
PAUL NUNN

Pakistan 1992

K₂ – Abruzzi ridge As usual several expeditions tried K₂. A Swiss group of four men and Frenchwoman Chantal Mauduit reached 7000m during July in snowy conditions. Mauduit then joined a 17-member Russian–American expedition which prepared the route to Camp 4 at 8100m. Valeri Balyberdin (Russia) and Gennadi Kopieda (Ukraine) summited on 1 August, followed two days later by Mauduit and Aleksei Nikiforov. Mauduit had come to Pakistan after an earlier, unsuccessful, attempt on Everest and, with the death of Wanda Rutkiewicz, remains the sole female K₂ climber alive.

Americans Ed Viesturs, Scott Fischer and Charley Mace ascended the Abruzzi ridge, reaching the summit on 16 August. Jonathan Pratt (UK) and Dan Mazur (USA) were unsuccessful, as was a New Zealand pair and a Mexican expedition, which abandoned its attempt after Adrian Benitez was killed descending in bad weather when an anchor failed. Ponce de Leon and Johan Lange (Sweden) from this party climbed the forepeak of Broad Peak on 31 July. Balyberdin and Viesturs are the sixth and seventh persons to climb the world's three highest peaks. These were the first ascents of the Abruzzi ridge since the numerous accidents and ascents in 1986. 79 people have succeeded on K₂ to date.

Only one party attempted a route other than the Abruzzi. In July Polish climber Wojciech Kurtyka and the Swiss, Erhard Loretan returned to the unclimbed W face for the second time in three years, but were unable to make the alpine-style ascent planned owing to bad weather.

Broad Peak Seven expeditions made attempts from the Pakistan side. One attempt, by a group made up of people from several expeditions, was successful. The summiters were Scott McKee (USA), Dave Hambly (UK living in the USA), Spaniards Antonio Tapiador and Pedro Rodriguez, Catalan Eudwald Martinez and Romanian Constantin Lacatusu from a British commercial expedition. Roger Payne's British June–July expedition stopped around 7700m in deep and dangerous snow conditions.

Broad Peak Central (8016m) On the Chinese side, Catalan and Italian climbers made the most impressive first ascent of the year. Led by Jordi Magriña, they were accompanied by Kurt Diemberger who entered this little visited area with Julie Tullis, as part of an Italian expedition, in 1983. In 1991 he had been at the Festival of Onions in Tarragona and mentioned to the mayor that he knew a mountain which had some of the finest roots at its foot. This helped local climbers get sponsorship for a reconnaissance of the N Gasherbrum glacier in autumn 1991, which identified a route and climbed to 6500m.

In summer 1992 Kurt Diemberger returned to the Shaksgam with the Catalans and on 4 August Oscar Cadiach, Lluís Rafols, Enric Dalmau and

Italian Alberto Soncini reached the central summit of Broad Peak via the E face by the route explored in 1991. Diemberger thus fostered an ascent suggested in mid-1980s' explorations here, and helped open the process of climbing on the huge, remote N and E faces of the central 8000m Karakoram peaks, which began with the Japanese first ascent of the N ridge of K2 in 1982. (Full details in article 'Beyond Broad Peak: A Journey of Discovery' in this volume.)

Gasherbrum 1 A Polish commercial expedition led by Krystof Wielicki failed in June in poor conditions, when a windslab avalanche killed Italian Paulo Bernascone. Three expeditions were unsuccessful on the *Messner route* and a Japanese expedition failed on the *Slovene route*. Another Japanese expedition, led by Eiho Ohtani, attempted the Japanese couloir on the N face, but switched to the W ridge after trouble with deep snow. They gave up on 22 August after reaching 7000m. Their liaison officer, Nazir Sabir, returned to the route with high altitude porters Rajab Shab and Mehrban Shah and succeeded between 24–26 August. This was Sabir's fourth 8000m peak.

Gasherbrum 2 The normal route was climbed by several teams.

Trango Tower Americans Greg Child and Mark Wilford climbed an extremely difficult rock route. They fixed rope on the lower section to a bivvy at 5700m, then made a push for the summit. A huge slab of rock, reported as 200m by 60m by 10m, detached itself from only 50m to their right and created an earthquake-like experience. The top was reached late on 23 August. On the **Great Trango Tower** John Middendorf and Xavier Bongard did a new route near the *Nowegian route*.

Skilbrum (7360m) A Japanese team, led by Tadakiyo Sakahara and booked on Gasherbrum 2, were delayed in Karachi when gas cylinders hidden in baggage exploded during unloading. Two weeks delay led them to attempt an unclimbed subsidiary peak on the W ridge, at the head of the Biange (Younghusband) glacier. Three members climbed this subsidiary peak S and left of the main peak, but failed in their attempt on the main summit.

Latok 1 Catherine Destivelle and Jeff Lowe tried the N ridge. A first attempt in mid-July ended when Lowe suffered a knee problem. A second in August was stopped by bad weather after six bivouacs. The ridge was threatened by huge snow mushrooms suspended over sections of the climbing and the pair made a 'reasonable but dire' decision to abandon the climb. This was probably doubly disappointing to Lowe who was involved in the epic first attempt in 1976.

On the same route a New Zealand/British party of Carol McDermott, Dave Wills, Andy McFarland and Andy MacNae reached 5900m on two occasions, but no further.

Latok 2 Ted Howard (British) led an attempt on the much attempted, unclimbed NW ridge. Though less steep than Latok 1, it compensates in length with still unknown difficulties in the last 500m. A camp was established on the Latok col at 5900m in mid-August, but bad weather and wind curtailed attempts on 23 August, ironically just before a few settled days.

Early in the morning of 3 August Tony Riley and Paul Nunn found sparse remains, clothing and equipment of Don Morrison, who was killed on the

Latok glacier in a crevasse fall in 1977. Morrison's remains were about a mile from the area where he fell in a crevasse and were removed to Base Camp, examined by Dr Peter Jackson and interred under his memorial cairn opposite Pamshe peak, of which he made the first ascent with Ted Howard in 1975. Asghar Ali, the expedition liaison officer and a guide, went back early to inform relatives.

During this expedition the viewpoint peak (Pt 5208m) S of the Baintha Lukpar glacier, first reported climbed by the Italians in 1977, was repeated by Colin Farnsworth and Tony Riley and the same pair ascended the crooked rock pinnacle (Pt 5250m) towards the S end of the Biafo-Baitha Lukpar divide – almost certainly a first ascent, involving exposed rock climbing on the summit section.

On the Biafo glacier British climbers Andy Cave, Dave Heseldon, Paul Jenkinson and Neil McAdie tried another steep rock line on the W Biafo wall in August, but gave up after prolonged bad weather.

Fiyag (King's Peak, 5550m) The 1400m N face was soloed from the Passu glacier by Jonathan Preston (UK), while his partner, Roy Ruddle, was ill. It gave climbing up to Scottish 4 (TD overall). The peak is incorrectly marked as 5640m on some maps. Preston also soloed the S face of Pt 5550m (adjacent to Needle Peak, 6090m), climbing a gully direct to the summit (Alpine D).

It is also understood that a second attempt on **Crown Peak** on the Choktoi/Nobande Sobande glacier divide was unsuccessful late in the season and that one climber was killed.

Many other smaller groups from Britain were active in Pakistan, mostly on smaller peaks, and one had permission to attempt the huge E ridge of **Masherbrum**, but news is not available of their outcomes.

Nanga Parbat – Kinshofer route Six out of ten expeditions succeeded, including three Koreans, five Basques and two Poles on 1 July and two Czechs on 4 July. Pete Long led a five-person alpine-style attempt which did not succeed.

The Rupal face A French winter venture is reported to have been defeated by bad weather and high winds.

Nanga Parbat via the Mazeno Ridge

Doug Scott writes:

The W ridge of Nanga Parbat is about eight miles long from the Mazeno Pass. It is the longest ridge on any of the 8000m peaks, and remains unclimbed. Although Nanga Parbat is a very popular mountain, there has been surprisingly little activity on this major feature. In July 1992 we planned to climb the Mazeno Ridge in three stages. After acclimatisation, phase two involved climbing the Hans Schell route on the S side of Nanga Parbat, to 6900m (Camp 4). On 17 August, whilst descending the steep, loose rock between Camp 2 and Camp 1, a massive rock avalanche roared down. Serge Efimov and I found shelter with the rocks skimming over our helmets and sack. Sean Smith was turned upside down on the belay by the abseil 50m higher. Valeri Perchine, who was about to make the abseil, was swept down when a rock hit him in the chest. Sean sustained bruised ribs, a crushed toe and a smashed

helmet, but was otherwise OK. He climbed down with what was left of the abseil rope. Valeri stopped 100m down in a shallow depression on the steep face: he was lucky not to go another 1500m. As it was, he suffered broken ribs, a cracked pelvis and lacerations to the hands and face. It took two days to get him down to Base Camp.

Meanwhile, Alan Hinkes, Ang Phurba and Nga Temba had survived another huge rock fall the day before, after placing a food and fuel dump at 7000m. Alan decided to go home, a decision influenced as much by the death of two close friends earlier in the year as from his own near-miss. Sean went off to Gilgit for a medical check and Valeri remained at Base Camp to recover there over the next few weeks.

The remaining four members of the expedition went around towards the Mazeno Pass. After two days walking from Base Camp, we arrived to camp at 4800m amongst the moraine of the Mazeno glacier, some 3km SSE of the Mazeno Gap. Early the next morning Ang Phurba, Nga Temba, Serge Efimov and I set off to climb the ridge which goes N to Pt 6880, the first of the seven Mazeno summits, as marked on the 1936 German map of the area. We were carrying, on average, 25kg rucksacks, with enough food and gear to sustain us over an estimated eight days up and down, up the Mazeno Ridge to the summit of Nanga Parbat, and a descent down the Schell route. We moved together over the glacier and climbed roped up 45–50 degree ice slopes. After 12 hours' climbing, we arrived at a suitable camp site on the crest of the NS ridge, at about 5850m. We spent 26 August climbing around and over the pinnacles of the ridge, with some difficulty (TD) to camp at about 6400m. On 27 August we climbed up on ice and snow to Pt 6650 and then over the first of the Mazeno summits, Pt 6880. We continued E along the ridge, over Pt 6825, to camp on a windswept saddle, to the east. On 28 August we climbed up to Pt 6970, which was as far as we got.

The night before had been extremely windy: the Sherpas hadn't slept too well and Ang Phurba was definitely worried about the descent. He had been in the big rock fall with Alan and actually caught a rock on his chin; he was still somewhat demoralised from that and counselled a retreat. There was no way we could split the party and so we went into retreat, retracing our steps to Pt 6880 and continuing W and down towards the Mazeno Pass. We descended the steep, broken ground directly above the col and bivouacked at about 5750m. On 29 August we descended the last of the loose and dangerous rocks to the Mazeno Pass at 5358m, and eventually reached Base Camp, just before dark, after a 20km walk. It had been a good seven-day outing, climbing over new ground, including three of the seven Mazeno peaks, and seeing first-hand that this Mazeno Ridge, the W ridge of Nanga Parbat, could be the most elegant and safest way to the summit. However, the most difficult of these summits have yet to be crossed.

After collecting, burning and burying 45 sacks of rubbish from around Base Camp with the help of local children, we packed up. On 1 September we walked out to the road-head where Ibrahim, our excellent liaison officer, had the jeeps ready to take us to Gilgit.

Paul Nunn continues:

Following the steep rise in fees from Nepal, and discussions at the International Tourism Conference in Islamabad in early November, peak fees were raised substantially and a system charging extra for additional members beyond five was introduced for 1994 onwards.

Peak height	Royalty (\$US)	Additional fee per member over five (\$US)
K2	9000	1000
8000+	7500	700
7501-8000	3000	300
7001-7500	2000	200
6000-7000	1200	150

Peak fees are never welcome to mountaineers, and these will be no exception. They are not so extreme as the Nepali fees and the Pakistan Government maintains traditions of order in giving permissions, which reduces uncertainty for visiting mountaineers. Unfortunately, increased peak fees generally benefit central government and have almost no impact upon the environment.

At the practical level, it should be noted that many parties are using the Gondoro La as an approach or return route from the Upper Baltoro/Concordia area. Though it takes a relatively short time it remains reasonably serious, with risk of stonefall on the Hushe side. It may also be as expensive as the other way now that the jeep road to Askole shortens the journey to a day from Skardu, weather and conditions permitting.

The road is not a forgone conclusion. Ted Howard's party found it broken by a landslide before Dusso in late July, entailing a two or three hour delay. Up the Braldu past Chokpoing, opposite the notorious slopes of the old walk-in, their five jeeps passed safely. As some of the climbers walked behind, the road split under their feet and a 10m section disappeared into the river. It was several weeks before restoration and the road is unlikely ever to be entirely safe.