

# Muchu Chhish Expedition 2014

## MEF reference 14/21

Country and region visited: Pakistan, Batura Muztagh, Karakoram.

Objectives: To make the first ascent of Muchu Chhish 7453m by the south and west ridges. To make the first ascent of the southeast couloir of Gutum Talji 5238m.

Coordinates:

Base camp: 36.45373N 74.51594E Muchu Chhish: 36.50218N 74.55565E Gutum Talji: 36.39497N 74.47359E

Duration: 4/8/14 to 18/9/14

Expedition members: Pete Thompson (leader), Tim Oates, Phil De-Beger.

Muchu Chhish is one of a number of 7000m peaks located on a high ridge known as the Batura Wall in the Batura Muztagh, which is the western-most part of the Karakoram.

For the most part, our intended route was to follow the Polish route up the south ridge of Batura VI which they climbed during the first ascent of Batura V in 1983. In 1999 a Spanish expedition attempted Muchu Chhish following the Polish route, reaching 6300m.

At 7260m we planned to leave the Polish route and traverse east below Batura VI to join the ridge connecting Batura VI with Muchu Chhish. This ridge leads in 1.1 km via a col at 7180m to the summit of Muchu Chhish.

## Summary

The expedition was unsuccessful.

We made an alpine-style attempt on Muchu Chhish. On a long traverse, ground we had hoped to climb unroped had to be pitched due to hard ice. Realising we had no realistic chance of success climbing slowly we decided to retreat from only 6000m.

We did not attempt the southeast couloir on Gutum Talji due to lack of ice.

Instead we moved base camp to the Morkhoon Valley. Tim and Phil attempted to make the first ascent of Pregar 6083m by the south face, but retreated from 5600m due to unconsolidated snow.

## Diary

Aug 4 Departed Manchester, UK. 5 Arrived in Islamabad. Met by Ashraf Aman of Adventure Tours Pakistan. 6 Briefing with the Pakistan Alpine Club. Food shopping. 7 Departed Islamabad by bus up the Karakoram Highway. Stayed at Chilas. 8 Arrived in Aliabad, Hunza. 9 Met guide/cook Hassan and his assistant Sarbas. Shopping, packing loads and hiring porters. 10 With a team member sick, we stayed in Aliabad. 11 Started the trek at 2200m up the Hassanabad Nala to base camp. Camped at Tatumbarasho 3000m. 12 A hard day for the porters walking across and along the glacier to a poor camp site. 13 Passing a good camp site at Shikam Askurin we reach base camp at Batokshi 4000m. The porters were paid off and the guide and assistant remained at base camp. 14 At base camp. Sunny. 15 Rain. 16 Rain in the morning. In the afternoon we (Pete, Tim, Phil) made a carry up a rocky ridge above base camp

to 4700m on Muchu Chhish south ridge. 17 Rain. 18 Snow overnight at base camp followed by a period of several days good weather. 19 We made another carry up to 4700m assisted by Sarbas. 20 We made another carry to establish advance base camp (ABC) at 5000m. 21 Acclimatisation above ABC. 22 Set off from ABC on an alpine-style attempt on Muchu Chhish. After easy snow slopes we climbed through a rock band and started traversing on hard ice. We bivied on a rock outcrop. 23 We continued traversing on hard ice. We had hoped to climb much of this ground unroped given the length of the traverse. Climbing slowly in pitches we realised we had no realistic chance of climbing the mountain and we decided to retreat at 6000m. After a number of abseils we reached ABC after dark. 24 Rested at ABC. 25-26 Carries down to base camp in poor weather. 27 At base camp. Rain. The south-east couloir of Gutum Talji was our back-up objective. We decided not to attempt it due to a lack of ice in the couloir. Instead we decided to attempt an unclimbed peak in the Morkhoon Valley whose short walk in was within our budget. 28 Porters arrived at base camp. 29 Left base camp. Pete, Tim, Phil and Sarbas walked back to Aliabad in one day. 30 Hassan and the porters arrived at Aliabad. 31 In Aliabad. 1 Sept Prepared for the Morkhoon Valley. 2 Travelled by road to Sust in upper Hunza. This also involved crossing the 19km long Attabad Lake. There are regular boats. The lake was formed in 2010 by a huge landslide. Arranged porters. 3 Drove the short distance to Markhoon village and set off up the Markoon Valley with Hassan, Sarbas and the porters. 4 Arrived at base camp 4300m. Rain. 5 Rain. 6 Walked up valley and identified Pregar, (possibly unclimbed), as an objective. Google Earth height 6083m, coordinates 36.60985N 75.03039E. We crossed the Morkhoon Glacier and left some gear below the mountain. We returned to base camp and that afternoon went back up, collecting the gear, to a bivouac at 4900m. 7 Tim and Phil attempted the south face of Pregar. They retreated from 5600m due to unconsolidated snow. We returned to base camp. 8 At base camp. 9 Returned to Morkhoon village and Sust. 10 Returned to Aliabad. 11-14 Unable to change our flights, we remained in Karimabad, near Aliabad. 15-16 Drove to Islamabad on the Karakoram Highway. Debriefing with the Pakistan Alpine Club. 17 Flew to Manchester, UK.

## **Budget**

Income £

MEF grant 3400

Rothschild grant 750

BMC grant 800

Alpine Club grant 1000

Shipton-Tilman grant 2911

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Total 8861

Expenditure £

Flights 1899

Visas 420

Permit and fees 466

Agency fee 310

Staff costs 1012

Porters 1950

Transport and

Accommodation 890

Insurance 1600

Food and fuel 850

Hill food 134

Gas 195

Equipment hire 487

Miscellaneous

Including sat phone 395

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Total 10608

Balance-members contributions.

## **Acknowledgements**

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Thanks also to Rab for providing us with equipment.

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The compiler of this report and the members of the expedition agree that any or all of the report may be copied for the purposes of private research.



Part of the south ridge of Muchu Chhish and the line of our attempt.



Picture showing our planned route up the south ridge and the traverse to the summit of Muchu Chhish.



Pete Thompson climbing on Muchu Chhish. Photo by Tim Oates.



Attempt on Pregar south face.

