

Barron Saddle to Mt Brewster

After climbing their route on Mt Conrad, Shelley Hersey, Paul Hersey, Jamie Vinton-Boot and Troy Mattingley kept walking, all the way to the Otoka Valley, where Jamie and Shelley did a route on the north face of Mt Hooker. They didn't climb to the summit but finished their route on the icefield just below the north-east ridge. Over in the South Temple Valley, Ross Cullen climbed *Hangups Need Company* (MC2) on the south face of Pakeke peak and then with Nick Shearer, climbed *Taurus* (MC2), on the east face of Mt Calvin. Rupert Gardiner, Dave Bolger, Greg Larkin and Rodger Hodson visited the Ben Ohau Range, where they made the first ascent of *Face to Face* (16), on the Pyramid Face of Mt Lloyd. In the North Huxley Valley, Rob Frost and Ben Dare found a new route on the south-west face of Peak 2054—a subsidiary peak of Mt Fraser. The climb is called *Aldous* and has a crux of grade 16. Ross Cullen and Nick Shearer completed *Jersey Bull*, on the south face of Peak 2303m. Paul Hersey and New Plymouth's Phill Davies climbed a new route on Glen Lyon in the Hopkins Valley. Searching for the best rock on the main face, the two climbed five pitches and then scrambled the rest to create *The Blind Assassin* (15). Erik Bradshaw climbed a variation/new route on the south face of Mt Huxley. Erik climbed the line in 2.5 hours with a big ol' tramping pack, which inspired the name: *The Tramping Route* (800m, MC4).

Other areas

In September Steve Fortune and Kieran Parsons went to have a look at the south face of Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku, in the Inland Kaikoura Range, and came away with a good new MC4/4+ ice route they named *Ornery Goat*. Geoff Spearpoint, Rob Frost, Claire Gibbs, Tim Church and Yvonne Pfluger completed the first complete traverse of the Selbourne Range in South Westland over the Christmas holidays. The party took six and a half days from the coast to the Dispute Lakes.

Rob Frost and Claire Gibbs climbed a new route on Mt Oates at Arthur's Pass in December. *I May Be Some Time* (MC2+) is on the south-west spur. Matt Thom, Rob Addis and Steve Fortune added some new winter lines to the Cathedral Rocks on Mt Ruapehu.

Ben Dare soloed a new route on the south-west buttress of Somnus, at the head of the north Routeburn, on 22 September. Ben climbed approximately 1200m from the valley floor to the top of the buttress, then followed easy ground to the summit. He encountered difficulties up to M4/4+.

Milo Gilmour and Llewellyn Murdoch headed up the Young Valley to establish *Wicked*, on the east face of Mt Awful. *Wicked* is a nine-pitch route to the right of *A Stitch in Time*. *Wicked* is by all accounts appropriately named, with sustained climbing in the 16–21 grade range and good protection (including some bolts). Milo then enlisted Rich Tribe and Nick Flyvberg for another foray into new ground. This time the trio completed five pitches, all traditionally protected, that get progressively more difficult, culminating in a difficult wide crack to layback that goes at grade 21/22. *Summer of Yes* is slightly further right again of *Wicked*.

Mount Everest Foundation Expedition Reports

SUMMARISED BY BILL RUTHVEN

The Mount Everest Foundation [www.mef.org.uk] was set up as a registered charity following the ascent of Everest in 1953 and was initially financed from the surplus funds and subsequent royalties of that expedition. It is a continuing initiative between the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).

The foundation's prime object is the promotion of 'exploration' in mountain areas: this is mainly geographic, but also includes the application of other exploratory disciplines in these areas, such as geology, botany and zoology. It has now distributed well over £1 million to more than 1,600 British and New Zealand expeditions planning such exploration, mostly to ambitious young climbers.

In return for supporting an expedition, all that the MEF asks is a comprehensive report. Once received, copies are lodged in the Alpine Club Library, the Royal Geographical Society, the British Mountaineering Council and the Alan Rouse Memorial Collection in Sheffield Central Library. Donations to assist the work of the MEF are more welcome than ever, so if you have previously benefited from MEF grants, why not include a bequest to the Foundation in your will?

The following notes summarise reports from the expeditions supported during 2012, and are divided into geographical areas.

NORTH AMERICA

InSpired Alaska Mike 'Twid' Turner with David Gladwin, May-June 2012.

The Kichatna Range (aka Cathedral Spires) is very remote and only accessible by light aircraft from Talkeetna but is fairly well explored, although there is plenty of scope for new routes, particularly on the second highest summit, Middle Triple Peak (2693m). When they arrived on the Tatina Glacier, this team was surprised to meet two other climbers, Stuart Inchely from UK and Kim Ladiges from USA, so they agreed to join forces and climb as a single team. They had hoped to climb a steep ice/mixed line toward the right side of its west face, but this proved impractical under the conditions, so they opted for the unclimbed north-west pillar. Despite poor weather with snow almost every day (the area recorded a 50-year record) in an eight-day push they climbed a 1000m mixed/ice route on the pillar, abseiling back down the ascent route. They called the route *Hard Arteries* (A3, E2, V), as half the team lived off pure butter while on the climb.

MEF Ref 12/05

Bangor University Denali Tom Ripley and Tom Livingstone, May-July 2012.

These two students hoped to climb a new line on Father and Sons Wall of Denali (6194m) in a single push. Unfortunately, they timed their visit rather late in the season thus much of the snow had melted, leaving the face in a dangerous condition. This and the intimidating scale prompted the duo to seek alternative routes. They eventually made successful ascents of the south-west ridge of Mount Francis (2610m), Bacon and Eggs (an ice gully) on the Moonflower Buttress of Mount Hunter (4444m) and a two day ascent of Denali's Cassin Ridge – one of only four ascents in the season. MEF Ref 12/13

Imperial College Alaska Sara Arbós-Torren (Spain), Boris Korzh and Sam Thompson (UK) and Arnaud Sors (France), June-July 2012.

The Wrangell-St Elias National Park still offers unclimbed peaks between 3000m and 4000m accessible from the Fraser and Baldwin glaciers. Exploring on foot and on ski, the four students discovered that the rock was generally poor quality, so as far as possible chose to climb snow/ice lines, succeeding on 14 independent peaks, of which six were thought to be first ascents. Unfortunately while descending from one of the peaks, the leader slipped, landing on an ice screw attached to her harness, creating two serious lacerations to her upper thigh. Although not life threatening, they seriously restricted her mobility. She was evacuated to Anchorage and back to UK. MEF Ref 12/17

SOUTH AMERICA

Free Venezuela Big Wall George Ullrich and Sam Farnsworth plus Siebe Vanhee (Belgium) and Mason Earle (USA), January-February 2012.

During their own expeditions to the area, Anne and John Arran have spotted a number of attractive lines on the tepuis, one of the most dramatic being a 500m wall overhanging by 100m in the lee of a waterfall (Salto Tuyuren) on Amuri Tepuis. They did not have time to attempt it themselves, but felt it had the potential to be the hardest and most overhanging big wall on earth. Hence, it became the objective of this international team of climbers. After flying to a remote jungle settlement, and three days bush-whacking, they set out to free-climb an audacious line up the centre of the steepest section of the wall. Unfortunately, at about half-height they began to run out of time, food and water, forcing a change of tactics and use of aid on some of the harder sections remaining. After 12 days on the wall and 21 pitches, they reached the top within a stone's throw of where the waterfall burst off the summit. They called their route *Kids With Guns* (5.13a, A3, E6 6c) and feel that, given time, the entire route would go free. MEF Ref 12/02

Altiplano (Chile and Bolivia) Naomi Dodds with Richard Allen, Prof Damian Bailey, Julien Brugniaux, Rhodri Evans, James Greig and Andrew

Loftus plus 25 volunteers, July-August 2012.

This expedition was a follow-on from a trip to Mt Elbrus in 2008 (MEF Ref 08/12) to investigate the hypothesis that normal biological variation in dynamic cerebral auto-regulation observed in the 'healthy brain' at sea level will identify an individual's susceptibility to Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). This could be vital in the relief of suffering. Particular attention was paid to the differences between male and female response to altitude, something that has never been properly studied before. Data were collected from each volunteer at sea level, 3599m, 4400m and 6542m (at the summit of Sajama). Analysis will continue for some time. MEF Ref 12/25

GREENLAND

East Greenland Matt Traver and Steve Beckwith with Mike Royer (USA) and Matt Bunn (Australia), August-September 2012 (*full report page 158*).

This team hoped to sail into Timmiarmiut Fjord, and make exploratory ascents of peaks in the area. Unfortunately, due to weather and sea conditions, they were unable to sail into Timmiarmiut and were dropped some 120km further north in the Kangertittivatsiaq region. With no previously documented visits by climbers it offered even more scope for exploration, although a four-man team from USA was already ensconced when they arrived. A fixed base camp was established at the centre of a prominent series of granite towers, which they dubbed 'the 'Mythics Cirque'. Operating as two pairs, Royer and Bunn concentrated on the valleys to the south and west of the cirque, while Traver and Beck used an inflatable canoe to visit the north ridge. They succeeded in making the first ascents of a number of peaks between 1100m and 1300m. MEF Ref 12/19

HIMALAYA – INDIA

Alpine Club Kagbhusandi, Garhwal Derek Buckle with Joanna Campbell, Mike Cocker, John Kentish, Paul Padman, Mike Pinney and Stuart Worsfold plus John Temple as a trekker, September-October 2012 (*full report page 57*).

This team explored the upper reaches of the Semartoli glacier and made first ascents of Peak 5301m, which they tentatively named Kagbhusandi Parvat, Peak 5210m and Peak 5120m, each of these routes being graded PD to PD+, and of Peak 5515m, on the inspiring ridge of Peak 5855m, via its south-west couloir at AD. MEF Ref 12/04A

Shiva (6142m) Pangi valley, Himachal Pradesh Mick Fowler, Paul Ramsden, Steve Burns, Ian Cartwright, September-October 2012 (*full report pages 47*).

After acclimatising on a nearby 5500m peak, Fowler and Ramsden made the first ascent of Shiva's north-east pillar, also known as 'The Prow', grading it ED Sup, descending via the unclimbed south-east flank. Meanwhile Burns and Cartwright made the first ascent of a fine snow and ice

peak (c5500m) on the east side of the Tarundi Valley, naming it 'Shiva Shakkar'.
MEF Ref 12/11A

Indo-British Rimo III Malcolm Bass, Paul Figg and Simon Yearsley with Satya Dam, Dan Singh Harkotiya, Tashi Phunchok and Konchok Thinless; also Rachel Antill as 'Resident Artist', August-September 2012 (*full report page 21*).

Rimo III (7233m) is situated in the remote east Karakoram, and although the peak was climbed from the north in 1985 by Fotheringham and Wilkinson, the beautiful south-west face remains one of the long outstanding challenges of the area. After establishing a base camp at 4950m on the North Terong Glacier and an ABC at 5350m, the British climbers acclimatised on ground leading to the col between Rimo III and Rimo II. Unfortunately, after reaching 6200m bad weather forced them to retreat and they then spent 10 days waiting for an improvement. The face never cleared, so they changed objective to an attractive unnamed rocky peak between BC and ABC on the west end of the Sondhi/Sundrbar ridge. In a two-day alpine style push (maximum difficulty AI 3) they were successful, recording a height of 6365m on the summit (map height 6330m). They have proposed the name Dunglung Kangri.
MEF Ref 12/12

Scottish Zanskar Susan Jensen, Geoff Cohen, Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy Nisbet and Des Rubens plus Nancy Kennedy as a trekking member, July-August 2012 (*full report page 35*)

Certain valleys in the Zanskar region of Ladakh have only recently been opened to foreign expeditions, so although the peaks were identified and numbered by Japanese trekkers in 2011, none had been climbed. This team set out to explore peaks in the Giabul Nala area. Finding that south-facing slopes had little snow in August, and many were composed of loose rock or scree, they concentrated on the north side of the valley. They were successful in making the first ascents of G22 East Peak (5750m) via its snowy east ridge (AD), G22 West Peak (6150m) by its north-west ridge (AD) and Peak G23 (5850m) by its rocky west ridge (AD).

MEF Ref 12/18A

HIMALAYA – NEPAL

British Chamlang Nick Bullock and Andy Houseman, September-November.

This pair hoped to make the first ascent of the 2000m north face of Chamlang (7319m) from the Hongu valley, a week's trek from Lukla. The peak was known to have had at least four previous ascents, but always by its west or south ridges. Basecamp was on a meadow at 5000m just below Peak 41, and shared with Rob Greenwood's expedition to that peak (MEF Ref 12/21). They made several acclimatisation forays on peaks in the area, including making the first ascent of Hunku (6119m) and to 6200m on Chamlang's west ridge. However their attempt on the north face was

abandoned at 5700m due to rotten rock and strong winds. MEF Ref 12/06

British Gorakh Himal Julian Freeman-Attwood, Phil Bartlett, Nick Colton and Ed Douglas, September-October (*report page 107*).

The Gorakh Himal lies in the far west of Nepal between the Changla Himal and the Kanta Himal, close to the border with Tibet. Partly due to the nine-day approach march it has had very few British visitors and offers a number of peaks awaiting first ascents. The team concentrated on the western end of the range, approaching via the Luruppa Khola, never previously visited by foreigners. From a basecamp at 4500m they initiated a number of reconnaissance trips, hoping to find a viable route on Langtachen (6300m). When this proved unsuccessful, they made a further recce into the Karpunath Lekh, to the west of base. From a col at 5600m they had a good view of the surrounding country, including a particularly fine peak of 5816m, but too far away for them to attempt. Before leaving, Colton and Douglas climbed a 5100m rock peak to the south-west, which gave some VS climbing to the summit tower.
MEF Ref 12/08

British Peak 41 Rob Greenwood and Jack Geldard, September-November 2012.

Peak 41 (6623m) has had several ascents but all have been from the south. In the hope of making the first ascent of the more remote and complex north face, this pair made the longer trek to the Hongu valley, where they shared a basecamp and staff with Nick Bullock's Chamlang expedition (MEF Ref 12/06). After rejecting several lines as 'futuristic' or 'suicidal', they opted to climb a couloir up the western side of the face, this being the most obvious line and free from objective danger. After two days climbing poor snow (Scottish grade V) they reached a col at the top of the couloir and made their way towards a mixed ridge leading to the summit. Unfortunately they discovered that this held little snow and the rock quality was extremely poor. They were forced to retreat at just under 6000m.

MEF Ref 12/21

Talung North Pillar Gavin Pike, James Clapham and Dave Searle, October-December 2012.

Rarely climbed, Talung (7349m) rises above the Yalung glacier on the Sikkim border next to Kangchenjunga, and has a very obvious arrow-straight line up its north pillar. This was attempted by Czech climbers in 2002 and 2004, but both teams were forced to retreat due to poor weather and frostbite. After a couple of weeks acclimatising at Ramche, Pike, Clapham and Searle established 'middle camp' at c4800m, in the tortuous moraine of the Yalung glacier. From here they carried out a reconnaissance of the north face and also of the west face, their intended descent route. After two nights at 6400m, they descended in strong winds to recover for an attempt on the face. But time was running out, and they realised that the face had a distinct lack of visible protection and was more difficult

than anticipated. After two more nights of very high winds and temperatures of -20C they gave up their attempt. This expedition received the Nick Estcourt Award for 2012. MEF Ref 12/24

PAKISTAN

British Charakusa Jon Griffith with Will Sim, August-September 2012.

The Charakusa valley offers plenty of scope for new routes, and this team arrived in the area armed with a tick list. To acclimatise, they climbed the *British Route* on Naysar Brakk (5200m) and then the north-west ridge of Sulu (6050m), this being a possible first ascent. They then soloed the 1000m Diaper Couloir to the summit of Beatrice Peak (c5800m) before turning their attention to the complex north face of unclimbed Link Sar (7041m) on which a combination of bottomless snow and the arrival of bad weather forced a retreat while still 1000m below the summit. Their final route was on the south side of Fathi Brakk (c5600m) where a 1000m loose gully and some good rock pitches landed them on a very airy summit.

MEF Ref 12/23

British Mazeno Ridge, Nanga Parbat Sandy Allan and Rick Allen with Cathy O'Dowd (South Africa) and Sherpas Lhakpa Rangdu, Lhakpa Nuru and Lhakpa Zarok, June-July 2012 (*full report page 3*).

The Mazeno Ridge is the longest arête on any 8000m peak, a staggering 13km from the Mazeno Pass at 5377m to where it joins the SSW ridge or *Schell Route*, then another 2km up slopes on the Diamir Flank to the summit of Nanga Parbat at 8125m. It is a totally committing venture, as escape on either flank seems impossible until the Mazeno Col, and had defeated several previous attempts. Hence the successful traverse of the entire ridge by Allan and Allen must rank as one of (if not the) mountaineering achievement of the year.

MEF Ref 12/26

MISCELLANEOUS

A Short Winter in the Hindu Kush (Afghanistan) James Bingham, Eddie Bingham, Quentin Brooksbank and Mark Wynne, January 2012.

Mir Samir is a 5809m peak on the Afghan border with Nuristan that Eric Newby and his companion (both inexperienced mountaineers) set out to climb in 1956, a trip Newby described in *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*. Although they were unsuccessful, the mountain has since received a number of ascents, but never in winter. Undeterred by the unstable political situation in Afghanistan, this more experienced four-man team hoped to climb a new route on the peak's north face in winter conditions. Unfortunately the theft of a kit bag containing essential equipment, coupled with very deep snow conditions and route finding difficulties, meant the team was unable to even reach the basecamp of the mountain.

MEF Ref 12/01

New Zealand Wakhan Corridor (Afghanistan) Pat Deavoll, Bill Byrch and Ms Mary-Rose Fowlie (July-August 2012).

Following her success in the Wakhan in 2011, Deavoll was keen to return to climb peaks from the Upper Qala Panja glacier. In particular she hoped to climb the west face of Rahozone Zom (aka South Peak, 6535m). The mountain had never been attempted from this side, both previous ascents being made from Pakistan. However, once a high camp had been established at the head of the glacier, they decided that Koh-e-Rank (5930m) was a more amenable objective, and so it proved, ascent and descent being achieved within a single day.

MEF Ref 12/15

Queen's University Belfast MC Tien Shan (Kyrgyzstan) Conor Gilmour and Rónán Kernan (both Irish), Azwan Isa and Bradley Morrell (British) and Alek Zholobenko and Vladimir Zholobenko (British/Russian), August-September 2012.

This multi-national team planned to climb new routes on peaks surrounding the little visited Dzhirgatal glacier in the Western Kokshaal-too. They climbed 11 routes, two of them being first ascents of prominent summits and three first ascents of high points of dubious prominence. Summit heights were approximately 5000m and standards ranged from PD to TD. In retrospect, they felt that the trip would have benefited from better weather if it had taken place a couple of weeks later.

MEF Ref 12/07

Cambridge Tien Shan (Kyrgyzstan) Dave Farrow, Michael Fordham, Matthew Graham, Bethan Gudgeon, Joe Hobbs, Doug Hull, Joe Smith and Tom Wright, July-August 2012.

This team of students looking for somewhere 'more remote and exciting than the Alps' selected the head of the Shamsi Tuyuk valley (close to the Ala-Archa area of the Kyrgyz Ala-Too range). Although popular with trekkers, it has no huts or other facilities, but offers a number of accessible peaks between 4100m and 4400m with no recorded ascents. Over the course of 14 climbing days, operating as two 4-person teams, they attempted 13 routes on eight peaks, recording first ascents of six peaks via nine routes at grades up to AD. They also identified a number of routes for future expeditions.

MEF Ref 12/16

Altai (Russia) - George Cave, Greg Annandale, Clay Conlon and Eleri Dawson, August 2012.

This team selected the South Chuyski range of the Altai Mountains in southern Siberia in the hope of making first ascents or new routes on peaks between 3500m and 4000m. They discovered that all rock routes presented significant and continuous objective dangers in the form of loose and crumbling rock, so major difficulties were soloed without leader-placed protection. Five routes were climbed on four different peaks, at grades from F to AD, at least one – the north ridge of Dzhaniktu (3942m) – being a first ascent.

MEF Ref 12/22