

Pictures on previous page:
Christina Corbett and Jessica Holmes with mules and pack animals making their way on narrow trails through the rock and snow valleys of the Kilgah Dagh.



Charging ahead with Mlagene Elwell bearing our "standard".



The essentials of our ride including a copy of Benyon's diary, Kelly's chief of staff, who guided us through every step of our expedition.



Abdul Aziz, with our heavily laden caravan, our equipment and supplies travelling with us, sometimes in front, sometimes behind.

When Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter, then Commander of the Household Division, invited me to join him and Professor Richard Holmes on a horseback journey through the Hindu Kush Mountains, in the North West Frontier Province of Northern Pakistan, I did not hesitate for an instant. What better way to experience the unspoiled nature and beauty of the mountains and the local culture than by travelling in good company on a loyal and dependable steed?

The purpose of our eight-man expedition was to retrace the trail of a famous campaign that took place where the Great Game was played out, testing the British and Russian influence of yesteryear. In March 1895 Colonel Kelly marched across some of the most difficult country in the world, from Gilgit to Chitral, across the notorious 13,000-foot Shandur Pass, hauling guns through snowdrifts to successfully relieve the fort at Chitral.



A very narrow welcome through the pass, as we were escorted by police and abductees of the Chitral Scouts on our way to the fort in Chitral.



A worried fellow traveller sharing the trail for a day, a likely encounter in the Chitral Valley with Kelly's troops in 1895.

What better way to experience the nature and beauty of the mountains than by travelling on a loyal and dependable steed?



The "first view in show" - The River Gilgit in all its glory.

Masquod Ul-Malik, whose grandfather was the British-backed Mahar at the time of the campaign, organized our expedition. Once mounted and leaving Gilgit, our procession of eight riders, 13 horses plus pack horses and donkeys proceeded along the banks of the blue-green Gilgit River valley. We then cut through some very impressive mountain scenery over the Shandur Pass and down to Chitral, travelling a total of 450 kilometres.



A different sort of beauty, a young woman's smile around Malak.



Just another picture perfect view from our campsite in Fort Larkspur.



Descending from Shandur Pass.

43 In the Footsteps of History

A stunning photographic document of a journey through the mountains of Pakistan



Katildil tribal woman.



The Gilgit river, sometimes flowing calmly through magnificent mountains, valleys and occasional villages.

We rode on superb Marwari and Ismaili horses, which are normally used as polo ponies by the locals in the surrounding villages. Polo grounds, remnants of the days of the great British Empire, became a common sight in the villages that we rode through. Every village had its own team to take part in the polo festival held every summer. The polo grounds on top of the remote Shandur Pass are the highest polo grounds in the world.

As we travelled and camped on the very same trail used by the earlier expedition, Sir Evelyn would read us excerpts from the diary kept by Lieutenant Benyon, Colonel Kelly's chief of staff, as we sat around a musing fire each night. The only difference between their journey and ours was the absence of battles or an enemy to be wary of. Instead we experienced a glowing and welcome hospitality from the few people we encountered in the surrounding villages where we camped, as we progressed through the mountains along the Gilgit River.

Little has changed in this area since Colonel Kelly's campaign took place. This is the way to witness it: by horseback deep in the country, at a pace that permits you to see and feel the local culture and magnificent scenery.



Polo in the past form is played in many villages throughout the Chitral Valley.

The polo grounds on top of the remote Shandur Pass are the highest in the world



The high prize of our trip, the infamous 13,000-foot Shandur Pass, which gave much trouble to Kelly's troops, due to high snow drifts along its 3-mile distance.



Henry Dallal is a photojournalist from Iran. His work has been published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Country Life*, *Horse and Hound* and the *Denver Post*. Henry has worked closely with the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, and is currently at work on a photographic book about them. His other photographic books include *Flowers in the Park*, a document of the scenes of public mourning following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.