

Mount Everest Foundation Notes 1983-84

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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 in seeking assistance, financial or otherwise, from other organisations. It should be noted that the MEF itself only 'sponsors' expeditions in exceptional circumstances, eg the 1981 Mount Kongur expedition.

Copies of the full reports of these expeditions are lodged with the Alpine Club library and with the Archives Section of the Royal Geographical Society, and may be consulted in these places. Some expeditions will already have been described in articles in the *AJ* and other journals.

The expeditions summarized in the following notes took place between June 1983 and August 1984. The notes are based on reports received up to 1 December 1984.

Antarctic and Arctic, including Greenland

MEF ref. 84/6 — *Joint Services Expedition to Brabant Island 1983-85*. An interim report covering the first of the two Antarctic summers this expedition plans to spend on its extensive multi-scientific researches. In the interest of reconnaissance, ski-mountaineering rather than technical climbing resulted in ascents of ten unclimbed summits, including Harvey Heights (2410m) and Mt. Rokitansky (1805m).

84/17 — *Mount Forel, Greenland Expedition 1984* — Bad weather caused Derek Fordham and his party to alter their plan for a ski approach to Mt. Forel (3360m) N of Angmassalik, in favour of landing by air on the N side of the mountain. Attempts on the SW ridge and NE flank were abandoned some 200-300m below the summit owing to high winds. They then skied 135km to the W in 7-8 days, being picked up at the snout of the Knut Rasmussen glacier.

Himalaya

MEF ref. 83/10 — *Annapurna III (British SE Pillar Expedition August-October 1983)* The continuation of the monsoon into October forced Kekus and Tinker to abandon their attempt on the SE Pillar. The attempt on the E ridge by Pilling and Uttley ended in persistently bad snowfall on a small ledge at 6300m where Uttley developed chest pains and a bad cough. Pilling descended to seek help and after 5 days Uttley was rescued by Kekus and Tinker.

83/11 — *Joint Services East Nepal Expedition to Manaslu North (7200m) (March-June 1983)* Lt-Col Keelan led a party of 12 members of Royal Marines, Royal Navy and RAF on a successful first British ascent of Manaslu North. After a long

approach march by the Buru Gandaki, Base Camp was pitched at 3840m beside the Manaslu glacier. Four members reached the summit on 10 May, climbing to the col between Manaslu and Manaslu North and thence by a heavily corniced ridge. On the descent they found Camp 3 devastated by an avalanche which had fallen during the day. There were no casualties at any time on this expedition.

83/18 — *North London MC Expedition to Kongde Ri* (October-November 1983) The object of Paul Harris's party was to make alpine-style ascents of Kongde Lho (6187m) and Kongde Shar (6093m) from the S by unclimbed routes. They reached 5200m on Kongde Lho but retreated because of dangerous conditions and acclimatization problems. They did not attempt Kongde Shar.

83/19 — *British Kishtwar-Shivling Expedition* (August-September 1983) Despite monsoon conditions on the approach march, Dick Renshaw and Stephen Venables succeeded, in 7 days from Base Camp and back, in achieving a highly satisfying and technically demanding first ascent of the magnificent N face of the Kishtwar Shivling.

83/27 — *SAS Mount Everest Expedition* (March-May 1984) The 13-member team led by M. Lane intended to climb Everest by the N face, using oxygen above 7600m. On 2 April the height of 6860m was reached on the N face; but on 3 April their advance base, on a site used by previous expeditions, was devastated by a fall of seracs from the N Col 3km away. L/Cpl Swierzy was killed outright and is buried on the Central Rongbuk glacier. Four others were wounded and the whole expedition was abandoned.

83/32 — *British Annapurna II Winter Expedition* (November-December 1983) The Rutlands and two others planned the first winter ascent of the N face of Annapurna II from a Base Camp at 4200m. During the first week of December frequent and massive powder avalanches swept over both high and low base camps. On 11 December, after reaching 6000m in deep snow, Ron Rutland decided to abandon the attempt.

84/9 — *Irish Nepalese Expedition to Churen Himal (7371m), Dhaulagiri* (March-May 1984) This expedition, led by Dawson Stelfox, found itself repeating, on the upper section of the unclimbed 3000m high SW face of Churen Himal, the route taken by the German expedition of 1983 which had diverted from the S ridge and ended tragically. The Irish, like the Germans, suffered from persistent stonefall and bad weather, turning back at 6300m, thankful that there was no injury.

84/10 — *Multi-Peak Alpine-style Expedition to Makalu Region* (May-June 1984) This British-American-Nepalese party of 12, led by Doug Scott, combined family climbing from an attractive Base Camp at 4900m with ascents of Baruntse (7220m), the hitherto unclimbed E and Central summits of Chamlang (7290m and 7235m) and another attempt at a traverse of Makalu, up by the SE ridge and down by the NW original route, which involved some exciting descents of the headwall.

84/16 — *Lhotse Shar Expedition 1984* (August-October 1984) The Burgess twins, Paul Moores and two others attempted the S spur of Lhotse Shar but abandoned the climb at a point over 6700m. A switch to the SE ridge was also defeated by a serious serac barrier at 6400m.

84/19 — *British East Face Kedar dome Expedition 1984* (September-October 1984) Poor acclimatization by some members of this small party frustrated Martin

Moran's ambition to tackle the unclimbed 1600m rock 'prow' of the E face of Kedardome. Instead he achieved a technically difficult and satisfying first ascent of the 'Sunrise Pillar' (5900m) on the E flank of Kedardome, while John Mothersele and Pat Littlejohn climbed to within 250m of the summit of Kharchakund (6612m) by its W ridge; and subsequently enjoyed a 450m granite climb (overall UK-grade E3 with a section at 6A and several pitches of 5A) on the NE ridge of 'Gangotri Dome'. Though disappointed by lack of time, lateness of season and poor acclimatization, they were enthusiastic about the prospects for granite wall climbing in the Upper Gangotri glacier area.

Karakoram

MEF ref. 83/5 — *Karakoram Alpine-Style Expedition* (May-July 1983) This Franco-US-Australian-British party, including Doug Scott, Andy Parkin, Al Rowse and Peter Thexton, made a number of climbs from two base camps, one at Urdukas for some fine granite-wall climbing on the Lobsang Spires; the other being the K2 Base Camp, from which two attempts were made on the S ridge (direct) of K2. Two pairs reached the summit of Broad Peak (8047m) but Peter Thexton died of pulmonary oedema at 7500m. A French member also suffered from cerebral oedema but recovered on descending. (A full account appears in *Mountain 93*).

84/3 — *British Bojohagur Expedition 1984 (7400m)* This expedition found the approach march from Gilgit too long for an Alpine-style push. Base Camp was low at 3300m. Though they climbed another 3500m (to 6800m), it would have taken at least 2 more days to reach the summit, and in view of minor injuries, mild frostbite and shortage of food, they turned back.

84/15 — *British Trango Tower Expedition (6246m)* (May-July 1984) Bad weather and dangerous conditions forced this party to abandon this attempt at a new route, between the 1976 route and the New Zealand route on Trango, after reaching the final pitch below the summit ice-field.

84/13 — *Cambridge Karakoram Expedition 1984* (July-October 1984) This six-member team, led by James Mayers, did some medical project work in Hunza, mapped the snout of the Minapin glacier (finding it had receded 10m since the International Karakoram Project), studied the Himalayan snowcock in its natural habitat in the Minapin area, but found their time cut short unexpectedly by a Himalayan bear which consumed the expedition's rations. The party trekked out from Gilgit into Chitral.

Kashmir

MEF ref. 83/24 — *Oxford University Expedition to Kashmir* (August-September 1983) A six-member team led by Peter Holmes did valuable ornithological work on the Hygam Rakh wetland area and along the Suru river, ringing a total of 3897 birds of 77 species. They also made a study of the breeding population of the Little Bittern.

84/27 — *Cambridge Medicinal Plants Study Group* (June-July 1984) Following up Mark Rothera's encounter in 1983 with an *amchi* (Tibetan local doctor) in Zanskar, he and Alistair Brown collected, in the Kanji region near Leh, some 150 out of a total of 400 plants in use by *amchis* for the treatment of hepatitis,

dysentery, rheumatism and high blood pressure. These are being analysed by Rothera at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Soviet Union

MEF ref. 84/20 — *Hadfield Altai Expedition* (July-August 1984) John Town and Shiona Dawson made the first British ascent of Mount Bielukha (4514m) in the Altai mountains of W Siberia, in company with 2 West German and 7 Russian climbers. The summit was reached on 5 August by a circuitous route from the N, round the E end of the impressive 5km long ice-and-rock wall of the N face at the head of the Ak-Kem glacier. The ascent was completed by the normal SE ridge route.

