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# Mount Everest Foundation Expedition Reports 2001

SUMMARISED BY BILL RUTHVEN

Founded after the successful ascent of Everest in 1953 and initially financed from the surplus funds and subsequent royalties of the 1953 expedition, the Mount Everest Foundation was established to encourage 'exploration of the mountains of the earth'. In those early days, there seemed little likelihood that there would still be any unclimbed mountains in the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century, but incredibly, of the 2700 summits over 6000 metres listed in the AC Himalayan Index, no less than 1500 remain untrodden. True, some are probably little more than bumps on a ridge, but there are still a large number of worthwhile peaks awaiting the attention of adventurous young climbers – host nations permitting!

It is therefore most fortunate that at an early date the MEF decided that only the interest from its investments should be given away as grants, thus ensuring that the Foundation could continue into the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, with current low interest rates and recent changes in taxation, the actual value of grants has tended to decrease as the years have gone by, so the MEF is using 2003 – the Fiftieth Anniversary of the First Ascent of Everest – as the ideal opportunity to launch a major appeal for funds, with the hope that grants can be increased to a more realistic figure.

All that the MEF asks in return for its support 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, where they are available for consultation by future expeditioners.

The following notes are a synopsis of all the reports from expeditions which took place mainly in 2001, and are divided into geographical areas.

## AMERICA – NORTH & CENTRAL

**01/04 Eastern Buttress of Mount Hunter** Malcolm Bass (with Paul Figg). May 2001

Although there are two buttresses on the eastern face of Mount Hunter, prior to the arrival of this duo there was only one route, the *Diamond Arête*. The ground to the left of this is lethal, but starting in good weather from an altitude of 2470m to the right, the climbing became hard mixed (Scottish 5) before they reached the junction with the East Ridge at c.3500m. Despite

insecure 'mushroom' cornices and deteriorating weather, this was followed to the 4411m summit. Descent was via the West Ridge, but this was seriously delayed by light snowfall and thick cloud. They have called their new route *The Prey*, and graded it Alaskan 5, Scottish V.

**01/11 Huautla/Cheve Cave Diving** Jason Mallinson (with Charles Brickley, Greg Horne, Bev Shade, Rick Stanton and Bill Stone from UK and Soriano Antonio José and Gustavo Vela from Mexico). February-April 2001

Previous exploration of the submerged cave passages in the Santo Domingo canyon area of Central Mexico indicated the potential for a world record height difference between sink and resurgence. With this in mind, the team decided to utilise the latest technology in re-breathing equipment to eliminate the need for extensive cylinder re-filling and staging. Unfortunately, progress in the Cueva Cheve resurgence was stopped by boulders after 1.5km, and although dives in the Sistema Huautla resurgence found a continuation, progress was curtailed at an airbell after 300m when time ran out. Several members of the team exhibited symptoms of the fungal infection histoplasmosis, whose spores thrive in bird droppings in the soil.

**01/24 British Broken Tooth 2001** Geoff Hornby (with Dave Wallis). May-Jun 2001

The E Pillar of the Broken Tooth, 2749m, bears a striking resemblance to the Bonatti Pillar on the Petit Dru, so it was an attractive target for these climbers. Unfortunately, although the weather in Central Alaska was generally good throughout the year, over this period it was not, and a preliminary fly-past on a scenic flight showed that the mountain was plastered in fresh snow with the lower slopes seamed by recent avalanche runs. They therefore flew in to the Ruth Glacier instead, intending to attempt the unclimbed 747 Peak. Deep snow and unstable séracs prevented them from getting much above 747 Col, and a subsequent attempt on a peak to the south of Thunder Mountain was also abandoned.

**01/25 Alaskan Fake Glacier 2001** Mike Fletcher (with Lindsay Griffin, Richard Leech and Oliver Shergold). June 2001

In 1906 the American explorer Dr Frederick Cook returned from Alaska claiming to have made the first ascent of the highest point on the continent, ie Mt McKinley (or Denali), 6194m, with a photograph of the US flag flying from a peak as 'proof'. That their claim was not true was proved in the mid-fifties by Brad Washburn and Ad Carter, since when the 1631m peak concerned has been known as 'Fake Peak'. It has been climbed several times since then, but a number of other spiky granite peaks awaited first ascents, so this team established their base camp on nearby Fake Glacier (aka Glacier 1). They succeeded in making first ascents of the two most

attractive summits in the area, both c.1920m: Lee was climbed by two separate routes simultaneously and Glisen by an indirect 650m route on its West Face, which they graded Alpine TD (Scottish V mixed). An unnamed Point c.1770m also received its first ascent, while repeats were made of the notorious Fake Peak and Sholes, 1890m. A new AD line was climbed on the NW Face of this last named.

**01/26 Cathedral Mountains 2001** Dr Brian Davison (with Lindsay Griffin, Geoff Hornby and Dave Wallis). June-July 2001

The main glacier basin of the Cathedral Mountains in the very remote western fringe of Central Alaska is unnamed and virtually unvisited, so it offered plenty of scope for this strong team to make first ascents. Despite the worst July for many years, with rain most afternoons/evenings, (and 'clouds' of mosquitoes) all the peaks on the east side of the glacier were climbed in one long traverse which, with other climbs, made a total of 18 probable first ascents. In addition, the highest and only peak in the area known to have been previously climbed, Pt. 8500 (aka Mount Beckey) c.2591m, received its second and third ascents by new routes. The team (which seems to have survived on gallons of tea) warns future visitors to the area that a satellite telephone is essential if communication with the outside world is to be maintained.

**01/38 Totally Forakered** Ian Parnell (with Kenton Cool). May-June 2001

The original plan of this strong two-man team was to climb three new routes: W Face of Kahiltna Peak West, 3912m, NW Buttress of Denali, 6194m and SE Face of Foraker, 5305m. In fact they did none of these, but were successful in climbing two routes on Mt Hunter, 4441m, and one on Denali. On Hunter they repeated *The Moonflower*, 1200m, ED3, Scottish VII as far as the top buttress, and made the first ascent of *Kiss Me Where The Sun Don't Shine* on the 'mini-Moonflower', 2600m, ED, Scottish VII in an 18-hour push to 3200m. Moving to Denali, they then climbed a new route, *Extra-Terrestrial Brothers*, 2200m, ED2/3, Scottish VII on Fathers' and Sons' Wall in a 46-hour push as far as the top buttress, 5180m. On each climb, weather conditions – deep snow or high winds – prevented a continuation to the summit.

## AMERICA – SOUTH AND ANTARCTICA

**01/03 Cochamó Big Wall & Alpine** Dr Lucy Regan (with Dr Brian Bigger and James Marshall). December 2000-January 2001

It is unusual to aim for two contrasting climbs during the same expedition, but that was the aim of this team, two members of which had already achieved some impressive big-wall climbing in Peru and Chile.

On this trip they returned to Chile to attempt a new big-wall line up the 700m NW arête of Mount Trinidad, c.1750m, followed by an alpine traverse of the Trinidad range. After nine pitches on the former, dirty cracks requiring 'aid' to A3+ slowed progress so much that they decided to abandon it, and concentrate on the traverse. In two days' climbing up to AD+, they successfully completed the *Mount Trinidad Horseshoe*, including Trinidad and five other peaks, four of which were believed to be unclimbed.

**01/05 APEX Bolivia 2001** Kenny Baillie (with Matthew Bates, Roland Partridge, Martin Schnopp, Alistair Simpson and Roger Thompson plus Dr Andy Sutherland, 20 heroic 'volunteers' and a BBC 'Tomorrow's World' film crew). March-April 2001

After four days in La Paz at 3600m, this team travelled by bus to the Chacaltaya fixed laboratory at 5200m which offered an ideal venue for five Edinburgh University medical students to investigate the effects of altitude on the human body. Although several people were affected so severely that they had to be evacuated to La Paz, the research programme was conducted almost exactly according to the original plan, which covered research into the function of systemic and pulmonary circulation, ventilatory control, high-altitude cough and blood markers of mountain sickness. Later, seven of the survivors made a guided ascent of the highest peak in Bolivia, Sajama, 6542m, in the Cordillera Occidental.

**01/07 South Tower of Paine 2001** Mike 'Twid' Turner (with Louise Thomas). December 2000-January 2001

The South Tower of Paine (the highest at c.2500m) has not yet received an ascent by a British climber, and its East Face has never been climbed at all, so with pitifully short memories of what Patagonian weather can be like, this duo headed back. Avalanche danger precluded an attempt on the South Tower, and five weeks of heavy snow and strong winds prevented them from progressing very high on the Central Tower, which soon reminded them about Patagonian weather. However, with their time rapidly running out, in their final four days they managed to climb a new 800m 19-pitch direct route up immaculate orange granite to the c.1850m summit of Cerro Mascara (aka The Mummer) from the Bader Valley. They called the route *For a Few Dollars More*, and graded it ED E3 6a A3.

**01/08 British Darwin Range 2001** Simon Yates (with Andy Parkin, plus Celia Bull, Elaine Bull and Jane Yates in support). February-March 2001

Owing to difficult access, poor maps and appalling weather, there have been few expeditions to the Cordillera Darwin range of mountains in Chilean Tierra del Fuego. This team sailed from Ushuaia in southern Argentina via the Beagle Channel to Bahia Yendegaia on Celia Bull's yacht, *Ada II*, and a base camp was established as far up the Yendegaia valley as horses could get. The climbing objective was selected from a photograph

supplied by Dr David Hillebrandt, the NE face of a mountain thought to be Mont Bové, 2150m. They were successful in making the first ascent of this 900m route to the summit at Alpine ED, VI, but found that it was actually a separate peak, c.2200m, on the ridge connecting Bové to the Roncagli summits. Unlike Bové, the mountain was unclimbed, and probably unnamed, so they are proposing to call it Monte Ada.

**01/17 Llanberis 2001 Patagonia** Leigh McGinley (with Mick Pointon). October-December 2001

The original intention of this team was to put up a new bolt-free route on Cerro Torre, 3128m, starting on the SE Pillar (Compressor Route) then traversing onto the W Face in the vicinity of the Helmet. However, when they arrived in the Park, the summit mushrooms were continually collapsing as a result of three weeks of good weather, so they turned their attention to Torre Egger, 2673m, instead. After a great deal of effort, a snow cave was established at the foot of the E Face, but after six weeks of wind and heavy precipitation, during which the cave (and most of their hardware) was buried under eight metres of snow, they realised that there was no hope of climbing whatsoever, so returned home.

**01/23 British Female Bolivian Cordillera Real 2001**

Dr Adele Pennington (with Nancy Brooks, Di Gilbert and Catrin Thomas). July-August 2001

Whilst returning from an earlier Bolivian expedition, this leader spotted some attractive peaks in a remote area of the Cordillera Real which appeared to offer plenty of scope for exploration. The first foray from Base Camp resulted in the probable first ascent of Dome 1, 5220m, by its S Ridge. Later, five new routes were climbed (Alpine PD to TD and VS rock) before the weather broke, giving the team members plenty of time to hone their bridge skills.

**01/27 Lakeland Quimsa Cruz 2001** Paul Platt (with Carolyn Bailey, Pete Blackburn, Stuart Halford, Deno Hewson and Phil Ralph). August 2001

From a base camp at 4750m to the E of Khori Chuma and NW of Atorama Glacier, in 12 days of 'stunning weather', this team explored the area, trying to make sense of the confusing maps. First ascents were made of two peaks, Cerro Salvadore, 5500m, by its S Ridge (Blackburn & Ralph) at Alpine AD, V, Scottish II and Cerro Jankho Loma, 5440m, by its W Ridge-SW Ridge (Halford & Platt) at Alpine AD. Four other new routes were climbed plus a repeat ascent of the highest peak in the area, which they thought was Atorama, 5640m, although this was disputed by local people. The good weather was followed by a period of very heavy snow which effectively put a stop to all further climbing.

**01/28 Scottish Cordillera Blanca 2001** Jason Currie (with Guy Robertson). July 2001

In a similar manner to 01/08 (*see above*), these climbers planned their expedition from a photograph, intending to attempt the East Face of Santa Cruz Norte, 5829m. However, on arrival in the area they discovered that the photo was actually of a satellite peak, Santa Cruz Chico (aka Atuncocha), 5800m, but as this was also unclimbed, they decided to make it their objective. Following the centre of the buttress as closely as possible, they were successful in making the first ascent as far as the summit ridge at TD, but very heavy cornicing deemed it unwise to continue up the last 20m to the summit. Several days of poor weather then followed, precluding attempts on any other peaks.

**01/40 Cymru Bolivia Apolobamba 2001** Owen Thomas (with Jim Morris and Dave Stanley). Jun-Jul 2001

This team planned to explore the Pupuya Massif, making first British ascents of a number of peaks by new lines. However, on arrival in Bolivia, they discovered that local unrest which had erupted in 2000 had escalated to such an extent that not only the Cordillera Apolobamba, but also many major tourist areas were completely off-limits. Nevertheless, some valuable mapping work was carried out, aligning maps created by Paul Hudson and others with Landsat images. An ascent of Pyramida Blanca, c.5300m, in the Cordillera Real was intended for acclimatisation purposes, but then the weather deteriorated to 'the worst in Bolivia for 35 years', so they came home.

**01/44 Quitaraju SW Face** Nick Bullock (with Al Powell). July-August 2001

Working from a photograph, this team planned to climb a new route on Quitaraju, 6040m, in the Cordillera Blanca. However, on arrival in the area they discovered that what they had thought to be the SW Face was actually the South Face, and had already been climbed. However, as their intended line remained untouched, they continued as intended. The climbing turned out to be much harder than anticipated, but of exceptional quality and very sustained at Scottish V.5 with pitches of 6 and a crux of 7. Apart from high winds, causing a lot of powder snow to pour down the face, the weather was reasonably settled. They have called their route *Central Buttress of Quitaraju South Face*.

## GREENLAND AND ARCTIC AREAS

**01/01 Greenland 2001 - Tilman in a New Millennium (Year 2)**

Rev Bob Shepton (with Mat Goodyear, Andy Prosser and Peter Maxwell in Greenland and Brian Duchart, Pat Duchart, Peter Maxwell, Polly Murray and Tash Wright on Bylot Island). June-September 2001

In 2000, this leader sailed his 10m sloop *Dodo's Delight* from Scotland to commence an exploration of mountains close to the west coast of Greenland (*MEF Ref 00/09, reported in AJ 2001*). After wintering the boat in Greenland, a year later he flew out to continue his exploration a little further inland. First ascents were made of seven peaks c.2000m on the Akuliarusinguaq Peninsula and of two rock climbs in the Upernavik area. With a modified team he then sailed to Bylot Island (north of Baffin) where Shepton and Maxwell repeated the epic ski traverse made by Bill Tilman and Bruce Reid in 1963: this took them ten days and they made first ascents of eight peaks en route. Meanwhile, the girls made a longer but faster N-S traverse, with no ascents. The two-year project was completed by sailing the boat back to Scotland.

**01/14A SMC East Greenland 2001** Colwyn Jones (with Jim Fairey, Chris Ravey, Colin Read, Brian Shackleton and Nick Walmsley). July-August 2001

This team of Greenland stalwarts experienced excellent weather with only two days of very light snow during their month in the Staunings Alps. Unfortunately, they had to retreat from the S Face of Sussex, 2390m, after three pitches owing to technical difficulties, and were unable to attempt Dansketinde, 2930m, because of helicopter problems. Although unsuccessful on their two primary objectives, they did have a number of other successes. These included a new route graded D on the SE Face of Sussex (second ascent overall), and the first ascents of Keswicktinde, 2430m, by its NW Ridge (graded AD), the SW Spur of a 2570m outlier of Sefstromsgipfel (ED, A1), and Mears Fjeld, 2100m, by its SW Ridge.

**01/16 Greenland Winter** Alun Powell (with Jon Bracey, 'Stan' (Charles) Halstead and Dr Jon Morgan) April 2001

No-one was known to have previously visited the Schweizerland area in winter, so this team was uncertain what conditions would be experienced. In fact, the weather was very unstable with 5 storms and the longest spell of good weather lasting 4 days: temperatures were down to -35° C. Nevertheless, Bracey and Powell made the first ascent of the N Face of Tupilak, 2264m - which was the main objective of the expedition - via a 900m ED2 route, *Silence of the Seracs*, entailing 2 bivouacs. Halstead and Morgan achieved the second objective by climbing a new 1100m route (TD, VI, 6) on the S Face of Rodebjerg, 2140m. Using ski, a number of other peaks were climbed, followed by exciting descents of 40-50 degree couloirs.

**01/30 Lanchester Greenland 2001** Jonathan White (with John Booth, Brian Coombs, Richard Denison, Ian Jones and Dominic Matters). June-July 2001

When this team started planning their expedition to the Northern Lindbergh Mountains, they could have had no inkling that their trip would



be affected by the Foot and Mouth outbreak in the UK. But restrictions on the export of food imposed by the powers-that-be caused a number of problems. Nevertheless, with only four days unfit for climbing out of their 23 days in the field, they managed to far exceed their declared aim of climbing 'at least one virgin peak'. They actually climbed 28 peaks between 2346m and 3005m, of which 25 were first ascents. They also experimented with 'waste minimisation techniques' that could be of great value to future expeditions.

**01/47 2001 British 'Baroness'** Matt Dickinson (with Airlie Anderson, Tom Briggs, Lucy Creamer, Ian Hay and Niall Grimes). July-August 2001

'The Baroness' is an imposing 600m wall of golden granite on the eastern side of Torssuqatoq Sound in S Greenland, almost opposite *The Thumbnail* (climbed by Ian Parnell and his team in 2000. *MEF Ref 00/35*). This strong mixed team set out to make its first ascent 'in a British style' – ie free climbing with no bolts. In this they were very successful. In fact four separate routes were climbed, each of high quality and sustained technical standard, with an average pitch grade of E3. A satellite peak was also climbed and a general reconnaissance of the area completed.

The Alison Chadwick Memorial Grant for 2000 was awarded jointly to Airlie Anderson and Lucy Creamer as individuals on this expedition.

**01/49 Sail Greenland 2001** Andy White (with Janice Fennymore, Davie Frame, Tony Pointon and Tim Rogers). July-August 2001

After sailing from Stornoway to the Cape Farewell area of Greenland in 15 days, this team used their boat, *Samen*, as a floating base camp from which to explore Sangmissoq Island, and observe its wildlife – which was surprisingly scarce. A total of 15 peaks between 370m and 1306m were climbed, all of which were thought to be first ascents.

**01/50 SmoG in Greenland** Mark Lampard (with Richard Bungay, Denise Forster, Jeremy Fuller, Adrian Kemp, Simon Needham, David Newcombe and Michele Reason). June-July 2001

Poor visibility prevented the flight transporting these members of Slough Mountaineering Group from reaching the Martin Knudsen Nunatak (c.73° N) in Fraenkels Land, which was their intended – and permitted – area of operation. However, in the next three days they succeeded in pulking all their gear the 42km north from their landing point, arriving just as the weather improved. Despite a later six-day period when they were tent-bound owing to heavy snow, by moving camp several times and operating mainly in pairs, they succeeded in climbing over 30 peaks between 2100m and 2700m and up to AD, of which most were first ascents.



**01/53 South Greenland 2001** Matt Heason (with Dr Max Dutson, Richard Garnett, Dean Grindell, Mark Harris, Adam Jackson, Dave Lucas and Mark Shea). July-August 2001

The 200m to 600m granite faces at the western end of Prins Christian Sund have been compared with the monoliths of Yosemite, Baffin and Patagonia. Having visited the area with a BSES group in 1992, the leader was aware of the potential. Attention was focused on the main face of Igdlorsitt Havn and surrounding peaks, where the team was successful in climbing 16 new routes up to E5, including one on the main face. Each route was given a very distinctive name - 'Homebrew Hangover' 'Vodka Sausage' etc In addition, a traverse of the ridge was completed in 18 hours at TD.

### HIMALAYA - INDIA

**01/32 British Chaukula 2001** Mike Ratty (with Miriam Denney, Chris Mothersdale and Trevor Willis plus Anne Allcock and Ellen Mothersdale in support). July-August 2001

Despite experiencing repeated problems in obtaining a permit to climb in the sensitive Rupshu area of Ladakh, the leader has persevered in his hope of achieving the first ascent of Chaukula, 6529m. In 1997 (*MEF Ref 97/34*) deep soft snow forced the attempt to be abandoned at 6000m. On this occasion, from an ABC at 5600m, a route was forced up a line of rock flanking the E side of the S Face to 6000m and from there via the face to the summit ridge. The summit was reached by Mothersdale and Willis at a grade of AD+, Denney and Ratty giving up some way short of the top four days later when they ran out of time.

**01/34 Arganglas 2001** Sir Chris Bonington (with Jim Lowther from UK, Harish Kapadia, Lt Cdr Satyabarata Dam, Divyesh Muni and Cyrus Schroff from India and Mark Richey and Mark Wilford from USA). August-September 2001

This was the first mountaineering team ever to visit the Nubra Valley of Ladakh, near the Siachen Glacier in the Eastern Karakoram. Travelling by road from Leh, they crossed the Khardung La, one of the highest motorable roads in the world, to establish a base camp at 5300m on a dry lake bed at the foot of the Phunangma Glacier. Operating as small independent parties, from here a wide area was explored, with first ascents of Abale Peak, 6360m, Amale Peak, 6312m, and Yamandaka, 6218m, which was climbed by a serious route up its N Face which was named *Barbarossa*. Unfortunately, an attempt on the highest peak, Argan Kangri, 6789m, had to be abandoned at 6200m because of soft unconsolidated snow.

**01/54 Tagne 2001** Andy Vine (with Dan Carrivick, Jon Ellis, Alan Geer and Steve Jolly). June-August 2001

These young climbers, some on their first foray outside Europe, hoped to make the first ascent of Tagne, 6111m, in the Lahul/Spoti region. With mostly good weather, they achieved this via its South Ridge at an estimated Scottish II, Alpine AD. They also made what they think was the first ascent of another 6030m peak via its East Ridge at AD. They named the peak 'Sagar', which is Hindustani for 'Ocean'.

**01/57 Siruanch Glacier 2001** Colin Knowles (with Roland Arnison, Angela Benham, Chris Drinkwater, Titch Kavanagh and Andy Phillips as climbers plus Christine Smart as BC Support). April-May 2001

The initial objective of this expedition was to make the first ascent of Tirsuli West, 7035m, at the head of the Siruanch Glacier in the Kumaon, but reconnaissance failed to reveal a safe route on the intended North Face. Another peak some 5km N of Tirsuli proved more responsive, and its first ascent was achieved by the entire team via its South Face at Alpine D+. Approximately 6160m high, it was subsequently named 'Shambhu Ka Qilla' (Shiva's Fortress).

### HIMALAYA - CHINA AND TIBET

**01/43A New Zealand Kangri Garpo 2001** John Nankervis (with Wilfrid Dickinson, Colin Monteath, Nicholas Shearer and John Wild). October-November 2001

The area surrounding the Lhagu Glacier in SE Tibet is very remote so it offered an ideal opportunity for original exploration. Using skis from a relatively low altitude, they were the first climbers to reach the magnificent upper névé, from where, still on ski, they climbed a peak of 5750m. An attempt on one of the higher, more prominent, peaks failed due to the long time taken to ferry loads up the long glacier, and the unfortunate timing of bad weather.

### HIMALAYA - NEPAL

**01/20 Anglo-New Zealand Raksha Urai 2001** Adam Thomas (with Phil Amos, Jim de Bank, Graham Rowbotham and Simon Woods from UK and Bryan Godfrey from NZ). September-November 2001

Raksha Urai is an unclimbed multi-summitted mountain above the Seti Valley in a recently opened area of Far North West Nepal: this team attempted to climb Raksha Urai III. So remote is the area, that when a local man was asked if a team member could take his photograph, it turned out that he had never previously seen a camera! In a period of excellent

sunny weather, from a high camp at 5900m on the S Face they climbed on perfect 60 degree ice to within 150m of the summit. Here they met unstable rotten snow which was felt to be too dangerous to risk continuing. Descent was by twelve 60m abseils from Abalakov threads and ice screws, completed long after dark in extremely cold conditions. Although the 'official' highest point of Raksha Urai is 6593m, from their own GPS readings, the team thought that both Raksha III and Raksha II were more likely to be c.6650m.

**01/21 British Kantega S Ridge Integral** Mick Fowler (with Paul Ramsden).  
March-April 2001

Having been refused a permit for the unclimbed Peak 43 (aka Kyashar), 6769m, in the Khumbu area NE of Lukla, this pair applied for, and received, one for the ridge which includes the peak. Unfortunately, they found that Peak 43 was guarded by a very active icefall discharging into a lake ('a pleasant place to swim with a rucksack on!') and they therefore considered that the objective dangers were too great to continue. An attempt to climb the NE Face of Mera Norr (aka Pt 6255m, forming the NW end of the Mera massif) was aborted at 5600m due to new snow avalanches – hardly surprising considering that it snowed every day that they were in the area.

**01/35 Lobuche / Ama Dablam** Jules Cartwright (with Jon Bracey, Sam Chinnery, Rich Cross, Ali Coull, Dave Hollinger, Owen Samuel and Andy Sharpe). October-November 2001

Although a new route on Lobuche, 6100m, had been suggested as a 'warm-up' before attempting the main objective, on arrival in the area the team split into two, with Cartwright and Cross going straight for the uncompleted NW ridge of Ama Dablam, 6812m. In a 10-day push they were successful on this route at Scottish VI (mixed), descending by the normal route. The rest of the team climbed on the N Face of Kongde, 6150m, Coull & Chinnery making the second ascent of the Lowe/Breashers route (Scottish VII) and Bracey & Samuel the second complete ascent of 'Extra Blue Sky' (also Scottish VII). On return to Kathmandu, they were shocked to find that the Ministry of Tourism expected to receive a second peak fee for the descent route on Ama Dablam.

## KARAKORAM - PAKISTAN

**01/19 British Greater Trango 2001** Mike (Twid) Turner (with Steve Long, Steve Mayers and Louise Thomas). June-August 2001

This team hoped to climb a new route on the 1400m E Face of Greater Trango, c.6240m, to the left of the Norwegian Pillar. Although huge avalanches swept the approach every 20 minutes with monotonous regularity, once established on the wall it was found possible to keep out of the line of fire. After 25 pitches a high point had been reached at 5700m

when bad weather made further climbing impossible. There was still no sign of an improvement when they had been trapped in their portaledge for seven days, but by now food was running out, so it was necessary to retreat.

**01/45 British Solu 2001** Dave Wilkinson (with Bill Church, Stephen Kennedy and Stewart Muir). July-August 2001)

During his expedition to the Solu Glacier in 2000 (00/33) this leader was attracted by a 5901m peak which he named 'Solu Brakk': this year he returned hoping to make its first ascent. Although the approach started with an easy glacier walk, a big ice fall with crevasses and overhanging ice cliffs prevented access to the peak itself, so the team looked around for alternative objectives. Some 10 km to the west, Sugula Peak, 6102m, was attempted but foiled by bad weather and snow conditions: however, climbing at Alpine AD, they achieved the probable first ascent of a subsidiary 5800m summit which they named 'Ice Cream Peak'.

## CENTRAL ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

**01/10 Vietnam 2001** Howard Limbert (with Martin Colledge, Martin Holroyd, Paul Ibberson, Nick Jones, Debora Limbert, Peter Macnab, Mick Nunwick, Duncan Morrison, John Palmer and Trevor Wailes). March-April 2001

This was the seventh caving expedition organised in conjunction with Hanoi University, with two of the provinces – Cao Bang and Quang Binh – being revisited. 22.5 km of mostly river cave passage was explored and surveyed in the former area, and 5 km in the latter, with many unexplored leads still left in both. Permits proved to be something of a problem in the politically volatile 'new' area of Ha Giang, but nevertheless the caving potential of the area was proved with the survey of 2.5 km of predominantly vertical passage. Plans are already in hand for a return visit in 2003.

**01/13 British Kun Lun Shan 2001** Julian Freeman-Attwood (with Phil Bartlett and Henry Day). July-November 2001

It is many years since an MEF-supported expedition clocked up a road journey approaching 30,000km, but that is what results if one drives from UK to Xinjiang Province and back, making a double crossing of the Taklamakan desert en route. At Pulu, they changed their mode of transport from Land Rover to donkey, but on hearing that their intended base camp had recently been visited by other climbers, when they reached the plateau at 5000m, instead of continuing south they turned west to head for a previously unvisited area. News of the terrorist attacks in the USA caused much concern about border closures and traffic restrictions, but the intrepid team carried on, and after establishing a BC at 4050m in the Aksu Gorge

managed to achieve the first ascent of a 6061m peak above a tributary valley of Karyagdi. The climbing, which was via its North Ridge, was described as 'straightforward on poor snow covering even poorer rock'.

**01/37 British Western Kokshaal-Too 2001** David Gerrard (with John Allen and Tim Riley from UK plus Peter Berggren from Sweden and Dr Hilda Grooters from Holland). August-September 2001

Although there have been several expeditions to the Kokshaal-Too area of Kyrgyzstan in recent years, as far as is known, none had previously visited either the Gori Sarybeles or Khrebet Kyokkiar areas. In the first of these, this team climbed four peaks with heights up to 4550m, and in the second they climbed two routes to a summit plateau, and to the summit of Pt. 4445. They are in consultation with the Kyrgyz Alpine Club to select suitable names for the peaks, but consider that both areas still have plenty of opportunities for quality mountaineering with a wide range of climbing standard.

**01/56 British Pik Dankova** Dr Paul Knott (with Graham Holden). July-August 2001

The area round Pik Dankova (5982m) in the Western Kokshaal-Too of Kyrgyzstan close to the Chinese border offers plenty of scope for first ascents and new routes. Although access to the area went very smoothly, with none of the problems of permits etc experienced by previous visitors, this pair soon realised that climbing in the area was a very serious business, made more so by the heavy snow and storms that they experienced. On several peaks they were turned back by steep rock towers, but they did achieve the first British ascent of Pik Molodezhniy ('Youth Peak'), 5338m, by its NE Ridge.

## AFRICA

**01/29 British Nampula Towers – Mozambique 2001** Dave Turnbull (with Ben Bransby, Andy Donson, Leo Houlding and Pete Robbins plus five South African climbers). July 2001

No previous visits to Mozambique by British climbers are known. 300km east of the southern tip of Lake Malawi in the north of the country lies Nampula Province, which boasts a number of unclimbed granite towers up to 1,000 metres high. The area lies a long way from an international airport, so this team flew to Johannesburg where they were joined by the South African climbers for a 6000km round trip by 4WD vehicles. Having eventually obtained permission to climb, they were successful in making the first ascent of Merupi Tower, c.800m, by two (simultaneous) different routes at E 4/5 6a. Surprisingly, an attempted repeat of the South African route on Mlema Tower was rained off.