Mount Everest Foundation Expedition Reports 1989–91

SUMMARISED BY EDWARD PECK

All the expeditions summarised below received the approval of the Mount Everest Foundation. MEF approval, in most cases accompanied by a grant, is generally an important first step in seeking assistance, financial or otherwise, from firms or other organisations. The MEF itself does not normally offer sponsorship.

The expeditions briefly described in the following notes took place between June 1989 and August 1991. The notes were compiled from reports received up to 1 December 1991. Further expedition reports from 1989 and 1990 were summarised in the previous two volumes of the *Alpine Journal* (Vols 95 and 96). Copies of the full reports are lodged in the Alpine Club Library and in the Archives of the Royal Geographical Society, and may be consulted in those places.

The Americas and the Arctic

89/30 *Joint Services Expedition to the Cordillera Real, Bolivia* (June–August 1989)

16 Royal Navy and Royal Marine officers and ratings with film crew and medical team climbed, between them, 25 peaks over 5000m in the upper basin of the Cocoyo, E of Illampu, on which an attempt was made. Principal peaks climbed were Ancohuma (6427m), Pico Esperanza (5760m), Kimsakolyo (6044m) and Yoko de Ancohuma (5895m).

91/3 *South-East Greenland Traverse* (July–August 1991)

This proposed traverse was abandoned as a result of the collapse of one member who had to be evacuated from four days out on the ice cap from Sangmileq Fjord.

91/8 *British Andean Volcanoes Expedition* (July–September 1991)

This two-man team made a winter ascent of Licancabur (5916m), via the E spur, and went on to climb Volcan Simbad (5924m), Cerro de Pili (6046m), Volcan Lascar (5641m), and Ojos del Salado (6885m) in the northern Chilean-Argentine Andes. They recorded mapping and height errors.

Himalaya

89/6 *1989 Scottish Kishtwar Expedition* (August–September 1989)

Though balked of their main objective, Kishtwar Kailash, by the loss of their high-altitude food, two members of this four-man party made a successful ascent of Sentinel Peak (5900m), while the other two did likewise on Rohini Sikar (5990).

89/26 *British Unnamed Peak 6230m Expedition* (July–August 1989)

This three-man team made the first ascent of the N face of Unnamed Peak 6230m in the Kishtwar region of the Indian Himalaya. Owing to heavy snowfall their planned traverse of the peak was abandoned and the team reversed the N face route on descent.

90/5 *British Ama Dablam Expedition* (September–October 1990)

One member of this six-man party reached the summit on 24 October, while three others made it the following day.

90/6 *British/New Zealand Nanga Parbat* (May–June 1990)

Three British and five New Zealand climbers made two attempts on the Rupal Face of Nanga Parbat but were defeated at the top of the Diamir Face, well above 7000m.

90/10 *British Thalay Sagar Expedition* (September–October 1990)

The climbing party of four attempted the unclimbed S face of Thalay Sagar (6904m) in the Garhwal from the Phating glacier, but, owing to bad weather, they turned back at 6400m at the foot of the headwall.

90/14 *British Pumori Expedition* (September–November 1990)

Members of this eight-man party succeeded in the first British ascent of the S ridge of Pumori from Kala Pattar. They suffered one case of altitude sickness.

90/19 *British Gangotri Expedition* (September–October 1990)

Of this party of eleven British and one French, four members attempted the NNW ridge of Shivling, reaching 6000m before being stopped by dangerous snow conditions. Two further attempts on the NE face reached 5300m and 5500m respectively. Two members finally climbed Shivling by the normal W route in alpine style.

90/23 *British Ama Dablam NW Ridge*

This party of two men and one woman aimed to attempt the first ascent of the NW ridge of Ama Dablam, but were frustrated by administrative difficulties and the theft of their equipment.

90/26 *Nilkanta Himalayan Expedition* (September 1990)

Nine British climbers attempted Nilkanta (Garhwal) via the Khirao valley and the SE ridge. Two members pushed beyond Pt Alison, the highest point reached by a previous party, to reach the second pinnacle at over 6000m, when the weather deteriorated.

90/34 *Himalayan Venture 90 (Kamet)* (September–October 1990)

This joint venture of eleven British Royal Air Force and ten Indian Air Force climbers aimed to make the first British ascent of the W ridge of Kamet (7756m). Two summit attempts were made before retreat.

91/1 *Anglo-Polish Nanga Parbat 90/91* (November 1990–January 1991)

Seven Polish and four British climbers attempted a first winter ascent of the Rupal Direct on Nanga Parbat. This was abandoned at 6500m after a prolonged period of bad weather. Later, four members reached 6600m on the Schell route.

91/2 *Kashmir to Kulu Ski Traverse* (March–April 1991)

This four-member party succeeded in their objective of skiing from Kashmir through Zanskar and Lahul to Kulu, taking 32 days, covering 600km and crossing five major passes.

91/7 *British Winter Manaslu East* (November–December 1991)

This seven-member team had the unclimbed Manaslu East (7900m) as their objective. They reached 6200m but, mindful of the 38 deaths on Manaslu, including 17 in an avalanche on their route, they retreated on finding dangerously unconsolidated snow.

91/26 *British Bhrigupanth Expedition* (August–October 1991)

This four-man team succeeded in the first ascent of the NE face of Bhrigupanth (Gangotri) to a point (*c*6570m) within 200m of the summit. They went on to make the first ascent of Bhrigu Pathar (6038m) via the 1200m N face in 26 pitches at an overall UIAA grade of ED.

91/47 *'Green' Expedition to Bhutan* (October 1991)

This nine-member party explored the W watershed of the Basingthang Chu, E of Shodu, making what are thought to be first ascents of Ngum Tang Gang III (*c*5640m) by the E ridge, Wohney Gang (*c*5589m) by the NW ridge, Ganae Gang I (5487m) by the SE ridge, and Ganae Gang II (5460) by the N ridge. They submitted a report to the Bhutan government on 'clean conduct' in the mountains.

Karakoram

89/31 *British 'Ogre' North Face Expedition* (June–September 1989)

Owing to treacherous weather and snow conditions, this eight-man team failed to achieve their objective: the steep and previously unexplored N face of the 'Ogre'. On their first attempt they had nearly reached the top when they were avalanched by a serac fall from 500m above; one man suffered a bruised shoulder. Their second attempt was aborted when snow conditions proved unjustifiable.

91/4A *Anglo-Kiwi Latok Expedition* (May–July 1991)

This attempt by a four-member Anglo-New Zealand team on the first ascent of the N buttress of Latok I (7145m) was abandoned, as a result of accident and illness, after two members had reached 5880m.

91/6 *Yorkshire Shimshal–Malangutti Expedition* (July–August 1991)

This seven-member team gave up their projected objective of Pyramid Peak in the Malangutti glacier area in favour of climbing two peaks (5200m and 5550m) near the Corner Peak and the unclimbed peak shown as 5800m on the map (but probably *c*5550m). Corner Peak and Shiffkitten Sar were observed and an extensive photographic record made of the area.

91/16 *British Makrong Chhish Expedition* (June 1991)

This four-member party attempted the S face and E ridge of Makrong Chhish in the Hispar region, reaching 6000m; but, on descent in avalanche conditions, two men fell over an icecliff to their death.

91/25 *Indo–British Chong Kumdan Expedition* (July–August 1991)

This 12-man team succeeded in the first ascent of the W face/NW ridge of Chong Kumdan I (7071m), as well as of Chong Kumdan IV (6520m) by the SE ridge, Chong Kumdan V (6520m), Kichik Kumdan (6640m), Laknis by the E ridge (6235m), Kumdan Terong (6456m) and Landay (6170m).

91/42 *Shingkhang Expedition* (August–September 1991)

This team of two women abandoned an attempt on Shingkhang (5900m) at the head of the Aling glacier off the Hushe valley, owing to dangerous collapsing seracs, in favour of an attempt on Crown Peak and successful first ascents of three peaks between 5700m and 5900m – the Ali Peaks – at the head of the Ghondokhoro glacier.

91/43 *Oxford University Expedition to Naltar Valley* (June–July 1991)

This three-man team largely succeeded in their objectives, with an ascent of Snow Dome (5029m), Sentinel by the S face (5269m) and an unnamed peak at 5100m, but were forced to retreat on the NE ridge of North Twin.

90/51 *British Karakoram Traverse* (July–August 1991)

Though this four-member team were unable to complete their objective by crossing the Virjerab Pass to Shimshal, they did much exploration, partly on ski, of the Nobande Sobande glacier area, making a first ascent of Hanipispur (5990m) and two rock spires, as well as the first ascent to the Virjerab Pass (5700m) from this side.

Central Asia including Mongolia

90/18 *British Turkestan Expedition* (June–July 1990)

In a visit to this largely unexplored range in Soviet Turkestan, two members of this six-member party attempted Ak Cy, first by the S ridge and then by the N ridge, finally succeeding in a first ascent by the exacting NW buttress, reaching both the Rocky Ak Cy (5216m) and the Snowy Ak Cy (5355m) summits.

91/31 *British Mongolian Altai Expedition* (July–August 1991)

This team of four British and two Mongolian climbers made the first Western ascent of Munkhairkhan (4204m) and of Malchin (4150m) in West Mongolia. Two members made the first recorded crossing of the pass linking Doloon Nuur and Shuurkhai. They noted that Mongolia offers much new ground for mountaineers.

91/32A *British/New Zealand Central Tien Shan Expedition* (July–August 1991)

Both pairs of this four-member party made, on separate days, successful ascents of Khan Tengri (7010m) by the W ridge and of Pik Pobeda (7439m) also by its W ridge, in the Tien Shan (Celestial) Mountains on the Sino-Soviet border.

91/34 *Achat Valley (Zeravshan) Expedition* (July–August 1991)

This four-man party, visiting the Asan region of the Soviet Pamir, climbed Pik Domyaged (3900m) and made a new route on Pik Holland, all from the Russian-organised camp in the Ak Su valley. They succeeded in their main objective of a first ascent of the W ridge of Pyramid Peak (5509m) from the Avshan valley.

91/55 *ASPEX '91 Anglo-Soviet Pamir Caving Expedition* (July–August 1991)

Seven British and eleven Russian speleologists aimed to follow up the 1990 exploration (90/36) of the 'Dark Star' cave in the Hodja Gur Ata massif in the Bajsuntai Khrebet region of Uzbekistan. The frozen streamway of 'Dark Star' had inconveniently melted, but useful exploration was made of 'Morning Star' and 'Prima' caves, as well as of various cave entrances along the 30km long rock wall.

91/56 *Anglo-Soviet Pamir Caving Expedition* (July–August 1991)

14 British cavers explored several cave entrances believed to lead to a major cave system (also sought by French and Russian cavers) in the Peter the First range in the Tadjikistan Pamir. In addition to illness and bad weather, their return was complicated by the coup in Moscow.