

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice Wilson

Route finding became more problematic as the daylight quickly faded and gave way to night. In the dark we bounced and rattled along a poor track heading for the school at Nubi Pampa. As we approached, the headlights picked out the white walls of the school house.

Dark shapes crept from the huts, heavily wrapped up against the bitter cold of this starlit night. Small groups of children looked on as we unloaded then the vehicle lurched back towards better tracks and La Paz. We had a meal then we settled down for a night in the classroom with its concrete floor. There was no electricity or water only a curling edged print of Simon Bolivar watching over us, occasionally joined by faces at the windows peering in.

A site for the base camp was chosen five miles up the valley past a series of lakes and the equipment transported to it. I felt weak from a stomach bug and took some time to acclimatise. We were at 15,000 ft and surrounded by 19,000 ft mountains. At dusk I returned to the school house, exhausted and dehydrated, every step had to be forced so that the school house came nearer. I opened the door to the cry from Michael Smith, Ian Crowther and John Sterland, "What are you doing here?" "Because my gear's here" I replied. "Oh no it's not" came the reply. That night, in a temperature of -10 °C, I slept on a concrete floor wrapped in a

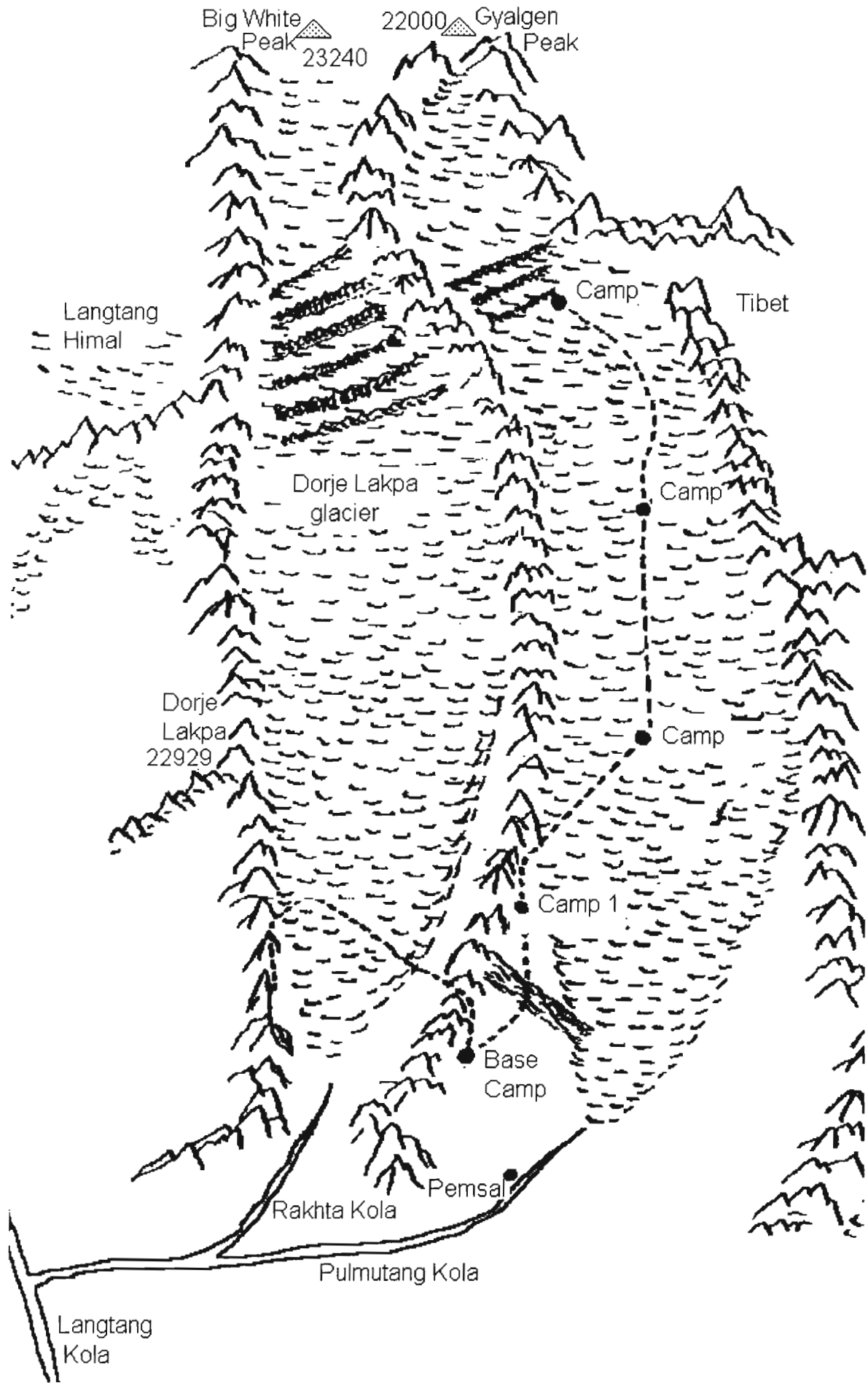
Extracts from notes made in Maurice's Himalayan Journal during the walk-in.

For the full report of the Club expedition see the 1958 Journal. The team were Crosby Fox, George Spenceley, Wilfred Anderson, Dan Jones, Arthur Tallon and Maurice Wilson.

April 13

Porters went rather better this morning. The track led through the jungle. Creepers were entwined everywhere and trunks lay in crazy fashion. Tree trunks were covered with moss and had to be walked on like 'walking the greasy pole.' Kukris were much in evidence, hacking a way. There were more flowers to be seen now and I took photos of some champions. In time, we reached the Rakhta Kola, the crossing of which was not too bad. A few poles were thrown across, though they were hardly necessary. Once over the other side the porters made it clear that they wanted to camp, and camp we did at 10,430ft. Camp fires were blazing all over the place and it was quite a job locating food boxes. Sherpas and Sherpanis were roosting everywhere. We have decided to use Ochrenis for the return journey and had a palaver with their head-man. I was given an interesting demonstration on how to make a fire using only a piece of iron, a stone and some cotton. They light their cigarettes that way. Only the men wear rings. Some wear bangles. They use a fan of leaves as a plate from which to eat.





April 14

Arrival at Base Camp, Pomba Serebu.

The porters were more anxious to get away than we were, this morning. Obviously they wanted to get to Base Camp and back to the valley the same day. After a pleasant walk through the woods we reached Pemsall (11,416ft). They are excellent pathfinders. Stopped for a brew, during which Crosby showed us his wedding pictures. Set off an hour later. At first the slope was easy but soon became quite steep. I managed to get into a rhythm, making height steadily and would probably have made the whole ascent non-stop. Alas, one man let loose a High Altitude Box N°6, which went crashing down the hillside, spilling out all its contents en route. Arthur and I stayed behind and collected what we could. The Sherpas made the man who dropped the box carry the kitchenware box, which was much heavier. The slope now became much harder. When we reached the top, Arthur, Andy and I had lunch. It was cold. Only about ten minutes further on we came upon the others. They had selected a camp site amid the snows and were levelling the site.

There followed much haggling about the pay. Initially, we offered each man R16, but eventually settled for R17 plus ten cigarettes. At first, only the Ochreni men accepted this, but when the Tempathang men saw us paying them, they soon crowded round. The finale came when we found that one man had been underpaid. We blamed Nima Lama but it wasn't really his fault. Whacking dinner and everyone cheerful.

April 15

Did not have a good night's sleep...too cold. Woke to find magnificent views and snow on the tents. This site is poor and we decide to move higher up. We are all keyed up at the prospect of moving into action. Dan and I are to reconnoitre a way to Camp One and I have to spend a good deal of time getting things together. Of course, I would have to catch a cold now and do not feel too good. Crosby and George have seen some Imperial Eagles.

April 16

Everyone up early and ready for the 'off'. Crosby and Arthur, George and Andy are to go surveying. Dan and I, with Sherpas, are to try to find a site for Camp One, on the Phurbi Chyachambu Glacier. All left camp at 6:50 a.m. on a fine morning. The leaders struck up a snow slope that proved extremely tiring. Eventually, Dan called down to say we were too high. I tried to traverse lower down but as soon as I stepped into the couloir, I was up to my thighs in snow. Crossed lower down in similar conditions. Very tiring. Still looking for the others when I heard a shout from Crosby's station waving me over to join them. Mingma came to meet me with some mint cake. Observed a curious phenomenon, plates of ice being whipped off the snow surface by eddies of wind, though it didn't seem very windy to me.



Maurice Wilson surveying above Camp Three

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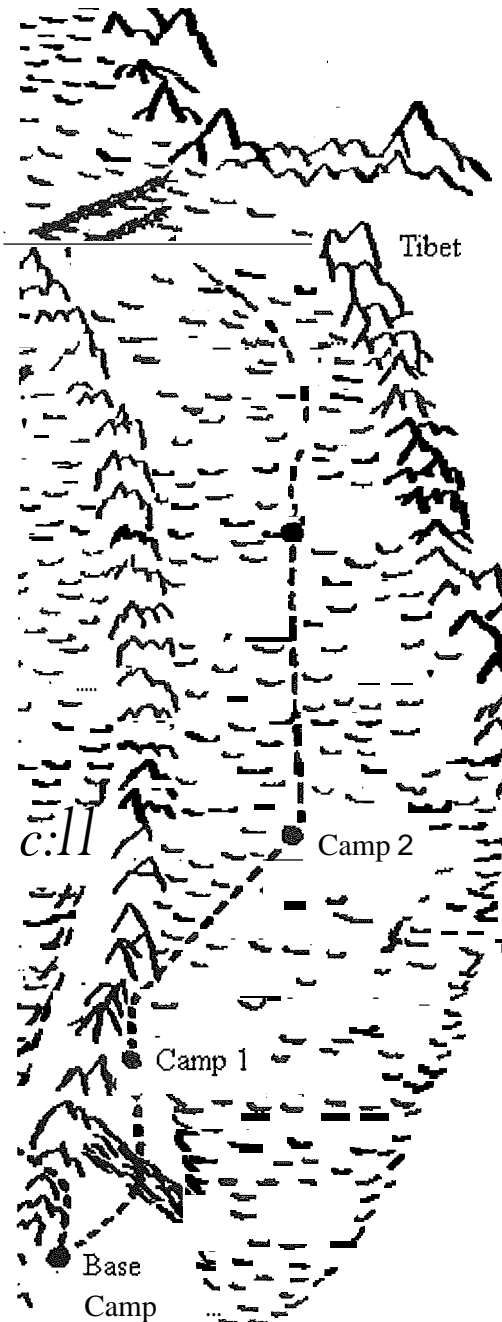
The previous extract left Maurice searching for a site for camp one.

April 17

Much better night and kept warm throughout. Up at 5.30 a.m. and the usual activity. Left camp at 7.00 a.m. probably carrying about 30 lbs. Went quite well. Crossed the Pass and eventually found the others peering into an enormous snow couloir, the first of three running parallel to each other. I was for taking a low route well below the line of fire, on the glacier. However the general feeling was to cross higher, so we ascended over rather tricky snow. High up on the flank of the gully a rope was fixed as a hand-rail. Two more gullies were crossed before we were able to descend the snow slopes to a reasonable site for camp one. We had some lunch and then set off on the return journey. Having erected the tents, Crosby and Arthur with two Sherpas stayed there the night. It was a bit of a pull coming back in the soft snow, but got back to base about 3.00 p.m. At high altitude, my cold does not bother me but I feel it immediately I get back to a lower level.

April 18

George was to have gone up to Camp One today with Dan, but was too unwell. I too stayed at Base Camp and went up to Base West with Andy to do some plotting. We found certain discrepancies in the position of Base. Andy went down to tell



A map covering a wider area was included in Issue One. See the 1957 Journal for details.

George, who later came up and confirmed the correct position. I tried to work out the height of Base from a known mountain across the valley. I have the angle of elevation, and from it deduced the height of 12,839 feet for Base West. Surely, we are living higher than that! In the evening the Sherpas taught me two of their songs, which I have tried to write down.

Potatoes from the Field

(Myla's Song)



April 19 (Good Friday)

George and Andy set out for Camp One this morning in good weather. Both seemed a good deal better. I went up to the top camp and retrieved the various oddments of food lying there, brought it down and made it up into a High Altitude box. It was a day-off for Dan and I and we spent most of it in our tents until Crosby and Arthur arrived from Camp One. They both seemed very pleased with themselves and after some soup we drew up some plans for the future. Put on a good menu for the evening meal.. pemmican, corned beef and vegetables, jelly, coffee. Unfortunately the jelly had not been allowed to set!

April 20

Up at normal time but with rather more activity. Dan and I with Pemba and Ang Temba left camp at 7.20 a.m. It was a nice morning and we took things leisurely. However I soon found the going hard, although my sack only weighed 28 lbs. Getting up to the highest point on the hump took more energy than ever and I had to stop every few minutes. I must do better than this. The weather

deteriorated, clouds came over and it got cold. Arrived at Camp One about 11.30 a.m., having taken more than four hours.

Crawled at once into tent and lay for a long time. Had lunch of pemmican and biscuits. Read a bit, dozed a bit, and then had pemmican again for dinner. Started to snow about 6.00 p.m. My watch is wrong again. Trying to read Van Loon's 'Story of Mankind', but not getting on too well with it.

April 21 (Easter Day)

We were a bit slow off the mark this morning and did not get away until 7.20a.m. I roped up in front so that I could go at my own speed. We were soon on to the rock pitch which, in spite of the fixed rope, was a bit awkward near the top when carrying a heavy load. We were then faced with the ice fall which was quite impressive. After crossing one or two snow bridges we landed out on to the broad glacier and the grind was on. I think we stopped twice before reaching Camp Two. To our surprise the tents were still standing, though sleeping bags had been taken. This perplexed us, until Ang Temba suggested that they were probably

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

an occasional track, breached in many places. After a couple of hours we reached base camp, a collection of some twenty huts in various stages of decrepitude with a few resident vulcanologists. Fortunately we didn't need to pitch tents as we were able to get into a couple of the huts, equipped with a sleeping bench. That afternoon we climbed a Suilven like peak up above camp, en-route descending into a large ice cave at the foot of a permanent snowfield. Next day the fit ones planned an ascent of the peak now clearly seen as a huge cinder cone, still active.

Although born in slag heap country and spending much of my childhood running up and down them I am not now daft enough to spend hours slogging up such peaks so decided on a more gentle walk. It soon started to rain and, as the climbers were on the final cone, to snow heavily so they had to retreat some 300 ft below the summit. Another night in our cabins then back to the fleshpots.

After a final day spend sailing around Avachinska Bay, fishing and watching White-tailed and Stellars Sea Eagles we flew back to Moscow for a days sightseeing.

I had found Kamchatka to be an unusual, fascinating area but not feeling as remote as expected. Petropavlovsk is a large town (300,000 population) with an important Vulconology Institute. It seems that staff from this Institute get around into most of the areas on a regular basis thus keeping tracks upon. I feel with a more "reliable" way of getting there (possibly via Alaska, thus avoiding Aeroflot) Kamchatka could become a very popular area for adventure tourism.

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1957 - Nepal

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April 22 (Easter Monday)

We had a fair amount of snow during the night. It was cold but, eventually, I realised that it was striking at my buttocks through the Lilo. By simply dragging the Duvet suit further beneath me, the trouble stopped.

Breakfast was served through the tent flaps fairly punctually and I quite enjoyed the porridge. I much prefer our breakfast to the scant dinner of pemmican and ryvita.

I emerged from the tent to find a beautiful morning and an enchanting view. Our small camp was by majestic peaks. The one to the North West, especially, captures my imagination. I feel I would like to climb it. The so-called 'Ladies Peak', fills the background, finely. I took several pictures, thought I suspect my shutter has frozen.

We collapsed the tents and weighted them down with stones. Then we roped up and fairly romped down the glacier. I left lilo, duvet and one sleeping bag behind, to save weight. The lower icefall looked grand at close quarters and, soon after reaching Camp One, the 'Ferry Party' joined us. On the way to Base, Dan took some movie pictures in colour, for which I 'played' various parts.

Had chicken and dehydrated raspberries for dinner.

April 23.

We all had a lie-in this morning. Had a discussion on equipment to be returned home and what could be left. Had a pleasant session with the Sherpas regarding their songs. They gave me

the words of one, but it is difficult to write down the tunes satisfactorily. They spent most of the morning playing a game with dice, called Swazo. Arthur and I had a game of Patience and then sorted out a few extra rations for the High Altitude boxes, mainly meat bars, sardines, and soup. these were then placed into three polythene bags, one for each Camp. I started on a book called, 'Communism and Christianity', rather heavy going.

This evening was quite good fun. I went down to the kitchen and got the Sherpas singing. They would sing a song and then I sang the English equivalent song. Eventually, Crosby, Arthur and George, attracted by the din, joined us and we continued for some time. We finished off our part of the show with a rendering of 'Ilkla Moor', and an improvised 'Sunhoss Sherpa'. (Sunhoss is my own pronunciation of the Sherpa work for 'Goodnight', and seems to cause them much amusement).

The smoke from the wood fire in the kitchen was painful to my eyes and I had to get a pair of goggles, though they didn't make a great deal of difference.

April 24.

This morning we all set out for Camp One with varying loads, leaving at 6.40 a.m. and arriving about 8.50 a.m. I went rather better, though I only carried 20 lbs. Still, this is easily my best time for the trip. A good deal of snow has gone from the lower slopes and the higher track is well beaten down. Arthur and Dan stayed behind. I took my time coming back with George, who was unwell.

Had salmon for lunch. The usual clouds came down rather early today, about 10.30 a.m. and the afternoon brought a fairly long shower of snow. We spent the evening, as usual, just talking in the tent.

Marari.

This young student is our Liaison Officer. Probably about 20 years old, he is very intelligent and well-read. His is absolutely invaluable to us as an interpreter, both with the coolies from Tempathang and the Sherpas. He usually feeds with us but, as often as not, prefers the company in the kitchen. He came out with us once, on our first recce. of the route to Camp One.

The 1958 Journal

the full expedition report.

Song for the Beloved

Translated by I. C. Ravalde

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: 'Chung di la mi gab la la. Tu le ea di do go go'. The second staff contains the melody for the second line of lyrics: 'Da la mi gab la la Ni ma lo le ring chung chung'. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Chung di la mi gab la la. Tu le ea di do go go

Da la mi gab la la Ni ma lo le ring chung chung

David's front tooth now throbbing, painful with every pounding step of the descent and the area is swelling rapidly. We had to transport back to LaPaz.

Our courtyard accommodation has a disused dental chair but despite urgent enquiries we fail to rustle up a matching dentist, only the owner of the chair.

The remaining four members of the team return from Peru, tired from the travel and recovering from stomach problems.

David has to put up with pain-killers and anti-biotics. The whole side of his face is swollen and he must be having a wretched time. We are due to leave La Paz on Monday, it now being Saturday evening.

31 July 1988

With the help of a hotel receptionist we manage to locate the daughter of a dentist who assures us that her father will meet us at his surgery in the afternoon. We find the place, it is the half deserted old Hotel La Paz, while the rest of the team see to final provisioning we go in by the personnel door of the shuttered entrance. We communicate in Spanish with the dentist assisted by his delectable daughter's English when she is around. He proudly illustrates his diagnosis and proposed laser-aided treatment with the use of gruesome plates from weighty texts. Ninety minutes, \$200 and 24 Bolivianos later David is now much happier, has a detachable tooth and gradually lessening swelling.

On the eve of our departure to the Apolobamba we manage a heartier meal at Ell's cafe though Harvey is far from being on top form.



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April 25

Events are now becoming rather dull. We did the usual ferry trip from Base to Camp 1, today. I had about 25 lbs up and found the going a good deal harder. The snow still covered all the hillside and this slowed us up a bit. Crosby and George stayed at Camp 1, which leaves Andy and me at Base Camp. Spent the afternoon sorting out my kit for the coming week. The overboots are too difficult to get off, so I am trying another pair.

Heavy snow after 4.00pm and into the evening has covered the ground to a depth of 2 inches. Tonight, I am alone in the large tent.

April 26. Camp 1

A further three inches of snow fell during the night and everywhere was as white as a blanket, this morning. Did not hurry getting up as we had to do the journey only one way, today. Andy is busy photographing.

I left about 8.00 a.m. Felt much more tired today and went slowly. Waited for Pasang to come back to the couloir after he had dropped off his load, so as to see him across safely. Returned to Camp 1 after mid-day. Opened a High Altitude box ready for tomorrow's splitting of loads and then crawled into the tent. Rested a long time, but by 4.20 p.m. feel more lively. Camp 1 is an eerie place. It is pitched on the very edge of an ice-fall, with its attendant seracs on the one side and precipitous cliffs belching stones on the other. Indeed, stone falls, crumbling seracs and avalanches provide a constant source of music here.

High Altitude Diet

Breakfast Porridge, Ryvita, Butter,
Jam, Tea.

Lunch Bournvita, Ryvita, Butter,
Cheese.

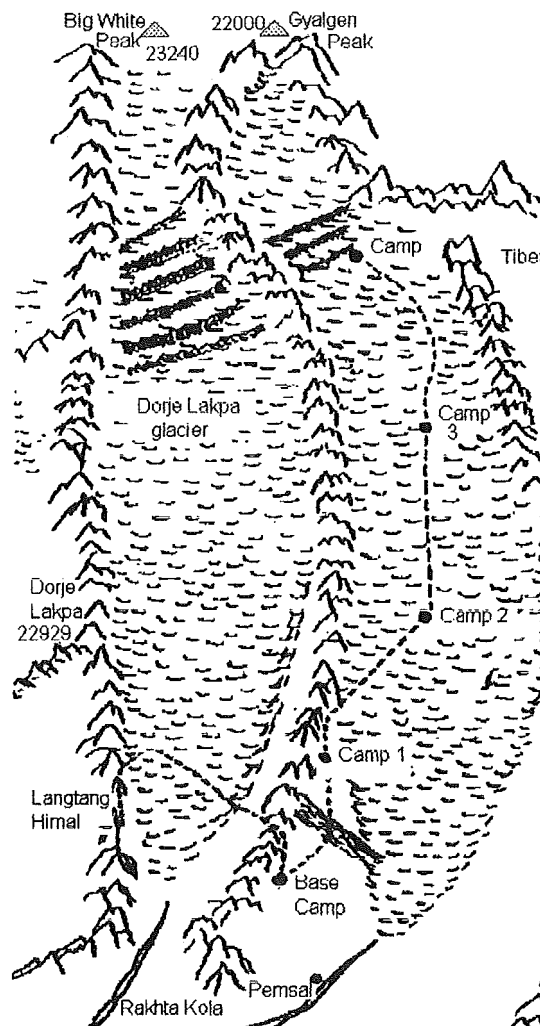
Dinner Pemmican, Ryvita, Butter,
Jam, Shortbread, Bournvita.

The pemmican, without vegetables, is most unpalatable. I think of Scott and his men, in the Antarctic, who, poor devils, seemed to subsist on little else.

April 27. Camp I

We got off to a good start at 6.15 a.m. and, after returning for my snow goggles, soon got up the rock pitch which was sheeted in a film of snow. On top we roped up and I took the lead, plodding along at my own pace up the glacier. It is quite a long way, even to Camp 2, but the ice is set at an easy angle and we made it with only one stop.

We found the tents still erected and a note from Crosby to say that he and George were returning for another load. So we thought we would strike camp for them. This we did, though the canvas was firmly frozen into the ground in places. Stones which had been placed on the sides to counter the wind were, also, difficult to dislodge. Finally, we got packed up and decided to take what we could up to Camp 3 and hand over to the others as they came down. In due course, we met George coming down with 'Myla' and Mingma. After a consultation, he decided to continue down for what little distance was left. Andy and I then trudged on up to Camp 3, Andy taking the lead. For this, I must confess, I was thankful as the snow was becoming soft. (Rather surprising, as in the Alps the higher you get the harder the snow.) It was tiring towards the end, but we



reached Camp 3 at 11.00 a.m. and delivered the goods. Crosby was rather surprised, but pleased, to see us. The wind got up while we were there, so we soon set off down. Fixed a 'marker flag' at the survey point. Wind intensely cold and I was thankful for my anorak. Retrieved sweater at Camp 2 and reached Camp 1 in the early afternoon. Some of the crevasses opening above the ice-fall. Soup.

Pasang

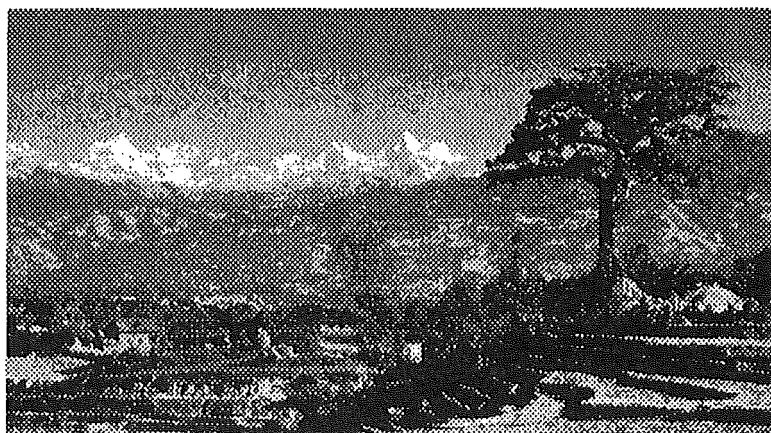
One of the better known characters about camp is Pasang, nicknamed 'Solid'. He was recommended to us in Khatmandu by Ron Barclay. Quite early it was obvious that he was a very strong lad. He carried the

kitchen equipment (heaviest load) all the way up to Base and has stayed on. To look at he is, as one member put it ... 'ugly'. Yet, he is always ready, willing and likeable. He married his brother's widow. (If a married Sherpa dies the obligations and rights

of marriage do not come to an end, but pass to the deceased's younger brother **if** he is willing to take her on and she to accept.)

Pasang's main claim to fame, however, is that he has seen a Yeti. He says he saw it at close quarters.

He describes it as being like a man but hairy, sometimes on all fours, sometimes on two legs. It has a voice like a man. He did not see it near Thyangboche. Four of the other Sherpas have seen footprints, but they say that there are not many Yeti to be seen, now.



The True Top of Tyke-land

Bill Todd

When I was a youth I bought maps. They showed me where the high places were and how to get to them on my bike. So long before 1974 I knew that Mickle Fell was the highest mountain in Yorkshire at 2585'. I never got round to climbing it until this year. It's miles from anywhere, there is no light of access, and most important of all, it is an artillery range. But some of my mid-week companions had done it in 1991 so I decided to organise a repeat performance. I found out that the army would not be firing on the 27 June 1994, so six of us met at Hilton village that morning. Four had been on the previous ascent so I wasn't unduly worried that the cloud was down to c. 1500'. We walked up Hilton Beck, noting rock-climbing potential on Mell Fell and at the Pennine watershed turned south east by compass. As we lunched at around

2000' the cloud lifted and we got a view of our objective slightly north of east. It was a good job we had resisted the temptation to go too far south up Little Fell. In improving weather we hit the slope of Mickle Fell and found some rock to scramble on the way up. The summit plateau lies SW-NE and the highest point was at the north east end. The magnificent views included Cow Green and Cauldron Snout.

To make it a bit of a round we decided to come back over Little Fell at 2454' and it was half-way up here that Clive realised that in 1991 they had gone up the wrong mountain. The mist had been so thick that they had thought they were on Mickle Fell. Perhaps it had been a mistake to revisit. The slope of Burton Fell took us back to Hilton Beck to round off a good day.

Information:

Range Officer Brough 41661

Map O.S Landranger 1:50k Sheet 91

Distance walked 13 miles

Height gain 1919' 585 m.

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April 28, Camp 1. We started rather later than usual this morning, as we had to move two boxes of food up to Camp 2. Indeed, the sun was already on the upper glacier before we reached it. We are becoming more adept at scrambling up the short rock pitch flanking the icefall. On the glacier, the snow was softening and I found the going rather slow, and we took at least half an hour longer than usual. Andy was willing to go on to Camp 3, but I didn't feel up to it. In fact, as we started to descend the glacier I realised I was not well and was very pleased to reach Camp 1. I think it was the porridge we had this morning which didn't go down too well.

In the afternoon, it became very dark and soon thunder and lightning were let loose. I was afraid it might loosen some of the rock above us but, fortunately, the storm only lasted half an hour. I don't like this camp site. Quite close, seracs are collapsing in the icefall, and crevasses opening up. Behind us, towers a cliff with stones and small boulders hurtling down from time to time. Andy has just looked in to say that the nearest stone stopped only 20 feet away.

April 29, Camps 1-3. For the first time, the early morning weather looked unpromising and the sky was overcast, the sun having a job to shine through. Nevertheless, we set out from Camp 1 at about 6.45am and, after the usual trudge reached Camp 2 in 2 hours. We had a rest here and then continued up to Camp 3. Again the snow was soft and the going tiring. We met Arthur and Dan on their way down.

We finally reached Camp 3 about 10.30 am in poor visibility and a very cold wind. Turned in and had some soup. My feet are very cold and I can't get them warm, as the lilo is saturated and the sleeping bag not much better. Snow drives in

through the sleeve whenever the entrance is opened. Andy placed some overboots under my feet by way of insulation and this has made a lot of difference.

April 30, Camp 3. This terrible day started with difficulties with the primus stove. As a result, we had little breakfast. Still, it was a beautiful morning and, in view of the behaviour of the stove, Andy and I decided that it would not be fair to ask Crosby and George to say here at Camp 3, as arranged, by way of support to us at Camp 4. Accordingly, we set off for Camp 4 with a box and a bag of food, expecting to meet them.

It was an interesting route through the icefall, finishing high on its right flank under some cliffs. There followed a most tedious traverse in soft snow, to Camp 4. We could see Crosby's party on the glacier way beyond, but they had not left us any note. I suppose they wanted to take advantage of the sudden change of weather. We left them a note and then set off back.

To our surprise, when we reached Camp 3 the stove burst into life, so we had a brew. However, we hadn't been there much more than an hour when George turned up with his dreadful story.

He, Crosby, Mingma and Myla had been passing beneath a hanging glacier when the snout of it broke loose. In seconds they were all hurled into a crevasse. Somehow or other, George managed to climb out. He scraped and dug for a long time but was unable to extricate the rope to Crosby or reach anyone else. We fear all are lost.

As soon as we could, Pemba and I set off down to Camp 1 where we found the others. Dan and Ang Temba set off, at once, to Base Camp for entrenching tools. I shared a tent with Arthur.

It was a melancholy gathering. We all felt so completely helpless and yet, praying for a miracle. The Sherpas chanted some mournful tune all night and I got no sleep.

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May 1. Camp 3.

Called for breakfast at 4.30 a.m. They all seemed to be awake. Dan and Temba arrived with the entrenching tools about 5.30 a.m. and Arthur set off with them soon after. Dan set off next, after which Pemba and I dismantled a tent. We both set off with quite a load and went quite well to begin with. Then the sun got up and the going from Camp 2 to Camp 3 was purgatory. I couldn't go more than a few paces at a time.

In due course we reached Camp 3 and laboriously erected the tent. Pemba is a real gem and nothing is too hard for him. He even went down for another food box later. I merely escorted him through the crevassed area. Not long after, George, Andy and Lakpa turned up. They had no hope to offer. All they had encountered was hard ice and not reached anyone. We had a long talk in the tent regarding procedure. George says he must go to Kathmandu to dispatch the necessary telegrams etc. He is bearing up very well.

May 2. Camp 3.

I took a sleeping pill last night and, although cold, slept like a log. Andy looked in before going down to Camp 1 for the reserve surveying equipment, and I went to sleep again. George woke me by calling me to come into his tent. This I did. We talked of memorials and various other matters. We feel that the best monument we could offer to Crosby is to complete the map which he had commenced to make. This we will try to do, though no further risks must be taken. It was arranged that Arthur and I should stay here a day or two to complete that job and then we should move to another area, probably, the Langtang.

It had been arranged that certain signals would be given by Arthur and Dan from Camp 4, at 11.00 a.m., regarding the day's work there. In fact, around 10.30 a.m. they were all seen to be coming along the track in this direction. They were obviously heavily loaded and had abandoned camp. This they confirmed on arrival. They had dug for a long time but could make little impact on the ice entombing the bodies. Moreover, their own position was extremely dangerous, as there was a loose ice block poised directly above them. (They were working 20 feet down, in the crevasse.) There is no doubt that they could do no more, nor risk any further loss of life. The Sherpas, too were agreed on that. Andy and his sherpa turned up quite latish. They had magnificently gone right down to Base Camp to get the surveying equipment.

May 3. Camp 3.

Arthur and I got off in good time this morning and followed the route to Camp 4 up to a point just below the start of the traverse. Here we set up the tripod and plane table. I took a number of rays on the prominent points around and also elevations. Arthur made a pan. sketch and we also took some panoramic photos. It was all most interesting but, as early as 9.30 a.m., the clouds started to advance up the valley. We packed up and came down in order to do some work at Crosby's old station near Camp 3, and marked by a red flag. From here we could just distinguish the flags we, ourselves, had embedded in the snow at our previous station. It was boiling hot and I find such heat unbearable as it saps my energy. Yet, an hour later, I needed my sweater on and by the afternoon it was hailing. Andy and the sherpas took some loads down to Camp 2 and then returned for their own gear.

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Maurice Wilson

May 4, Camp 3 to Base Camp.

Once more there had been lots of snow overnight, and the tents took a lot of digging out. We had our porridge raw but the scene outside was beautiful. It is hard to realise that our three friends lie entombed in the glacier above.

Arthur and I left to do some surveying at Camp 2 loaded with all our usual gear. We got several rays and elevations at this station which were helpful. Avalanches continue to fall all round with great frequency. I have never heard so many in one area. As cloud enveloped us we moved down to Camp 1.

We found it very difficult to find the route through the icefall in the mist, combined with a perfect crescendo of stonefalls from the cliffs on our right. Certainly, the icefall had altered a good deal and needed every care. Dan and Ang Temba met us at Camp 1 and escorted us back to Base. The route across had altered considerably. The stone couloir was a perfect menace and more grass was now exposed on the slopes. It started to rain just before we got in and I got rather wet. The rain has continued for several hours and life about camp is muddy and unpleasant.

May 5, Base Camp.

There was a little inclination to turn out this morning. Nine days away from Base Camp makes one appreciate its relative comforts. George was making his final preparations to leave for Kathmandu. We all took a number of photographs and George, Murari and Pasang got away in due course. We then set about making the camp more ship-shape.

The tent in which I was sleeping was moved to the position formerly occupied by Arthur's 'Pal-e-Mine'. I shall occupy it tonight, alone. A tent

flysheet was then erected in the vacant space to serve as a dining-room. Personal boxes and food boxes make excellent tables and seats. As usual it started to rain in the afternoon, turning to hail and then back again to rain. The weather really is appalling after each mid-day.

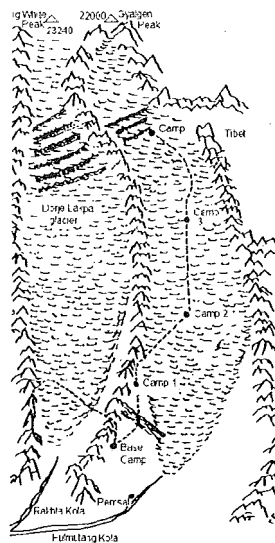
May 6, Base Camp

We were all up at 5.00 a.m. and I was pleased when Andy informed me that he and I were to reconnoitre the way down to the Dorje Lakpa glacier. Arthur and Dan, with sherpas, are going down to Camp 2 to retrieve equipment. I had no desire to go, again, to that glacier. The others left just before we did.

We left at 6.00 a.m. and got up the steep slopes above the camp and reached the pass in 2½ hours. From there we went down the snow slopes on the other side, looking for a suitable way down. Clouds interfered with our total view of the Dorje Lakpa ridge. On our return, we glissaded down the snow slopes on this side and inspected the ruined shacks in the corrie above Base Camp. At the former Scottish Ladies camp, I found an old basketball boot. Nima and his brother awaited our arrival.

They brought bad news. They gave us a note from Arthur to the effect that Dan had broken his arm and Lakpa Tsering had broken his leg while on the traverse.

All were at Camp 1, so, Andy went across with morphia and other medical supplies. I remained at Base Camp with Nima Lama and his brother. (Exchanged Ryvita tin for flint etc and some food for potatoes.) Soon after, we had a terrific thunderstorm with lots of snow. I was amazed to see how these two padded about the snow in bare feet. Eventually, they installed themselves, complete with a fire, behind a boulder. I hardly expected Andy's party to return from Camp 1, but they did turn up just as the storm drew to its close.



like tor, where a scramble described as grade 3 brought me on top, and then hastily down again into a sunny oasis of calm in the lee of the rock. In front of me in the racing clouds the weirdest landscape imaginable materialised to the east and south - ghostly castles and crouching monsters that could creep to a new place if you turned your back on them. I began almost to wish for some company - to share the experience, and maybe to be quite sure that this was real and not the setting for another Great Grey Man to appear, as experienced by Norman Collie.

Back at the saddle I was badly chilled but the climb up towards the North Top of Beinn a Bhuid warmed me up and I could take time to enjoy the beautiful flora - the tiny alpines and vivid green mosses in an area of drainage. The blink of the huge cliffs of Coire nan Clach came up on my left - how lethal they could be in a white-out - and then the four-foot cairn on a bit of table-flat plateau nearby. There was room only for one to escape the gale and no incentive to linger. Even while I ate some chocolate the mist closed in and the compass was needed to return to the cliff edge for progress south. An hour later I passed the South Top and losing a few hundred feet at last found a sheltered grassy hollow below the cloud where I could get my breath back. Ahead were miles of moorland to cover to rejoin the outward path but I had lots of time in hand and could treasure the moment. It has been an exhilarating day made perhaps a little special by the fact that I had not seen a soul.

Summary: the traverse of Ben Avon and Beinn a Bhuid from Invercauld Bridge. Approx. 23 miles. 1100 metres ascent. Time take, 11 hours.

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice Wilson

May 7, Base Camp

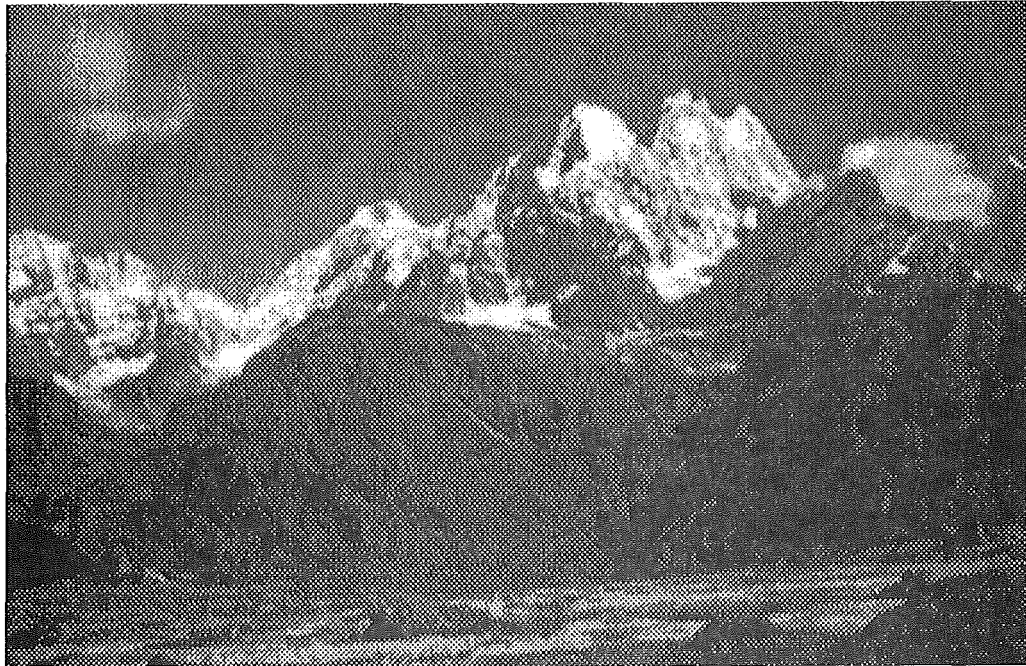
Pemba and I set out for Base Camp with all the odds and ends, for which Dan had asked. The hillside was covered with snow but I went rather better than usual. Pemba soon caught me up, so we crossed the couloir together and he showed me exactly where, on the other side, members of the other party had slipped. (Someone had stumbled into Lakpa and Dan, turning to see what was happening, also went off down the hillside,).

At Camp 1, I found Dan very cheerful after a good night, but Lakpa looked in a pitiable condition. Not only has he broken a leg but also has head injuries. Stayed about 1½ hours chatting and making plans for getting them back to Base. Pemba stayed and Ang Temba came back with me. We at once ran into a hailstorm and, in the middle of the couloir, we crossed a 'river' of hail a yard wide.

At Base, Andy and I had a long session with Nima Lama, negotiating with him how best to get the injured men back to Katlunandu. It was no easy matter. A cold and bleak afternoon with continuous snow and large hailstones, followed. This traverse from Camp 1 is quite dicey across soft snow and steep wet grass slopes. The sooner we are done with this route, the better.

May 8, Base Camp

Andy went off to Camp 1 this morning, so I have been left on my own. Stayed in the bag longer than usual. Eventually, got up and set out various things to dry; did a little packing for the journey and cut



The Dorje Group from Five Cwms photographed on the 1995 expedition

steps in the mud slope up to the kitchen. Nima Lama set off back to Tempathang. I went a little way down the hillside to prospect a route to the glacier. It is obviously dangerous between the moraines. Snowfall commenced, punctually, at 12.04 pm and continued all afternoon. Arthur turned up later than I expected. They had been putting fresh splints on to Lakpa and generally preparing him for tomorrow's journey. Pemba was with him and both he and Ang Temba seemed in good form. They do not want to carry Lakpa down the glacier to Pensall, as I'd suggested, on account of the danger from stonefalls. They would prefer to carry him pick-a-back.

May 9, Base Camp to Camp J

The alarm didn't go off, (so Arthur says) and the very early start did not materialise. We set off as we each got ready, myself, Arthur, Ang Temba, Pemba and Tensing Lama. The others all overtook me before I reached the col. It was a beautiful morning with the sun rising over Phurbi Chyachu as I rounded the shoulder and reached the stone couloir as the others

approached the camp. Tensing Lama had been left behind at that point. As I reached Camp 1, Lakpa was just being strapped on to a pack frame and Pemba then set off carrying Lakpa on his back. They had gone barely fifty yards when they stopped and turned back. Lakpa's injured leg was catching on the slope. They then strapped him sideways on the frame so that his leg lay 'with the slope'. This was, obviously, much better. Things then went well and in about an hour they were over the shoulder and into the stone couloir. I could hear loud shouts of jubilation when they reached the Chorten, the highest point.

Meantime, I had been active with Dan. Getting a man with one useless arm, out of a sleeping bag in a mountain tent is not easy. He had his own routine, however, and at length the job was done. After a rest, he had a walk for a few yards up the slope and then returned to the tent. Getting him back in again took longer. Had a job getting the primus stove to work and nearly set the tent on fire in the process. Dan is proving to be a good patient.

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice F. Wilson

May 10. Camp 1 to Base Camp.

Dan woke up feeling much better and the stove worked without any trouble. As soon as I sighted the other patty at the chortan, Dan started to get ready for the journey. He was much more active today and was out of the tent in five minutes. I started to pack up when the transport patty arrived. Dan was a bit unsteady to begin with but soon improved. We had him roped between Andy and Arthur.

All went well until we reached the main stone couloir. He was got over to the fixed rope but, just as he was starting the traverse, some stones started to fall. I shouted, Dan ducked, and lost his footing while doing so. Ang Temba and Arthur laboriously

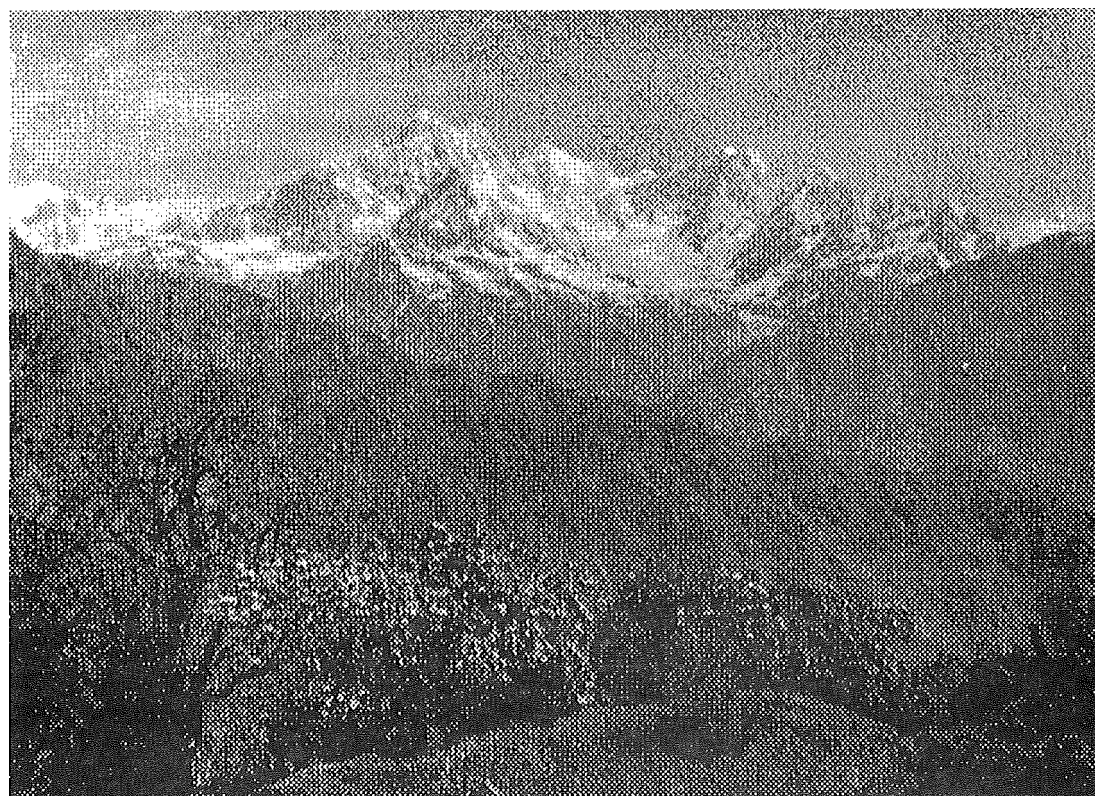
helped him to his feet and the traverse was completed.

My own traverse was quite exciting. I was just below the very large boulder ... a recognised danger spot ... when the others started shouting a warning, I looked up to see several large stones coming over the top of the boulder. I ducked and weaved and managed to avoid them. My only injury was a scrape on the back of my left hand and my beloved Kangol beret had been whipped off my head into the gully. The remainder of the sherpas got across without any trouble.

The rest of the journey was slow but uneventful. I must say it is a relief to get back to Base Camp with all safe and well. Gave Ang Temba some 'fielding practice' with cheese tins. They can't catch!

May 11, Base Camp.

Spent the morning packing up. Pemba



The Jugal Rimal with the expedition objective, Big White Peak, in the centre

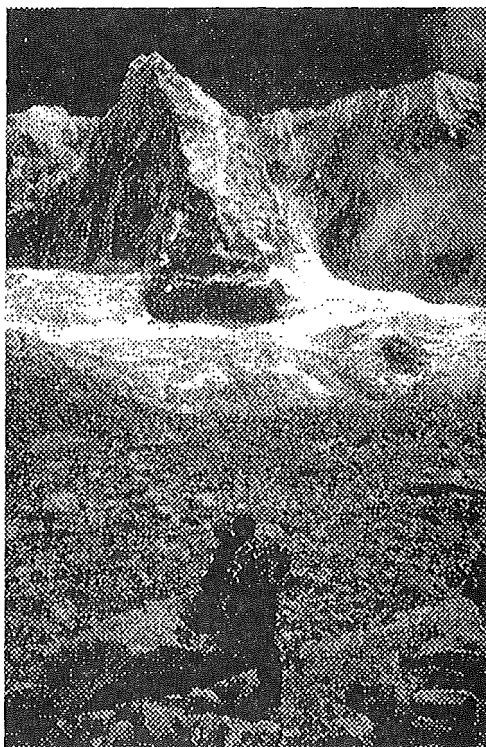
Photo Arthur Tallon

helped me to pack into a box those things not needed for the journey and into a kit-bag those things I will need. It was quite amusing the way things tumbled out of the large kit-bag ... especially tobacco, which I have seldom had the chance to smoke. Organised the food required and think we shall need eight loads, plus four men to act as stretcher bearers. This should be about right. Repacked Dan's medical box. The Tempathang men, who arrived yesterday, strengthened the stretcher on which we are to carry Lakpa. Last day at Base Camp spent with mixed feelings. It has been 'home' for a while and there is a long journey ahead.

May 12. Departure from Base Camp.
Awoke to find the camp covered with snow. Started to get things together for our departure but, during breakfast, it started to snow again, with intensity. Preparing two injured men for transport ... one with a broken leg ... under these conditions, was most trying. Even more trying was Nima Lama, who kept up a running banter indefinitely, thereby handicapping our progress. What he was saying I never discovered, but he seemed to be picking a quarrel with Ang Temba. His brother Tensing Lama is much better. Eventually, the patients were prepared and we got away about 9.30 am.

It was still snowing lightly but much brighter. Andy and Arthur accompanied the party as far as the Elephant Rock. We then embarked on the long descent down to Pemsall. Lakpa, who started off strapped to the stretcher, was transferred to a carrier on the back of one of the sherpas. It was a steep slope, so I held Dan on the end of a rope.

It was a long, slow descent, but the weather improved and we reached Pemsall in 3½ hours. After a rest and some biscuits we continued into the woods. These were delightful, but by now Dan was getting very tired. I must say the Tempathang men were most helpful. Lakpa, now back on the stretcher looked like a king, riding on high and smoking a cigarette. The Tempathang men use bamboo stalks as cigarette holders. Finally, we reached and camped for the night in a big cave at Tongshung. We did not use the tents, just lay on a lilo in front of a big log fire. We had a fine view, a burnt tree framed the entrance to the cave, we sang songs and it was a lovely atmosphere. The potters drank out of their hats, and cooked and moulded tzampa into a ditty, stodgy looking paste. by now, Nima has become very subdued. I saw Ang Temba pouting generous helpings of tzampa to a boy who had brought none with him.

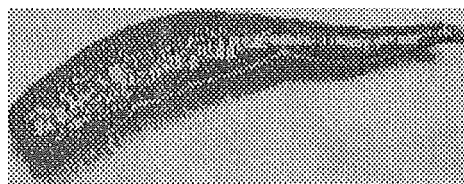


Dorje Lakpa III Photo from the 1995 expedition

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice Wilson



May 13

Awoke to find the cave abuzz of activity with axes chopping away at wood for the fires. The ceiling was still festooned with Ryvita papers and soup packets. The burnt tree in the entrance was silhouetted against sunrise in place of sunset. It was grand not having to crawl about in a cramped tent.

Dan showed me how to inject a dose of morphine into Lakpa, which I did after the syringe had been boiled and the solution prepared. It hurt him a bit, I'm afraid. Reached the Rakhti Kola in $\frac{3}{4}$ hour. Took some cine shots of the casualties crossing the bridge but the light was not' good. The jungle is now thick and passage through it difficult, especially under or over fallen tree trunks. The Sherpas are very good with Dan and help him considerably.

I tried to make a flute out of a bamboo shoot, but without much success. It is amazing the speed with which the coolies transport Lakpa over this terrain. Reached a small holding at lunchtime, where we saw our first yak. Was offered and ate some cheese. Dan is slowing up a good deal now and it is obvious we will not reach Tempathang, today. Camped at the junction of Langtang Kola and Pulmutang Kola. I soon graduated to being assistant doctor. Several had cuts on the soles of their feet and scraped shins. Remedy for all ... elastoplast! Treated one man for

dysentery. Saw some leeches today ... and one got on my boots.

May 14.

A lazy start this morning. Took some cine pictures of Lakpa being tied on to the stretcher and then moving off.

The rest of us soon halted at a mountain stream and had one of our rate washes. There is a constant buzz of insects in the woods and bat-like insects flitting around; lots of life but mainly, unseen.

The path is now much easier and small bamboo huts have sprung up in our absence. We all stopped at one of these for some time, and I took pictures of the family. Ultimately, reached the cornfields where the men and women were all at work. I was intrigued by the primitive method of reaping. The corn is plucked by grasping the stalks between two short sticks of bamboo and pulling upwards, so removing the head of corn.

Reached Tempathang in the early afternoon and went straight to Tensings Mama's home. Camp not pitched on the former site, as I would have liked, but on an old corn field in the village. Pestered with villagers the whole time and by dogs after dark. Quite a large attendance at the surgery. Wrote to George and re-organised the food boxes.

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice F. Wilson

May 15 Tenpathang

All was bedlam this morning. When I emerged from the tent, I found that all the village had turned out to witness our goings-on but, in fact, only half the porters arrived. Such are the attractions of family life! Moreover, people kept turning up in ones and twos for medical attention. There was the usual chatter, which I could not decipher. In fact, only by moving from box to box and almost hoisting it on to a man's back, could I get them moving. It was 9.30 am before I left the site and, lo and behold, down by the river there was another blarney going on. It appeared that one man was needed to carry the stretcher-bearers' food. This seemed reasonable enough, so we finished up with fifteen porters, altogether.

Getting Lakpa across these surging rivers is always a great attraction. We left the liver about ten am and were soon committed to very steep and thickly wooded slopes. I seemed to lose sight of the rest and felt quite cut off. I could hear no sound of the others. So, I kept strictly to the ridge and, after two hours, came out on to a little plot of land. I was pleased to see, just a short way ahead, Pemba chatting to a group of 'residents'. I was only the third man to have arrived, The others did not appear for nearly an hour but, meantime I had received a delicious bowl of milk. We camped amid lots of cow muck and there was no water nearby. After dinner, helped to fashion splints for Lakpa's leg and dressed it with fresh bandages.

May 16

Dan was very restless last night and so, I too, had a disturbed night. There were the usual injections to be given, so it was 7.45 am before we got away. Steep slopes through the woods led to an easy traverse interspersed with an excellent staircase of rock. Then, it was back again to the woods and steep paths. The stretcher bearers were slow today but, then, it was a bit of a bind. Now, we were getting excellent views of Dorje Lakpa and Yam-bi-cho, (The Great White Peak.)'

We seemed to take a long time to reach water but, eventually, came out on to a beautiful plateau surrounded by Rhododendron bushes. It was a perfect camp site and, at a slightly higher level, is a small lake. We put up our tents here and revelled in the position. In addition to the usual cigarettes ration I gave each of the porters a flake of pipe tobacco and a piece of toilet paper (with this they rolled their cigarettes). One of the boys tidied up the outside of our tent and festooned it with Rhododendrons. A storm is in progress over the Jugal Himal and we are on the fringe of it. The evening is improving but by no means settled. I sat out until it became too cold. The porters made their home in some disused huts about two hundred yards away. It is very lovely here and I shall be sorry to leave this place.

¹ I had an earnest conversation here, with a group of locals and porters. They called it 'Yam-bi-cho' (phonetically). I think it was the Scottish Ladies' Expedition of 1955 who gave it the English name.

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice F. Wilson

May 17. As usual it turned out fine **this** morning and we got under way at 7.30 a.m We soon entered the woods and followed a gentle traverse **with** fine views, through the trees, of the Jugal Himal and Langtang Himal The track then swung left over a pass and we traversed left, along the opposite side of the next **hill**. Some of this track was quite steep and involved the stretcher-bearers in difficult work The views throughout were magnificent, though not always photogenic.

Along **this** second traverse we met some Ochreni men who surprised us with the information that George and Mnrari were coming along the same route towards us. We **set** off shouting for them but got no reply. At last, in a clearing, we did meet them and told them our own sad story. George was obviously very taken aback and we had a long talk about financial matters etc. until it grew cold and we continued on our separate ways. We were given our mail and the news that Mr & Mrs Boyd-Tollington had left the Embassy in Kathmandu,

Not long after **this**, the sherpas stopped at a snow patch and we had lunch, during which they produced a dead steinbock! I suppose they thought we might carve it up for lunch. In about another hour and very high up, we reached a chorten, beyond which we pitched camp. I took some 'commercial' photos of medical stores and helped to mend Lakpa's lilo, which had been punctured by **his** splint. It's been even more cold tonight than last night.

May 18. It's been an excellent day. We were **just** about ready to start from our windy camp when the group of Ochreni porters (which George had ordered) turned up. There ensued the usual blarney

while I tried to explain to them that only nineteen men were required and it was necessary that four should turn back This they did in the end.... but **with** great reluctance. The hill ahead, to be traversed, did not seem far away but took us nearly 2½ hours to reach. The stretcher-bearers were going quite well and, finally, reached some prominent chortens at the end of the ridge. I expected that we would then drop quickly down to Ochreni but, in fact, there followed a long traverse through woods followed by a sharp descent through narrow defiles The sherpas' handling of the stretcher was terrific and their 'buffoon', in the front shafts, was especially good. Only once was Lakpa dropped and not seriously, as a boy was putting on a headband. We reached OCID'eni as a thunderstorm approached and the tents were pitched just in time. (I noticed one of the boys has, and uses, ...a **set** of fear-cleaners)

Their manner of carrying the stretcher now seems to be established. The front man, between the shafts, carries the weight through **his** head-band and, at the rear, two men each carry a shaft on their shoulder. A fourth sherpa usually trots along behind and **is** at hand for emergencies or to act as a reserve for any position. When passing under low trees or branches, the pair in the rear change to carrying by hand. Any particular hard piece of carrying **is** heralded by a low whistle rising to a shrill note. Their footwork **is** wonderful and any mistake is quickly rectified.

Postscript.

In February 1997, I wrote to the *Guinness* Book of Records, challenging their record indexed under 'Stretcher Bearing' as being an organised 'feat or stunt'. I gave brief details of this 'carry' of a genuinely injured man over 50 miles of high mountains and through dense jungle in ten days, by a team of three sherpas with one in reserve, and accompanied, throughout, by a medical practitioner. I claimed that this was a much greater and genuine achievement. I got no reply... Evidently it is a stunt that matter.