

Guidebook Notes

Compiled by Lindsay Griffin

Lindsay Griffin would welcome further information and new route descriptions for publication in these pages at: c/o 1 Lockerley Close, Newenham Road, Lymington, Hampshire.

The development on rock continues with the Mont Blanc Range again, almost exclusively, the focal point of creative activity. The majority of new ascents take the form of very technical but short (one recorded at 50m!) rock routes that in general have very easy access. Michel Piola has climbed over 20 new routes this summer and his Topo Guide to the massif should be available in Britain soon. In the main, climbs have fixed protection and belays on the open walls, whereas the cracks and corners are usually left clean. Abseil descents allow a lightweight approach.

Gabarrou still extracts routes of great length and apparent quality all over the Alps and during all seasons. This year (1985) his offerings include several steep and narrow couloir lines climbed during the winter months on the S side of the Mont Blanc-Maudit region, plus a 66 pitch rock climb up the NW pillar of the Petite Jorasses.

Dauphiné

Refuge du Promontoire Few people now reach the Promontoire Hut by any other means than *via* the W branch of the Etançons Glacier. The cables on the rock buttress beneath the hut are in a pretty poor state.

Refuge du Châtelleret This was partially destroyed by an avalanche in spring 1985 and was being renovated and enlarged during that autumn. During this period the historic and famous boulder at the front of the hut was dynamited.

Pic Coolidge, NE Face Bizzare/Bonatti Route Current descriptions of this climb do not give enough detail regarding the correct starting point. The line that appears to be most frequently climbed in error takes the obvious rock buttress on the L side of the face. This is easy and broken in the lower section but becomes steep and very difficult towards the top. There are a number of abseil pegs in place. The correct route lies in the depression/couloir to the R of this (not exactly 'the lowest section of the barrier of rocks at the base of the face') and gives easy climbing with several pitches of III.

Graians East

Gran Paradiso NE side from the Pol Hut. The route from the Colle Dell'Ape to the summit is misleadingly described in the present English guide. Phil

Bartlett writes: from the Colle Dell'Ape and just across the main ridge a loose rock ridge ascends towards the Roc (4026m). Climb this for 60m then make an easy and slightly rising traverse across the face on the left (traces of a path). Reach an obvious gap in the ridge above. Descend a steep snow slope on the other side for about 10m, cross a bergshund and traverse easily to join the final section of the W flank (Gran Paradiso glacier) route. Follow this to the summit.

Mont Blanc

Pic Adolphe Rey Another short rock route was made on the S face to the R of the Gervasutti route. The main difficulties involve some excellent slab climbing.

The route has been equipped to a certain extent and a convenient descent can be made by abseiling the adjacent Bettembourg route to the foot of the face.

(B Domenech and the Remy Brothers, 23 July 1985, 8h. 300m ED.)

Aiguille de Blaitière NW Ridge Direct There are a number of hard rock routes on the steep pillar at the base of the NW ridge, first climbed in 1972 by the Japanese. The following climb takes an open groove system between the Japanese route and the line taken by the 1982 British 'Pilier Rouge' route.

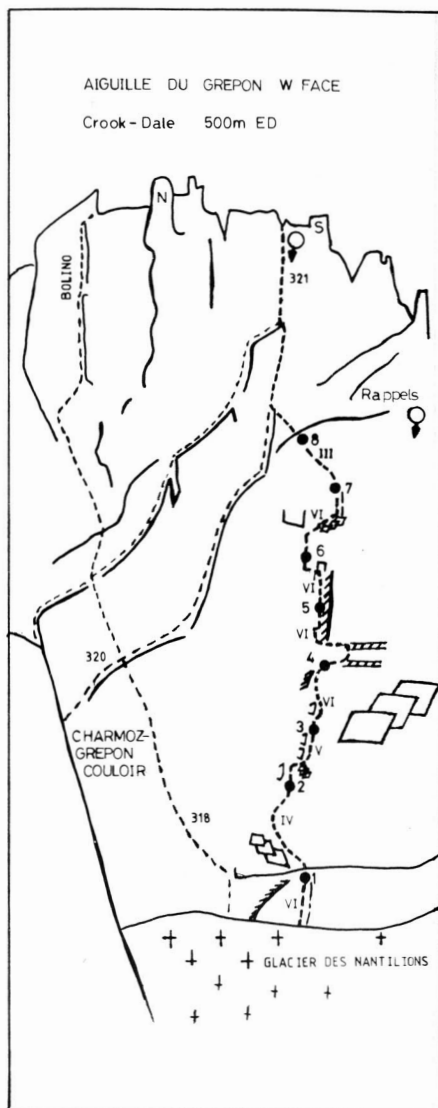
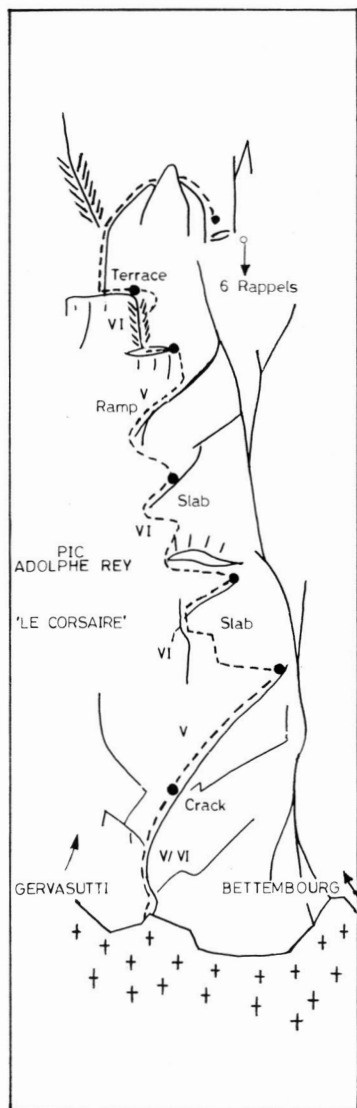
Start 6m L of the British route and trend L up slabs to gain the base of the central grooves. Climb the grooves for 10m then traverse L to gain a series of discontinuous flakes (V+ sustained) then trend R up grooves (IV+) to belay just R of a large detached flake. Continue up for 4m to a horizontal ledge. Follow this L to a crack and climb this (a move of V), finally belaying below a small overhang. Climb the latter (V) then trend R up obvious grooves (V) to a stance below a slanting orange diedre. Climb the diedre (15m, V+) then make a hard exit (VI-) to reach the continuation grooves (V+). Climb these to more broken ground which quickly leads to a 10m high corner with a crack in the L wall. Climb this (VI-) to a belay. Trend slightly L up a crack in the slabs (IV+) then the corner which leads to a flake on the L (V). Surmount the flake and exit L to a belay. Take the obvious horizontal hand traverse L onto the arête and climb cracks and grooves (IV+) to the brèche. This is the junction with the Japanese and British routes. It is possible to make four abseils down the obvious couloir below the brèche on the W face to reach a ledge system from where an easy descent can be made.

An eight-pitch route with all runouts between 40m and 45m. No pitons used and no gear left in place. About British HV5/E1.

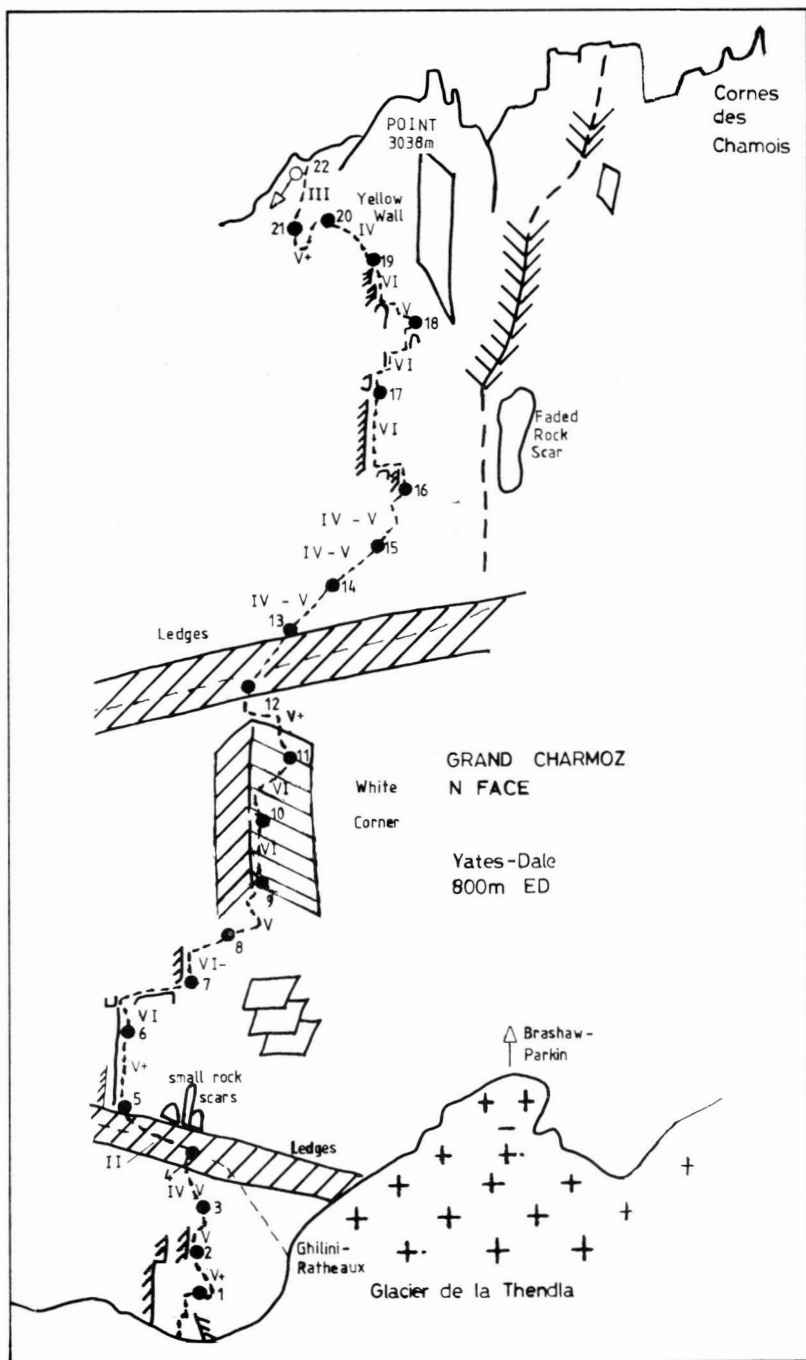
(David Simmonds and Chris Dale, 17 July 1984. 350m TD+.)

Aiguille du Grepon W face A fine direct line has been climbed up the centre of this face. It gives some spectacular climbing on good rock.

Start in the middle of the face halfway between a large curving arch on the L and an obvious easy rake on the R. Above is an intermittent orange crack line. Climb the orange crack line boldly to a ledge (45m, VI sustained). Meander up the slab above trending L, to belay below an obvious flake system (45m, IV). Move R (awkwardly) to gain the furthest R system of flakes and follow these to a ledge (45m V). Move R into a flake crack and continue up this making a hard



exit to gain a ledge on the R (45m, VI). Move R along the ledge then move back L diagonally across the wall to belay at the base of an obvious diedre (20m V). Climb up on the edge of the L wall of the diedre, over a small overhang then back R into the diedre itself. After a few metres it is probably best to belay (15m, VI). Continue up the diedre to the overhang at the top then move L to a foot ledge on the arête. Reach a belay on the slab above, below a large overhang (45m, VI). Move up to the overhang then exit R on a series of short, easy



gangways to gain a wide crack. Follow this to a ledge (45m, VI-). From here it is possible to move L to gain Route 320 (Vallot) and so reach the summit. Or climb up the easy ramp on the R for two pitches to reach an abseil descent.

No pitons were used or gear left in place. However it is essential to carry a large selection of small wires RPs etc. The hardest pitches (in the diedre) probably equate to British E2 5C.

(Martin Crook and Chris Dale, 21 August 1985. 500m ED.)

Grand Charmoz Point 3038m N face A long route giving some excellent and sustained pitches but unfortunately split by two ledge systems. A good bivouac site exists 5 minutes from the foot of the climb.

Start at the foot of the buttress leading down from point 3038m, halfway between an obvious monolithic corner and sickle-shaped groove. This is about 50m down and L of the start of the Ghilini/Ratheaux 1983 route. Climb the crack line with excursions rightwards at 15m and 20m to a ledge (30m V+). Move down awkwardly into corners and up these trending L to a belay (45m V). Climb the easy crack in the large corner trending R at the top (45m V). Slant up L to reach the ledges (45m, IV). Go along the ledges (II) to reach the base of a magnificent crack (initially bordering a corner). Climb the crack and flake, then continue up the crack to belay in a niche (30m V+). Continue over the overhang then trend R along a flake to a ledge (45m VI). Climb the corner above which is awkward at the top. Now trend R to a belay (45m VI-). Go up to a belay below the monolithic white corner (45m V). Climb this corner and belay in a chimney/cave (20m VI). Continue up the chimney crack to an overhang; surmount this, then trend rightwards up a finger crack, moving past a flake to belay in a cave — a superb and difficult pitch (20m VI). Continue up the crack then climb L across the cave to a ledge system (30m V+). Slant up R crossing short walls (V-) and ledges until below point 3038m, about 70m L of a faded yellow rock scar and below a R- facing orange (quartz) corner (150m). Layback the corner to a ledge, then move L over flakes to the base of another crack. Layback this, bold and sustained (45m VI). Continue up the crack above then trend R across several walls and cracks to make a hanging belay on a flake (40m VI). Move back L to gain a hanging flake and climb this, then the chimney that follows, to gain a series of short corners. Climb these to a ledge (45m VI). Move L along some ledges then climb a short wall to belay on an arête (30m IV). Climb down the wall for 15m into the couloir (V+). Reach the ridge below Pt 3038, easily in 45m (III).

DESCENT. Climb down the crest of the ridge to reach the brèche at its base (sections of III plus two abseils near the end). Continue down on the N side to reach the glacier and so regain the bivouac site.

No pitons used and the hardest climbing probably equates to British E2 5C.
(Chris Dale and Simon Yates, 24 August 1985, 9h. 800m ED.)

The Pyrenees

Recent hot summers in the Pyrenees, especially on the Spanish side of the frontier, reached a climax in 1985 with the hottest, driest in living memory in

the heart of the range. The effect on snowfields and glaciers has been dramatic; they are shrinking at an alarming rate. Those who regularly climb there will have noted the change that is occurring. On the northern slopes of Pic des Posets, for example, the Glacier de La Paül had completely disappeared from the steep valley in 1985, the only ice remaining being the glacial scarf draped immediately below the cliffs of the upper corrie. When Packe climbed here in 1861 the Glacier de Posets (in the E corrie) flowed over the Collado de La Paül and all the way down the valley into the Estos. It has now shrunk back some 2km and 700m vertically into the upper corrie below the E face.

Unless there is a radical change in climate in the near future, it will not be long before the Pyrenees are bereft of ice except in winter.

The Refugio de Estos (1835m) was destroyed by fire in 1979. This popular hut, base for climbs on the N side of Pic des Posets and owned by the Federación Española de Montañismo, has recently been completely rebuilt and enlarged, and was reopened in 1985. A full meals service is available during the season, and there is also a well-equipped kitchen for self cooks. The refugio can now accommodate 180 in its dormitories — which may not be such good news for those who loved the valley's former solitude.

NORWAY

Jotunheim

Galdhøpiggen NW Ridge Galdhøpiggen (2469m) lies in the Jotunheimen region of central Norway and is the country's highest elevation. An unmade road from Hoft in the Boverdalen reaches the Spiterstulen Lodge due east of the peak. In late winter this road is easily and relatively safely crossed on skis or with snow shoes. Paradoxically the coldest conditions in Norway are found in the south where the mountain ranges are further removed from the coastal effects of the Gulf Stream than those further north.

From the Visdalen just below Spiterstulen at c.1000m follow the river course steeply to reach the base of the gently ascending Styggebreen (glacier). Follow this WNW then W keeping near the R side, round the foot of the NE ridge of Galdhøpiggen to reach the col between the latter and Vesle Galdhøpiggen. About 6½ hrs on snow shoes.

Begin on the E side of the sharp ridge and above its base where a diagonal slabby break leads rightwards towards the crest. Step off a large rock spike and climb a short awkward flake chimney to reach the break. Traverse this on snow, with a delicate step, to reach a short crack leading to slabs. Climb the steep buttress above by icy grooves trending R to a difficult exit onto a snow slope. Follow this easily to a snowy rock barrier. Trend R steeply then return L to reach a belay at the base of a snowy gully just R of the ridge crest. Continue up this avoiding the tower above by making an exit rightwards onto a subsidiary ridge. Follow this back L where the angle is much easier and climb more open ground on the R flank of the crest, avoiding another small tower, for several rope lengths to an abrupt exit on the summit.

Descend easily down the NE ridge in ½ hr.

(Chris Forrest and Lindsay Griffin, late Winter 1985, 3–4h Temperatures of –17°C, c.250m, 9–10 pitches, Scottish 3–4.)

A number of excellent frozen waterfalls exist fairly close to the Visdalen Road and were climbed at the same period.

(a) Skautafoss R hand route. Scottish Grade III

L hand route (icefall). Scottish Grade IV.

(b) Glitrafoss Direct Route. Scottish Grade V/V+.

Romsdal

Forrest and Griffin climbed two routes here at the beginning of May 1985. Existing guidebook descriptions are somewhat inaccurate and a bit misleading.

Norafjell c928m SE Pillar via the Grunero Route on the 'Great Slab'. (The 1978 Norwegian Route.)

Start at the L edge of the pillar where a steep black slab leads to a small overhang. Climb the slab and easier rock to a small tree beneath an overhang at 15m (III). Climb over the overhang (IV) and continue up the grey slab to a belay. Another long slab pitch, first R then L (III+) leads to a ledge and belay. Continue up easy slabs to reach a steep wall with an obvious diagonal crack sloping from L to R. A thin crack splits the overhanging wall on the R. Climb this (VI–) then continue up easy ground to a high boulder-strewn terrace. The next Buttress is split by a wide V chimney system. Layback the R crack (V–) move R of a nose for a few metres then climb a roof crack on the L (one move of VI) to reach the upper section of the chimney. Climb this (IV+ then III) to a large terrace. Scramble up and across this to the base of the 'Great Slab'. Towards the L of the slab where it steepens is a huge detached flake. Climb the steep wall on the L of this (V–) on poor black rock to reach a smallish stance below the impressive R– slanting crack. Climb the overhanging crack for 25m (VI). Continue for 20m (V) to a ledge and flake. Follow the crack rightwards (V) to the top of the slab. Easy scrambling up slabby buttresses interspersed with vegetated terraces (pitches of II) gives way to a fairly steepish walk to the Summit Cairn.

Excellent rock, especially on the difficult pitches. Good protection and belays throughout with climbing up to British E1. 5b. 5–8 hrs seems a reasonable estimate.

(B Ostigard, K Svanemyr and H Doseth, 1978. About 600m Grade VI–.)

Adelsfjell c.940m SE Pillar The Eastern Slabs Route.

Although this route provides some fine open slab climbing, the original description is somewhat indistinct and in parts vastly over-graded. In fact the hardest pitch may well be the steep crack and corner R of the Dirty Gully/Rake mentioned in the description (V). No pitches of VI were encountered and the climb was considered rather disappointing. Five to six hrs seems a reasonable time for the ascent.

(J Duff and J Brazinton, 1970. About 700m, Grade IV+/V–.)

KARAKORAM

Chogolungma Basin

Skari Lungma Snow Dome (c.5530m) The fairly obvious snow dome at the head of the Sgari Byen Gang valley. From a camp on sand next to a stream L of the long rocky ridge which leads to the dome. Follow the ridge to the dome, loose and tedious but no problems until the distinctive black band at the base of the dome. This is steep and the rock is very very loose leading to the snow dome summit. 5½h. Views good. Descent via a long snow couloir to the glacier and follow the L side (heavily crevassed). 3h in descent.

Ron Giddy

'Aspirant Peak' 'Aspirant Peak' (c.6100m) is a rectangular shaped projection from the ridge defining the SE perimeter of the upper basin of the Haramosh glacier. From the Haramosh la, head SE into the basin, keeping well L to avoid the ice-fall, towards the obvious col at the end of the basin. When alongside the near shoulder of 'Aspirant Peak' (L shoulder, facing the ridge), break out L and climb directly up the increasingly steep slope to the foot of the steep summit ridge. Climb this (some Scottish Grade III) to the top. c.6h from the la.

Brendan Murphy

Central Peak at the head of the Boluche glacier (c.5600m) From medial moraine camp, cross the W arm of the Boluche glacier to the base of a small glacier between the rock peak and the central peak (objective) opposite the camp. Climb up the L bank to the snow plateau (crevassed), cross to the S and get on to the broad easy ridge. Follow it to the snow shoulder and then the short rock ridge to the top. The rock is very loose and crumbly. Good viewpoint.

Ian Haig

Berganchu (c.5800m) — SW of the snout of the Chogolungma From the Arandu track on the S side of the Chogolungma glacier, climb to the snowline (2 days). Ascend over the ice dome, descend scree slightly and then ascend a series of snow domes and bowls (crevassed) and finish up the S side of the hogsback of Berganchu, large cornice.

N.B. To climb Sencho (an adjacent peak) another camp is needed between snowline camp and Berganchu. Excellent viewpoint for panorama of Karakoram peaks and Shigar valley.

Ian Haig

Chogolungma to Kerolungma and Arandu via Bolucho la (c.5700m) The Bolucho la is shown on the Japanese Atlas Map, *The Mountain World — 1956/57*, p.169, Eric Shipton *the Six Mountain Travel Books* pp784–5, and the USA Army Series (1:250000). None of these are much help, the latter is misleading. Not a true pass but rather a name on the map. Unused locally and infrequently by mountaineers. Claims by porters at Arandu to know the pass should be treated with caution.

The Bolucho valley from its junction with the Chogolungma presents no problems. The path soon runs out. Follow the middle of the glacier. At the head of the cirque, towards the true L bank of the glacier and hidden behind a ridge, is a superb campsite on the shores of a small lake, off the ice and invisible from below; no firewood. From here there is a choice between a col above hanging glaciers R of the camp, and a col above an ice-fall and a plateau on the L. Take the left. Descend a short way from the camp across the glacier and follow an ice gully L of the ice-fall. Porters need to be roped up for about 60m. Threat of stones-fall from L. Above the ice-fall cross the plateau diagonally R (heavily crevassed). The parts of this glacier near the enclosing wall are under constant threat of stone-fall. Camp immediately below the col on the glacier (no water or wood). Climb 150m of rotten rock to the top of the col. From the col descend steeply towards the Kerolungma glacier about 300m over rotten rock and scree (porters have to be roped down) traversing R (stone-fall danger) to avoid bergshroud and crevasses. On the glacier cross diagonally to the true L bank to camp (firewood sparse). Follow the ablation valley to a path crossing lateral glaciers to another camp. Cross the main glacier to the R bank and up to the village called San Chu (= clean water). Follow a good path to the confluence of the Kerolungma with the Chogolungma and Arandu. 7 days including one rest day.

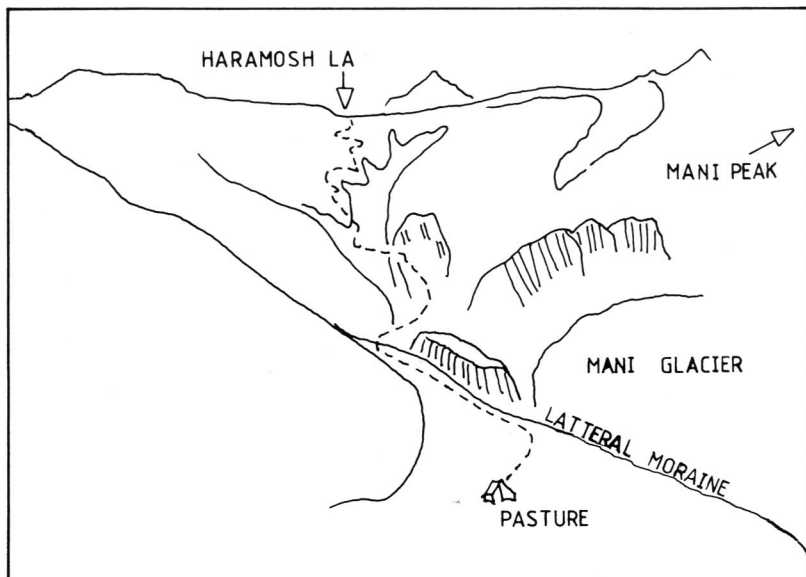
Ron Giddy

The Haramosh la The Haramosh la (4800m on some maps, probably higher) provides a crossing between the Kutwal valley and the Haramosh glacier which is a southern tributary of the Chogolungma glacier. The Haramosh glacier approach is easy angled and uncomplicated but the Kutwal side presents a steep final slope about 2000m high with snow, avalanche runnels and extremely loose rock in the upper section. there is a rock platform campsite at the La which provides a good base for exploring the upper Haramosh basin.

Refer to the Polish map of the Karakoram 1:250000 and to the Japanese atlas maps of the Chogolungma area 1:150000.

From Arandu the stony snout of the Chogolungma glacier is crossed W to join a good path which follows lateral moraines and ablation valleys along the true L bank of the glacier. There are several good campsites along this section and the Bolouche glacier can be reached in two or three porter stages. Camp in the last ablation valley 1.5km before the Bolouche junction rather than the fairly unpleasant Dust Camp at the junction.

Here take to the centre of the glacier at the earliest opportunity or continue along moraines and more ablation valleys to the mouth of the Sgari Byen Gang which is opposite the Chogolungma-Haramosh confluence. Both routes head for a prominent ridge of red moraine and large boulders which issues from the W side of the Haramosh glacier and bends round into the centre of the Chogolungma glacier. Follow this moraine until opposite the serrated rock ridge just short of Cathedral Peak. The delightful Laila camp will be found on a grassy alp below the S end of the serrated ridge and a long way above the glacier (and water!); one stage from the Bolouche glacier.



From Laila traverse steep vegetated slopes to rejoin the glacier just above the ice-fall; in reverse care is needed to find the right point at which to leave the glacier. A long gentle walk up the centre of the glacier leads through a final crevassed area to the foot of a rock ridge descending from the N. The Haramosh la is at the junction of snow and rock; two stages from Laila camp.

The first part of the descent to the Kutwal valley is uninviting. Start about 150m S of the camp platform and zigzag down through loose blocks and scree terraces until a series of ridges provide a relatively safe descent. (Avalanche runnels through intervening snow patches.)

Idyllic camping on pastures at the foot of the slope R of the Mani glacier.

The walk out to Sasli can be done in two porter stages by a variety of routes taking in the villages on the N or S slopes of the Kutwal valley. Paths are good and the forested area between Kutwal and Kutwal Sar is well worth savouring.

Lyn Noble

Askole to Hispar la The Hispar-Biafo glacier system is the longest continuous glacier system in the Karakoram, running for about 100km in all, with the Hispar la dividing it roughly halfway. There are no real technical problems on either side of the pass, although route finding on the lower moraine-covered slopes of the Hispar glacier is difficult, and the going tedious; the side walls are steep and limit views of the surrounding peaks. The going is generally easier on the Biafo side, and the sides of the glacier less enclosed, giving excellent views. The best map appears to be Shipton's 1939 map published by the Royal Geographical Society.

From Askole to Hispar la is 6 porter stages although it can be done in a leisurely 5 days. From Askole follow the path up the Braldu for an hour, then

turn NE up to the true R bank of the Biafo glacier, mostly on glacial moraine. Then follow bare ice towards the centre of the glacier and subsequently snow, except for deviations to campsites at the side of the glacier. There seem to be no major crevasse zones. Camp in ablation valleys on the R bank of the glacier, at Namla, Mango and Ho Bluk — good camping, water and firewood. Thereafter camp on snow, near the Sokha la and below the Hispar Pass. Soft snow limits progress after mid morning.

Hispar la to Hispar village is 6 porter stages (3 days in descent). From the pass, descend the upper glacier just R of centre, and follow a spur which avoids most of the crevasses down to the lower glacier. Camp on moraines just short of the Jutmara glacier. Then follow bare ice as far as possible (numerous open crevasses and ice ridges, and progressively encroaching moraine debris; the central river can be very difficult to cross). Take to the hillside on the L bank, to camp at Haigutum just W of the Haigutum glacier. Follow gradually improving herders' tracks, camping below Chandra Chish, before reaching Hispar on the third day. Similar paths on top of the lateral moraine of the R bank can be used also — both routes involve extensive labour in crossing side glaciers.

Steve Town

Askole to Shigar via the Skoro la The Skoro la (5070m); can be used as a short cut between Skardu and Askole or a small trek in itself. It is best attempted in the months of July and August.

Hidden about 100m below Askole is an ancient intertwining rope bridge stretching for 60m across the Braldu river. Cross this with caution (many porters refuse to cross it with loads).

At Teste village on the other side of the Braldu, ignore the many paths going straight up the steep grassy mountainside. Skirt L round the village for about 1km. Follow a wide and well defined path which zigzags up about 900m to Teste Brook village. Guides can be hired here to show the exact way to the Skoro la.

From Teste Brook follow the only path on the R side of the stream for about 5km to the terminal moraine of 2 small glaciers. Here the path disappears and there are few cairns. Keep to the R edge of the rubble where there is green grass. Good camping.

The Skoro la is the middle of 3 passes at the head of the valley; the glacier up to it is heavily crevassed but safe on its R edge.

From the pass descend a steep rock gully carpeted with ice; care is needed to descend a track tending R which soon fades away into the gully itself. This is descended with caution for around 1200m to the valley. At the bottom of the gully turn L and follow the river down a gorge for about 16km to Shigar (several river crossings). Lifts to Skardu.

Tim Greening

From Chalt to Nomal, via the Daintar pass The Hunza river is bridged at Chalt, where there is a primitive resthouse. A good jeep track leads up to Das, above the confluence of the Daintar and Bola Das rivers. The jeep track climbs

up into the Daintar valley, but stops just above an inconspicuous footbridge, from which a path continues on the N side of the river, to and beyond the village of Daintar.

Below Taling the track re-crosses the river and continues up through the village (which is only occupied during the sowing and harvest seasons). Taling is wrongly marked on the Polish map; it is in fact on the true right bank of the Daintar river. Although there are good campsites near the village, it is advisable to continue up the valley for about 1½ hours, as far as a shepherds' encampment, because of the long day to follow. Above and to the SW of the shepherds' huts, steep wooded slopes are followed by grass, willow scrub and Juniper. Higher still are open scree slopes and moraine which are traversed W, passing below a small glacier. Then a glacier, with a crevassed zone not easy to see until you are in it, is crossed to a shattered ridge of loose rock and slate. This tottering heap, especially precarious near the top, is climbed to reach the pass, a shaly col with snow patches. 5-7 hours. A camp on the col is feasible, if uncomfortable, in order to climb Snow Dome to the SE.

The Daintar pass itself is at 4800m, and the route to it is not obvious from below on the Daintar side. From the opposite direction the line is clearer. Before August, the pass is likely to be snowed up, and there may be avalanche danger.

The descent is straightforward, down scree and snowfields to a good campsite in a grassy but woodless meadow by a stream, on a plateau above the Shani valley. Continuing along the cliff tops, a track is reached which winds its way down steep ground to reach the valley floor. A short day can be ended at Shiobar. The path runs through forest then an open valley to Upper Naltar, and the top end of a jeep track. In August 1985 a bridge below Lower Naltar was under repair, so there was no prospect of mechanised transport at all. Follow the track through a steep gorge to Lower Naltar, and bus to Gilgit. 4-7 days (map A790, p68).

Margaret Clennett