

Mount Everest Foundation Notes

1984-85

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The following notes summarise reports from expeditions which have received the approval of the MEF and this is in most cases accompanied by a grant. MEF approval is generally an essential first step to seeking assistance, financial or otherwise, from other organisations. It should be noted that the MEF only 'sponsors' expeditions in exceptional circumstances, *eg* the 1981 Mount Kongur expedition.

Copies of the full reports of these expeditions are lodged, when available, with the Alpine Club Library and the Archives section of the Royal Geographical Society, and may be consulted in these places. Some expeditions will already have been described in the Alpine Journal and other journals.

The expeditions summarised in the following notes took place between August 1984 and October 1985 and these notes are based on reports received up to 1 December 1985.

North America, including Arctic & Greenland

84/32 *Anglo-Canadian Rocky Mountain Speleological Expedition (1983 & 1984)*

In August-September 1983 ten British speleologists joined a Canadian team to explore the limestone *karst* cave country in the Small River area west of Mount Robson. They surveyed ten significant new caves, the longest in excess of 1.3km. The following year (July-August 1984) seven British cavers joined Canadians in exploring sinkholes in the area of Bocock Peak south of Williston Lake in the Peace River district of British Columbia. Three caves were explored, one to a depth of 253m.

85/8 *Yukon — A winter journey (March-April 1985)*

Guy Sheridan's plans to traverse the full length of the Selwyn Mountains from Tungston, in the Mackenzie Mountains, to Dawson was frustrated by bad weather. Only two sections, from Tungston to Macmillan Pass and from the Ortell Camp down to Elsa Camp on the Stewart River, together with an excursion into the Tombstone Mountains north of Dawson were completed, a total of 812km on skis.

85/15 *Southampton University, Baffin Island Expedition (July-August 1985)*

The high cost of local rations from the Hudson Bay store at Pagnirtung limited the scope of this expedition, based at Summit Lake on the Weasel River in the Cumberland Peninsula. Sediment sampling from side streams was abandoned, but the glacier snout was mapped and there was some general exploration of the area.

85/39 *I M Marsh College Expedition to East Greenland (July–September 1985)*

Despite a (non-fatal) rockfall accident, this expedition climbed a number of peaks from a base camp at the junction of the Bersaekerka and Dunnottar Glaciers, including the SE face of Dunnottar, and also carried out glaciological and geological work in the area.

Andes

85/5 *British Peruvian Cordillera Expedition (June–July 1985)*

A major unclimbed route on the West of Milpocraju (5420m) was completed and filmed for the 'Mick Burke Award 1985' competition. More filming was carried out on Nevado Cayesh and Nevado Maparaju around the Quebrada Cayesh. Hinkes and Gore remained behind to make three new climbs: N face of Huandoy Deste, W face direct of Nevado Churup and S face of Nevado Pisco, as well as climbing three major peaks in the Cordillera Blanca.

85/18 *Cambridge Ecuadorian Andes Expedition (August–October 1985)*

This scientific expedition completed their studies of the thermal balance of the Caldera Glacier of El Altar and of the tree *Polylepis Incana*, finding conditions warmer and wetter than expected. They also visited the area devoid of vegetation (the Limpio Pongo) round Cotopaxi to collect soil samples. Three members climbed Chimborazo.

85/25 *East Midlands Universities Peruvian Expedition (July–September 1985)*

Finding that their planned first ascents (Jurau D and Siula Grande W face) had been climbed, Ruddell and Ravenshill substituted two new routes, one on the W face of Trapecio (5653m), the other on the S ridge of Sierra Norte (5860m), but deep snow forced retreat at 5500m and 5600m respectively.

85/28 *Perth High Andes Expedition (June–July 1985)*

After climbing in the Ishinca Valley, making ascents of Nevado Ishinca (W ridge), N summit of Ranracalpa (E face) and Urus Este, the team successfully tackled Huascarán but were forced by bad weather to abandon plans for Alpamayo.

85/36 *Cordillera Apolobamba Expedition (July 1985)*

Tier and Curran succeeded in the first ascent of Palomani Tranca (5633m) not, as intended by the short steep N ridge, but by the 3km W ridge. A very mixed snow, ice and rock climb taking two days.

Himalaya

85/11 *London Shivaling Expedition 1985*

This team's attempt on the unclimbed buttress of Shivaling was abandoned at half height owing to bad weather and four members climbed the mountain by the original W ridge route.

85/32 *British Sickle Moon Expedition (August–September 1985)*

From a base camp on the Sarbal glacier this party, led by J.R. Peart.

attempted an ice line on the NW face of the S ridge of Sickle Moon but heavy snow crushed Camp 2 at 5500m and continuous snowfall forced their retreat.

Karakoram

85/6 Scottish Karakoram Expedition (June-September 1985)

This party, under Cohen and Nunn, had as objective a new route on Gasherbrum III (7952m) by the SW ridge which they tackled from the upper coire between Gasherbrum IV and Gasherbrum III. After a bivouac on the ridge at 7400m, they pushed on (without bivouac gear) to c.7700m when high winds forced a retreat. In good weather another 3 to 4 hours would have been needed to cover the continuing difficulties to the summit which, although only 250m higher, was some considerable distance away. The third member of the party suffered frostbitten feet.

85/10 British Masherbrum Karakoram Expedition (April-July 1985)

This Anglo-Canadian team had the double objective of combining geological work round the Concordia area of the Baltoro Glacier with a reconnaissance of the formidable N face of Masherbrum. The extent of the geological work can be gauged by the fact that it took 8 porters to carry out 200kgs of rock samples. As for the mountaineering, Searle and Rex, after going as high as 6500m on the Abruzzi ridge of K2, set up camp to attempt, not the N face itself of Masherbrum where Japanese had been engaged for three weeks, but the long E ridge of Masherbrum. Atrocious weather and frequent avalanches made their ascent to a point on the E ridge, W of the Masherbrum La hazardous. They considered that to continue along this ridge in these conditions would have taken weeks, but in good conditions, this 'most spectacular unclimbed ridge' might have gone. They rounded off a useful month in the Karakoram with a look at Gasherbrum and the Trango Towers.

85/40 Anglo Indian Expedition to Siachen & Rimo Range (June-September 1985)

This expedition, combining Alpine Climbing Group members and Bombay Mountaineers, explored the S Rimo glacier, the Shelkar Chorten glacier and the S & N Terong glaciers, conducting some scientific work on the last. Venables and Saunders attempted Rimo I (7385m), but a dropped sack containing essential equipment forced a retreat at 6900m. Wilkinson and Fotheringham made the first ascent of Rimo III (7233m) crossing the previously uncrossed S col of Rimo I to the S Rimo glacier from which the summit was reached in two days on 14 July.

85/42 Cambridge Ladakh Expedition (August-September 1985)

This party carried out studies of the complex geology of part of the Zaskar range; in particular, the valley morphology of the Markha valley and its glacial morphology above Nimaling. They also researched the origin of the yellow silts in the Lamayuru basin.

Kenya*Peter Thexton Memorial Expedition to Mt Kenya (July 1985)*

In addition to making several difficult ascents in good ice conditions on the S face of Mt Kenya (Diamond Glacier–Ice Window and S face direct), this 11-man team completed a scientific project into mountain sickness based on Two Tarn Hut (4490m), collecting data about the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (implicated in the genesis of acute mountain sickness) in accordance with a protocol extending over 18 days.

85/17 Imperial College Ruwenzori Expedition (July–August 1985)

As the E side of the Ruwenzori massif had been occupied by Museveni's National Resistance Guerrillas, this party had to abandon their plans for Ruwenzori. They substituted a visit to Mount Kenya on which they achieved a number of difficult ice climbs on the S faces (then in winter conditions) of the summit peaks. They also made three new rock climbs on Pigott and Midget Peaks including 'Hunting the Hyrax' (on the W face of Pigott) which they believe to be the first Grade 8 (E3) on the mountain.

