
Expedition Reports



'Seracs on the East Rongbuk Glacier', T Howard Somervell,
pastel, 21cm x 29cm, 1922. (*Alpine Club*)

SUMMARISED BY ADAM BUTTERWORTH

Mount Everest Foundation (MEF)

Expedition Reports

The Mount Everest Foundation (www.mef.org.uk) was established as a registered charity following the successful ascent of Everest in 1953. It was initially financed using the surplus funds and subsequent royalties from that expedition. It provides financial support for expeditions of an exploratory nature in mountain areas, and is administered by trustees appointed by the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society.

The exploration is mainly of a geographical nature but may also cover disciplines such as geology, botany, zoology, glaciology and medical research. In return for funding the MEF requires only a comprehensive report, and copies of these reports are lodged with the AC and the RGS. The reports can be consulted at these establishments or alternatively online.

The MEF has made total grants of well over £1m to more than 1,600 expeditions with members from the UK and New Zealand. Donations to allow us to continue this work are always welcome. We particularly encourage donations from former beneficiaries of MEF grants. In 2021, due to lingering travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, only three MEF-supported expeditions were able to go ahead. The following notes summarise the reports from these expeditions.

GREENLAND & THE ARCTIC

Structural Glaciological Analysis of a Calving Glacier – Nathaniel Baurley and Chris Tomsett (July 2021)

This research expedition aimed to undertake a complete structural glaciological analysis of Fjallsjökull, an active, calving glacier in south-east Iceland. Due to time and weather constraints, the team decided to focus their efforts on using a UAV-mounted laser scanner to conduct surveys of the glacier. This novel methodology allows for the accurate delineation of glacial surface change and it is hoped that this will contribute towards a better understanding of glacial calving. In total the pair were able to carry out seven survey flights over four days in the field. Processing of the resulting data is ongoing, but due to the novel nature of the surveying method, it is expected that the results will prove to be of significant interest.

MEF Ref 21-07

CENTRAL ASIA

Alpine Club Kyrgyzstan Expedition 2021 – Tom Davis-Merry, Tom Simpson, Alex Metcalfe, Sam Davis and Sam Mace with Wayne Auton providing support from France (July-August 2021)

The team gathered in Bishkek before transferring to Kuiluu via Karakol. Here they established their basecamp with a view to climbing a number of virgin peaks off the East Bordlu glacier. Due to problems with acquiring insurance for the expedition, Wayne Auton was unable to meet the rest of the party at base camp as planned. The team was further reduced to just four members when, shortly after arriving at basecamp, Sam Mace was evacuated by helicopter due to an infected ingrowing toenail. Despite their reduced numbers, the remaining team members succeeded in establishing a new route on their acclimatisation objective; **Peak 4788m** on 13 August. The mountain was climbed via its west flank and summit ridge in alpine style at an approximate grade of PD+. The following day, the same team achieved another first ascent on the same mountain, again via the west flank, at a grade of AD+. On their return to base camp, the team discovered that the expedition cook had been threatened by a local farmer who had also damaged a number of the camp tents. The fallout from this event cut short the remaining climbing time and no further summits were achieved.

MEF Ref 21-09

EUROPE

Izvor Licanke 2021 Expedition – Christine Grosart, Richard Walker, Mark Burkey, Louise McMahon, Fred Nunn, Anton Van Rosmalen and Velimir Vrzic (August 2021)

The renewed exploration of the Izvor Licanke cave in Fužine, Croatia is now into its sixth year. Covid-19 forced a hiatus in 2020, but this 2021 expedition was able to go ahead as planned. Unfortunately one of the expedition's push divers became unwell early in this year's expedition, rendering them unable to dive. A standby diver was requested at short notice and the team were eventually able to conduct an exploratory dive. In total, they explored a little over 100 meters of new cave passage, both above and below the water. This took them to the completion of Sump 4 and beyond, where they identified another sump (Sump 5). In addition, the party were also able to survey the passage between Sump 2 and Sump 3, conduct a centre line survey of the dry cave between Sumps 1 and 2 and re-equip the line in Sump 1.

MEF Ref 21-22