

**British Revelations Expedition 2018. Mt. Jezebel.
Tom Livingstone and Uisdean Hawthorn**



Team Members:

Tom Livingstone - 27 - British
Uisdean Hawthorn - 25 - British

Duration:

On glacier: 23rd March to 10th April 2018
International flights: 21st March to 16th April

Location and brief summary:

Mt. Jezebel (2880m/9450ft), Revelation Mountains, Alaska.

The team wanted to explore the Revelation range and climb some first ascents. They had heard from Ben Silvestre and Pete Graham of the Range's quality and considered objectives on Mt. Mausolus and Mt. Jezebel. Their pilot (Paul Roderick of TAT) landed on the Fish glacier beneath the east face of Mt. Jezebel due to weather conditions, so they focussed on this.

Attempts and Endeavours:

- One attempt at the unclimbed north face of Mt. Jezebel. Bailed due to an 'unclimbable' chimney feature. The north face remains unclimbed.
- One new route on the east face of Mt. Jezebel: 'Fun or Fear.' M6+, Ai6 R. 1200m.
- Descent from Mt. Jezebel via the south couloir and crossing over the south col.
- Successful passage from the east side to the north side of Mt. Jezebel via the north-east col.

Expedition Diary:

21 March 2018: Fly from UK to Anchorage
22: Buy food and supplies. Hassle British Airways to find our missing ski bag. Collect ski bag.
23: Lift to Talkeetna with friends. Fly into mountains with TAT. Set up BC on Fish glacier.
24: Move base camp 200m up the hill, so we get the morning sunshine.
25: Stash climbing kit at north-east col, ready for attempt on north face Mt. Jezebel.
26: Scope out area and east face of Mt. Jezebel. Remember how to make quesadillas.
27: Rest. Mixed weather, light snow. Build ski jump above BC.
28: Rest. Mixed weather. Afternoon ski above BC.
29: Packed bags for north face Jezebel attempt.
30: Skied to north face Jezebel.
31: Attempt 'The Chimney Line' on north face. Bail. Return to BC late that night.
01 April: Rest day. Nachos for lunch. Strong winds up high.
02: Scoped out east face of Mt. Jezebel again. Solo initial pitches of some routes.
03: Rest day. Afternoon ski above BC.
04: Rest and pack for east face attempt. Set alarm for 3am.
05: Wake up to snow. Back to bed. Rest. Short ski. Set alarm for 3am again.
06: New route on east face (Fun or Fear). Day 1.
07: New route on east face (Fun or Fear). Day 2.
08: Rest day. Dry out kit. Bask in relative warmth and consume quesadillas and fried bagels.
09: Get updated forecast. No major weather windows before our international flight. Ask TAT to pick us up.
10 April: Get picked up by TAT. Return to Talkeetna. Learn about The Bush Club from our new-found French friends, whilst in the Fairview.
11-15: Enjoy warmth and fresh food in Anchorage with friends. Change flights.
16 April: Return to the UK.

Detailed Summary of Expedition:

We flew into the Range on the 23rd March, landing on the Fish glacier. This is to the south east of Mt. Jezebel, almost directly below the east face. It's known as 'Fish 1' by Paul Roderick/Talkeetna Air Taxi (TAT).

We hoped to scope the west face of Mt. Mausolus *and* Mt. Jezebel on our flight into the mountains. Due to occasional winds and limited fuel, Paul flew around Mt. Jezebel a couple of times and then landed us at Fish 1.

Our main objective was the unclimbed north face of Mt. Jezebel. This is impressively steep and about 1200m high. Only Rob Jones can land below the north face - there a lots of boulders so a brave pilot in a small plane is the only option. Glacial retreat and climate change is also hitting Alaska hard - and in particular the Revelations, due to their relatively low altitude and 'coastal' location (they are about 100 miles from the coast).

We stashed all our climbing kit at the north-east col of Mt. Jezebel. We'd heard this was a 4 hour ski from beneath the east face (i.e. the Fish glacier). We found excellent snow conditions and it only took us 2 hours. Admittedly, our BC was also slightly down-glacier from Ben Silvestre/Pete Graham's BC, and about 200m up the hillside. (We found camping on the glacier to be windy and cold. It didn't receive the sun until lunch time. We liked having the sun from first thing in the morning, so slogged most of our kit up there on our second day).

Overall, the weather was fantastic. There was approximately 10 inches of snow over the whole three weeks, and generally light winds. We occasionally saw strong winds on the ridges around base camp. We later heard reports about very strong winds and much more snow from other climbers camped on the Revelation glacier. Ben and Pete also reported they had better weather beneath Jezebel than other climbers in the Range... but they also had a metre of snow in their first week. It seems we were very lucky with the weather.

After a couple of days of mixed weather, during which time we built a ski jump about base camp and made use of the excellent skiing conditions, we duly received a good forecast.

We skied back to the NE col in 1hr 30mins, then descended to the north face of Mt. Jezebel. We scoped the lines and concluded there was only one safe line. We were slightly concerned about cornices above our line but they didn't look too big. To the right of our chimney line we thought *there are no safe lines*. All of the north face (except our line) is threatened by jumbo seracs.

We attempted the north face line (see photo and report below).



Photo above: north face of Mt. Jezebel (2880m) with this team's attempted line marked in a red vertical arrow. To the left is a very steep rock wall and to the right there are no safe lines: every line is threatened by serac(s).

The orange horizontal line marks this team's high point after 8 pitches.

Photo below shows north face of Mt. Jezebel from the plane, with our attempted route.



The 1200m north face is unclimbed, although has been attempted many times (most notably in 2017, although climbers only gained approx. 100m). Our attempt climbed approx. 350m before bailing.

On 31st March Uisdean and I climbed eight pitches up our north face line. There were strong winds on the summit ridge but otherwise the weather was good. Last years teams reported vertical un-protectable sugar snow on a nearby line on the face, but luckily we found steep neve.

Pitches often involved moving together until a belay was reached, and protection was sparse. For example, P2 was 60m and no gear. P3 was 75 until a poor belay. P4 was 80m. After P5 things became a little more reasonable and 'mixed' with good gear.

P1: 40m, 80 deg neve. To minimise time spent threatened by the serac up and right of our line, we started to the left of the red arrow in the picture. P2 crossed from left to right through the head of the arrow. P3 then continued straight up the neve above.

P2: 60m, snow, steep neve.

P3: 75m, 85 deg neve

P4: 80m, 85 deg neve

P5: 60m, 75 deg neve

P6: 20m down climb to R, snow.

P7: 60m, snow, M5

P8: 60m, 75 deg neve.

After P8 we reached the main feature of the line: an enormous chimney. Heavy waves of spindrift now washed down the cliff and chimney. The first two pitches were black diorite rock, bizarrely compact yet chossy, and with overhanging steps. After this we could see 60m of overhanging sugar snow. The spindrift avalanches flew right over the lip of the sugar snow, into space. There appeared to be no way to bypass this pitch on the L or R, and no way to tunnel into the back of it. Furthermore, a large (5 or 10m²) snow mushroom sat right at the top of the chimney. We had known about this mushroom from the outset but were now very aware of it.

The back of the chimney received no sunshine (at time of ascent) as it was recessed, and therefore conditions probably won't improve. Perhaps this line is good in the autumn, after some sunshine?

We didn't climb the first two pitches of black diorite rock, nor did we actually 'get involved' with the overhanging snow in the chimney, so we can't be absolutely certain the pitch is 'unclimbable.' To us, though, it looked unclimbable by fair, safe or rational means and we were bitterly disappointed. We hoped for a Dru Couloir Direct style pitch, or at least something with which to climb - neve, or cracks on which to aid around.

It should be noted this team climbed every pitch onsight and free, as is their preferred style. We're sure you could bolt a way around the pitch but this would be totally unacceptable to us.

We rapped back to the glacier, leaving wires as anchors, and arrived later that night.

After a few days of rest we decided to focus our attention on the east face of Mt. Jezebel. We couldn't see a way around the overhanging sugar snow, and didn't want to get squashed by a big snow mushroom.



Above: the east face of Mt. Jezebel.

After one false start (due to snow) on the 5th April, we launched on 6th April. See photo and report below:



Above: East face of Mt. Jezebel from Fish Glacier. This team climbed the obvious thin couloir above the red line.

Ascent: 'Fun or Fear' - new route on the East face of Mt. Jezebel, Northeast summit. (2880m).

We decided to climb a line to the L of 'Hoar of Babylon' - the FA of the mountain and face by Ben Silvestre and Pete Graham in 2015.

On 6th April we climbed our east face line, to the east ridge.

P1: 50m 85 deg neve, M6

P2: 60m 60 deg neve

P3: 50m 90 deg neve and mixed M5, R

P4: 60m M6+

P5: 60m 60 deg neve,

P6: 60m 85 deg neve, R, Alaskan ice 6.

We then climbed 180m of snow, choosing the left branch when the couloir split into a Y.

P7: 60m 75 deg ice.

We then climbed 120m of snow to a small ridge.

P8: 200m of snow in couloir to east ridge.

P9: 25m along the ridge to a rock step.

P10: 25m 5+, R. Bare hands crimping and crampon smearing on a step in the ridge. (see photo below).



We then climbed 200m of ridge-line to a comfortable bivi beneath the large final tower on the ridge, before the final col.

We bivied on the east side of the ridge to get the morning sunshine. It was thankfully out of the wind, too. We flattened out a ledge and enjoyed a few hours or spooning in our custom double bivi bag/double sleeping bag system.

Day 2:

P11: 80m. From the bivi we dropped back to the west side of the ridge, then traversed snow.

P12: M4, 80m, traversing on the left side of the ridge, snow band, to the final col.

P13: M3, rocky ground on ridge.

We unroped here and climbed 150m to the summit.

This ascent was very satisfying and involved some technical climbing, thankfully mostly at the start of the route. We reached the summit at 12.30pm on the second day (7th April). It was totally clear, good visibility, and virtually no wind.

We descended the east ridge, reversing our route, to reach the 'final col.' This is the first and most obvious col you reach when descending this way. We walked 100m down from the summit, then downclimbed 150 metres of easy ground to reach an anchor.

Photo below shows descent line from first abseil. The large 'south couloir' is visible.



We made three rappels on rock gear, leaving wires, to reach the broad couloir which leads down to the south couloir. We then down-climbed to the south couloir.

We walked down the South couloir - a very smooth, easy and quick descent (45mins).

Photo below shows the view from half way down the south couloir, looking towards the SE col.



We then climbed four 60m pitches up the left side of the col between the east and south faces, and then made 3 raps, one 60m down climb on snow, and then a final rap, to reach the Fish glacier/east face, and walked to our skis. We arrived about 11pm on the 7th. Photo below shows the line of ascent from S couloir to SE col. This is on the left of the col.



The South couloir is an obvious and very large couloir, which makes for a great descent. The problem is returning back to the East face/Fish Glacier, which involves climbing up four pitches to a col. We were slightly apprehensive as to whether we could find a way to get back over the col, but thankfully the left-hand-most couloir line was ok.

Uisdean led:
P1, 60m, 80deg neve.
P2: 60m, 90 deg ice step.

Tom lead:
P3, 30m, A1 on the right hand gully wall.
P4: 90m, 80 deg neve, to reach the col.

We rapped straight down the other side.

The line was about 1200m, to the summit of Mt. Jezebel. Alpine style.
Route Name: Fun or Fear
Climbers: Tom Livingstone and Uisdean Hawthorn
Grade: M6+, 90 deg neve, Ai6 R.

After a rest day we got an updated weather forecast. We had about 10 days left before our international flight. There was no major weather window and bad weather potentially arriving towards the end of those 10 days. We could've done a bit of skiing, but there aren't any small 'cragging' options around the Fish glacier and we didn't want to miss our international flights.

TAT picked us up the next day.

General information about climbing in the Revelations

Revelations Info:

Read Clint Helander's article here:

<http://publications.americanalpineclub.org/articles/13201212387/Recon-Revelations>

Clint was very helpful with providing info too.

Also see Ben Silvestre and Pete Graham's Expedition report (google 'Hoar of Babylon Revelations').

Flights

We flew from Edinburgh via London as it was cheapest. I usually seem to avoid all excess baggage/ski bag charges, mostly due to luck. The more I travel, the more it seems it depends on the person behind the check-in desk. Expecting to have the usual battle about overweight and extra bags, we were simply told to 'have a nice flight' by the check-in staff.

On our return, we weren't so lucky; Alaska Airlines could waive their fees, but wouldn't waive the onward British Airways fees (understandably). It seems to be pretty random and they can (and do) waive all fees at the click of button. We paid our fees, only to meet a British climber on the same flight who said, 'yes, they just waived all my fees! I don't know why.' The point is, it's worth a try.

Ideally, get your international flight to arrive in Anchorage in the morning. Spend the day shopping, then get an afternoon/evening transfer to Talkeetna.

We stayed with friends in Anchorage but you can get cheap motels. It's worth hiring a car for a day, rented from the airport. This only costs about £30 and means you can visit all the shops in one jet-lag-induced haze.

Food:

Go to Walmart or Fred Meyer's supermarkets for small items, and then find a friendly American and go to Costco with them. You must have a member card but can bulk buy loads of items for super cheap. We saved a lot of money this year by going to Costco.

Gear shopping:

Go to The Hoarding Marmot shop first. This is a second hand/cheap gear shop, then get other items from Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking supplies, and REI.

Transfers:

You can find transfers from Anchorage to Talkeetna on google. They're all about the same. Apparently Fat Gary gives you a free peanut butter cookie when you get a transfer with him... but we've yet to sample this!

There are no food shops in Talkeetna, only restaurants and the Fairview Inn. Buy everything before you arrive. You can stay at TAT's bunkhouse for free.

Glacier Flights

We flew with TAT and they were excellent, as always. Flights were \$1650 per person, and this included a 125lbs per person weight allowance. They charge an extra \$1 per 1lb. Try to save weight! Freeze-dried meals for lunch AND supper save many kilos but probably ruin your guts... it worked for us though.

Rob Jones from <http://www.randrhunting.com/RRH/Home.html> has a hunting lodge near the range, and flying into the range via a stay in the lodge would be a far more reliable way of getting in/out, as weather windows can be quite short. Rob quoted us \$4500 all in, same as Pete and Ben. He can land you beneath the north face of Jezebel... but is more expensive. We opted for TAT, who landed us beneath the east face (larger plane) and we skied round to the north face.

Weather

The prime time to climb is from the Middle of March to late April. Temperatures before the middle of March can reach -40C but then quickly rise to about +20C. We had no thermometer but the coldest nights reached -14C on the forecast.

We were extremely lucky with the weather this year, and had mostly calm, sunny weather. Pete and Ben had a lot of bad weather in 2015. We could see winds on the high ridges on some days but had less than 12 inches of snow during our trip, and mostly calm weather. A French team and an American team were camped on the Revelation Glacier and reported 100km winds and lots of snow. We saw none of this. This 'localised' weather is similar to what Pete and Ben reported, but I think we were just very lucky this year.

Climbing

The granite is very good quality on the north and east faces. The sunshine certainly helped ice to form during the start of our trip, but towards the end of our three weeks on the glacier, anything which got more than a few hours of sunshine was beginning to melt.

We climbed mostly mixed or neve. There wasn't much ice. Anything which was sheltered from the spindrift (i.e. under roofs and in the backs of corners) was useless sugar snow. Anything which allowed the snow to sluff off was good neve. We usually found rock gear on our east face route, but didn't find much gear on our north face attempt... Perhaps the big chimney we attempted on the north face is best after some autumn sunshine...? We found it filled with a pitch of overhanging sugar snow.

The most reliable glaciers to land on are the east facing ones, due to snow conditions.

The Revelations are outside of the Denali national park and so no permit is necessary for climbing there.

Budget

Item	£ per person	£ total for 2 people
UK - USA Flights	700	1400
TAT flights	1200	2400
food	250	500
accommodation and misc.	100	200
InReach monthly plan	30	60
extra: car rental, beer etc	50	100
Insurance	450	900
Total:	2780	5560
Grants:	MEF	2000
	BMC	1050

Kit

We downloaded some very accurate and free maps from <http://www.usgs.gov>

We had the outer of a tunnel tent, which works really well as a kitchen tent. We used Lightwave t25 arctic.

We had a Garmin inReach, which was excellent.

We used slightly less than 1 gallon of white gas fuel per week. We were liberal with fuel usage, melted lots of water, but weren't at altitude and it wasn't very cold for some of the time.

Note:

It's America, so remember to apply for your ESTA in advance.

Buy everything on a Monzo debit card - they don't charge a fee! This saved us a lot of money.

Dan Joll's kit list helped a lot with kit and food:
<http://alpineteam.co.nz/2013/alaska-expedition-2014>

Next time we'd bring:

- Hot chocolate powder and canned cream
- More than 3 pairs of boxers
- More than 3 merino wool base layers
- More than 3 pairs of socks
- More ziploc bags (40 is good)
- More bin bags (30 is good, and useful to use as tent snow anchors)

And I'd...

- check liquid fuel stove is in good working order! Mine needed a clean.
- check I have a piss bottle! Nearly made a massive error...
- better down boots - ideally down insulated wellies. apparently Clint has 'Baffin wellies'/ snow boots which are very good.
- bring a full length foam mat.
- bring lots of wires! E.g. 3 full sets or 4 full sets. And lots of tat (e.g. 30m of 5mm). Bailing = lose lots!
- Bring an electronic small handheld shaver
- Small towel for drying tent/washing/drying.
- Better lip salve/lip sun cream - bought 2, which was fine, but poor quality. Need factor 50 sun cream x 2, and ideally one moisturising one.
- Better books (not rom. coms!).

Kit

Below is a kit list I made just before the trip. It's probably not 100% accurate but hopefully it'll help!

All clothes are Mountain Equipment, kit is Petzl and boots are La Sportiva, so google the name if you're not sure what it is.

To Do	
Make a list of food to buy	
Make a list of things to buy in Anchorage	gas etc
check ESTA - expired?	
email mark westman	
buy extra bags/ski bags on flights	
Check weight of all our shit.	TAT say 125lbs per person. 60kgs?
Book Anchorage to TAT transfer	
Clothes etc	
Boots	Sportiva G2
socks x 3 pairs	
ME eclipse salopette	

lightweight shell trousers	firefox pants
hardshell trousers	tupilak
boxers 4 pairs	
base layers	x 3
eclipse hooded mid layer	eclipse
transition jacket	
switch jacket	
hard shell jacket	firefox
soft shell jacket	frontier. Did not take.
beanie	
lead gloves	2 pairs. direkt and Couloir
seconding gloves/big gloves	gore tex. super couloir
Citadel mitts	
Vega down jacket	
Dewline down jacket	
buff	
balaclava	
puff pants	compressor
Camping/Bivis	
massive sleeping bag	SIZE XL! Base camp bag
route sleeping bag	Firelite/fly
Base camp sleeping mat	
route sleeping mat	
foam mat	
double sleeping bag	for bivis
down booties	
base camp tents	
BD firstlight	
multifuel stove and bottle and pump	Primus OmniFuel and MSR Whisperlite
stove board	
knife	bear grills
big 5 L pot	
kettle	Kimbo's, stashed in TAT
spoon	
tupperware bowl	one each obvs
lighters	
route stove	MSR Reactor
winter gas	
white gas	

speaker	wANKER
solar panel	wANKER
baby wipes	
toothbrush toothpaste	
razor	
route bottle	Nalgene or MSR Dromedary
piss bottle	
mug	one each
sleeping bag liner	
snow shovel	one each
snow saw	did not have
books	
iPod shuffle	
watch	with good alarms
sewing kit	
extra stuff sacks for tent pegs in snow	
Mega mid	Houseman?
small towel	for drying tent
Other	
sunnies	
suncream	lots, plus moisturiser, lip balm etc.
goggles	
camera	
memory cards	
lots of camera batteries	
headtorch	
headtorch batteries	
topos	
betrafol tape	obvs
lip salve	
leatherman	
First aid kit	
Climbing	
single rope	petzl volta guide 9mm
tag line	RAD line
2 half ropes??	take
Personal climbing	
harness	
Leashes	

prussiks, belay plate,	
crampons	darts
axes	comics
spare pick each	
allen keys	
small file	
pick weights	
helmet	
route pack - 30L	tupilak
Rack	
screws	10/12
wires	1 and a half sets - SHOULD TAKE MORE
cams	2 sets
pegs	lots
slings	4
draws	8
extender draws	6
micro traxion	
spare biners	5
screwgates	4
tat	25m of 5mm
route knife	
v threader	
ice clippers for harness	
Skis	
ski boots	
skis	
skins	
poles	
Food	
gels	check what we have stashed in talkeetna
bars	check what we have stashed in talkeetna
meals	check what we have stashed in talkeetna
then buy loads of shit in anchorage	
Leave in Talkeetna	

rock shoes	
chalk bag	
casual clothes	
laptop bag	
laptop	
charger cable	
extension cable	
plug adapter	
Documents	
Passport	
Driving License	
boarding cards etc/flight details	
ESTA etc	

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Thanks to Dana, Heide, Magpie and Rosco for letting us stay.

Thanks to Doug Hawthorn for the lifts to and from the airport.

Read more:

<https://www.tomlivingstone.com/climbing-blog-1/2018/4/13/fun-or-fear>

<https://www.uisdeanhawthorn.com/new-gallery-1/>