



Adventure 2001

Comprising

Overland Pakistan and

Biafo Climbing

Nick Adlam
Alain Hosley
James Smyth
Tim Harris
Nick Saunders

The Idea, the Challenge and Why

"So let me get this straight, you want to drive to Pakistan in a battered old Volvo and then assuming you get anywhere close you want to go climbing in the Karakoram. Why?" This was pretty much the general attitude of many of our friends, to which we would generally reply, "Do you know anyone else who's done it?"

The idea can be traced back to just before the start of the 2000/1 academic year. James and Nick were discussing possible ideas for the coming summer when they hit upon the idea of doing an overland trip. They also wanted to satisfy their craving for climbing and so quickly pinpointed the Himalayas, in particular the Karakoram in Pakistan. The connection soon became apparent and an overland trip to Pakistan was combined with some Karakoram climbing.

A team was evidently needed and above all a mechanic since James' and Nick's combined car knowledge could probably fit on the back of a postage-stamp. As an off-road driving instructor with a passion for stripping engines, Tim seemed an ideal choice and he soon got swept into the proposition with little encouragement. Two mutual climbing acquaintances from school were Nick S and Alain and they too took little encouragement to sign up. A team formed the wheels were set in motion and there certainly a lot of obstacles to overcome, but that was half the challenge.

The proposition stood that Nick, James and Tim would drive from London to Karachi where they would meet up with Nick S and Alain. Tim would then fly home and the remaining four would head north to lay siege to a variety of peaks around the Biafo Glacier in the Karakoram. A plan to which for all intents and purposes was adhered to, give or take.

Overview of the Expedition:

The overland phase of the expedition was extremely successful. However the climbing phase was tainted by an incident, which left Nick returning to the UK earlier than expected to undergo Knee surgery and ill health combined with bad weather ended climbing attempts earlier than hoped.

The overland trip was an excellent experience, marred only slightly by the number of bribes that were required to facilitate our journey. Mainland Europe was easy and we flew along the motorways, often a little too fast on the German Autobahns. The adventure really began as we left mainland Europe and entered Romania, perhaps the world's largest continuous roadwork's that seemed to stem the entire country. Turkey marked the beginning of the more insane driving style but as soon as we hit Iran it paled into insignificance. We had many sleepless nights before crossing into Iran, fearful of its Islamic regime, which is so in contrast to our own. Our fears were soon swept under the table as we entered a country of amazing sights and hospitable people. Eastern Iran was more exciting and our armed escort near the Afghan border reminded us this was an area in conflict. The major drug trafficking corridor around the Pakistan, Afghan and Iran borders meant we stopped little and instead drove through Sandstorms and down dirt tracks in blistering heat. Just before arriving in Karachi the car started playing up: a fuel line blockage, brake failure and a burned out starter motor tested our skills but we eventually parked up in the centre of Karachi. Surrendering the car to the government to avoid a £3000 shipping bill proved a challenge and the back-handers required showed that corruption in Pakistan still exists and at the highest levels. However eventually the car was signed away and the first phase of the expedition was completed successfully, some 6600 miles in just 3 weeks.

The climbing phase began well although we soon found that our porters were ill equipped for glacier travel and we had to send them back earlier than expected. This meant we would be unable to make the proposed Biafo-Hispar glacier traverse and we resided ourselves to trek the Biafo glacier and climb sub-6000m peaks along the way.

However just before climbing began Nick's knee went and he was forced to return to the UK leaving the remaining three to continue. Nick suffered some bad luck during his return: a fall in a crevasse, attempted mugging while he slept and theft while sleeping on a bus. He did however safely make it back to the UK where he underwent knee surgery. The remaining members attempted peaks in a side glacier off the Biafo glacier. They were plagued with both ill health and bad weather and were forced to retreat to the Biafo Glacier after a few days. They then ascended to Hispar La (5151m) for some magnificent Karakoram views. At this point they decided to descend and returned to Askole, they then encountered brakeless jeeps on the return to Skardu, before a breath-taking flight over the mountains to Islamabad.

In Islamabad a few days ahead of schedule they decided to visit Peshwar and the Khyber Pass, both of which proved worthwhile and ended an expedition beleaguered with so many problems in the latter half on a happy note. Alain and Nick safely returned to the UK, while James flew onto Singapore for a 'holiday' staying with friends.

Despite the fact that the climbing phase failed to make any first ascents, the team agree that they learnt more about both themselves and climbing during this trip than on any other expedition they had previously been on.

Member Profiles



Nick Adlam

Nick is 21 and has just completed his second year studying Civil Engineering at Imperial College. He is an avid traveller and mountaineer, desires that have taken him across the world and most notably to the top of the Matterhorn in Switzerland. He has three alpine seasons under his belt and has trekked in the Himalayas before.

Responsibilities:

Mountaineering and Medical

Expedition Name:

Bam Bam



James Smyth

Jim is 21 and has just completed his third year studying Civil Engineering at Imperial College, his desire for engineering is wavering and the financial institutions are sure to lap him up at the coming milk round. He has visited Peru where he climbed Huasacaran Sur at an altitude of 6768m. His high altitude experience was deemed essential if similar peaks were to be attempted in the Karakoram.

Responsibilities:

Treasurer

Expedition Name:

Laud



Tim Harris

Tim is also a Civil Engineer at Imperial College having recently completed his third year. At the age of 21 he is an off-road driving instructor and avid Sailor. This his first expedition outside Europe proved no challenge for him unlike the car which at times tested his knowledge to the limit. His experience both off-road and under the hood proved invaluable during the more testing roads and climates the car endured.

Responsibilities:

Mechanics and Logistics

Expedition Name:

Ed



Alain Hosley

The eldest of the motley crew at 25 Alain is a Database Administrator currently working for Oracle at the US department of Defence in Washington. During his University years he was a devoted rock-climber as well as an Alpinist. His experience and mountaineering talents as well as his tools make him a sought after climber, and our Lead-Climber.

Responsibilities:

Mountaineering and Lead Climber

Expedition Name:

Little Frenchman



Nick Saunders

The youngest of the group, his slow wit and ability to carry heavy loads make him a friend to all on any expedition. At 20 he has just completed his first year at Bristol University studying Mechanical Engineering. He too climbed to 6768m in Peru and his status: as high-altitude porter was well deserved, he's not bad at climbing either.

Responsibilities:

Food

Expedition Name:

Saunder

Itinerary:

- July 1st: Depart UK by ferry from Dover to Calais
- July 2nd: Drove through the night: France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Czech. Republic - arriving in Prague.
- July 3rd: Sight Seeing Prague
- July 4th: Prague to Vienna (Austria). Sight Seeing in Vienna and camping on outskirts
- July 5th: Vienna to Budapest (Hungary). Sight seeing in Buda and camping in central campsite
- July 6th: Sight seeing in Pest then drove and camped near Romanian border
- July 7th: Crossed into Romania and drove to Brasov where we camped
- July 8th: Drove from Brasov to Bucharest for sight seeing. Camped near Bulgarian border
- July 9th: Crossed into Bulgaria and drove down Black Sea coast to Sozopol where we camped
- July 10th: Drove to Turkish border and onto Istanbul, where we stayed in Hotel on outskirts
- July 11th: Sight seeing Istanbul and then drove to outskirts of Ankara where we camped
- July 12th: Drove to Ugrup and Goeme camped on the road to Erzurum
- July 13th: Drove to Erzurum where we stayed in a Hotel
- July 14th: Drove to Iranian border, crossed and stayed in a hotel near the border
- July 15th: Drove to Senedej, but could not find accommodation so slept in car on outskirts
- July 16th: Got a little lost finding Ali-sandar caves then onto stay in hotel in Khoramabad
- July 17th: Drove to Esfahan where we found a suitable hotel and went sight seeing
- July 18th: Sight seeing in Esfahan and then on the road to Shiraz where we stayed in a hotel
- July 19th: Sight seeing in Shiraz and then we drove to Yazd where we camped in a car park
- July 20th: Sight seeing in Yazd and then we drove to Bam where we found the one hotel
- July 21st: Sight seeing in Bam and then onto Mirjave (via armed escort) on the border
- July 22nd: Crossed into Pakistan and drove to Quetta, arriving at dusk. Camped in a hotel grounds
- July 23rd: Drove from Quetta to Karachi where we parked up at our final destination
- July 24th: Visited P&O office (£3000 to ship), but managed to surrender car to government instead
- July 25th: Completed formalities to surrender car to government. Organised onward flights to Islamabad
- July 26th: Sight seeing in Karachi
- July 27th: Sailing and crab fishing in Karachi harbour
- July 28th: Met up with Alain and Nick S and flew to Islamabad
- July 29th: Organised Skardu flights and sight seeing in Islamabad
- July 30th: Skardu flight cancelled got minibus instead, stayed night at Chillas. *Tim stayed in Islamabad*
- July 31st: Continued driving and arrived in Skardu. *Tim awaiting flight in Islamabad*
- August 1st: Got jeeps from Skardu to Askole. *Tim flew back home to the UK*
- August 2nd: Began trekking walked for 9hours over terminal moraines to first camp at Namla
- August 3rd: Trek over the glacier to second campsite at Mango I
- August 4th: Trekked up the glacier to a grassy plateau at Baintha I, where we dismissed porters
- August 5th: *Alain stayed in camp* while others established a climbing camp up near the Ogre
- August 6th: Alain, Nick S and James go to Ogre camp. *Nick descends alone to Askole due to knee injury*
- August 7th: Nick and Jim recce possible peaks to 5000m, Alain sat ill in tent. *Nick gets a jeep to Skardu*
- August 8th: Jim and Alain ascend up the glacier to 4850m. *Nick takes a bus to Islamabad*
- August 9th: Jim and Nick descended to the camp in bad weather. *Nick arrives in Islamabad*
- August 10th: Ferried loads onto the Biafo and Nick S suffered internal plumbing difficulties. *Nick flies home to the UK*
- August 11th: Ascended biafo glacier to just below Marpogoro
- August 12th: Ascended crevassed glacier to Karpogoro set up tent in crevasse field
- August 13th: Ascended to Hispar La and returned to tent which was moved away from a crevasse
- August 14th: Descended Biafo Glacier back down to Marpogoro
- August 15th: Descended glacier to Baintha picking up all deposited loads on the way
- August 16th: Rest Day at Baintha, and found some porters to assist in descent
- August 17th: Descended to Namla at the edge of the Biafo glacier
- August 18th: Left the glacier and got jeeps (with no brakes) from Askole to Skardu
- August 19th: Flew from Skardu to Islamabad
- August 20th: Took bus from Islamabad to Peshawar. *Nick undergoes knee surgery in UK*
- August 21st: Sight-seeing around Peshawar
- August 22nd: Travelled up to the Kyber pass to gaze into Afghanistan
- August 23rd: Archealogical tour of the sights of Peshawar
- August 24th: Carpet shopping in Peshawar and then a bus back to Islamabad
- August 25th: Alain and Nick fly home to the UK and Jim awaits his flight to Singapore

Overland to Pakistan (Phase I)



The Car

Although overland travel immediately reminds us all of Land Rover's across the desert, we opted for a slightly different vehicle. The car needed to have

lots of luggage space and an economical engine. Well a Volvo 240 estate has boot space at the

very least. Economically speaking we could not afford a Land Rover and decided that we would have to settle for the reliability of either a Volkswagen or a Volvo estate. The 'Auto Trader' in hand we assessed the market and ended up with a lovely old battered fuel guzzling maroon Volvo 240 Estate, original if nothing else.

Truth be told the car exceeded all expectations and only began to show signs of excessive wear on the last day to Karachi: a fuel line blockage, brake failure and a burnt out starter motor. Despite the plethora of spares carried in the boot the sum total of spares required amounted to: an exhaust bracket, a wheel nut, a brake light, a couple of fuses and a splash of paint. Despite the incredible heat of Eastern Iran (about 50°C) the engine did not overheat, although on occasion we had to have the fans on full heat to draw the heat away.

Once a few personal effects had been spread around the car it soon became comfortable and served us well. We even managed to sleep three abreast in the boot on one occasion in Iran. The further we got from the UK the more stares we received simply because Volvo's are like gold dust. On one occasion a gentleman looked after our car all night for a mere dollar just so he could sit and admire the Volvo.

The Route

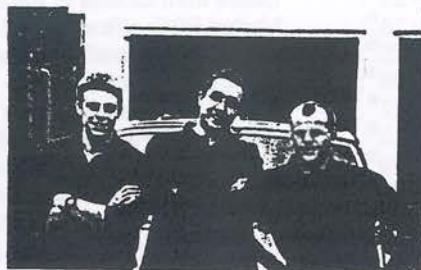
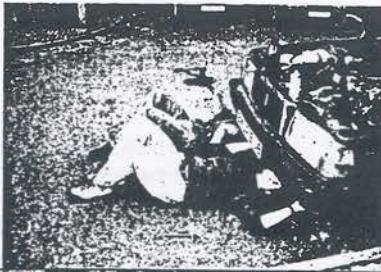
When we sat down initially to plan our route across the world we were presented with a multitude of options. However on closer inspection there is only really one route that's possible on account of the political instability in the countries that encompass the borders of Pakistan. All the '-stans' of the world seem to converge on Pakistan's Northern Borders, most if not all of which are experiencing some political instability. China is not as hostile as it used to be but we envisaged incalculable paperwork for the import of the car and so vetoed the prospect. The Indian border is supposedly no problem for foreigners despite the conflict, but unfortunately India is on the completely wrong side for our approach. This left Afghanistan and Iran. At the time of our brainstorming Afghanistan seemed like a possible and certainly exciting route, however the situation soon soured and as Christians as prospects were bleak. This left Iran, the country previously deemed more evil than Iraq. In reality however it turned out to be an amazingly hospitable country, once you ignore the security checkpoints every 50 miles. To get to Iran we travelled across mainland Europe to Prague (Czech. Republic) then South through: Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. We then crossed into Asia via Istanbul and then on through the rest of Turkey toward the Iranian border.

In the event that anyone else is 'brain cell' challenged enough to repeat our route, we include a short route plan for your benefit:

Cross the water south of London and head out on the road east until you reach a well-known alcohol vending facility. Then take the road south through a few hills and then descend along the road until it ends in a stream. Drive the car across and keep heading south along the waters edge. The road soon turns east where you reach a big river with a few kebab shops on either side. Once over the river drive East for a while until you reach a sandy patch. Finally turn right at the end of the sandpit and head south until you hit the coast.

However in reality it was far from this easy: road-signs in Arabic, roads that end in fields and a compass that points at the engine block all added to the challenge.

A more detailed and descriptive route can be found in Appendix 6.



Day by Day



Sunday 1st July:

After some less than emotional goodbyes, and some good hearty tucker we left The White House in Melbourn (or more simply Jim's). However this was not before the Legendary Saunderson piped up with a classic quote: "So if you don't drive on the left hand side of the road which side do you drive on?" We made a good two miles down the road before the first argument over directions. Bam-Bam tired of the squabbling immediately turned the radio on to the tune of "Teenage Dirt-Bag" to drown them out. We stopped briefly at a town outside Dover so that Ed's parents could see him one last time, before heading to the gateway for beyond. At the Dover check-in our four-hour return ticket for a booze cruise was not questioned despite the fact that squeezing just one bottle in the boot would have defeated Houdini. A peaceful crossing and we had at least defeated

most of our critics by leaving the country. In Calais we spent no short amount of time in search of fuel, but eventually all tanked up we were ready to start. Distance: 145 miles

Monday 2nd July:

We drove through the night in two-hour shifts. While Jim commented on how straight the roads of Belgium were, a brief stop was made for the acquisition of the expedition sign which simply read 'Mega Full Pull Party VI', something about tractor pulling apparently. Nick then attempted to navigate Tim through Brussels unsuccessfully. The German Autobahns were disturbingly fast but the heavy beast made a good run for freedom, clocking at least 85mph from its brick shaped aerodynamic profiling. The Volvo triumphantly crossed into the Czech Republic at Lunchtime and then continued on to Cheb for its first breather. A brief stop for provisions and we continued on to Prague. We arrived at our first stop and racked up in a little campsite on the outskirts. A complete overhaul of the interior of the car was then undertaken, the source of an irritating rattle tracked down to a stray exhaust bracket. Distance: 737 miles

Tuesday 3rd July:

We spent the day enjoying the cultural sights of Prague but more importantly savouring the local tipps. Be warned however the local beer is stronger than wine and you drink it by the half-litre. After a circum-navigation of the city by tram we eventually fell off at the right stop and crawled to bed, jubilant in making our first major destination.

Wednesday 4th July:

After a few map reading issues and a brief scenic tour the wrong way down a tram route, we managed to leave Prague and head for the Austrian border. A bizarre no-mans-land of casinos was crossed before finally into Austria and onward to Vienna. With only limited maps and now first hand experience of Nick's map reading we decided to park on the outskirts and take the tram. However despite our best efforts to pay for a tram ticket we travelled for free. A tour of the parliament and palaces of Vienna paled into insignificance when we eventually found the architectural wonders of Kunst-Haus Wein. Distance: 238 miles

Thursday 5th July:

On arrival at the Hungarian border we were turned away and told to go to another crossing. Not dismayed we found another point to cross at, but so too did a felon who was thankfully apprehended by three police cars at the border. On route to Budapest we had to stop while a battalion of tanks crossed the road, but then amazingly parked in the heart of Budapest with out a traffic warden in sight. We then went to explore the castle of Buda and the labyrinths within, but not before a less than friendly tour-guide threatened to kill us, gracefully we declined. A brief tour the wrong way round a 'no cars' road and we knew we were getting to grips with the road signs. Distance: 106 miles

Friday 6th July:

We extensively explored the cosmopolitan 'Pest', lapping up a multitude of sights that were to say the least well spaced. However the view from the top of St. Thomas' was worth the climb. Back on the road we headed for the Romanian border along the motorway. Oblivious to the stop sign at the slip road Nick drove on, although unfortunately the Policeman had other ideas. Through a distinct lack of local currency Nick was threatened with jail and then through complete ignorance the policeman gave up and we drove on. Distance: 171 miles

Saturday 7th July:

At the Romanian border we managed to answer: "How many guns are you carrying?" correctly and were through in relatively quick time. We soon learnt that all foreign exchange offices close at weekends but thankfully a little bribery in the bank was well received and the exchange was opened. We drove through one roadwork after another, averaging a meagre 30mph the whole day. Distance: 302 miles

Sunday 8th July:

With high hopes of seeing Count Dracula's Transylvanian castle we were eluded for sometime due to a lack of road signs. Eventually having tried every other possible road we stumbled upon it. Then we joined the continuous roadworks toward Bucharest, following the circular diversions and avoiding many a horse and cart. Bucharest was disappointing; the only highlights were the enormous parliament building and the copied Arche-de-triumph. Dismayed Jim drove us out toward the motorway. However a policeman was waiting for us and soon pulled us over for failing to stop at a disused railway crossing. It soon became clear this was for his personal benefit but what could we do, we paid up. Continuing along the dirt track to the motorway we soon left the less than wondrous Bucharest. Distance: 250 miles



Wednesday 4th July:

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With only limited maps and now first hand experience of Nick's map reading we decided to park on the outskirts and take the tram. However despite our best efforts to pay for a tram ticket we travelled for free. A tour of the parliament and palaces of Vienna paled into insignificance when we eventually found the architectural wonders of Kunst-Haus Wein. Distance: 238 miles



Monday 9th July:

Having eventually found a ferry to cross to the Bulgarian border the previous evening we made the final step over. We managed to call an officials bluff at the border when he asked for dis-infection tax, but then seem unable to avoid paying ecology tax. Nonetheless we soon made it into Bulgaria, paying only a few more taxes than expected. We soaked up some tourist sights along the Black Sea before finally taking a dip despite the depth never exceeding shoulder deep. Distance: 207 miles

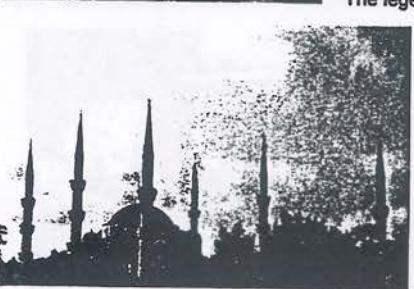


Tuesday 10th July:

The Cyrillic road-signs soon had us baffled and we spent an age trying to find an exceptionally remote border. At the border the soldier who managed to read our passports upside down impressed us, but then when we got to the Turkish they were a little more switched on. We entered a large room with several unmarked doors and proceeded to enter everyone to get a stamp in the right box. Finally we had the car searched but surprisingly unobtrusively. We then ventured on to Istanbul, where the concept of a driving licence was evidently myth. A distinct lack of road markings on the motorway entering the city and it became a free for all, but thankfully the beast fended off unwelcome guests well and held her own. We parked the car at a hotel and braved the heat to explore the city. Distance: 218 miles

Wednesday 11th July:

The legendary Blue Mosque and Aia Sofia did not fail to impress and we wondered the streets of Istanbul in awe. The heat soon became unbearable and we relished the wind rushing in the windows as the beast burned down the lane-less roads. Crossing into Asia it dawned on us that the adventure was only just beginning, the Turkish driving was certainly proving that. We stopped along the way to fix a few rattles, squeaks and faulty lights. However we soon became the interest of two local soldiers, and despite our desires to leave Tim was having his mechanical knowledge tested well. Eventually he averted to primary instincts and hacked the remaining wheel nut off. Distance: 262 miles



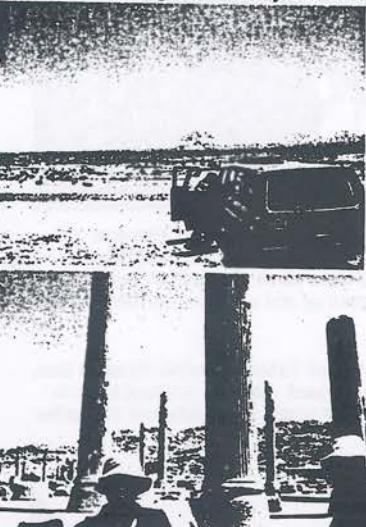
lengthy camera stop. We drove on heading roughly east and only just coming to terms with the shear size of Turkey. Tim's driving became increasingly Turkish and his overtaking manoeuvres startled the hearts of his passengers on more than one occasion. Distance: 464 miles

Friday 13th July:

Got pulled over by the Police along the way but thankfully he just wanted to practice his English pronunciation. So we continued on our way to the less than wondrous Erzerum, and a suitably unpleasant hotel. However the sights had a little more to offer, and the local castle kept us entertained for the afternoon. All 'kebabed' out we cooked on our balcony, while the locals took part in their daily wailing rituals (prayers). Distance: 233 miles

Saturday 14th July:

The most challenging border yet lived up to expectation, but for some rather unexpected reason. The Turkish side was suitably disorganised and we were then made to wait in a prison like room while our Iranian visas were checked. We put up with the dark, hot and thief-ridden room until our passports were finally cleared. On the Iranian side we met Hussein (a tourist officer), who for \$20 got all the right boxes signed in all the right places and we were through without any of the intrusive searches we had expected. We had made it to Iran and within 10 miles we were



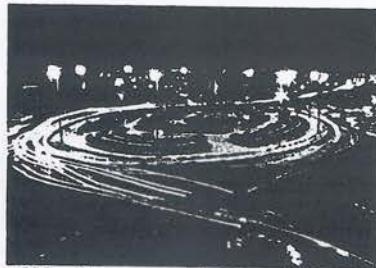
at our first of many Police checkpoints. Distance: 228 miles

Sunday 15th July:

Our first petrol stop and our jaws dropped as we pumped the fuel in at just 2p/litre. Jim's reckless lady like overtaking manoeuvre resulted in being pulled over by the police, but due to his ability to use long complicated words the Iranian policeman let us go bewildered. We soon got the hang of the Iranian driving; a belief in fate helps no end when overtaking on blind corners. As for roundabouts you only give way when the oncoming vehicle is bigger than you. We couldn't find a hotel so we slept uncomfortably three abreast in the boot. Distance: 457 miles

Monday 16th July:

We managed to buy a road map but unfortunately it was all in unreadable Farsi. This inevitably led to us getting completely lost on a road that ended in a field. We eventually followed some power-lines to a remote village, which in turn led to a tarmac road. We spent the afternoon on a peddle-o going round an extensive cave network in the middle of nowhere, surreal does not even begin to describe it. We then drove on to Senedej where we parked the car for the evening with a charming mechanic who sat in awe all evening staring at the Volvo. Distance: 298 miles



Tuesday 17th July:

During our early morning drive we perfected the art of Iranian driving by placing our brains in the foot-well as we moved out to overtake. We soon arrived in the cultural capital of Esfahan and lapped up a variety of sights. The highlight of the day was drinking tea and smoking Hubble-bubble under the shade of a bridge. Distance: 248 miles

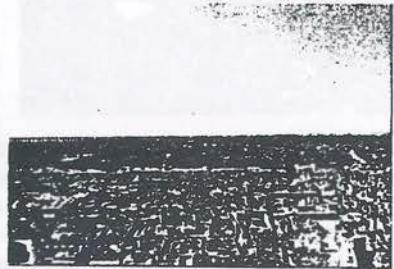


Wednesday 18th July:

We again ventured into Esfahan and lapped up the remaining sight including a magnificent Mosque, although we all agreed we were becoming all 'mosqued-out'. Back on the road in the afternoon we went on to Shiraz, however we were suitably shocked by the local traffic going the wrong way down a dual carriageway. Distance: 316 miles

Thursday 19th July:

We spent most of the morning touring Shiraz and its sights. Then we drove out to Persepolis perhaps one of the most amazing ruins ever. A back hander to the grounds man and he unlocked the door to let us in to an amazing tomb cut out into a rock face. We then found a network of



tunnels under the ruins and proceeded to venture in with only a camera flash to guide us. A few more ruins and then we drove on to Yazd where we met some very friendly security guards who let us camp at their compound. They even bought us tea and chapatis. Distance: 289 miles

Friday 20th July:

The Zoroastrian Towers of Silence were well hidden in Yazd but still worth the visit, however the temple was closed. Content nonetheless we drove on to Bam and soon hit the desert proper. Bam loomed like a true oasis in a barren desert, and we managed to get a room in the only hotel we could find. Distance: 394 miles

Saturday 21st July:

The deserted walled citadel of Arg-e-Bam could quite simply be one of the few remaining 'uncommercialised' wonders of the world. We explored the corridors and tunnels until the heat got the better of us. We then ventured on across the desert until the Police stopped us and insisted we take an armed escort before going on. AK47 in hand our armed escort was soon demoted to simpleton thieving soldier and finally none. We drove on and closer still to the Afghan and Pakistan borders alone. The checkpoints became more serious and machine-guns were now complemented by cannons, thorough questioning at every checkpoint. The temperature outside was topping 50°C and to make matters worse we had the fans on full heat to divert the heat of the engine. Distance: 263 miles



Sunday 22nd July:

The Pakistan border was a slow process and not well complemented by a passport officer beating up a Pakistani for smuggling hashish. Once through we topped up on black market petrol and drove all day through a sandstorm that soon stripped away the paint from the side of the car. We veered worryingly close to the Afghan border and saw several trucks with mounted machine-guns and armed personnel, they certainly weren't carrying sugar. Later Tim eager to perfect his Iranian driving skills pushed the old beast to far and she swerved wildly, thankfully this ended Tim's Iranian driving escapades. Distance: 415 miles

Monday 23rd July:

We left Quetta at 0430 and drove through the sunrise to head toward Karachi. While the car had performed admirably up until this point today it decided to test us. The brake failure light lead to a lengthy stop in lawless Baluchistan and then a fuel line blockage on the outskirts of Karachi stopped us again. The sound of distant mortar-fire got us back on the road in no time and we arrived in blistering hot Karachi by early afternoon. Our destination reached we were elated but still faced one small problem, getting rid of the car. Distance: 432 miles

Tuesday 24th July:

We had resided ourselves to the fact that the possibility of donating our car to charity was impossible and so looked into the options in shipping. We had been told £1000 to ship the car home, but when a variety of handling charges and taxes had been added the figure had risen to £3000. We were distraught and so turned toward the local custom, bribery. For £40 at the customs house in Karachi we managed to start the paper work in order to surrender our car to the government. Distances: 8 miles

Wednesday 25th July:

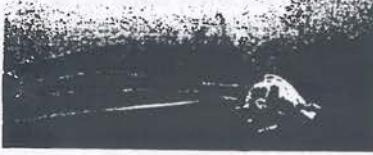
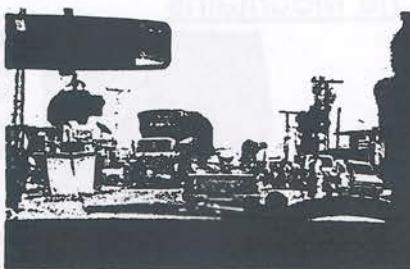
Today we managed to complete the paperwork for the surrender of the car. However just before we managed to hand the car over the start motor burned out in the middle of while we would love to have celebrated with a fermented tipple, they were unfortunately far from easy to obtain in Pakistan and they repeatedly eluded us.

Thursday 26th July:

We spent the day enjoying the sights of Karachi but were unfortunately rather disappointed particularly by the dirty Indian Ocean. Jim again managed to get us lost but now used to it we were soon got back on track. Dinner was decidedly local and we all got well acquainted with the bathroom, all particularly glad to have got the cheap room without a porcelain throne.

Friday 27th July:

A small communication error meant we thought Saundar and Alain were arriving a day early; we were subsequently left with a day in hand. However we did find the one enjoyable excursion in Karachi: Crab Fishing. We spent the morning catching fish and crabs off the sides of the sailing boat, which were then cooked for lunch. A relaxing afternoon of shopping around Karachi and we new the city had nothing left to offer.



Biafo Climbing (Phase II)

The Trek

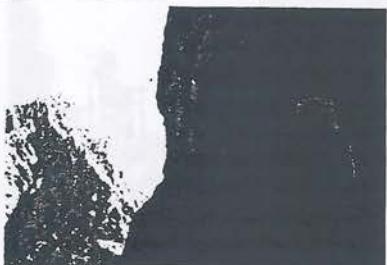


When we look back in years to come I think there will be one thing above all that remains in our memories of trekking in the Karakoram: the moraine. The moraine and moraine covered dead ice were steeply undulating and just went on forever. During the early part of the trek and in getting to the Uzum Brakk glacier we spent up to three hours at a time slipping and sliding our way over it. Always kidding ourselves that it would flatten out, just over the next ridge. The scale of this terrain was beyond anything any of us had experienced before and the extent was greater than the maps and book descriptions suggested due to massive glacial retreat in recent years.

Our progress on the main ice streams throughout the trek was somewhat easier and quicker, however by the end of day three our plans had changed dramatically. All was not well with our porters. It had become increasingly clear that they were not the good and experienced porters we had been promised by Shah International Travel Services. The main problem however was their lack of equipment and food. Despite us paying the equipment allowance in advance and confirming with Shah Travel that they would have their own food; they had no tarpaulin and by the end of day three were running out of food. They also appeared to lack suitable gear for the more complicated sections of glacier travel to come.

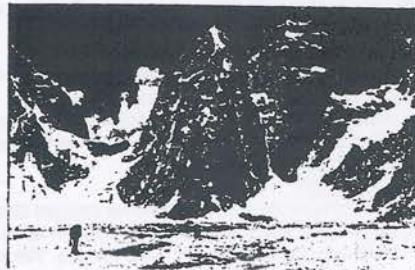
Hence as the rain started to fall heavily (we had lent the porters our bivvy bags as a shelter) we sat together in one tent and discussed our options. Basically it became apparent that there were two. Firstly, we could keep the porters and complete the Biafo – Hispar traverse by giving them some of our food. The problem with this being that we would not have sufficient food to attempt any peaks. Secondly, we could dismiss the porters now and attempt some peaks from the glaciers above Baintha (our current campsite) using a series of depots. We could then still get to the trek high point - Hispar La, as long as we came back the same way so that we could pick up food from a depot rather than having to carry everything. Ultimately after much discussion we settled on option two as it gave us the best chance of climbing and we wouldn't miss out on the apparently unsurpassable mountain views from Hispar La.

The Mountains



After Nicks decision to go down, the 3 of us made our way up onto the Uzun Brakk Glacier. The ice was its normal interminable moraine. Where is the ice? Camp was established on an ablation valley. From there we ascended onto the ridge of what we had come to call point 5904. Having travelled light in order to make a day trip off it, we had insufficient equipment to make the traverse along the summit ridge. However we did get some fantastic views of the Ogre. As Alain was ill, he remained with the tent, as a result we decided to go further up the glacier past the Ogres Thumb in order to ascend the snow slope up to the ridge between the Ogre and Uzun Brakk. We bivied under a large

boulder in order to set off for the ridge early in the morning. Due to rain we returned back to the tent, as we had got soaked during the night. As things were not progressing well, we decided to return to the Biafo and then ascend to Hispar La. We made steady progress up the glacier taking 2 days to reach the crevasse field just before Snow Lake. We camped there due to the late hour and melting snow bridges. The following morning we made superb progress up to the pass. The crevasses were wide but the snow bridges firm. The final slope was to say the least frustrating, due to the endless false summits. The views from the summit down the Hispar Glacier were superb, as were the views back towards the Ogre and snow lake. We made good progress back towards the tent. As we approached the tent the snow bridges had started to melt again. So we had a harder time getting back to it. Once we got there we moved the tent, as it was precariously close to a very large crevasse. The descent to Baintha progressed without any huge difficulties. The hardest part of the return was moving the depot from the Biafo glacier to the Baintha campsite. It was 90 minutes of carrying huge loads through horrendous moraines.



Day by Day

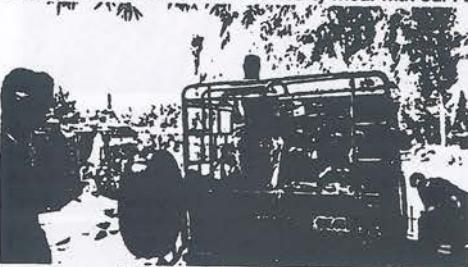


Poor weather meant our flight to Skardu was cancelled and so we took a long minibus ride up north along the Karakoram highway, accompanied by some Americans. We spent the day enjoying the winding roads, following them higher to ever more isolated villages. We found some 4 leaved grass by the side of the road and thought it unwise to pass up the opportunity to savour the local produce. However we soon became aware of laws governing such items and quickly discarded the offending articles. The road was washed away in places towards the late evening but our experienced driver successfully navigated the fallen boulders to arrive at Chivas by late evening

Monday 30th July:
After being deserted during the early hours of Monday morning by the rest of the team it was time for me to discoverer Islamabad for myself. I was a little worried about travailing on my own to start with but I never found any real problems. If you're in Islamabad with time to spare I suggest visiting the Super Market. This is not the food kind but the market of the Super district and has a large selection of souvenirs, jewellery, books and food. A real must-do is to climb the path from the north end of 7th avenue up into the Margalla Hills to Daman-I-Koh, a lookout point where you can see the whole of Islamabad laid out before you. From here you can understand fully the master plan for the city and see all of the separate districts. I discovered on my way back to Rawalpindi that

one of the best ways to make the trip was to use the Varan bus service which costs less than 10% of the taxi fare, with all routes ending in the centre of Rawalpindi.

Tuesday 31st July:
We continued on the road to Skardu and despite a flat tyre arrived by late afternoon. We found the 'Hilton International' and with a room at £5 could hardly refuse. We spent the afternoon organising and making final preparations while our man Abdulah went and found us some porters. We had one last hearty meal with our American chums before we left this last remnant of civilisation.



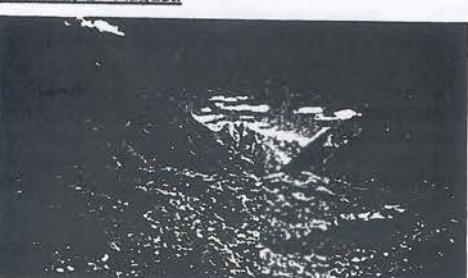
Wednesday 1st August:

We met our porters and got into some battered out jeeps to drive some 8 hours to Askole where the road ended. The road was washed away in two places and so three jeeps and some rather 'exciting' driving we arrived in Askole. However the local policeman evidently had delusions of grandeur and refused us permission to proceed. Two hours of incessant pleading later he gave up and let us pass.

Wednesday 1st August:

Wednesday felt strange for me as it was the end of my adventure but at the same time I was about to see my family again and enjoy those little luxuries we all take for granted in the western world such as a proper flushing toilet.

Thursday 2nd August:



A little disgruntled by the fact that one of our four porters had manifested into a 14-year-old boy, we started nonetheless. The going was tough and only became worse when we reached the glacier. The terminal moraine combined into an immense serac field extended as far as the eye could see. On arrival at the day's destination we were all feeling the effects of altitude and wondered above all else, why we were here?

Friday 3rd August:

A little sleep and we all felt ready to face another gruelling day and that it was. The seracs never subsided and the constants ups, downs and missed footings due to loose rocks underfoot soon tested our patience. The day was however

Saturday 28th July:

We met Alain and Saunder at the airport and then got a plane to Islamabad. The content of Tim's carry-on luggage prove the source of much amusement, the hacksaw and most of the car tools bewildering the airport security. The plane was decidedly ancient and Nick's seatbelt didn't seem to work so he had to resort to tying it in a knot. We arrived in a slightly cooler Islamabad and spent the afternoon booking flights to Skardu and changing money for the next part of the expedition.

Sunday 29th July:

Islamabad was not blessed with too many cultural sights either but nonetheless we spent most of the day finding them. In the evening we enjoyed a final meal all together, before packing all the climbing and trekking equipment for the second phase of the expedition.

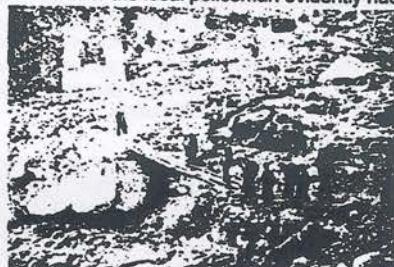
Monday 30th July:

Monday 30th July (Tim):
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Tuesday 31st July (Tim):

Tuesday saw me catching the bus through the Margalla Pass to the Taxila valley, second stop after the pass on bus Varan No.6. The valley houses numerous archaeological sites, mostly Buddhist temples and monasteries, and is regarded as one of the subcontinent's archaeological treasures. I started at the museum and walked around the sites, which is ok if you can manage a long walk in the blazing heat. The alternative is to hire an auto-rickshaw, which will take you around the sights for a reasonable cost. I found that for the further afield sites such as Jaulian, in my view the best individual remains, the best way to get there was to flag down a pickup and jump on the back for a few rupees. Mind you, on the way back I managed to hitch a lift in the front cab of a military fuel tanker!



shorter than the last and we arrived at the campsite by lunchtime, giving us plenty of time to relax those already aching limbs.

Saturday 4th August:

We zigzagged across the glacier and for a short time saw a patch of snow amongst the rocky moraines. The track continued through a small grassy patch high to one side of the glacier and there we found an idyllic little campsite. Alain was unfortunately feeling a little unwell and his constant necessity to examine the backs of bushes testified to the fact. At this point our porters decided to inform us they had no more food, fuel or shelter. Ill equipped to feed the extra four mouths we sent them down.

Sunday 5th August:

We realised that now alone with no support our best bet was to do some climbing now and then proceed later with lighter loads. While Alain recovered in the tent, the remaining three members ascended a side glacier where the intention of assessing some peaks. The going was tough underfoot and while we did find an excellent campsite and some suitable peaks it was demanding work. Upon return later in the afternoon Nick's knee buckled and everything changed.

Monday 6th August:



While it was Jim's birthday and a very memorable one it was for all the wrong reasons. Nick unable to walk properly on his knee turned to descend, while the others offered to descend with him, his stubbornness stood strong and he went alone.
(Nick) Monday 6th August:

An emotional hobble upon departure and I began to second, comforting myself in the knowledge that it was simply my turn for a monumental bout of bad luck. I made good progress on the flats, however up and down proved challenging in the extreme, my knee simply giving way as and when it chose. In fact my knee chose to buckle at perhaps the worse time leaving me face up in a crevasse wedged thankfully by the

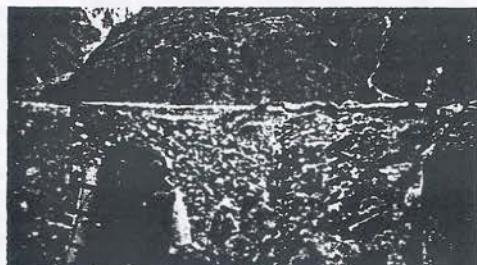
rucksack on my back. I spent an age negotiating my way out and once freed from the abyss beneath I focused on one thought alone; get off the glacier. I walked all day only stopping to take more painkillers, the pain so intense by nightfall where I collapsed to pitch the tent that I was crying. Needless to say I slept on contact with the ground.

Tuesday 7th August:

Had a relative lie-in before heading off for the morning up the large scree slope to the left of our campsite, in the hope that at the top at the col, we would find a possible climb on either side. Unfortunately, Alain was still feeling rough (and going through the eye of a needle), made it for about 10 minutes as far as the first large boulder, where he was almost caught short, and sensibly decided to return to camp. Jim and I continued ever more slowly up the continually steepening and ridiculously unstable surface; eventually reaching the col. From here we had a magnificent view of the Biafo Glacier, looking almost innocent in the sun. Having analysed the peaks on either side, we agreed that although we thought we could see a route, and we may be prepared to do it in the UK with a rope, we weren't

prepared to try it free at almost 5000m in the middle of nowhere in the Karakorum. On the way down, Jim climbed a small pinnacle to one side, and having reached camp again, we discovered that Alain had a very 'special' form of diarrhoea, and would be going nowhere very fast.

A quick council later, and it was decided that Jim and I should take a few days food, trek to the head of the valley, bivvy, and see what we could do up there. The afternoon was therefore spent packing, taking a few photos of the stunning scenery, and relaxing. The stove decided to start playing silly

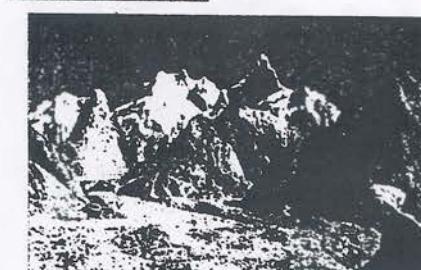


games at supper, (which it continued to do periodically due mainly to the fuel quality) but as Alain showed a remarkable skill at taking it apart, it was soon roaring again.

(Nick) Tuesday 7th August:

Woken in the middle of the night by three gentlemen keen to pillage my tent, I erupted out in only boxer shorts with ice axe in hand to defend my territory and thankfully successfully. However I sat waiting for them all night and by daybreak I was already walking. I managed to get jeeps back to Skardu and the relative sanctuary of civilisation.

Wednesday 8th August:



We had planned to leave at 5.30am, but as it was raining, we delayed until 7. Upon reaching the main glacier, the easiest terrain we had yet come across, we progressed upwards. Unfortunately, the weather was worsening, so when we got tired of walking in hail, we stopped and built a bothy on the moraine, building the walls and putting the bivvy bags on top. When the weather improved a bit, we continued to the head of the valley, and with a lack of rocks to build anything from, we



flattened a patch of ice under a huge perched block into something we could lie on. A recce of the area uncovered a number of possible climbs. And a number of impossible climbs. We decided on one, and returned for supper. In a radio call to Alain, we agreed to return the next day. All afternoon, the clouds had been down, and it had rained, hailed or snowed repeatedly, and it showed no sign of improving over supper. We settled down under the perched block for the night, but soon became disturbed by scraping noises, which sounded rather like it was moving, so we moved outside. The weather being bad though, we eventually moved back in, and half sat, half lay, awake for the rest of the night, getting damp. As it began to get light, we saw that the clouds were still right down, the weather promised more of the same, and so decided to head down.

(Nick) Wednesday 8th August:

I took a 20-hour bus from Skardu to Islamabad and no sooner had I got on board than some of my possessions had gone 'walkies'. A gentleman being violently sick all over me without any hint of remorse further complemented the bus ride. The bus only stopped once in 20 hours so I dread

to think what the driver was taking, perhaps an intravenous coke drip.

Thursday 9th August:

The walk down was easy, and we arrived back in camp at about 7.30am, having stopped for a quick chat with some Kiwis on the way. The morning was spent drying gear and discussing options. Alain was feeling relatively able to walk, so we decided to head down to the main Biafo glacier again, and make a 'lightweight' 'dash' for Hispar La. By lunch, the weather had moved down the Uzun Brakk sufficiently to keep us tent bound playing cards for the rest of the day, feeling rather disappointed that nothing had been climbed.

(Nick) Thursday 9th August:

A day of recovery in Islamabad but there was only one thing I wanted to do and that was leave the country and to all intents and purposes I harassed the British Airways office tirelessly to achieve this end.

Friday 10th August:

We decided to ferry the gear down to the Biafo in two loads, and set off at just after 7am. We managed to find a route through, and reached the Biafo again with little incident. Apart, that is, from my finding that I had picked up a similar bug to Alain when caught short at a water break. With the tent pitched on the glacier, Alain and Jim returned to fetch the remaining gear. I had a couple of visits from inquisitive porters, who always wanted to know where my friends were, what I was doing and if I had any medicine for them. With gear sorted and excess dumped, the weather once again came in, and we spent the afternoon in the tent doing nothing. Supper started to become tedious with noodles for the 5th night in a row, and the prospect of more to go before returning to the main food dump. We went to bed at the later than usual

time of 7pm!

(Nick) Friday 10th August:

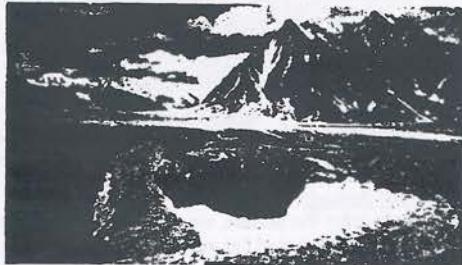
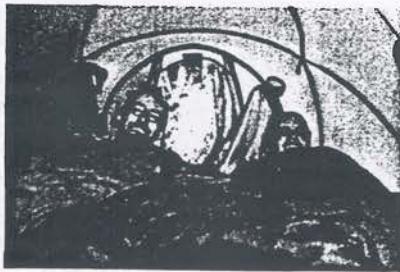
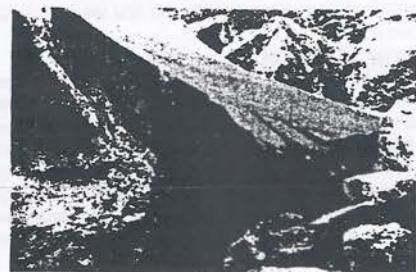
Last seat on the flight and I was gratefully flying home to the motherland, with little incentive to ever desire to return.

Saturday 11th August:

With surprisingly heavy packs we headed up the glacier. Apart from the occasional steeper incline the going was relatively easy, if monotonous. Alain's Karrimor pack began to give up the ghost, resulting in much venting on his part about the said company. About lunchtime we found a spot next to a medial moraine, opposite either Marporgoro or Karporgoro, we couldn't decide, having no guide book and a 1:250,000 map, and decided to camp. The weather appeared to be taking on a pattern after the first few days of brilliant sunshine, of starting off relatively clear, cloud building up, and raining on and off during the afternoon and night. The curry flavour super-noodles were a delight. Also, I don't think any of us wanted to see another chocolate bar for quite a while - oh for a green apple!

Sunday 12th August:

Expecting another event filled day walking up a flat glacier, we left at a sane hour and proceeded on our way. The glacier slowly became more crevassed, and a surface layer of snow started to appear, along with a few snow bridges across rather large crevasses. At about 11, we realized that we were in the process of walking into a very large and complex crevasse field, and it would probably be wise therefore to rope up. So having roped up for the first time in the expedition, we continued, Alain leading, and Jim and I taking it in turns to put our feet through the fast weakening snow bridges. About 45 minutes later after I had gone up to my waist, we decided it was stupid to go on, so stopped and marked out a safe area and pitched camp on what appeared to be a small solid patch. We spent quite a while trying to work out precisely where we were, using a combination of back-bearings and the GPS (whose altitude readings varied from 4500m to 5000m), but as the scale was 1:250000 (the same as



an average national road map), it was relatively tricky. As the sun moved across we started melting snow, and for the first time as we went to sleep we appreciated our down bags.

Monday 13th August:

Not for long though, as we were up at 4 to try to get across the crevasse field, up to Hipar La and back to the tent again before it got too soft. Progress to the foot of the rise was quick and direct, and it felt good to be finally on a summit day, hearing nothing but the crunch of footsteps surrounded by the immensity of the mountains. At the foot of the pass we came across evidence of previous groups in the form of large hole in snow bridges where they had obviously tried to get through to late in the day, and continued on upwards. The climb was slow, and riddled with false summits. Combined with our starting to feel the altitude a bit as we got above 5000m, it became considerably mentally tortuous, and upon reaching the pass, I felt more relief at having got there than joy at the conquest

Tuesday 14th August:

Today we headed down to below Marporgoro, starting early to avoid the crevasses. There had been a considerable amount of melting in the previous few days, so crossing the section of open crevasses we took an even more wayward path than on the way up. In the afternoon, whilst Jimmy slept, Alain and I decided to dam and divert a glacial stream with ice, which proved relatively futile until Jim provided his expert civil engineering skills. We also looked wistfully at the mountains on the other side of glacier, but calculated that although we had the food, we didn't have the time.



Wednesday 15th August:

As it rained all night, and morning, we allowed ourselves a lie in, and eventually got off late, aiming to reach Baintha. All went well, as we surged down meeting some Italians who were wearing jeans and had their porters carrying patio chairs for them. We found our gear dump at the edge of the Uzun Brakk Glacier, somehow fitted it all into or onto our packs and taking it in turns to carry the Jerry can of petrol, we started to grope our way round the edge of the moraine to find a spot where the trekkers must have emerged from Baintha. We decided to make for a low point, and somehow found our way through the absolutely appalling piles of ice and rubble to the main path and the relative civilization of earth and greenery at Baintha. Having picked up our Baintha dump, we stuffed ourselves with mini cheddars, tuna and corned beef. Supper was a feast.....

Thursday 16th August:

This was a rest day, in which we hoped to find some porters hanging around on the glacier just waiting for the chance to take our gear down; otherwise we would have to carry the whole lot. We washed, dried out the spare toilet roll, and generally did nothing. Just as it started to rain in the afternoon, we spied some porters, and hailing them over, gave them huge amounts of our spare chocolate and petrol, and hired for the way down. They thought Christmas had come early, and also thought we were incompetent trekkers, offering us naan bread, tea so sweet you had to chew the sugar in it, and trying to help strike the tent.



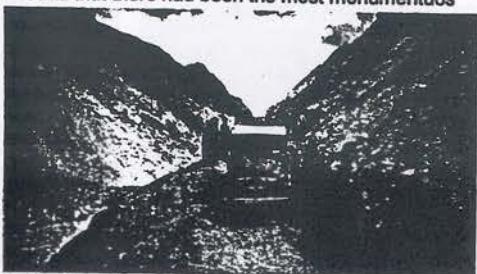
Friday 17th August:

Having thought we would leave at about 6, the porters arrived at 5.30 to help us take the tent down and pack our stuff, having given them as much as possible to carry, and all the excess food we no longer needed, we left. These porters were great, obviously knowing what they were doing. Heading off, we walked with them all day, surprised at their desire to walk fast for short periods rather than slowly for long periods. At a break one of them ran off and appeared a few minutes later with a handful of wood from somewhere in the middle of the glacier, which they proceeded to light with the petrol and made a brew. We reached the end moraine of the glacier again, experiencing a few hairy moments before stopping at Namla, and swapping some sweets for a large tin of peaches with a Dutch couple, who couldn't believe Jim and I were 20, due to our now excessive beardage.



Saturday 18th August:

Hoping to pre-empt the porters, we set our alarms for 5.30, but were woken by a porter praying vociferously at all hours of the night. Passing through the rest of the moraine, we turned the corner out of the Biafo, and found that there had been the most monumental rockfall. A vast chunk of the cliff had come away, completely burying the rock on which we had had lunch before, and changing the landscape. The porters obviously had their nose set for home, and accelerated off, giving us a tricky job to keep up. After what seemed to be an interminable days walk, we passed through Askole and on to Thongol where we were lucky enough to find a jeep immediately, and headed off. There were more road breaks, changes, and the road was considerably hairier than before, culminating in everyone jumping out of the truck like lemmings as the brakes appeared to fail whilst executing a three point turn on a hairpin bend. Following the final break we had quite a wait for the last jeep, during which the porters found some apples for us, and when the jeep arrived, Alain had a small strop about non-paying locals, and only let on a couple who asked nicely. We eventually reached Skardu long after dark, to find the Americans had just arrived too. A real meal later and we were ready for bed.



Sunday 19th August:

We decided to have a rest day, and do a bit of sightseeing round the area. Then about 2 hours before the plane was due to take off we changed our minds. In the booking office, the clerk calmly informed us that we were lucky and there were three seats left whilst simultaneously crossing three locals off his list. We just made the flight, despite the fact that we no longer looked anything like our passport photos due to a not insignificant amount of facial hair. The flight was stunning. We flew by sight round Nanga Parbat close enough to have seen people on the summit, and landed at Islamabad, welcomed once again by the smell of the hashish plant. Having checked in to the Paradise inn again, we read Nick's various messages and were shocked to hear what had happened to him. I found that my mobile had gone from my bag. Having threatened the manager with the police, he suddenly found it. In the evening, we had our expedition meal at the Marriott.

Monday 20th August:

Having 5 days to go before our flights, we decided to go to Peshawar for a few days, to see the bazaars and travel up the Khyber Pass. Having spent ½ hour trying explain to various taxi drivers we wanted to go to the bus stop, driving round in circles, and losing all semblance of control, we eventually found a 'locals' bus, and paying about 30p each for the 200km journey, we alighted in Peshawar, and found our way to Khanis hotel, where having chosen no air conditioning, we made the room stink in a very short space of time.

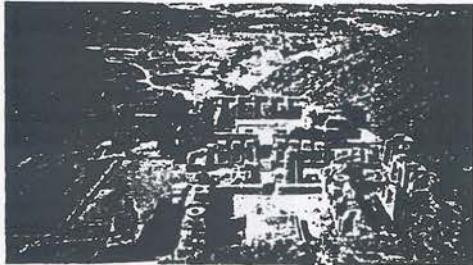
Tuesday 21st August:

We booked a trip up the Khyber Pass, and then set off round the sights of the city. The museum was full of stone Buddha's and people who wanted to check our tickets, we weren't allowed inside the fort, because the army was doing something there, and we wandered round the bazaars for a while buying apricots, curry powder, and tea. We also had a quick look for carpets, but failed to find anywhere that wasn't specifically aimed at tourists, charging a ridiculous price.

Wednesday 22nd August:

We set off from the tourist Centre with 3 Italians, and soon picked up our armed guard from the barracks, who also had our passes for the journey. Leaving Peshawar, we passed the tented city, full of Afghan refugees and gun shops. As we approached the border, the number of small military outposts increased, and at one point when we saw a man running after a car with a gun pointing at it, the driver commented 'very bad place this, much kidnapping', which was a little unsettling. Having reached Landi Kotal, the small border town, we went on a little further, until the mountainous scrub of Afghanistan was spread out before us. Following the obligatory photos, we bought some Afghan money from a small child, who probably made a huge profit, and started the return journey to Peshawar, stopping for tea on the way, where Jim was cornered by a bloke trying to practice his English. Back in Peshawar, a spot of afternoon shopping in which Jim bought a cricket bat and I bought a hockey stick, both at bargain prices, followed a dodgy lunch, which sowed the seeds of future bowel problems. We had supper in the hotel, another dodgy meal served by waiter who didn't seem to understand the word 'Pepsi', despite our pointing at a bottle of it in the drinks chiller at the time.

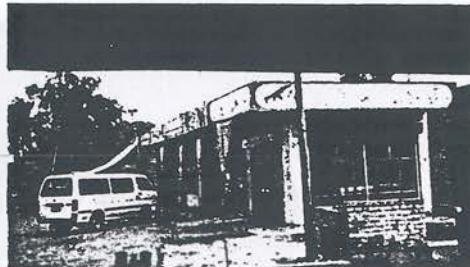
Thursday 23rd August:



way we could get then back on the plane. The coach trip back to Rawalpindi was considerably more luxurious than the other way, despite a small child sitting behind me who was very keen on stroking the back of my neck, and whose father got annoyed whenever I turned round to see what was happening. Back as the Paradise inn we packed for the next morning's flight home, and after a final curry, Alan and Jim shared a single sheet on a double bed as we went to sleep.

Saturday 25th August:

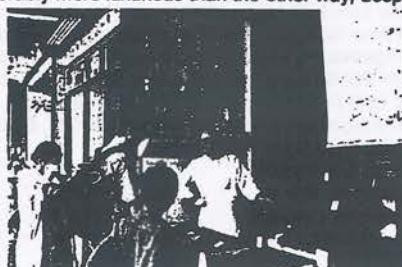
The wake up call was half an hour early, but Alain and I arose and made it to the Airport, checked in, and having had our bags and climbing boots thoroughly searched at every checkpoint as we had two unlabelled bags of (curry) powder in our hand baggage, as well as a tent, an afghan rug, three climbing helmets, and various other slightly unusual items. The first flight was uneventful, however for the second leg from Abu Dhabi to London, we were upgraded to business class, which made for a very pleasant end to the expedition.



This was a day of culture, as we took a trip around the old archaeological sites in the vicinity, visiting amongst others, the Takht-e-Bhai Buddhist monastery, built on the side of a large hill, stunning, and rightly on the UNESCO world heritage list. Lunch was the most 'interesting' meal so far, in the equivalent of a trucker's café. Back in Peshawar, we went carpet shopping. Having found that the wholesalers were situated down back alleys in tower blocks and run by Afghan refugees, we proceeded to browse a large number, leaving the buying until the next day.

Friday 24th August:

The carpets spotted the previous day we duly reanalysed and bought, mainly from one vendor, an ex-Afghan satellite engineer, who had left at about the time the Russians had given up their invasion. Eventually, laden down with Afghan carpets, we found DHL, and got them posted back to the UK, as there was no



The Lonely Descent



Below is a copy of the article written for BMC Summit magazine:

Snap, buckle and pop.

My knee was grinding itself out of business fast. My leg kept collapsing without warning, but it was sustainable, so far. As long as it didn't crumble as I crossed a crevasse I'd be fine...

The fall should have been controlled, but the momentum of my rucksack toppled me in. Now, wedged face up in a crevasse the depth of which I dared not guess, the only things between me and the blue abyss were the battered karrimat and tent lashed to the sides of my pack. The sanctuary of the crevasse lip was only four feet above, but that was four feet too far. Alone in Pakistan, and miles from civilisation it could not have worked out worse... Grind, step, Grind, Step.

It was no good, my right knee was definitely failing, we stopped and pondered what to do. I was certainly going down but the real question was whether it was alone. We argued for a while neither side giving in, but as usual my sheer stubbornness won through: I would descend alone - a small victory I would later learn to regret.

I said goodbye, trying not to make anything of the moment as I turned to leave them, content in the thought that at least the entire expedition wasn't over. Jim's trekking poles helped to lessen the impact on my knee, although co-ordinating them was a challenge. A tear welled-up in my eyes as I began my descent, all that preparation and planning straight down the pan. I managed to hold back breaking down, consoling myself in the knowledge that it was simply my turn. Richard's Austrian heart-infection, Chris's Icelandic Hypothermia, Duncan's Nepalese Gardia, Dave's Swiss lead-fall, now just my Pakistan knee. As the minutes flowed into hours this thought managed to imprint itself into my head, leaving me free to concentrate on at least trying to look co-ordinated hobbling along on the poles.

I made good time on the flats thanks to Ibuprofen, mastering the cross between a hobble and a waddle. It was just the ups and downs that seemed to bother me, which was a slight drag, since the terminal moraine of the Biafo Glacier is the biggest crevasse pile-up I've ever seen. Skirting the edge of the glacier seemed to work, relatively flat underfoot despite its undulating and crevassed nature....

....Wedged in the crevasse I started praying and praying hard. Then began to recall my Mother's words before I left: "You just make sure you come back in one piece". Well, I had reassured her, with a 100% success rate so far, I have no intention of returning as air-freight.

With this impressive success rate on the line, remorse turned to resource and I began to analyse an escape. The trekking poles still dangled from my arms, despite my despise for them I swallowed my pride as I silently thanked their maker, Mr. Leki. If you dismantle one section of a pole you are left with a very sharp threaded point, ideal for ice chiselling. I cut two handholds above myself and with a little huffing and puffing managed to orientate myself into a vertically wedged position.

Embolded by this unexpected result, a cunning plan swung into action. I squirmed round, and managed to chisel two small ledges in the crevasse walls - opposing each other at knee height. Concentrating fiercely, I reassembled the trusty Lekis, wedged them across the abyss in the ledges, and then in a leap of faith manoeuvre (I still haven't quite worked out how), stood on top of the poles de-wedging myself in the process.

Swinging my rucksack off, I removed the ice axe before pushing it out and over the lip of the crevasse, then tied off the trekking poles to my feet - I then prayed once more, this was it: the crux. I reached up and embedded the ice axe hard. Pulling up with the remainder of my strength and simultaneously performing that mandatory waving of the legs that always occurs, I managed to claw my way to the safety, and sunlight. After a brief word of thanks to upstairs I decided not to sit on the crevasse rim and contemplate what could have been, leave that for later - I still had to get out of here, ideally still in one piece.

Over the next eight hours I stopped only to pop Ibuprofen, saving the more powerful temgesic's to help me sleep. Eventually the edge of the glacier loomed in front of me, I staggered on until I stumbled across a flat piece of ground outside a village. Collapsing in a heap, I weakly pitched the tent, before falling into a deep sleep.

Only to be rudely awoken by someone unzipping the tent. Tired, annoyed, and in no mood for a robbery, I erupted for the tent, screaming my head off, waving an ice axe, dressed in nothing but boxer shorts. Deciding not to bother this madman anymore, my nocturnal visitors slunk off, but I just sat there listening, waiting for daylight, I needed to get out of here. Good job I'd forgotten to pop the Temgesics, they could've danced on my knee, and I wouldn't have woken.

Later that day, I arrived in the relative sanctuary of Skardu by dusk, after a positively uneventful jeep ride from Askole, and headed straight for a hotel. Later that night I found two cards in my rucksack - and dimly remembered - today was my 21st. Definitely one to remember.



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BMC - Information Pack on Pakistan
Lonely Planet Guides to: Trekking in the Karakoram, Pamir, Hindu Kush, Tien Shan, Altai, Gobi Desert

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The British Baffin Glacier Expedition

Publications

[Birthday Blues](#) (Article about Nick's independent travel to UK from Biafo Glacier) – BMC Summit Magazine, September 2001

Contacts

Prague Entertainment: Welly club, Jilská 4, Prague
Iranian Border crossing: Huessin Hammad, Iranian Tourist Board,
Sailing and Fishing Karachi Harbour: Captain Jimy, Boat no. 73, tel: 2850960
Car Shipping: S. M. Munawar Ali, Deputy Manager, P&O Nedlloyd, Mackinnons Building, Chundrigar Road, P.Obox 4666, Karachi - 74000. Tel: 2419562/6 ext:206
Customs clearing agent: Mohammed Hussain Khan, Suite 609, 6th Floor, Landmark Plaza opposite Jung Press building off Chundrigar road, Karachi - 74200
Porters: Ali Abdu, Flat no. 1, 1st floor, Block no. 19, G-8 Markaz, Islamabad, Pakistan tel: 92-51-2255838
Islamabad - Skardu transport: Bashir Zaman, C/o. Raza Stationary, P.O Shinkari, District Mansehra
Skardu - Askole Transport: Syed Mehdi Shah, Shah Travel Services, Star market, Skardu Tel: 0575 2425
Nick Adlam: Out-of-term: The Haining, Hildersham, Cambridge, CB1 6BU tel: 01223894902
Term: 311 North End Road, London, W14 tel: 07815097905
nicholas.adlam@ic.ac.uk
James Smyth: Out-of-term: 72 High Street, Melbourn, Royston, SG8 6AJ tel: 07801497075
Term: 243 Latymer Court, Hammersmith Road, Hammersmith, W6 7LD
james.smyth@ic.ac.uk
Tim Harris: Flat 7, 392 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, SW15 6JJ
Tel: 02087892504
timothy.harris@ic.ac.uk
Nick Saunders: Out-of-term: 9 Tenison Avenue, Cambridge, CB1 2DX tel: 01223565010
Term: 64 Oakfield Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 tel: 07779161581
ns0059@bristol.ac.uk
Alain Hosley: 2107 S street NW, Appartement N, Washington DC, 20008, USA
alain.hosley@uk.oracle.com

Appendices:

- Appendix 1:** Money
- Appendix 2:** Food
- Appendix 3:** Medical
- Appendix 4:** Car documentation + Visas
- Appendix 5:** Equipment:
 - 5.1 - Car**
 - 5.2 - Mountaineering**
- Appendix 6:** Driving information by Country

Appendix 1: Money

Our final budget is presented below alongside our initial pre departure estimates. It is a slightly simplified version for the benefit of the report, as there were a number of complications. These arose from the combined phase, different flight costs, Nick's early departure and our division of the sponsorship. However the overall costs are as accurate as possible given exchange rates, different currencies and the difficulty of remembering to record everything spent whilst on the expedition.

Future expeditions may like to bear in mind certain points:

The equipment cost for the mountaineering phase is only a small fraction of the equipment used. The remainder was already owned by expedition members or borrowed from friends.

The original cost of insuring the car, including breakdown cover, was over the £1000 budgeted but we managed to get a rebate on the insurance because we only used it for 6 months.

Under the sections entitled Other, we have included sight seeing costs, hotels on the overland phase, bank commission charges and the shortfall between the value of the dollars changed and the expenses recorded.

We would also suggest that only American Express traveler's cheques are taken as you can be sure of changing these at an American Express office. Only one money changer would take VISA traveler's cheques (None of the banks including HSBC and Citibank would touch them). Cash is by far the best thing to change particularly in Turkey and Iran where we failed to change traveler's Cheques anywhere. It should also be noted that in Pakistan the money changers give a better exchange rate for large notes.

Finally we would like to thank the people and organisations that made this trip possible by supporting the expedition financially: Andy Fanshawe Memorial Trust, Bristol University Alumni Association, Goldman Sachs Global Leader Award (Nick Adlam), Imperial College Exploration Board, Oracle (Alain Hosley Flight Expenses) and Shell International Ltd.. It can be seen that we did not meet our initial fundraising target, however we managed to keep our personal contributions down by making savings in a number of areas. We also feel a great debt to all those who gave their time and services freely to the expedition.

BUDGET

Section	Item	Budgeted Cost	Actual Cost
Overland	Car	450.00	450.00
	Preparation of car, spares	300.00	276.12
	Road Tax	80.00	85.25
	Fuel	600.00	522.04
	Car Insurance	1,000.00	531.11
	Ferry	100.00	19.00
	Food	600.00	413.32
	Maps + Books	50.00	41.99
	Visas (not Pakistan) and	480.00	394.72
	Carte de Passage	0.00	0.00
Mountaineering	Car Disposal / Motoring related costs	0.00	155.47
	Other (Iranian Hotels etc.)	0.00	118.65
	Contingency	380.00	0.00
	Total	4,040.00	3,007.67
Mountaineering	Internal Travel	400.00	497.22
	Permits	200.00	0.00
	Food	600.00	481.31
	Accommodation	400.00	202.12
	Porters	680.00	125.28
	Baggage	200.00	44.51
	Equipment	160.00	228.00
	Maps + Books	50.00	55.97
	First Aid	75.00	131.06
	Insurance	0.00	1,129.75
Combined	Other	0.00	52.99
	Contingency	280.00	0.00
	Total	3,045.00	2,948.21
	Grand Total	9,680.00	8,968.73
Sponsorship		6,180.00	4,484.00
IC Students Insurance			796.75
Personal Contributions		3,500.00	3,687.98

Appendix 2: Food

We decided to split the food into two main sections, trekking and climbing, the aim being to make the climbing fare lighter and more edible whilst still moving. Inter-changeability of food between trekking and climbing phases was important due to the fluid nature of our plans.

Super noodles were taken for climbing suppers due to their cooking time. Pasta was taken for trekking, as there were enough noodles in the climbing meals, and rice took too long to cook. Trekking suppers were envisaged as being either pasta and sauce, or pasta and soup, both with either corned beef or tuna with ketchup, brown sauce, herbs, curry powder etc. as flavourings. Pudding was Angel delight. Climbing suppers consisted of a bag of super noodles each with custard and raisins for pudding.

Lunch was designed to be a day long snack, apart from the primula and digestives during trekking, as lots of short breaks and eating on the go were assumed rather than a couple of long ones. Therefore, choc nuts and raisins were put in a snack bag together, except for Jim, who being difficult, decided to have a peanut allergy. This was accompanied by a couple of chocolate bars, and a packet of sweets. For the climbing lunches, there was more chocolate, and less food which needed a stop to prepare it. 3 litres of Isostar each was also thought good for summit days.

All this meant that Nick and I turned up at Bookers Cash and Carry one morning with a long shopping list, a large wad of cash, and proceeded to buy a large quantity of chocolate, and a few other items. Back at home, the food was repacked into man-day and tent-day bags, so as to reduce packaging and make it logically easier to organize day to day when there. When packing it into bags for transportation we realized that we had underestimated the weight and that we had probably closer to 70kg than the 50kg predicted.

So the Volvo left and all was fine until I received an e-mail from James in Erzerum, Turkey asking me to bring out 20 man-days of trekking lunches and 9 tubes of Primula. Naturally I assumed that they had got a bit peckish during the journey. However when Alain and I arrived at Karachi Airport, it transpired that in fact in the heat of the car the primula had gone off and had exploded all over the food and rucksacks. The afflicted rucksacks will never smell quite the same again. The food which could be saved was, but a large proportion affected had to be thrown away. Along the same lines, all of the chocolate bars had melted daily, and were therefore somewhat less appetizing than they may otherwise have been.

As the trekking and climbing sections merged, so too did the food. Having not been self-sufficient for this length of time before, we underestimated the weight and volume of the food required, which caused problems after the porters left in terms of our ability to go very far from a base camp without ferrying loads. We could have had carried slightly less food, but in general, the portions were about right, and we all lost quite a bit of weight.

Changes to be made in future would be

- Don't drive the food out in a vehicle in which it will not fare well.
- Take biscuits for breakfast rather than bars, as something solid is a lot better. Too much malt loaf without any butter etc for it can become a bit tough.
- Take less chocolate and more cereal bars, as a mixture is good, and cereal bars don't deform or make you as thirsty.
- Buy fruit and nut chocolate rather than the three separately, as they were not as tasty when melted and mixed.
- Primula is alright, as long as it is not heated and cooled repeatedly.
- Different flavours are important when eating the same food for 3 weeks, however, stick to flavours known and liked. For instance Tex Mex super noodles were different, but not pleasant.
- Buy quick cooking pasta rather than the cheapest, as the difference will be made up by the amount fuel used and carried.
- Do not have chocolate at all three meals. Even with a variety of bars, it will still pale quickly.
- Iodine drops are far more efficient than iodine tablets.

Food	Trekking menu
Breakfast	soreen or 2 fruslis
Lunch	prim or tuna with digestives, frusli, garibaldis, choc, dried fruit, nuts, pastilles
Supper	pasta n sauce or soup, pasta, corned beef and topping. Hot crunch, cake or custard
Trekking	14 days = 56 mandays
no. of days	food
Breakfast	total
10 1/2 soreen	20
4 frusli x 2	32
Lunch	
14 frusli x 1	56
8 primula x 1/4	14
6 tuna x 1/2	12
14 digestives x25g	1.4kg
14 garibaldis x25g	1.4kg
14 choc x25g	1.4kg
14 dried fruit x25g	1.4kg
14 nuts x25g	1.4kg
14 pastilles	56
Supper	
8 soup x 1	32
8 pasta n sauce x 1	32
6 pasta x100g	2.4kg
6 corned beef x1/4	6
6 hot crunch x1/2	12
6 cake/flapjack x1/2	12
2 custard x1/2	4
2 dried fruit x25g	200g

Mountain menu	
Breakfast	2 fruslis
Lunch	garibaldis, 2 fruslis, pastilles choc, dried fruit, nuts
Supper	super noodle, Custard and dried fruit

Mountain		8 days=32 mandays	Totals
no.	food	no.	weight (kg)
soup	32 x15g	32	0.5
super noodles	32 pkts x25g	32	2.4
pasta n sauce	32 pkts x100g	32	3.2
pasta			2.4
corned beef	6 cans x 150g	6	0.9
hot crunch	12 sachets x200g	12	2.4
cake/flapjack	12 cakes x300g	12	3.6
custard	20 sachets x30g	20	0.6
dried fruit			4
digestives			1.4
chocolate			3
nuts			2.2
garibaldis			3
pastilles			3.5
soreen			4
frusli	216 bars x40g	216	8.6
primula	14 tubes x100g	14	1.4
tuna	12 cans x150g	12	1.8
Total			48.9
plus 10%			55

assume 5kg per climber =
therefore porters carry
each can take max of 20kg, therefore need two porters

ALSO: tea, coffee, hot choc, isostar, ketchup, brown sauce, curry powder, sugar, kendal mint cake, LIGHTERS

20

35

Appendix 3: Medical

Due to the very remote nature of much of our expedition we took a very comprehensive First Aid kit with some powerful prescription drugs for emergencies. It is worth noting that Iran and Pakistan are very worried about drugs and so all tablets should be properly labelled and bottled. It is also advisable to carry a letter of authorisation for you to carry prescription drugs from your doctor.

The First Aid kit was bundled into one box, the contents, of which were separated into sealable bags for ease of use particularly in emergency.

The contents of the First Aid kit was:

Medicines:

Strepsils (Sore throats) x24
Paracetamol (painkilling) x50
Senokot (Constipation) x24
*Chloramphenicol eye ointment (one tube)
*Ciproflaxin (Anti-Biotic) x30
*Dexamethasone (Altitude Drug) x10
(* indicates prescription drug)

Ibuprofen (Anti-inflammatory and pain killing) x50
Diareze and Lomotil (Diarrhoea) x24
Eurax x1 tube (Anti-itching)
*Tramadol (Severe Pain relief) x12
*Augmentin (Anti-Biotic) x30
*Acetazolamide (Altitude Drug) x30

Bandages and Plasters:

Gauze Swabs
Steri-Strips
Tubi-Grips
Wound Dressings
Micropore Tape
Plaster Tape
Compeed Assorted

Sterile Dressings
Crepe Bandages
Antiseptic Wipes
Assorted Plasters
Zinc Oxide Tape
Crepe Bandage

Miscellaneous:

Sterile Medical Pack (available from Masta)
Sterile gloves
Scissors
Safety pins
Iodine Paint
Eye Bath
Dioralyte

Sterile Dental Pack (available from Masta)
Cotton Buds
Tweezers
Dental Floss
Lip Moisturiser
Sterile Scalpels

Reference Book:

Royal Geographical Society, Expedition Medicine, Babbles, 1998, London

Recommendations:

Due to the fact that we were climbing in the Himalayan peaks area there was concern that the first aid kit may be lost in an avalanche. There was also desire to have commonly used drugs like paracetamol available easily. The solution was therefore to issue all members with small specific packs for such emergency and everyday use. These packs contained:

Wound Dressing
Micropore Tape
Paracetamol / Ibuprofen / Lomotil x5 each
*Sub-Lingual Temgesics (for extreme pain) x5
Compeed Assorted
Plaster Strip
Dioralyte x3

Appendix 4: Car documentation + Visas

Visas

As British nationals we only required Visas for Turkey, Iran and Pakistan.

Turkey:

Is obtained at the border for £10

Iran:

To get a tourist or transit visa requires permission from the foreign office in Tehran, the only practical way to do this is to pay a UK based Iranian Tour company to make contact for you. The cheapest we found was Persian Voyages Ltd. who do this for £60. This process alone can take up to three weeks. It is then necessary to go to the visa section of the Iranian embassy in London and the visa itself costs £43, getting it takes 2-3 days.

Pakistan:

To obtain a visa at the High Commission required three hours of queuing in the morning, and then a further couple of hours in the afternoon when you return to pick up your passport. The forms can be downloaded from their website and so that saves further queuing. The cost was £40.

Car Documentation:

The main documents that we required for this trip can be split into 3 groups; driving licenses, Insurance and import licenses. The first group is the simplest to organise. An up to date UK driving license is suitable for the majority of European countries but for the rest and further afield you will need to get an International Driving Permit (IDP). There are two types so check which you need for the countries you visit. The IDP is issued by the AA or RAC (in the UK) and is very easy to obtain. You are not required to be a member, just fill in the form, send them £4, and it's done in around a week.

Insurance needs to be at least 3rd party fire and theft throughout Europe, so this can be sorted out in the UK. On top of the standard cover you need to get European cover, which cost us only £20. This does not cover all European countries and you should check carefully where it does cover. For other countries, in our case Romanian, Bulgaria and Turkey, you will need a green card. This shows that you have a minimum standard of insurance and again cost us around £20 although this is dependant on how long you spend in the countries. When you get the green card check it fully as we had to have ours replaced twice by the insurance company due to their mistakes. The final one only arrived by hand the day before we departed! Once you get further afield you will need to buy insurance on the border. At the Iranian border we were escorted to the insurance office, paid the money, and got a fancy piece of paper with lots of Farsi script on it. The only thing we could read on it was our number plate, so we had to take it on trust that it was an insurance document! In Pakistan we had expected the same system but on the border the guards were quite adamant that we did not require any further insurance.

The hardest of the car documents to deal with was the temporary import licence, the Carnet De Passages En Douanes. This document gives you the ability to import your car for up to 6 months in most cases, without having to pay import tax on it. Again the AA and RAC issue these and I can recommend telephoning the Travel Centre at the RAC as they are very helpfully with regards to the Carnet. Plan to get the document as early as possible as it can be a slow process. To obtain the carnets you need to fill in a long form with all sorts of information and double check that it is correct, as it is highly likely that mistakes will be found at remote border crossings and cause you severe headaches. The carnets require you to pay a deposit, in our case 500% of the value of the vehicle, but again this is dependant on the countries visited. There does not seem to be a check on what value you state the car is worth so pick a reasonable value and one which you know you have the ability to pay the deposit for. The Carnet is a very important document. The person who signs it is taking full responsibility for any import duties that might be made against the car if it is left/dumped in a foreign country. To have your deposit reimbursed you must be able to prove that the car has either been returned to its home country or that it has been properly imported and all duties paid. We surrendered our vehicle to the customs in Pakistan and made sure we had all the paper work to demonstrate what had happened to the car so our deposit was duly returned without any problems.

Other things to consider include road tax, road tolls and break down cover. You need a valid UK tax disc for Europe but elsewhere this is not required. On returning to the UK, if you have not brought your car back, notify the DVLA with all documents to show the car is no longer in the UK otherwise they will constantly hound you for unpaid road tax. Road tolls vary from country to country but are usually on a pay as you use basis or, in places such as in the Czech Republic, you need to purchase a sticker to be able to use the motorways. Check on the borders, as penalties can be high. No matter how good your mechanic might be it is still worth having European break down cover from someone such as the RAC. For around £90 we could call out an English speaking mechanic anywhere in Europe. Save your practical ingenuity skills till you're in the middle of Iran or on some remote dirt tract somewhere.

Appendix 5: Equipment:

5.1 - Car

As with all well laid plans some things inevitably go wrong so try to be prepared. You could take all the spare parts in the world but it's no good if you can't work out what's wrong or don't know how to fix it, so limit your spares to things that could really be useful. Before you leave aim to get to know your car and understand what are main weakness of your car are. For us it was the 14 clutches in the automatic gearbox. We had been advised that they would probably last many more thousands of miles but we knew that if something went wrong with them we wouldn't be able to do anything about it. Nothing this drastic did go wrong but it's good to know your limits. For cost saving find someone with a similar car that's about to be scrapped or go to a car breakers and simply remove units whole such as the distributor and alternator to use as spares. In terms of tools, take what you can use and improvise the rest. Include things like a metal bar, lighter, boot lace, cable ties and tape. With these, some mechanical knowledge and a large slab of creativity you'd be amazed what can be fixed.

My first chance to get the tools out was in Turkey where we decided it was time to investigate a nasty rattle we had had since the UK in one of the rear wheels. This was a straightforward task that turned difficult when one of the wheel nuts rounded off. Sometime later after stripping the nut back so that it could be removed the rattle was discovered to be originating from a lose brake pad locating pin which was quickly fixed with a bit of grease.

The car then behaved its self all the way through Iran even though it was put through some gruelling challenges. We were not entirely happy with the security on the road from Quetta to Karachi so didn't what to stop. However when the brake pressure disappeared and the warning light came on we had to stop. My first concern was that we had hit something that had severed a brake pipe so I wanted the car off the ground so I could check each wheel quickly as a loss of fluid could case a major problem. Due to the rush I made a mistake and jacked the vehicle up without choking the wheels. Luckily as the car rolled forward all that was damaged was the jack but it could have happened while I was under the car so my advice would be always think about the safety side of what you're doing and don't take short cuts.

Further down the road we started to have fuel problems, which caused the engine to surge as it was starved of fuel. Before the trip, on advice from a mechanic friend, I fitted a clear filter to the fuel line. I replaced it several times during the journey as the fuel was not always of a high standard. The last time I replaced the filter was the previous night in Quetta, but when we popped the bonnet the fuel filter was full of sand which shows the quality of fuel in Pakistan really does leave something to be desired. The main blockage was within the pipe between the filter and tank so after I'd tried to blow it out and failed I gave Nick a go as he used to play the trumpet. After going very red he managed to clear the blockage. I renewed the filter and we were on our way again.

The final test of my skills happened in Karachi on the day we surrendered the car. We had just come back from the customs house and were to meet the customs official with the car in a short while. We got in the car, which had been parked up for the last two days, and turned the key. Nothing. Tried again, still nothing. Panic starts to set in. Under the bonnet I checked the battery, distributor, HV cables and alternator. Nothing. By this point there is small crowd around us, all too close to my shinny tools, so while trying to identify the problem and fix it I had to stop my tools from walking. After a while and several voltage drop tests later I found that the coating on one of the wires from the distributor had melted and was shorting the whole system as it was lying against the engine block. This wire and several others that could be liable to suffer the same problem were taped up. One turn of the key and the engine was purring like a kitten, and Nick and James decided I had justified my existence.

You cannot over prepare for a journey like this. Once you have a vehicle replace the timing and drive belts, renew spark plugs, oil filters and air filters etc. Whilst doing this take time to understand the layout of the car as you'll appreciate it when you're on the side of the road somewhere cold with night fast approaching. The one piece of kit we didn't take which would have been nice to have was a windscreens repair kit. Luckily we didn't need one but could have as there are lots of stones flying around on the bad roads.

Spares:

Air Filter
Alternator Unit
Automatic Transmission Fluid
Battery
Battery Top Up Water
Assorted Bulbs
Assorted Cabling
Carburettor Unit
Choke Cable
Distributor Unit and Associated Leads
5 x Drive Belts
Engine Cap
2 x Engine Oil
3 x Fuel Filters
Assorted Fuses
2 x Oil Filters
Assorted Pipe Connectors
Assorted Pipework
Assorted Relays
4 x Spark Plugs
Throttle Cable
Timing Belt
Universal Cable Set
5 x Wheel Nuts
2 x Wheel Rims And Tyres
Windscreen Wash
2 x Windscreen Wipers

Tools:

Adjustable Spanner
Ammeter/Voltmeter And Assorted Wires
Centre Punch
Crimpers And Assorted Connections
2 x Flat Head Screwdriver
Foot Pump Inc. Pressure Gauge
Full Metric/Imperial Socket Set

Tools Cont.:

Gas Soldering Iron And Solder
Hacksaw And Spare Blades
Lighter
Metal Bar
Monkey Wrench
Pen Knife
Persuader (Scaffold Bar)
Pliers
Ratchet Screw Driver And Heads
Ring/Open Spanners: 8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,17,19
Scissor Jack
Secondary Socket Unit
Stanley Knife
T-Bar
Wheel Brace
Wobble Bars (Small, Large)

Other:

Boot Lace
Assorted Cable Tiers
Emery Paper
Exhaust Repair Kit
2 x 5 Gallon Fuel Cans
2 x 5 Litre Fuel Cans
Fuel Tank Repair Kit
Tube Of Green Gasket
Assorted Jubilee Clips
Set Of Jump Leads
Assorted Nuts And Bolts
Pipe Repair Kit
Puncture Repair Kit
Assorted Tape
Tube Of Red Gasket
Tube Of Universal Blue
Warning Triangle
Water Free Hand Cleanser
WD-40

5.2 – Mountaineering

Item	Quantity	Comment
High Altitude Mountain Tent	2	Ultra Quaser and TNF Mountain 24
Expedition Stove	2	MSR Whisperlite and expedition
Ropes	2	50m@10.5mm dry treated
Snow Shovel	1	Camp two piece shovel
Water Purification Filter	500	Iodine tablets and droppers
Mountaineering Hardware	Assorted	deadmen, Ice screws, Snow Stakes, friends, pitons
Avalanche Transceivers	4	Orthovox and Barryvox (Mammut)

If you are going to climb in the Himalayas you will be very much aware of the specific specialised equipment you will require, however of note:

- MSR stoves tend not to run well at altitude and on the low quality fuel available, make sure you get petrol, we met other climbers who found their petrol to be a much lower octane rating than expected and had to survive on very poor heat from the stove.
- Make sure you take a full complement of MSR spares particularly prickers. A leatherman tool is also invaluable.
- There is no need to take a water filter use iodine. The tablets are only required at low-altitudes and if using a filter it will very quickly clog from glacial till.
- The glacial till at the lower trekking camps will clog up the zippers on the tent there was no obvious solution, be cautious.
- We took some two-way radios with us which proved invaluable on the occasions that the team split-up
- If going climbing accept the fact that you will need to take porters and provide suitable equipment for them.

Appendix 6: Driving information by Country

Route:

From Cambridge take M11 south toward London
Circumnavigate London on the M25 and take the M20 East to Dover
Cross from Dover to Calais in France on the ferry
Take the E40 toward Dunkerque then the E42 to Lille
Follow the E42 to Brussels and so into Belgium
Get lost in the centre of Brussels and eventually find the A2 toward Aachen, crossing temporarily through the Netherlands and then to Germany
Turn south onto the E40 at Bonn and then cross onto the A3 toward Frankfurt
Drive through Frankfurt on the A3 and continue onto Wurzburg
Just beyond Wurzburg turn North on the A7 and then turn East on to the E48
Turn north onto the E51 for one junction and then turn East again onto the E48
Cross into the Czech Republic and continue on the E48 – E442 and then SE on the 7 to Prague
Leave Prague on the E50/E65 going SE then turn south onto the E59 and on to Vienna (Wein)
Take the 10 SE of Vienna crossing onto the E60 at the border into Hungary, and then join E60/E75 to Györ and on to Budapest
Leave Budapest on the E60, which becomes the 42 and cross into Romania at Oradea.
Continue on the E60 through Cluj Napoca and then onto Brasov and then Bucharest
Leave Bucharest on the 3 and turn south at Calarasi and cross into Bulgaria at Silistra (note that you need to take a ferry across the Dunav river to get to the Bulgarian border)
Continue south on the 7 and then take the 21 to Dobrich and onto the coast at Varna and then south along the coast on the E87/9
Continue on the E87/9 all the way to the border into Turkey (the road is very wiggly and the border is very remote on the mountainside)
In Turkey continue south on the E87 and then turn east onto the 020, nearer Istanbul join the E80 and then at Istanbul circumnavigate the capital on the E80. Follow the E80 all the way to Ankara
Avoiding Ankara take the motorway ring road and then South on the 260 to Uğruf.
Then head north again toward Sivas and get onto the E88 which then becomes the E80 and finally beyond Erzurum it becomes the 100.
Continue on the main road toward the border at Dogazuyabat (this is the only safe border crossing into Iran)
In Iran head South going through Orumiye and then through to Senedej and then at Bahtaran turn east to Hamadan
Then turn South again to Khorramabad then SE to Esfahan. Head South from Esfahan and follow the road round west to Shiras.
Head back north from Shiras toward Esfahan and turn east to Yazd.
At Yazd rejoin the main highway and head SE through Kerman, Bam and then Zahedan. (Note that you will be given an armed guard beyond Bam)
At the Iran-Pakistan border get on the main road to Quetta and avoid stopping. The road does get very close to the Afghan border but not closer than about 10km.
From Quetta take the main road south to Karachi and again avoid stopping anywhere until you reach Karachi.

Specific Information for Particular Countries:

France, Belgium, Germany, Holland:

- If travelling by car do not count on being able to get fuel at night. Many petrol stations may have 24hr pumps (i.e credit card pumps) but all encountered were either closed or broken.
- If travelling on German Autobahn's at night beware of vehicles in outside lane travelling in excess of 100mph
- No border crossings as such for any country by car, particularly at night
- If driving, look out for signs at borders that indicate new speed regulations

Czech Republic:

- Bear in mind at border you must visit every window, despite the fact they all seem to check passports
- You cannot buy a motorway sticker (i.e tax) at border, but instead at post offices and some petrol stations
- Beer is predominantly all 12% and it doesn't tell you!
- Amusing fact is the number of prostitutes in Cheb (near German border), and how the 'quality' diminishes the further along the road away from the border you get!

Austria:

- Beware of excessive commissions before changing money
- Bizarre no-man's land of casinos (like Las Vegas) at border with Czech Republic, worth seeing if nothing else.
- Bare in mind that to use the motorways you must pay road tax

Hungary:

- In Budapest it is easily possible to park your car on the Southside of the river for free and relatively safely
- Get off the Hungarian motorway as soon as you enter the country (i.e very first exit) as otherwise you'll be forced to pay for motorway tax and it's not worth it as there are very few motorways anyway.
- Beware of abusive tour guides at the castle
- Budapest campsite maybe hard to find, but is well worth staying for its Heath Robinson look and the fact that each platform has individually been constructed for one tent out of the side of a hill
- Police are always on the lookout to pull over foreigners. They are not interested in dollars and will detain you until you can pay in local currency (we were forced to wait 48hrs it being 6pm Friday until bank opened 9am Monday).
- Excessive mosquito problem in South Hungary, be prepared.
- You must drive with your sidelights on at all times in Hungary

Romania:

- Roads in Romania are bad, it seems to be undergoing one enormous roadworks (we only averaged 30mph through the entire country)
- Be prepared to answer questions like: 'Are you carrying drugs?' and 'How many firearms are you carrying?' at the Romanian border
- Everyone seems to buy visas at the Romanian border. British passport holders do not need such visas
- Driving style is appalling in Romania, expect death defying overtaking manoeuvres as standard
- Bureau de Changes only operate Monday to Friday, but for a small 'commission' it is possible to defy this law in the bank!
- Speed limit is 50kph in towns and 80kph when a town ends. It was not uncommon for a town to start within the limits of another town, so despite seeing a town limits sign (i.e you can go 80kph) you can in fact only still go 50kph!
- Getting out of Bucharest is surreal, to get to their equivalent of the M25 expect to go down some dirt tracks on your way out of the city!

- Expect to be pulled over by the Romanian police for entirely mundane things like picking your nose while driving. They don't want to give you a ticket they just want money in their backpockets. If you pretend you do not have enough money for their fine it doesn't seem to matter. They'll take what they can get.
- One of the main roads near the Bulgaria border at Siliстра ends in a river. If you wait long enough a bizarre ferry of sorts will take you across for a small fee.
- There are ridiculous numbers of mosquitos in South Romania, at times there were so many trying to get into the tent that it sounded like it was raining.
- The border crossing near Siliстра opens at 8am. Expect random people at the Romanain side to demand a variety of bizarre taxes. If you ask for his identification or a receipt book, they tend to disappear
- On the Bulgarian side you do have to pay an ecological tax. We nearly got arrested for refusing, thinking it was a fake tax

Bulgaria:

- It is illegal to camp by the side of the road. This danger is reinforced by the fact that most campsites have armed guards on the perimeter.
- Reading signs is fun since they are in Cerylic and do not resemble their English translations at all. Be prepared!

Turkey:

- Turkish border is very strange, clearing the Bulgarian side is easy. The Turkish side is somewhat different. You are given a slip of paper with several boxes to get stamped and they must be stamped in order. Anything you are asked to pay for you should get a receipt for (I'm sure we filled a few back pockets)
- Do not drive in the centre of Istanbul unless you have a death wish
- Motorways around outer Istanbul sporadically have no road markings at which point it is a bit of a free for all and as many lanes as you can fit cars.
- Beware of high drink prices when buying in your own hotel they charged us at minibar prices in the restaurant (which was cheeky) and there was nothing we could do about it.
- There is no need to dress in long trousers and long sleeved shirts to visit the blue mosque (especially if it is stinking hot), sarongs and shawls are provided at the entrance and at no cost
- Turkish driving puts Romanians in the shade, be cautious and always think you have to give way. The way they drive you'll probably have to do anyway.
- Do not be surprised if you are pulled over by the Turkish police for absolutely no reason, they just seemed to be curious. We found that if you oblige them by showing them your car, where your going and what you do they'll happily leave you alone after a while
- It is perfectly acceptable to cook your own food in some Turkish hotels. They occassionaly even let us use their kitchens, otherwise we used our own stove on our balcony
- Amazing level of bootleg petrol smuggled from Iran in Dogazubazit.

Iran:

- The Iran border is every bit as worse as the nightmare you envisage and at the same time the easiest. Crossing the Turkish side is easy enough, although you must stop everywhere to get the stamp in the right box.
- When you clear the Turkish side the driver and car go one way and the passengers the other. If at all possible all go with the car, the passenger route is worth avoiding.
- The passenger route involves being put into a large room with blacked out windows, broken fans and no lights. There was evident pilaging and my pockets were picked. There is a small door at one end and about 100 people in this 'prison'. The door at the end will suddenly open and he will have a pile of passports in his hand. He will hand these back and those people will be let through. At this point (we eventually deduced!) you must give your passport to this Iranian official (which is quite some feat considering the crowding. About 20 minutes later he'll return and hand them back stamped and you'll be let through. An adventure I highly recommend avoiding
- When you get to the Iranian side I recommend finding the tourist officer called Hussien. He will take \$20 and for this he will take you through all formalities. He even got the customs part signed off without the boot being opened. I estimate he saved us over 4 hours and lot of stress. He will however try to sell you some bootleg alcohol he has. I am sure he is just trying to make money but I wasn't entirely sure, the penalties are too harsh to risk, we declined.
- Driving in Iran is something you have to see to believe. There are no speed limits, overtaking is an art form, nobody stops for pedestrians and Iranian drivers seem to know 2 seconds before the traffic light hints green and that's if he bothers to stop at a red. Roundabouts are however their piece-de-resistance: nobody and everybody has right of way. Do not slow while approaching a roundabout just drive straight on, while on the roundabout you only give way to vehicles coming on if you think that in a crash you'd come out worse. Absolutely insane, but you get used to it!
- Police check-points are on average every 30 miles or so. Odds on you'll get pulled at most, we found the best tactic was to act as if we new we could drive on. You drive through respectfully slowly, but do not give them eye contact. One person always looks at the officers out of the corner of his eye to see if he waves you over.
- When and if you are pulled over remember that they can only inspect you and your passport. They are not allowed to inspect the contents of the car, if they wish to do so ask them to take you to the police station.
- There are some very intelligent police officers near the Afghan border and they know how to validate your passport and visas, so do not even think about doing anything dodgy. Towards and near the Afghan border also expect large amounts of military hardware aimed at you: from machine guns to cannons.
- Iran is as I am sure you are aware a hidden wonder as yet relatively undiscovered. You can always haggle the price of a room and the lack of copyright laws makes everything affordable.
- Visiting attractions is a hassle because of the highly inflated tourist prices. The use of student cards often failed since they know you'll go in anyway.
- Petrol is all 4star (or worse) and all petrol stations have the government fixed rate equivalent to about 4p a litre
- Bear in mind when shopping and haggling that Iranians often drop a zero off the price to make it sound better (i.e they say 2000rials when they mean 20000rials).
- Foreigners are allowed to wear t-shirts (i.e expose arms) and even shorts if in their own car
- Never touch a policemen hat, we accidentally knocked one once and nearly got escorted away to goodness knows what. Most Iranians have very limited English so don't bother explaining if you do something wrong. Just say sorry emphatically and make the officer feel very big and important.
- We were pulled over by the police so they could practice their English with us!
- There is no camping available in Iran and I would not recommend it. However if out of money or wanting an experience then go to a factory with 24hr security. The guards are predominately friendly and very bored. They rarely let you into their compound but will let you camp outside and so keep an eye on you. They will also often offer you their water, toilet, shower, tea and food and they rarely want money.
- Internet access in Iran is very limited and when available is very slow
- Persepolis is an absolute must. I recommend you take a torch with you as there is an immense network of tunnels under the ruins to explore. Also up the hill in the tomb, if you give the old man 100rials he'll unlock the tomb door and you can go in. Just make sure there is no one else around when you ask.
- When driving in East Iran you will seem many old fortress' and houses. Most are deserted and well worth pulling off the side of the road to explore.
- Bam is quite simply one of the hidden wonders of the world. Again take a torch and bare in mind that at present pretty much no where is off-limits so explore!
- If driving beyond Bam you will be stopped at the checkpoint outside the town. They will then give you an armed police escort at no cost. The escort soon got bored and left us with a simpleton soldier who stole a load of tapes and sweets until he too got bored. We were then left to drive to the border and within sight of the Afghan border ourself.

- Zahedan is not a nice city and Mirjave is better but at the moment the Mirjave petrol station is not open and bare in mind if it was that petrol stations near the border will only give you 20l of petrol for fear of smuggling.
- The Iran-Pakistan border only opens at 8:30am. There is a roadblock before the border itself, however if you tell the officer you are going to the border he will let you through to the front of the que and there is a BIG que (most vehicles are traveling parallel to the border predominantly for smuggling purposes and so the roadblock checks cars thoroughly). Bare in mind that the border point is within sight of the roadblock so if he lets you through easily it is because he thinks customs will search you, don't lie and go parallel to the border. There were a few police jeeps with mounted machine-guns at the checkpoint that would probably come after you if you did!
- It should be noted that the official exchange-rate and black-market exchange rate are now nearly equal and there is little point in risking black-market exchange.

Pakistan:

- Another bizarre border crossing, getting all the ticks in the right boxes. All checks seem to take the vehicle registration and your passport details, when you do this for the 4th time it just shows the bureaucratic nonsense that exists.
- When you get through the Pakistan side which is reasonably ordered but does take about 4hours, you must remember to drive on the left.
- You can buy smuggled petrol at the bizarre in Taftan at very cheap prices. The cost of petrol increases from 7rupees to 35rupees a litre along the road to Quetta. The fuel is very dirty and of low quality.
- There are several checkpoints along the way and you will need to give name and passport details (individually) at each one.
- The road to Quetta has changed from all the maps we had. So when you cross the railway and seem to be heading disturbingly near to the Afghan border fear not it does swing back south eventually.
- The LP knowledge of travel from the border to Karachi was limited but there really is nothing to add. Basically do not stop anywhere but Quetta and Karachi. Incidentally foreigners do not pay to use the motorway on the outskirts of Karachi (even though it's only 5 rupees!)
- Beware of very heavy sandstorms on the Taftan - Quetta road (it stripped paint off the side of the car!)
- It is despite all literature to the contrary possible to surrender your car to Pakistan customs. This means you can drive your car one way and leave it in Pakistan. In Karachi you need to go to the Customs house. It is best to enlist the help of a 'customs clearing agent' (he will cost about \$100 for one day). These people can be found in offices on Chungirgar road. Then you need to facilitate the surrendering of your car, (i.e make it worth his while) this will cost about £40. It is not illegal, it is just a lot of paperwork for the customs officer to do and so you are merely thanking him for his time. You should if attempting this make it clear that you do not have the funds to ship your car home (approx. £3000) otherwise he may tell you he can't be bothered. The car will then be left at a government impound, do not leave anything in the car even if you don't want it. The officer at the pound will otherwise have to make an inventory of the entire content of the car and individually value everything. I suggest you chuck everything in the car before arriving at the pound including all spares and tapes. The passport and carnet de passage will then be signed off back at the customs house.
- We flew aero-asia from Karachi to Islamabad and my seat belt didn't work so I had to tie it in a knot. Beware of internal carriers!
- When purchasing internal flights be aware that foreigners have to pay export duty on tickets even if they are not leaving the country and there is a tourist ticket price (elevated above normal price) which you have no choice but to take

North Pakistan and trekking:

- We attempted to fly from Islamabad to Skardu and the flight was not grounded due to bad weather but due to a lack of passengers. So watch out sleep and he needs to be alert when driving the chillas – skardu section!
- When hiring porters if they say they have shelter, stove, ice axe, crampons and food etc. demand to see it before you even leave Skardu. Otherwise they will not be able to go beyond Baintha (Biafo-Hispar glacier) as we found.
- As a rule of thumb on the Skardu – Askole road everytime you change jeeps for a road block it is about 1200rupees (regardless of number of people). There were when I travelled through two changes, both of which looked permanent.
- I injured my leg just above Baintha and descended alone. I would not recommend this under any circumstances. Either take a guide/porter or return accompanied by atleast one member of your group. I fell in a crevasse, which by myself was a terrifying experience and I think I was lucky to be able to escape. Villagers near Askole then tried to raid my tent during the night but thankfully with ice-axe in hand I scared them off, but what if I hadn't? What would they have taken and more importantly done with me?
- I do not recommend getting a cargo-bus alone from skardu to Islamabad. I had processions stolen and was unable to sleep for all 18 hours. You will go insane from Pakistani music as well.

General:

- It should be noted in your guidebooks now that it is possible to use your mobile phone (at reasonable rates) in most countries. Excellent reception in Europe, for turkey and Pakistan reception predominantly restricted to cities. It is not possible to use your mobile phone in Iran, it is questionable as to whether they are allowed at all.
- A lot of the maps within LP are inaccurate and hotels and banks often appear to be on the wrong side of the road. I would say that most Iranian and Pakistani maps encountered had errors to some degree in them. I apologise for not noting any such errors, but I think you should do some research into their accuracy.