Mount Everest Foundation Notes 1985–86

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The following notes summarize 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 mountaineering periodicals.

The expeditions summarized in the following notes took place between August 1984 and August 1986. These notes are based on reports received up to 1 December 1986.

North America, including Greenland and the Arctic

86/3—*Salford University Expedition to Cape Farewell Area, Greenland (July–August 1986)* This eight-man team claimed some 20 first ascents of minor peaks (1300–1700m) in the Cape Farewell area (60N 43W) and the second ascent (after the French in 1956) of Big House Peak (2280m) (Igdlorssuit Qaqat), the highest point in the area, by the SW ridge, and also the first ascent by the E ridge.

86/7—*Sunderland East Greenland Expedition (July–August 1986)* This four-man team stopped short of their objective, the SW face of Laupersbjerg, and instead managed to climb the SW spur of Rodsbjerg (in the region of 16 September Glacier) to within 350m of the summit.

86/9—*Hayes Range Ski Mountaineering (March–April 1986)* Rob Collister led a party of four on a ski traverse of the Hayes Range in Alaska, climbing six minor peaks of 1800–2400m on the way.

86/19—*British Mount Hunter Expedition (April–May 1986)* Richardson and Hart succeeded in their bold objective of a complete traverse of Mt Hunter in Alaska (4442m) in a 12-day alpine-style push. (Of the two previous traverses, one had taken four months, the other had omitted the summit.) This British pair climbed by the difficult S ridge, traversed the 3km summit ridge and descended by the 6–8km long W ridge.

86/20—*Caribou Caving Expedition (July–August 1986)* This Anglo–Canadian caving expedition was disappointed in its exploration of the Grayling River Hot Springs area and the Caribou Plateau, though it discovered an unexpected colony of bats in a warm cave. No extensive cave system was discovered; numerous promising leads proved unfruitful.

86/25—*Austrian Alpine Club (UK Section) Expedition to Milne Island, Greenland (July–August 1986)* This party achieved its modest objectives of crossing the

Charcot Glacier and climbing four hitherto unclimbed summits of around 1300–1500m.

86/26—*Joint University 'Silver Spoon' Expedition to Northern Iceland (June–July 1986)* This party of 12 students and two tutors undertook glaciological work on the rock (ie debris-covered) glaciers in Nautadalur and Skjóldalur, S of Akureyri and climbed to the Tröllaskagi Plateau.

South America, including Andes and Antarctica

84/2—*New Zealand Expedition to South Georgia (November 1984–January 1985)* Based on the Royal Bay area, this team carried out geological, mapping and other scientific work on unknown areas of the Hindle and Upper Weddell Glaciers. The four climbing members achieved several first ascents of minor peaks in the Hindle Glacier area and on the ridge between the Hearney and Cook Glaciers.

84/6—*Joint Services Expedition to Brabant Island (1983–85) (continued)* The report of the over-wintering party (June–November 1984) covered the reconnaissance of a route up to 1800m on Harvey Heights, the two-week 'Himalayan style' ascent of Mount Parry (2522m) and the first ascents of all the higher Solvay Mountains. Scientific data from the N end of the island were also collected. The Second Summer Party took over in December 1984 and is due to stay until April 1985.

84/23—*Leeds Expedition to Peruvian Andes* This four-man team claims three first (hitherto unrecorded) ascents in the Huayhuash Range, namely the N face of Sarapo Oeste (5567m), the E ridge of Ancocancha Este (5600m) and the W ridge of Seria Norte (5860m).

84/34—*Cambridge Medical Expedition to the Andes* This team carried out medical work in two villages and one small town (Ilave) on the Peruvian shore of Lake Titicaca, collecting the faeces of children up to eight years old to study intestinal parasites, relating this to socio-economic conditions. They established that prevalence of parasites is higher in rural than in urban areas. Two short treks were made to study altitude distribution of *Satyridae* (brown) butterflies of the group *Pronophilini* for the Natural History Museum.

85/3—*Santa Ines Island (January–February 1985)* After being landed by the Chilean Navy on the virtually unexplored island of Santa Ines (SW of Magellan Straits), this three-man team spent 15 days exploring the ice-cap and, despite fierce winds, climbed some ill-defined summits. A further week was spent collecting botanical specimens of this most southerly vegetation.

85/12—*Porchester Andean Expedition (May–June 1985)* Simpson and Yates succeeded in their objective of an alpine-style ascent of the unclimbed (1250m high) W face of Siula Grande (6356m). During their descent of the N ridge first one, then the other, fell through cornices at 6000m—Simpson's fall resulting in a severe fracture. Yates lowered him down 800m of snow-face in storm conditions, but Simpson eventually fell into a large bergschrund. Assuming him dead, Yates returned to Base Camp alone. Simpson managed to crawl out of the crevasse and reach Base Camp after four days without food or water. He has since recovered after this miraculous escape.

85/37—*Anglo–Chilean Expedition to S Patagonian Ice-Cap (13 November–23*

December 1985) This team of seven British and four Chileans, led by Matthew Hickman, carried out an exploratory scientific survey in the Seno Andrew area of SW Chile, as well as attempting the ascent of Cerro Aguilera (2438m). Both the climb and the crossing of the Patagonian ice-cap were abandoned because of severe weather.

85/27—*British Andean Expedition to Cordillera Huayhuash (July–August 1986)* Despite alarms from 'Shining Path' guerrillas, this party made a first ascent of P 5514m (by E buttress and E face) in the Suiroraju group. They also made the second ascent of Suiroraju itself (5439m), and the second and third ascents of E (5410m) and Central (5442m) peaks in the neighbouring Puscanturpa Group.

86/38—*'Janka Raju' (Ice Mountain) 86 (June–August 1986)* In the Cordillera Blanca, members of this party made the first ascent of P 5420m, S of Nevado Cayesh, and also claim the first British ascent of Nevado Cayesh itself, taking six days by the NW face (itself a first ascent). Having achieved these two fine objectives, they did not attempt their planned traverse of the ridge connecting the two peaks of Chacraraju.

86/48—*UK New Zealand Andes Expedition to Cordillera Real (May–July 1986)* Of this four-member party, Hair and Payne made first ascents of the S face direct of Rasac (6040m) and of the SE face of Rinrijirka (5810m). Together with the others, ascents were made of three of the 6000m peaks in the range.

Himalaya

84/17—*British SE Kishtwar Himalaya 1984 (August–September 1984)* This party continued the recent exploration of the Agyasol area, approaching up the Kaban Nalla from the Chenab River. Bad weather forced a retreat from the ridge of Mardi Phabrang. Simon Richardson made a momentous solo traverse of the range, climbing Tupendo 2 by its S ridge, crossing the E ridge of Agyasol to the Darlang River which he descended to its junction with the Chenab at Athole.

85/1—*Ama Dablam Winter Expedition (November–December 1985)* The Burgess twins and a Canadian planned an alpine-style winter ascent of the SW ridge of Ama Dablam. No fixed ropes were used up to a point above the Yellow Tower. On 19 December high winds which shook the Yellow Tower itself forced their withdrawal from a point just short of 6300m.

85/2—*British Kishtwar Expedition (August–September 1985)* Rosser led a team of nine up the Chenab into the Burt Nalla with the object of making the first ascent of Hagshu (6330m). Though the technical difficulties of the climb were not thought considerable, persistent stonefall, avalanches and bad weather forced a retreat at 5400m. Some medical research on intracranial pressures (ICT), involving holes in the head, was carried out. A film was made for the Mick Burke Award.

85/9—*Pilkington Everest Expedition (March–June 1985)* This strong 10-man team led by Mal Duff made a further attempt on the ENE ridge of Everest, but were defeated by high winds and heavy snowfall after establishing Camp 4 at 7850m. They climbed the First Pinnacle where Joe Tasker's camera, and other equipment, was found, but turned back after attempting the Second Pinnacle at about 8100m.

85/13—*Edinburgh Lahul Expedition (June–October 1985)* This party's aim was to climb two of the unclimbed and unnamed peaks at the head of the Miyar Nalla in Lahul. They succeeded with Point 6100m (marked as 6150m) and on the S ridge and E face of P 6280 (marked as 6030m).

85/19—*Meru—British Gangotri Expedition (August–October 1985)* This four-man party had as its objective the first ascent of the E buttress of the Central Peak of Meru in the Gangotri area. After establishing a high camp on the Meru-Shivling Col, they pushed on to the rock-step at 6300m before conditions forced a retreat.

85/20—*Leeds Gangotri Expedition (August–September 1985)* This four-man team attempted the first ascent of the unnamed W summit (6504m) of Satopanth as their first Himalayan experience. After a bivouac at 5800m, with continuous avalanches nearby, they decided to retreat in the face of poor unseasonable weather in mid-September.

85/21—*Joint British/Nepalese Army Expedition to Mount Kirat Chuli (August–November 1985)* The principal objective of this large party (15 British, 10 Nepalese, two police, two civilians) was the first ascent from the Nepal side of Kirat Chuli (7365m) in the NE corner of Nepal. On 15 October, three climbers reached 6730m on the S ridge of the Nepal peak, but widespread snowstorms on 16 October and following days, with some climbers caught in avalanches, forced them to abandon the climb. The botanist member, assisted by others, photographed and collected 220 specimens for Kew.

85/22—*Indo-Scottish Himalayan Expedition to Parbati (September–October 1985)* Starting from Manali (Kulu), this party attempted the previously unclimbed highest peak in Glacier I of the S Parbati region. At a point on the W face at the foot of the S ridge, they were frustrated by the exceptionally heavy snowstorms that swept the Himalaya in mid-October 1985.

85/25—*Scottish Annapurna III (September–October 1985)* A porters' strike on the fifth day out, the resulting exhaustion from heavy load-carrying, coupled with the unseasonable snowfalls of October 1985, prevented this party from reaching higher than the 5200m col between Machapuchare and Annapurna III, from which the only glimpse of their objective was obtained, before retreat.

85/29—*White Sail West Face Expedition (September 1985)* Two members of this party succeeded, despite poor weather, shortage of food and five bivouacs above 6000m, in making the first ascent of Dharmsura ('White Sail', 6445m), W face. On returning to Base Camp three days later than expected, they found that the other two members, having reached the summit by the SW ridge, had presumed the first pair dead and had departed, leaving neither message, food nor money.

85/31—*Sheffield Fluted Peak (Singu Chuli) Expedition (September–October 1985)* After climbing Rakshi Peak and Tent Peak from a high camp in the Annapurna Base Camp area, this party abandoned their attempted first ascent of Fluted Peak owing to the unseasonably heavy snowstorm of October 1985. They had an unpleasant and unusual theft of equipment and a tiresome recovery process.

86/2—*Cho Oyu International Winter Expedition (November–December 1985)* A fast-moving alpine-style climb by three pairs took advantage of the fine weather

of the first week of December to tackle Cho Oyu by the Nangpa La and the SW ridge. The Czech pair reached the summit (8222m); the British pair (Burgess and Marshall) retreated at 7500m, and the US pair at 7000m. This fastest ascent of a 8000m peak in winter involved a high element of risk.

86/8—*British Mera South Face Expedition (March–April 1986)* Despite the deep snow of this early-season start, Base Camps were established below both the N and S faces of Mera (6461m), in the Khumbu Himal near Lukla. Two members succeeded in the first ascent of the SW pillar of Mera, descending to the Mera La. Two others turned back just short of the summit.

Karakoram and Hindu Kush

84/5—*Muztagh Tower North West Ridge (June–August 1984)* Two pairs (Duff and Brindle; Tinker and Allan) of this seven-man party succeeded in reaching the summit of the Muztagh Tower on successive days at the end of July. They found the lower glacier section technically more difficult than expected. The NW ridge gave excellent mixed climbing, but both granite and limestone were unstable.

84/24—*Old Oundelians: Tirich Mir (July–August 1985)* Except for one member suffering frost-bite, this was a happy expedition of four Old Oundelians and seven boys from the school, who tackled four new peaks of 5400m as training, successfully climbed both peaks of Guhl Lasht Zom (6630m) and, before being turned back by bad weather, reached 7000m on the ridge of Tirich Mir that forms the S edge of the Tirich Glacier.

85/33—*Climbs from the Karakoram Highway (June–August 1985)* Heat, illness and arguments with porters dogged Doug Scott's plans for ascents of Rakaposhi N face and Nanga Parbat from the S. Nonetheless, members of his mixed party did climb Diran (7273m), and the W side of the Rupal Peak, and also reached 7300m on the SW ridge of Nanga Parbat. Ease of access by the Karakoram Highway was a factor telling against proper acclimatization.

85/34—*South Wales Karakoram Expedition (July–August 1985)* This six-member team intended to traverse the Biafo and Hispar Glaciers, to make the first ascent of Snow Lake Peak, and to reconnoitre the SE ridge of Trivor. They achieved none of these objectives: one pair retreated with a pulmonary problem; one of the second pair was injured falling into a crevasse; and the third pair went missing and were not seen again, despite a search by Pakistan Army helicopter.

86/11—*British Gasherbrum IV (April–July 1986)* This eight-member team made attempts, first, on the 'West' (in fact SW) ridge of Gasherbrum IV—to a height of 6550m, and then, after moving round to the E Gasherbrum Glacier, on the untried S ridge to a height of 7300m. Stonefall, heavy snow and injuries were the reasons for their retreat.

86/18—*British Karakoram Expedition (April–July 1986)* Another informal trip to the Karakoram, based on the delightful Hushe Valley ('a true Alpine playground'), from which attempts were made on various unclimbed peaks near Gondoro Peak, at the head of the Charakusa Glacier, and later, from Hunza, some intricate climbing near the spectacular rock-spire of Bubalimiting.

86/28—*British Chogolisa Expedition (July–September 1986)* This five-member party led by Fanshawe made a successful traverse of the twin peaks of Chogolisa (7665m, 7654m) in light-weight alpine style between 10 and 15 August. Three members subsequently attempted nearby Broad Peak, but sadly, on 25 August, when Liam Elliot was close to the summit, a cornice gave way under him, and he fell 2000m to his death on the E (Chinese) side of the ridge.
86/31—*British Hindu Kush Expedition (July–September 1986)* After splitting up into climbing teams, members of this party climbed Dir Gol Zom by the E ridge and by the NE face, but were forced by 10 days' continual snowfall in early September to abandon their planned objective of an alpine-style ascent of Tirich Mir, without oxygen or porters.
86/39—*Army Expedition to Chogolungma (June–July 1986)* All eight British members of this team from the 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards achieved their objective of making the first ascent, by the N ridge, of an unnamed peak of 5820m in the Rakaposhi range. They have applied to the Pakistan Ministry of Sport and Tourism for permission to call it 'Cavalry Peak'.

Elsewhere

84/26—*Cambridge Mount Kenya Afro-Alpine Expedition (July–September 1984)* Basing themselves in the Teleki Valley, this undergraduate team from Girton College, discovering that there were no melt-water streams on the Lewis Glacier, altered their objective to the channel morphology of the Teleki River. Data were collected on the diurnal heaving of the soil and other soil patterns, but the length of the equatorial night inhibited their planned night field-work.
85/7—*Untamed River Caving Expedition (Papua New Guinea) (October 1984–April 1985)* The objective of this 12-man team was to explore the underground course of the Nare River (the 'Untamed River') in East New Britain, off Papua New Guinea. After three weeks underground, with at least eight crossings of the main stream, both the 'Flying Dutchman' and the furthest point ('Apocalypse Now'), reached by an earlier French team, were passed. Five cavers reached an impassable section at 'Armageddon'. Upstream on the Nare, the Gouvi Bougalawe and Pavie cave systems were explored and mapped.
86/10—*China Caves 1985 (October–December 1985)* This first Anglo–Chinese caving project was carried out in the lowland SE province of Guangxi and, more spectacularly, among the conical limestone hills of the Guizhou Plateau to the NW. Collaboration carefully established over the previous two years led, despite the contrast between the British sporting and scientific approach and the strictly utilitarian considerations of the Chinese, to a highly successful joint exploration of 30km of passages (and their survey), in the largest area of 'tower karst' in the world. Chinese cavers were trained in river cave techniques; an attractive colour booklet has been produced; and invitations have been extended for further British expeditions to both provinces in 1987.
86/23—*British Caucasus Expedition (July–August 1986)* This four-member team succeeded in their objective of making the first ascent of the W face of the N peak of Ushba. In addition they explored the major valleys of the area with a view to making information available to British climbers.