

San Lorenzo East Face Report 16/10/2014

Members:

Matt Helliker

Jon Bracey

intended expedition dates: 28th Sept - 30th Oct

Report:

Myself and Jon left London on the 28th Sept to fly to El Calafate, due to weight issues with equipment we arranged TNT to ship our climbing gear to El Calafate 1 week before leaving the UK which seemed cheaper than paying for extra weight at the airport. On arriving in El Calafate our bags were not at the hotel as arranged with TNT but still in a warehouse in the UK, due to paper work issues from there end! after much effort and phone calls TNT arranged an Express delivery of 3-4 days to our location which not perfect was doable with time if it arrived.

We wasted this time by getting everything sorted, buying expedition food, fuel, sorting taxi services etc so that once the bags arrived we could leave town that same day, taxi to the road head and walk in. 5 days later our bags still didn't show with TNT saying that they were in Buenos Aires (BA), and we needed to fly the 4 hours back to BA to attempt to release bags from customs, and even then it could take up to 2 weeks for us to lay our hands on the equipment meaning we would be totally out of time. TNT agreed to do the shipment with a max of 6-7 days for delivery, nothing was said about the bags maybe getting stuck in BA so we have been totally let down by TNT. We had no option but to fly home early, without any attempt on the mountain. We are still doing battle with TNT to recover our equipment still in BA, which is now proving to be an expensive process! unfortunately due to the nature of the trip we had to pay for most of the expedition apart from the 4x4 ride to the trail head, as we were set. ready to just go climbing, but this never happened which is massively upsetting due to the training, planning and expense for a trip to only be stopped by a mistake by TNT. before flying out we found a charity for homeless folk in El Calafate, this is where we gave all our expedition food and fuel to which they were very thankful for so at least we made someone happy!

At the start of our trip on arrival to El Calafate we were informed of our friend Andreas Fransson along with JP Auclair who were missing on San Lorenzo after being avalanched on ascent for a ski descent, we offered all our help with limited equipment with Rolo Gabrielli organising the rescue. a heli flew and unfortunately found the bodies of our friends, the same day my other friend Liz Daley was killed near Fitz Roy again by avalanche. With this news and no equipment it was dark heavy days down in Patagonia. So sometimes things are not just meant to be, and we are still alive!

We both feel very sorry for not getting an attempt but the situation was really out of our hands without our equipment...this is every expedition's worst nightmare I think.....Lessons Learnt, don't ever ship freight equipment to South America.

Expedition accounts in GBP:

Flights:

Geneva - London = £292
London - El Calafate = £2360
Cost to change flights home early = £630

Food:
£560

Fuel:
£84

Taxis between airports:
£130

Transport from El Calafate - Gobernador Gregoles: (payed upfront- no refund!)
£750

Freight:
£850

Hotel:
£560

Total expedition spent: £6,216

Grants:
NEA - £2000
BMC - £1300
MEF - £ 1650
Patagonia - £800

Total Grants:
£5,750

Personal:
£466

Totals:
£6,216