

returning for the lilos and tents. This proved to be the case as George and two Sherpas turned up to collect the tents, paraffin and other gear. It is cold and windy up here. The wind buffets the tent canvas and the sleeve

entrance balloons inwards. Wish I had something to read. The boys periodically make mugs of Bournvita and pass some in to us. Small things become important.

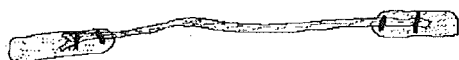


Expedition Diary 1988 - Bolivia

Harvey Lomas

Harvey was left spending the night wrapped in a tent, on his birthday, in a disused classroom in the Apolobamba. We rejoin the diary during his stay at base camp.

The ten days spent there impressed me with the long nights and intense cold. Daytime temperatures rose quickly, streams melted and came alive. The glaciated landscape was strewn with rocks and little vegetation except large clumps of hard moss grazed by herds of llamas and alpacas. The grey-green of the lakes contrasted with the light brown of the low hills.



The mess tent's central pole had failed during one of the regular afternoon gusts of wind and a makeshift paddle was borrowed from a local fisherman's boat to effect a temporary



repair. Despite this our helper, Francisco, lived in the tent and managed to cook our sardines and soupa!

On one of the days I walked round the upper lakes to the head of the valley. A small glacier straddled the col, I climbed its left side and scrambled around the moraine to look at the seracs above. Slowly I was regaining my strength and made several more short forays to other parts of the valley. Michael Smith and Dave Hick reached the summit of Cololo the day before Dave Martindale and I had to start our journey home.

Cololo scaled, Dave and I packed gear for our departure the next day. Supplies of staple foods and fuel were diminishing fast so a journey to the town of Pelechuco became a necessity. Our map did not show the route and we had to rely upon a satellite photograph that did not show much detail. Ian Crowther and John



Sterland accompanied us to Pelechuco to collect more food and return by an alternative route. Our super hi-tech rucksacks, that some designer had strived many weeks to perfect, were unceremoniously wrapped in blankets and slung across the pack animals back. One last look at the mountains, cold and wild yet wonderful and we set off on the first steps of our homeward trek. I made a point of remembering the scene.

As we turned away a strange, lovely song filled our ears. It was sung by a little girl making her way along a path. The notes filled the prevailing silence, pure and undistorted in the still air. We advanced silently in the direction of the songster. She appeared over a ledge, saw us, and immediately stopped singing. Five or six years old she had worn and dirty clothes and a crumpled hat covered her face. I advanced towards her and held out some sweets from my pocket. A quick glance, a word from one of our guides, she took them quickly, as if sensing danger, speaking no word of thanks. I managed to get a glimpse into eyes that expressed toughness tinged with hardship. Around her shoulder she carried a blanket that probably contained food for the day's wondering with the herd of llamas and alpacas. She moved past us and out of sight. The enchanting song continued again and blended with the scenery like a wind mixing with waves at sea,

For several hours the path was followed as it climbed out of the valley and then across a featureless expanse of open, barren ground. We walked on at a brisk pace and I found difficulty breathing as despite the altitude of 16,000 ft it was very hot. Eventually our way took us over the spectacularly winding Katantica pass at 17,500 ft then the road descended in a series of sharp bends then through a narrow gap opening to splendid views of the steep eastern slopes of the Andes. From this point the altiplano gave way to a gradual descent into the Amazon basin. Below the town of Pelechuco was not visible beneath the rising heat haze. I remember coming across a cool stream and bathing my feet before applying plasters to my blisters. We hobbled on through the brief twilight and into the night. We passed under a wrought iron archway that said "Welcome" in Spanish with the first letter B hung upside down, it was seven in the evening and we had arrived in Pelechuco.

We entered the quiet main square, our breath condensing in the cold air. An official beckoned us over to him with a "come and see me later" expression. We drifted across to the only Inn. The roughly painted sign above said "Pension Mexico" but implied "abandon hope all ye who enter here". It had one room and was lit by a feeble gas lamp. The walls were covered with flaking green paint and tables were scattered around the room, draped with sticky oilcloths and partly consumed meals. We were viewed with some suspicion, but the proprietress, Maria, had an aura of command about her and was businesslike. She had no available beds but quickly produced a meal from behind a curtain. Later, outside

in darkness we negotiated a room, which was situated above a garden and was reached through a labyrinth of creaking passageways and somebody's kitchen.

Next morning the light came quickly and the air was cold. The view across the roof tops showed the town nestling in a deep sided valley at the confluence of many raging rivers. A quick wash of hands and face in an icy cold stream was followed by breakfast at the Pension Mexico. Besides meals they also sold dynamite, it was stacked under a case of oranges. Afterwards we went about the town to buy camp supplies for transportation by the returning packhorses. The tiny stores in the town were well stocked but offered little variety, mainly having flour, eggs and sardines.

Later in the day we were told that a lorry departed on Saturday morning for La Paz at 02.30 hours. We rose at 01.30 hours having said our farewells to John and Ian the previous evening. In the deserted square it was totally dark and very chilly. We waited for an hour by the side of an empty lorry then, slowly, people emerged from buildings with their baggage. The driver started sounding his horn. After what seemed an age we moved off up the winding cobble street only to stop twenty minutes later by a hamlet where the process of horn, people and commotion was repeated.

Between short bouts of sleep I could see pink glaciers that changed to blue in the pre-dawn light. Aboard the swaying lorry, the ever changing engine note and my sleepy state left me in a state of suspended consciousness. All came to an abrupt

halt. An empty lorry we had been towing became wedged broadside to the road with the nose pressed firmly up against a steep embankment. There was much shouting, pulling and pushing at the lorry but little co-operation until it was bounced free and driven off down the hill and we continued on our way.

At the top of the pass, a lone woman sat waiting. We stopped and she climbed on board with her sack. Other stops were made along the route including a stop to repair the steering with a length of inner tube! The lorry became full of people who sat on bundles of wool and other objects. The close proximity of the Peruvian border ensured a lively trade in contraband goods. In the back of the lorry there was no escape from the intense sunlight, dust billowed off the road by our forward movement and engulfed us. More people joined and we became tightly packed together. I could not move my feet or legs and loss of circulation became a problem. Another stop and a bowler hat and a menacing face climbed over the side. She glanced around, looked at me, then made her way through a thicket of people and sat on my head. There was immediate darkness. I imagined remaining in such a ridiculous posture when my fellow travellers came to the rescue and insisted she move to the back of the lorry; There must be some unwritten rule on lorries that states that one's place is one's place.

From time to time, the word "gringo" was heard and followed by hoots of laughter. Some youngsters pointed at me with my wide brimmed hat, "Clint Eastwood" then "gringo" pointing at my beard. More hoots of laughter.

The Apolobama could be seen only a whitish strip now, their snow tops slowly merging into the deep blue sky. Visibility was good as there was little haze. Mid-day gave way to afternoon and the surprise sighting of a condor on the ground some 200 yards away. Later in the afternoon we reached Escoma, close to Lake Titicaca, and made a prolonged stop. The local militia refused to let us continue until some money was paid by the driver. There followed a long series of loud exchanges between driver and militia. In the meantime, the lorry was searched several times. Eventually payment was made and we continued our journey.

Night-time and keeping warm was now the priority. There were many stops and shouts of "vamoose" into the freezing air. All journeys do come to an end, ours lasted until 02.30 hours when we drove into La Paz. We had been travelling for twenty-four hours. Some passengers disembarked whilst other unrolled blankets and prepared to sleep on the lorry. With difficulty we off loaded our gear and took a taxi to a hotel where we persuaded the janitor to let us have a room.

Several days later as we sat on a beach in Rio sipping drinks, we kept asking ourselves if a woman really did sit on my head?



The Night of Hot Pies

Ali Renton

I was recently reading through old Climber and Hillwalker Magazines in the college library when I came across an article 'Classic Climbs in the Lake District' by Bill Bricket.

The route was located in Black Hole Quarry and followed the line above the large cave entrance. It was graded at EI, Se, very strenuous but well protected.

With Low Hall Garth being so close I just had to go and do it. I showed the article to a fellow student and climbing partner, Ian, and we decided on a date.

The next Monday evening saw us driving up the A6S towards the Lakes. I was really looking forward to just seeing the route. This was going to be the first slate and hardest route I had attempted.

Tuesday, we were up and ready to go, We entered the quarry and looked up at the route. Wow - it was a long way. We geared up and set off. There are two bolts on the route and then a long thin crack which was ideal for placing rocks in.

The route was very trying and sweat was pouring out of me; many times I had to reach for my chalk bag. The article said there were plenty of tree belays at the top and this was in fact the case.

On arrival at the top we congratulated each other then as the day was still young and everything else in the quarry looked more difficult we opted for Lower Scout Crag in Langdale before driving home. A memorable day