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# Area Notes 1995

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LINDSAY GRIFFIN

## Alps and Pyrenees 1995

*This report looks at selected activity from the wealth of interesting ascents, both in terms of exploration and technical performance, that occurred throughout the Alpine chain last year. In preparing these notes Lindsay Griffin would like to acknowledge the assistance of Jérôme Arpin, Liana Darenskaya, Stevie Haston, Frank Jourdan, Igor Koller, Mireille Lazarevitch, Giuseppe Miotti, Emanuele Pellizzari, Michel Piola, Ian Rea, Claude Remy, Simon Richardson, Franci Savenc, Hubert Schmitt, Hilary Sharp, Paolo Vitali and Matjaz Wiegeler. Technical grades are either French or UIAA.*

*Further information and new route descriptions for publication in these pages, especially pertaining to AC members' activities, will be most welcome and should be sent directly to: 2 Top Sling, Tregarth, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4RL, UK.*

### WINTER/SPRING 1994-1995

The beginning of the winter augured well for climbers, with little snow and generally stable weather but often very cold temperatures. A heavy snowfall in the New Year changed all that and unsettled weather continued right through the season. While this caused great delight to skiers, it proved frustrating to the majority of mountaineers who were unable to achieve

very much in the way of winter climbing until the more settled snow conditions of the spring. Outside of a good spell of weather during late April and early May, climbers attempting significant ascents were forced to snatch them during brief windows of clear sky. Mid-May brought heavy snow right across the Alps, even affecting semi-Mediterranean areas such as the Mercantour/Maritime Alps, and there was still more than average cover everywhere in June.

## Pyrenees

**Vignemale** Most of the hard classic couloirs on the N face were repeated during the winter/spring but over four days in March Ferran Latorre and Père Vilarasau added a new 600m line to the left of the rarely repeated *Direct route* on the N face of **Pointe Chausenque**. *Mixed Emotions* had a lower section of A3+ and V, before reaching a huge icy dièdre of 70°–80°.

**Peña Telera** On this well-known winter playground south of the **Pic du Midi d'Ossau**, Carlos Gallego, Gabriel Martin and Alberto Sepúlveda made the first true winter and second overall ascent of *Chez Lulu*, a series of steep ice smears and mixed ground up the 800m walls L of the *Maria José Aller Couloir*. Gallego and Martin had previously climbed *Carnaval Glace*, a more indirect route and a somewhat easier proposition (TD 80°) linking ice gullies just to the left. Subsequently, several parties climbed variations on *Chez Lulu*, Julian Beraza and Mikel Zabalza creating the hardest with *Directa al Antes de Aller* at ED2 (steep and thinly-iced slabs with rock sections of 6a and A1).

**Pic du Midi d'Ossau** There were no new routes on this very famous Pyrenean peak during the winter, but there was an important repeat: a rare winter ascent of the *Bellefon/Ravier route* on the NW face of the **Grand Pic** by Maffel de la Matta and Jordi Tosas.

**Pic de la Munia** Daniel Lanne and friends created *Taupe Niveau* (ED1), a new direct line up the N face of this, the highest peak in the Troumousse cirque. The 270m route was sustained, with icy runnels of 85° and rock sections of 5+ and A1.

**Pic del Mig de la Tallada** Two short new routes were climbed on the N face of this increasingly popular winter venue in the Mulleres valley. Sergi Bermúdez and Ferran Latorre climbed *Woodstock 69* (220m 90° mixed 5) and, as every peak worth its salt should have one these days, Jordi Barrancos, Jordi Sabaté, Xavi Metal and Edu Requena created a *Hipergoulotte* (90° 4+).

Several new routes and one or two impressive repeats occurred at the icefall mecca of **Gavarnie**. From 6-7 February Michel Courtade, Daniel Lanne and Gérard Traille made a complete ascent of the Cirque, following an entirely different line to that taken by Gabarrou and Latorre in 1994 on the inception of the first integral ascent. The trio linked *Mystiques/Panneau Central* (TD) on the first tier, *l'Alpe Julian*, a new TD+ line in the Atico sector to the right of the awesome *Overdose*, and finally finished up the

shattered rock of the rarely repeated *Malus route* (550m TD) on the N face of the **Pic Oriental de la Cascade (3161m)**, a total ascent of 1400m.

## Ecrins

Again, conditions appear to have been too bad for anything outstanding to be reported during the winter season. However, in the run up to the New Year, when the weather was generally clement though chilly, and before the big snows of '95, several interesting events took place.

On the NE face of **Pic Coolidge**, Abdou Martin and Bruno Pleindoux climbed the obvious 500m couloir to the R of the *Deweze* at TD+. On the **Ailefroide Orientale**, Emmanuel Borgis soloed the classic 1980 Sombardier/Schultz route, *Emeraude* (400m TD-) in a mere 1¼ hours and later the somewhat mythical *Emeraude de Droite* (400m TD but with unknown authors) in only a slightly longer time. Constant and partner also repeated this right-hand gully. Borgis and Constant made the first ascent of the N couloir of **Pointe Nerot**, the 1000m, ED1/2 climb exposed for part of its length to sérac fall. The same pair also made the first ascent of the N couloir of the **Brèche des Clochertons** (east of the **Crête de Roche Méane** above the Clot des Cavales valley), a TD+ route with ice up to 80° and a pitch of A2.

## Mont Blanc

**Mont Blanc du Tacul** Laurence Gouault, current female champion of the Courcheval ice-climbing competitions, and her husband, UK climber Stevie Haston now resident in Chamonix, climbed a very thin ice runnel on the right flank of the Martinetti Pillar which they christened *Scotch on the Rocks*. This 7-pitch route was given the French grading of VI/7M, making it one of the hardest ice/mixed routes in the country. The well-known and highly popular goulottes on the E face came into wonderful condition during April/May and received many ascents. Notable here was a repeat by Patrick Gabarrou of the complete *Supercouloir* with the *Direct Start*, almost 20 years to the day after his first ascent with the late Jean-Marc Boivin.

**Pointe de Pré de Bar** On the previously unclimbed W face above the N couloir of the Col du Dolent, David Autheman and Serge Bazin traced *Philou* on 6 April. This gave some excellent pitches of mixed climbing at D with a rock section of 4+/5.

**Mont Dolent** On the NW face Philippe Batoux and Gabarrou climbed a slim 400m ice runnel immediately to the left of the 1980 *Delettre/Perroux route*. Gabarrou is well-known for his somewhat 'modest' grading so the rating of TD+ should be taken with a certain pinch of salt, especially as the, probably easier, 1980 route is ED1/2.

**Petit Triolet** Two days later, on 9 April, the same pair put up a very

demanding, but superb, 650m mixed route on the N face, which they again graded TD+ and christened *En ce Printemps de Paix*.

**Sixt/Fer à Cheval** is home to some of the hardest icefall climbing in France but access is often problematical and the climbs slow to form. Out of the three grade 7 pure icefall routes in the country, two are situated in the Cirque Fer à Cheval: *La Massue* and *La Lyre*, both unrepeated. At the head of the valley there are some huge mixed faces which give impressive climbs under the right circumstances. In February Gabarrou soloed the 1500m W face of **Le Buet** to give *A la Grâce de Dieu* (short sections of 95°). With Batoux he returned in April to climb the whole of the 1300m wall of the **Cirque Fer à Cheval**, to finish on the **Pointes des Cavales (2764m)**, the first time a continuous ascent of the entire face has been completed.

**Ski Descents** There were a number of very impressive first ski descents in the range owing to the almost perfect conditions prevailing in the spring. The four most notable were: the E face of the **Triolet** by the superstar of this game, Pierre Tardivel; the N face of the **Triolet** via the *Contamine/Lachenal Direct* by André Rhem and Jérôme Ruby on snowboards (they beat Tardivel to a planned descent by a day); *The Shroud* on the **Grandes Jorasses** by Samuel Beaugey and Ruby, the pair only skiing the hanging ice field of *The Shroud* itself, the top mixed section and entry goulotte deemed to be unskiable; and the first snowboard descent of the Lagarde couloir on **Les Droites**. The latter, by Arnaud Boudet, was not complete, Boudet beginning his descent about 50m below the top and rappelling the steep runnel of the Direct Start.

Over in Switzerland Slovenian climbers Marko Car, Simon Copi, Urban Golob and Istok Tomazin made the first ski descent of the prominent couloir in the N face of the **Sonnblick**. They began skiing 15m below the top because of a vertical rock chimney but thereafter negotiated 50°-55° slopes. Slovenians also skied the W ridge/face of the **Eiger** following the route taken on the first descent by Saudan, and also via the slightly easier Abbuhl variation.

## Adamello

In this course granite massif with deep-cut valleys, local Trento activist, Ermanno Salvaterra, plus Gianni Berta, opened a major 'big wall' route on the **Scoglio dei Boazzo** in the famous icefall valley of the Daone. *Mala Onde* was completed on 17 April and weighed in at VII+ and A4+, giving some of the hardest aid climbing in the Alps.

## Valais

The ubiquitous Patrick Gabarrou, partnered by Christophe Jond, added a new route to the NW face of the **Dent Blanche** (his third) just to the left of

his own 1993 line *Marianne*. The grade of this mixed/rock route was rated as TD but as the date of the ascent was 29 July, conditions were, not surprisingly, reported to be far from perfect.

Jean Christophe Lafaille also passed close by during his spring 'cumul' (an accumulated ascent where a number of routes are climbed in a continuous journey but with time for sleep/recovery in between, as opposed to an enchaînement where a number of routes are linked together in a continuous effort and a night's sleep in a hut or on a bivouac is not allowed). Lafaille, operating more or less alone, climbed the NE face of the **Eiger**, N face of the **Mönch**, N face of the **Aletschhorn**, N face of the **Nesthorn**, E face of the **Monte Rosa**, N face of the **Matterhorn**, N face of the **Breithorn** (via a new route), N face of **Mont Blanc de Cheilon**, N couloir of the **Col de l'Aiguille Verte** and *The Shroud* on the **Grandes Jorasses**, between 4-19 April. This event caused considerable controversy because, as a highly sponsored climber, Lafaille received a large amount of cash for what some, perhaps jealous, competitors regarded as a linking of routes which were, by and large, 'ski descents' in the modern idiom.

At around the same time of year the Italian, G Berlone, made a possible first ascent of a 700m ephemeral snow/ice couloir that reaches the E ridge of the **Fletschhorn** from the Zibelenfluh glacier (80° to start then 45°-50°). He then descended it on ski.

## Dolomites

Amongst other ascents, of which there is little information at the time of writing, Slovenian climbers made two interesting contributions. Ivo Buda and Erik Svab climbed the *Cassin route* on the **Torre Trieste** in 10 hours during early January. This was the first, one day, winter ascent. From 15-17 April, but in full winter conditions, Miha Praprotnik and Slavko Rozic climbed the *Fish* on the S face of the **Marmolada** at VII+ and A3. The temperatures were low but the face succumbed to a continuous push without recourse to fixed ropes.

## SUMMER 1995

After a fairly savage winter and far from perfect spring, July saw an exceptional period of stable, anticyclonic weather. The Swiss Alps, which had earlier received the fourth largest snow deposit this century, were suddenly subjected to the warmest temperatures since the 1920s and these completely stripped many of the ridges and faces, especially at middle or lower altitudes.

Almost continuously unsettled weather swept most of the Alps in August and this evolved into prolonged and heavy snowfalls during September. The

ice/mixed routes came into fine condition in October and November, when the weather allowed considerable activity once again in the high mountains.

The result of a very snowy first half to the year meant that glacier travel and access to routes (rimayes etc) proved less problematical than in recent summers, but it will be seen from the notes below that little of significance or an exploratory nature was achieved other than on the pure rock walls.

## Vanoise

Two new rock routes were put up by Jérôme Arpin and friends. The first, on **Bazel (3440m)**, which is the dolomitic wall above the Prariond hut and Val d'Isère, gave 10 pitches up to 6c (6b obl). With a length of 350m this new route warranted an overall grade of ED1. The second lies on the **Barnes du Ché** which is a limestone wall about 6km from Bourg St Maurice in the direction of Cormet de Roesland. This was the fourth route on the face and had maximum difficulties of 6c+ (6b obl) in a total of seven pitches. Both climbs were equipped.

## Mont Blanc

**Mont Blanc** On the Frêne face Chris Cartwright and Simon Richardson completed the S pillar by a direct variation at ED1. The pair climbed the prominent chimney on the front face of the huge monolithic gendarme, avoided on the first ascent in 1972 by Dubost and Seigneur. The crux was 6b (about British E2 5c) with one point of tension.

On the **Aiguille Croix**, Manlio Motto and R Satore finished a project on the SE face that they first began in 1992 with the late Swiss activist, Romain Vogler. The route has been christened *Souvenir d'Italie*.

**Grand Capucin** On the wonderful knobby granite of the E face the well-known Courmayeur guide, Giovanni Bassanini, made another attempt to free climb *De Fil en Aiguille* but fared no better than on his previous foray in 1992, when he had to resort to two points of aid on pitch 5. In this form the route is 8a and A0 and presents one of the hardest technical free climbs in the range. For Bassanini the Capucin holds few secrets; this was his 41st ascent of the spire.

Mistaking a line of cracks on the far L side of the face for the classic 1984 Piola/Steiner route, *O Sole Mio*, Slovenian climbers, Minja Gregoric and Bostjan Slatensek, completed *A Cause de Soleil* at TD+ (6a).

**Triolet Glacier Basin** The great, modern-day, Italian explorer of the less developed granite walls in the range, Manlio Motto, concentrated his efforts this year on the rock walls surrounding the Triolet glacier basin. On **Mont Rouge de Triolet** he added two more routes to the superb diamond-shaped

wall of the **Central Peak (Pte 3289m)**, both in the company of Michel Piola. *Délicatessen* is 7b+ and *Le Proferie di Celestino* is 7c. Both lie close to his 1993 route, *Tout Fou* (6c+). More promising for lesser mortals are his two projects on the left arête of this face. Both are nearly completed and promise to be 800m long with difficulties of around 5+.

On the previously unexplored buttresses that comprise the S face of the **Aiguille Savoie**, the Motto/Piola partnership have opened five new routes of high quality. On the left-hand buttress *Le Meilleur Grimpeur du Monde* is 14 pitches long with a crux of 6c+ (6b obl) and was climbed with Lanza and Sartore. *Rose Marie* (TD+ Giovannetto/Motto/Predan) and *The Dark Side of the Moon* (TD+ Motto/Piola) lie on the Central Buttress and are 6c and 6b+ respectively. The right-hand buttress is a fine pillar of red granite and now aptly christened the *Pilier Rouge*. *Le Rouge et le Noir* is eight pitches in length and 6b (6a obl), whereas *Abitare il Tempo* is a much more demanding offering at ED2 and 7a (6b+ obl). Both were put up by Motto and Piola.

The vast majority of the climbing on this face lies on slabby compact rock where natural protection is scarce or non-existent. Although a selection of wires and Friends is essential, all the pitches are to a great extent bolt protected, but in several instances rather sportingly.

**Mont Gruetta** On the remote E face, Chris Cartwright and Simon Richardson made an ascent of the infrequently climbed 1982 Ferrero/Manera route, *Pilastro del Sorriso* (Route 109 in Vol. I, part II of the current AC guide). The Gruetta glacier, normally considered to provide the single greatest deterrent to climbing on this face, proved surprisingly straightforward but the pair found the correct line of the Pilastro from the huge terrace system at one-third height difficult to locate and created an important variation which avoided the aid moves on the roof above. Once the rotten rock of the SE ridge was joined, the pair made a rappel descent of the 1993 Vogler route, *La Roue de la Fortune*.

Although the best-looking line on the face is unquestionably *La Roue de la Fortune*, the Ferrero/Manera route provided a worthwhile outing and a revised description is included:

*Pilastro del Sorriso* (TD+) Approximately 25m L of the initial bolt belay of *La Roue de la Fortune* a line of cracks rises up to the R, reaching the base of an overhanging dièdre. Climb this crack line to a grassy ledge (5+). Reach the base of a large overhang and surmount it on the R (6a) to reach an easy ramp that slants up L to some blocks. Climb back down the ramp to above the overhang and follow a wide crack (5+) on the R. Climb the slab above to a small pillar which has a block leaning against its base (5 then 4). Step R, climb the dièdre above to reach an overhanging crack and struggle up this to an easy gully (5+). Climb the flake crack above (5+), then traverse R to reach the huge terrace system well-visible from below.

The true line of the pillar rises from the R end of the terraces and is taken by *La Roue de la Fortune*. *Pilastro del Sorriso* takes the wall and R-facing groove

system roughly mid-way between this and the prominent corner of *Le Karma* on the L. Climb up easily to the L of an obvious V-shaped depression and continue up superb grey slabs (5+) to the base of a crooked vertical crack (50m). Follow the crack to the roof, then traverse R to a ledge at the foot of a R-facing groove system (5+ and A0; no in-situ gear). Climb a slab and a 30m dièdre (4 and 5), then continue up for another 40m, at first on the L (4), then through some overhangs (5) to a slab. Climb the slab and the dièdre above to reach the crest of the SE ridge (4+). Above lies a smooth slab. Climb it and continue on easier ground just to the L of the crest for four pitches and so reach the top of the pillar (5 then 3 and 4). 380m 8h.

*Free Variation* (Cartwright/Richardson 23 July 1995 90m): above the superb grey slabs climb the crooked vertical crack to where it fades, then traverse up and L round a roof to a good ledge (6a). Exit from the L end of the ledge, follow a ramp up and R, then continue diagonally across a steep wall and around an arête to gain the 30m dièdre (5+). *Descent*: from the top of the pillar, a well-equipped, bolted descent leads down *La Roue de la Fortune* to the glacier (nine long rappels).

**Aiguille du Midi** On the world's favourite and over-used piece of granite of the S face, Alain Ghersen has completed the first 8b in the massif. Much work went into the slanting, overhanging finger crack on the L side of the face before it was finally red-pointed on 20 October. Gratifying for traditional climbers was the fact that not a single bolt was placed, protection coming from nuts, Friends and in-situ pegs, notably an old ice peg. The new pitch was christened *Au Sud de Nulle Part*.

Ghersen, with Thierry Renault, was the first person to truly red-point *Digital Crack* (8a) on the Cosmiques Arête in 1990 and until last year this pitch was probably the most technical at altitude. It has been repeated over two days by Stevie Haston.

**Aiguille du Pèlerins** Excellent conditions in October/November brought the notorious Parkin/Twilight route, *Beyond Good and Evil* (ED3), into near-perfect condition. It was repeated first by François Damilano and François Marsigny, and subsequently by a reported seven other parties, one of which included resident Scottish climber, Jim Blyth. All the parties finished up the Carrington/Rouse line, a more logical if easier exit, and most if not all the ascents were made entirely free owing to a far better build-up of ice compared to that experienced by the first ascent party.

**Aiguille de Blaitière** On 1 July Philippe Batoux and Benoît Robert climbed the E face of a superb gendarme on the SE ridge which they christened *Totem Pole*. Stopped by a seemingly unstable flake on the third pitch, the pair retreated only to return six days later with a car jack. However, the offending obstacle refused to budge and the 9-pitch route was completed without further incident at 6c+.

**Tour Rouge** Twelve years after their creation of *Le Marchant de Sable* (280m 6a+), the first route on the sunny SE face, Gérard Hopfgartner and Michel Piola returned once more to add *L'Alchimie du Temps qui Passer*, an 11-pitch

route with maximum difficulties of 6b+. This was perhaps the last logical line left on the wall. The ultra classic, *Le Marchant*, was also completely re-equipped with 10mm bolts (12mm on the belays).

**Aiguille du Dru** The Dru was again popular and there were a number of serious accidents and several fatalities during the summer. However, only two climbing events of note appear to have taken place: the Russian climber, Valery Babanov, spent seven days making the first solo ascent of the *American Directissima* (Harlin/Robbins) on the W face, commenting on the loose nature of the rock; and the very talented Slovakian climbers, Dino Kuran and Martin Heuger, made attempts to free climb the *Thomas Gross route* but only managed seven pitches. Very bad weather, rather fragile rock and some really problematical climbing above, eventually forced a retreat.

**Flammes de Pierre ridge** Olivier Ratheaux and Thierry Renault teamed up to create a new line on the S face of **Pointe 3215m**. Starting at the same point as the 1970 *Belmastro/Manera route*, *Retour de Flammes* takes a fairly direct line up a succession of pillars and gave a well-balanced, 12-pitch route with maximum difficulties of 6a (plus a few moves of A1). This marked a brief return to climbing for French superstar, Renault, who after his tour de force on French icefalls in 1992, culminating in an ascent of *Le Lyre* (7) at Sixt, possibly the hardest ice route in the world, gave up climbing and turned to Buddhism.

**Aiguille d'Argentière** Nicholas d'Albrand and Olivier Ratheaux added two pleasant, middle-grade routes to the pinnacles of the Charlet-Straton ridge. *Juste Milieu* (200m D+) lies on the Red Tower that forms the lower section of one of the south-facing spurs coming down from **Pointe 3640m**. It was rated 5. *La Poire* (150m D 4/5) climbs the pear-shaped buttress falling from a shoulder SW of the summit of **La Vierge**. Note also that the classic *Rébuffat route* on the SE spur of **Le Minaret** (Number 227 in the current AC guide) can be climbed completely free at 6a.

**Aiguille du Jardin** Chris Cartwright and Simon Richardson climbed a new line up the right edge of the initial 300m pillar taken by the 1964 Bernezat/Jaccoux/Revilliod route, *The West Pillar*. The pair found superb and sustained climbing with a crux of F6a. After joining the original route they continued to the summit making one, storm-swept bivouac, then traversed to the Verte and descended the Moine ridge.

**Aiguilles Dorées** Walter Josi has created two new routes on the SSE pillar of the **Aiguille de la Varappe**. With Fabrice Pini he climbed the crest of the pillar to the left of the 1897 *Crettez/Sandoz route* to produce the 14-pitch, *Les Strapontins du Paradis* (TD- 5+/6a maximum) – an excellent route. He returned later with Tobias Dollinger to put up *Les Chants du Midi* (TD 6b), a 7-pitch line just to the left of *Les Strapontins* and starting up the ledges used to access the 1994 Piola route, *C'est Mozart qu'on Assassine*.

**Aiguilles Rouges** There is still plenty of scope for development on the rock walls of this surprisingly extensive massif immediately N of the Chamonix valley. On the S face of the 2888m **Aiguille de la Floria**, which

lies above the Index téléphérique station, Michel Piola has created the totally bolt-protected, 250m line of *Asia*. This 8-pitch route is on perfect, though totally compact, gneiss and has maximum difficulties of 5+. Also on the same wall is a small sport climb of 28m called *Soho* (6b).

*Luchini Arsène* is the name given to a new route on the SE face of the **Belvédère**, put up by Abderrahame, Grégory Lisko, Rodrigue Passy, Sylvain Ravel and Julie Schwarz. The 300m climb has two initial pitches of 6c+ and 6a+ (6a+ obl) then eases to a maximum of 5+. It lies to the right of the 1920 *Bec/Lepinet route* (AD) and is again on excellent gneiss.

## Swiss Rock

The Remy brothers have been hard at work creating a number of worthwhile new routes on their home ground. *La Lyre* (7b 6b obl) is a fine and long route (15 pitches) to the left of *Mamba* on the huge limestone slab of the **Miroir d'Argentine** in the Vaudois.

In the **Bernese Oberland**, *Mir* (13 pitches 6c), *El Gourou* (13 pitches 7a+) and the superb *Schweiz Plaisir* (13 pitches 6a+) all lie between *Métal Hurlant* and *Simple Solution* on the famous granite dome of **Eldorado**. *Schweiz Plaisir* has seen many repetitions and is approaching the status of a modern classic.

The **Dome du Slot** is a 400m granite formation on the **Wannenhorn**, which lies above Fiesch in the Valais. It is similar to Eldorado but tends to run to more holds and less pure friction climbing. Here, seven routes have been created and all are reportedly well worth repeating. They are 12 pitches in length and require traditional protection in addition to the 60 or so bolts in place on each route. From left to right; *Jordana* (7b 6b+ obl), *Ikarus* 95 (6b 5+ obl), *Mythos* (6c 6b+ obl), *Siogo* (6c 6b obl), *Tenkil* (6c 6b obl), *Lucifuge* (6c 6b obl) and *Génius* (5+ to 6a). *Ikarus*, the most accessible of these new routes, has already been repeated several times.

**Salbitschijen** The classic S ridge (Route 1 in the Rock Climbing Area of the AC Bernese Oberland Guide) is not considered to be comparable with the N ridge of the **Piz Badile** as suggested. It is thought that a better comparison might well be the S ridges of the **Punta Allievi** or **Stockhorn**, but the **Salbitschijen** is more sustained than either of these routes. Although the present guidebook time is correct, the grading is thought to be questionable: TD- would be generous but probably no less than D+.

## Bregaglia

This summer saw the publication of the new AC guide to the region and this coincided with a well-attended AC meet based in Vicosoprano. The summer was also notable for a number of fine achievements, mostly on the stupendous granite that graces the Italian side of the range.

**Solo Ascents** Local hot-shot Gianluca 'Rampikino' Maspes was very active. He made the first solo ascent of the Merizzi/Miotti route *Soli di Ghiaccio* on the E face of **Punta 2511m** in the Zocca valley. The crux is an appalling, rounded, off-width crack (VIII-) below an eight-metre roof. A month later he made another first solo of the very bold *Sondrio City* on the **Punta Baroni**, confirming the frightful reputation of the fourth and fifth pitches (VII+ and very badly protected: originally A2/3 and first climbed free in the late 1970s by Miotti). Shortly after, he soloed the classic *Kasper Pillar* on the **Piz Frachiccio** (VII) on the Swiss side of the range and then turned to his major ambition, the first solo of *Jumar Iscariota* on the Waterdrop pillar of the NW face of **Piz Badile**. This bold 1986 Fazzini route is considered to be one of the hardest undertakings in the Central Alps with 12, generally very poorly protected pitches up to VII+ and A2. Maspes back-roped much of the route and took eight hours for his ascent.

On the **Punta Allievi**, Giovanni Ongaro made the first solo ascent of the magnificent and exposed, Brambati/Vitali route, *Filo Logico* (TD+/ED1 VII-), whilst down in the Masino valley, Paolo Cucchi made the first solo ascent of the *Liss del Pesgunfi*, a notable 'big wall' climb at V+ and A2 by Gogna and Miotti in 1984. This was probably the third ascent, Cucchi having made the second in 1994. He spent 10 hours spread over two days to complete his solo bid.

**Piz Badile** The first new route to be created for several years on the region's most famous peak was climbed last summer by Rossano and Valentine Libera. They forced an incredibly bold-looking line up the steep blank walls between the *Isherwood/Kosterlitz* and the 1973 *North Pillar*. *Hiroshima* is 600m high and rated VIII. Judging by this pair's previous offerings, the protection will undoubtedly be 'sporting'.

**Punta Bertani** High in the remote Ferro valley, Sonja Brambati and Paolo Vitali have added a third route to their existing offerings, *Asterix* and *Obelix* on the SE face. *Idefix* is VIII- with unavoidable moves of VII+.

**Mello Valley** Several routes were added to the famous glacier-polished walls with perhaps the most significant being *Nel Giardino dell'Aepiornis* on the buttress right of *Luna Nascente* on the **Scoglio della Metamorfosi**. The difficulties were rated as VIII and A0, with the crux a very bold horizontal friction traverse to join the top section of *Luna*. On **Stella Marini**, *A Vedova Allegra* takes a fairly direct line to the right of the well-known *Magic Flute* and was rated VII+. Both routes above were the work of Simone Pedferri and various partners.

**Mezzola Valley** High up in this wild valley below the Cima d'Arcanzo, Stefano Righetti climbed a compact slabby pillar on the NW ridge of the **Arcanzo** to create *Via Berlusconi dall'Italia*, a 250m route rated VI+. This appears to be the first new route to be climbed in this valley since a mysterious and unreported 1974 line put up by the enigmatic Ivan Guerini.

**Monte Qualido** Probably the most significant activity on the Italian side of the range during the summer took place on the awesome 'big wall' of the

Qualido's E face. Brambati, Adriano Carnati and Vitali returned to complete their project, L of *Paolo Fabbri* 43. After many attempts during the spring, the 500m line was finally climbed almost entirely free at IX- (7b+) with two moves of A0 (VII+ obl). The route was climbed from the ground up but equipped with a battery-operated drill.

In June Barbara Guattini, Simone Pedferri, Stefano Pizzagalli, Dominic Soldarini and Marco Vago climbed *Magic Line*, a fairly direct, all-free climb on the right side of the face with obligatory moves of VII, but a crux of IX if climbed free.

Slovakian climbers, Dino Beránek, Igor Koller and Peter Machaj attempted to free climb the 1992 Brambati/Carnati/Vitali route, *Galactica* (VIII and A1). The trio managed to climb up to the sixth pitch at IX- but found the steep, compact and bolt-protected slabs above impossible to negotiate free. They completed the route with aid but free climbed the last three crack pitches after some extensive cleaning.

They then turned their attention to the historic 1982 Boscacci route, *Il Paradiso può Attendere* and, after a protracted siege, free climbed the line at IX-. Above the 16th pitch the climb makes a long but not unduly difficult traverse rightwards across dangerous and vegetated slabs to avoid the headwall. The Slovaks wanted to force a direct finish up the headwall but were thwarted by a bad storm which forced them into a frightening rappel descent of the route, largely through waterfalls. There are to date 13 routes (and one project) on this giant face, a quasi-vertical granite wall often likened to a smaller version of Yosemite's El Cap.

**Escudo** Until 1992 this beautiful rounded buttress of the best Bregaglia granite appears to have remained untouched, although it must have been blatantly obvious to all those operating on the E face of the **Qualido** directly opposite. There are now eight climbs, all taking fairly bold, bolt-protected lines up steep compact slabs, typical of the region. In 1995 there were two additions: *Agua Calientes* (VIII-) by Brambati plus Vitali in the middle of the face, and the ever-so-thin *Fiori nei Cannoni* on the far right side at IX- by Pedferri and Pizzagalli.

## Orobie

Mario Vannuccini has climbed a new route up the huge slab that forms the NW face of **Punta Rosatello Bertolini**, a spire first climbed and named in 1989 by Giuseppe Miotti and Guido Merizzi. This was Vannuccini's second route to the summit after his ascent of *Cleopatra* (500m V) in 1993.

Miotti, Mogavero and Selveti returned last summer to an unclimbed rock tower in the **Val de Scais** which they had attempted in 1994. They completed the 400m North Spur at a grade of VI+ and proposed the name of **Torre Giovanni Bonomi** for this fine structure above the Mambretti hut. They noticed the vast potential for more new routes on its vertical E face.

## Bernina

During work on the new CAI guide published in January 1996 (Caneta and Miotti), Giuseppe Miotti discovered several more little-known areas of high-quality rock on the south side of the range.

**Ciazzun del Gus** This is a big slabby cliff around 400m high and located on the right side of the Togno valley, a north-easterly branch of the main Val Malenco that runs up to the south side of Piz Scalino. With A Savonitto, Miotti climbed the 16-pitch *Il Sogno de Togno* at VII and with Fiorucci and Mogavero the 9-pitch *Mai Più* at VII/VII+. Both gave thin friction climbing and were, uncharacteristically for this traditional climber, equipped with a battery-operated drill.

**Piz Painale** This remote 3248m peak lies to the south of the **Scalino** on the watershed between the Painale and Fontana valleys. Rarely climbed, it almost received an 850m new route in October from Miotti and Salini when nightfall stopped them high on the W ridge. This impressive line has hard climbing in the first 10 pitches (VI+) on rock that is less than perfect, followed by much easier ground (III to V) to a junction with the 1904 *Corti/Valesini route* (II). The latter climbs only the last 300m of the ridge. Underestimating the difficulties, Miotti and Salini climbed for nine hours to reach a point some two or three pitches below the end of the unexplored section. They christened their effort *Cresta della Perseverance* and at the first possible opportunity will be back to complete it to the summit.

## Ortler

Two new routes climbed during the summer confirm the potential still remaining for pioneering at a reasonable level of difficulty in this popular glaciated massif.

On the 3740m **Piccolo Zebrù**, D Chiesa and A Zavattarelli made probably the first true ascent of the triangular snow/ice wall of the W face. Approached from the Quinto Alpini hut, this gave classic front-pointing up the 55° and 300m-high slope. The climb was rated AD and completed on 6 August.

Earlier, on 2 July, Chiesa, this time with M Cerri, climbed a new route up the mixed ground to the right of the *Pale Rossa Couloir* on the W face of the 3851m **Gran Zebrù** (or **Königsspitze**). Christened *Soldato delle Pale Rossa*, the 500m route was graded AD+ (55° maximum) and had rock pitches of III. This is a route with considerable 'high mountain ambience' and a certain amount of objective danger. It will only be feasible in well-frozen and snowy conditions.

## Dolomites

At the time of writing there is little information on activities in the Dolomites. It seems apparent that far less climbing takes place on the great walls of these spectacular peaks than occurred a decade ago, the focus of attention now having shifted owing to the proliferation of sport climbing and the continued discovery of more accessible cliffs with superior limestone. The weather was atrocious during August and the most significant ascents were made by those climbing in the region during June and July.

**Cima Su Alto** On this well-known peak in the Civetta, a group of climbers from the Ragni de Lecco, which included Marco Anghileri, opened a sensational and very hard new route in July: very technical climbing with tremendous exposure and widely-spaced protection.

**Punta Tissi** Renato Pancera and Mauro Valmassoi have created the 700m *Eliana de Zordo* at F7a, a sustained route dedicated to the daughter of the Sonino Coldai hut guardian, who was killed with her boyfriend, the talented Paolo Crippa, in Patagonia several years ago.

**Torre Trieste** Lecco-based climbers have repeated the 1935 *dell'Oro/Giudici/Longoni route* and found it remarkably hard by modern standards. It was put up the same day as Cassin climbed the E ridge but, surprisingly, had never received a second ascent until last summer. Even more notable was Lorenzo Bearz and Stefano Zaleri's repeat of the *Kukuczka route* on the right side of the S face. The pair managed the ascent over two days of inclement weather and found difficulties up to VI+ and A2. However, the real problem was the rock which was extremely rotten and the Italian team were full of praise for the bold effort of the Polish climbers. Several previous attempts to repeat this route had come to a halt above the Cassin/Carlesso terrace.

**Lavaredo** Singularly impressive were the linked ascents of the famous walls of the **Tre Cime** by the renowned and insatiable German soloist, Frank Jourdan. From 20-21 June he climbed the *Yellow Edge* (VI) on the **Cima Piccola**, descended the *Innerkofler* (III), climbed up the *Brandler-Hasse Direct* on the N face of the **Cima Grande** (VIII), descended the NE ridge (*Dibona*: IV) of the same peak, back up the *Comici route* (VII) and down the *ordinary route* (II), up the *Cassin* (VIII-) on the N face of the **Cima Ovest** and down the NE face (IV), up the NE ridge (VI+), down the S face *ordinary route* (II) and was just attempting the *Scoiattoli route* (VII+) as a finale when heavy rain stopped play after a total of almost 5000m of ascent and descent.

**Marmolada** There were some important additions to the mighty S face by well-known local activists such as Maurizio Giordani and Pietro dal Pra. These included a new route at F8a, now probably the hardest technical problem on the rock, by an on-form Giordani.

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JOSÉ LUIS BERMÚDEZ & PAUL KNOTT

## Russia and Central Asia 1995

*We would like to thank all those correspondents who have sent information, in particular Józef Nyka; Tolia Gvosdev, Minsk; Vladimir Komissarov of ITMC Tien Shan, Bishkek; Sergei Kurgin of SibAlp, Novosibirsk; Ian McNeill of Adventure, Protection and Survival Ltd; Alexander Shcherbakov, Sevastopol. Reports and information should be sent via the Alpine Club. Contact with any of the correspondents, many of whom offer logistical support to climbers, can also be made through the Club.*

### The Pamir

**Summer 1994** A British commercial expedition made the second recorded British ascent of **Pik Kommunizma (7495m)**. The ascent route was from the Moskvina Base Camp on the Valtera glacier via the Borodkin Spur (5A) which is the standard way up the mountain. This route was first climbed in 1968. Changing conditions have meant that the spur must now be accessed from the left via an objectively dangerous sérac ramp rather than up the middle of the triangle. The summit was reached by Mike Smith and two others on 14 August. (The first British ascent of Pik Kommunizma was made in 1962 by Joe Brown, Ian McNaught-Davis, Graeme Nicol and Malcolm Slesser.)

Reports from Russian climbers strongly suggest that helicopter prices are rising in Tajikistan. A figure of \$1000 has been quoted for the flight from Dushanbe to the Moskvina Base Camp. Those planning a visit to the area should negotiate their transport in advance. Anecdotal reports suggest that the costs of climbing in the 'traditional' areas of the Pamir and Tien Shan have driven Russian climbers to the development of areas like the Kola Peninsula which have the advantage of being within Russia.

### The Pamir Alai

**Summer 1994** The Muzkol range lies in the Eastern Pamirs in Tajikistan, 100 km SE of **Pik Kommunizma**. It has 11 summits over 6000m, of which the highest is **Pik Sovetskikh Ofizerov (6233m)**, and 30 between 5500m and 6000m. The first mountaineering visit to the area was made by a Soviet Army team from Leningrad in 1986, whose first ascent of **Pik Bitkaya**

**Vostochnaya (6074m)** won first prize in the Soviet Mountaineering Championships. Two first ascents were made. Francis Distefano, Sergei Arsentiev, Billy Mason and others climbed **P 5800m**, which they named **Goodwill Peak**, while Arsentiev and Distefano climbed **Chottukay (5823m)**. Also on the Muzkol Ridge a team of four climbers from St Petersburg made the first ascent of **P 5660m** by a 6A route on its NW face.

A three-person Italian team from Friuli visited the Laylak gorge and put up the first route on the 850m high NE face of **Parus (5037m)**. Andrea Carolli, Mauro Florit and Silvia Stefanelli climbed *Sulli Ali delle Aquile (On the Wings of the Eagle)* at VIII-, A3. Florit and Stefanelli also climbed two new routes on **Pik Atabekov (4300m)** a 280m line at grade VII on the SW pillar and a 400m route at VI+ which they entitled *Rasputin*.

**Summer 1995** An extremely high-profile American team visited the Karavshin valley in the Pamir Alai for a productive three-week visit. Lynn Hill and Greg Child made the first free ascent of *Perestroika Crack* (5.12) on **Pik Slesov** (also known as the **Russian Tower** and **P 4240m**) in 28 hours of continuous climbing. On the same peak Kitty Calhoun-Grissom and Jay Smith spent five days on *Fat City*, a new route at 5.12, while Alex Lowe and Conrad Anker climbed *The Russian Shield*, a variation on existing routes at VI, 5.10, A4. Hill teamed up with Lowe to free the 1100m W face of **Pik 4810** (also known as **Pik Boston**), connecting two existing aid lines at Russian 6B with climbing up to 5.12c. Two routes were climbed on the N face of **The Bird (4490m)**, including a new route by Anker and Lowe at 5.11d and A0. Hill and Child also climbed *Clodhopper Direct* at 5.10+ on the **Central Pyramid (3850m)**. Like many teams visiting the Pamir Alai the Americans found that far more routes had already been climbed in the area than they had anticipated.

A six-member Italian team climbed in the Ak-su valley in August. Their routes, all climbed in pure Alpine style, included a first traverse of **Little Makalu (5011m)**, ascending by the N ridge and descending the E ridge; a possible new route on the S face of **Domashnaya (3929m)**; and a variation on the SW pillar of **Pik Dostoyevsky (4979m)**.

Although the Pamir-Alai is best known for its big granite walls there are plenty of relatively unexplored Alpine peaks in the area. A commercial expedition led by Pat Littlejohn of the International School of Mountaineering made several first ascents in September from a base camp at the junction of the Kara-Su and Ak-Su valleys, including the N ridge (graded Alpine D) of **P 5011 (Scott's Peak)** at the very south of the Kara-Su valley, and the N face (at D) of **P 4786** just north of **P 5011**. The N face of the main summit of **Domashnaya (3929m)** went at D. Several peaks were climbed on the ridge running E from **Pik Dostoyevsky (4929m)**, including **King** (4760m AD), **Queen** (4720m PD+), **South Prince (4650m)** by its N face at TD and **North Prince (4650m)** by the S face. The expedition made the round trip from Tashkent by helicopter.

## The Caucasus

**Summer 1995** The Russian Snow and Ice Climbing Championships were held in the Bezingi region during August. The format of the championships will come as a shock to Western climbers. Fifteen of the hardest routes in the Bezingi and Mishirgi valleys were each given points on a scale of one to six according to their length, technical difficulty and degree of commitment. The ten or so pairs entered were then given 10 days to amass as many points as possible. Each pair had a coach, and a support team whose job it was to keep the climbers supplied with food and equipment. Climbing competitions still seem to be taken quite seriously in Russia, with teams sponsored by their municipal mountaineering clubs and coming from as far away as Kemerovo in Siberia.

The Championships were plagued by bad weather, with no climbing possible on days seven and eight. When the weather cleared the leading pair from St Petersburg, Sasha Kashevkin and Sergei Malinin, were slightly behind a Siberian pair. They decided to attempt the highest-scoring route, the *Blankovsky route* (6A) on **Shkhara West (5057m)**. They climbed the route extremely fast but sadly slipped and fell to their deaths while descending the NE spur of Jangi Tau East. The Championships were called off.

These were not the only lives claimed by Shkhara that season. A week previously three Moscow climbers fell to their deaths through a cornice while descending the classic NE ridge route (5A) after climbing the *Tomashek-Muller route* (5B).

## The Tien Shan 1995

**Access** This year parties for the N Inylchek approached via Kazakhstan and those for the S Inylchek approached via Karakol, Kyrgyzstan. Logistics providers in each country are able to overcome potential difficulties with visas and permits, and helicopter access remains normal with prices similar to those in 1994.

**Central Tien Shan** The established base camps, one of which now has permanent buildings, continue to operate on the **South Inylchek Glacier**. The area still has unclimbed peaks, many over 5000m and a handful over 6000m, but large cornices and poor snow conditions hamper many ascents.

**Pik Pobeda (7439m)** had an estimated nine ascents during 1995. In April-May a team from Novosibirsk made the first spring ascent. Using four fixed camps, Gleb Sokolov, Vitaly Ivanov and Yevgeniy Belousov reached the summit on 8 May, five days after leaving Base Camp. Conditions are said to be particularly dangerous at this time of year.

**Khan Tengri (6995m)** remains popular with at least 45 ascents during the year; the West Ridge is reported to be littered with detritus. A speed competition took place on this route via the Semenovskiy glacier. Of the 18

participants 10 completed within the 36-hour control time, the fastest being Alex Lowe (USA) who summited and returned to camp in 10 hours 8 minutes.

In the same area a Slovenian team climbed a hard new route on the N Face of the NE summit of **Pik Troglav (5100m)**. On 14 August Peter Mežnar, Blaž Stres and Thomas Jakofčič took 15½ hours to complete the 1000m route at ED VI 90°. The British team of Tim Sparrow and Geoff Thomas reached 5400m on **Otkritii (5664m)**, taking a spur left of the SW ridge. Earlier they had attempted to reach **Shipilov (6201m)** but found the approach via the Zvezdochka glacier impassable (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/42).

Several British teams were active in the region of the **Kayndy Glacier**, which is parallel to and S of the Inylchek. Some approached partly or wholly on foot from the Maida-Adyr road head. A team visiting early in July was unsuccessful owing to metre-deep snow. Later, on 17 July, Mick Davie and Joanna Newton attempted the E ridge of the unclimbed **Pik 5445**. Close to the summit a cornice collapsed and Davie fell to his death; during the subsequent search two Russian guides also fell to their deaths owing to cornice collapse (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/34). Rob Collister and John Cousins were also in the vicinity. On 14 July they climbed **P 5315** from the 30 Years of Victory Pass (5000m), after which they descended towards the Terekty valley to climb the S spur/E ridge of the unclimbed **Pik 5784**, the highest in the Kayndy basin, on 18 July at AD. They later named this **Pik Moelwyn**. They then approached the unclimbed **Pik Kirov (6073m)** at the head of the Kuyon-Kap glacier to attempt the SW ridge. On 24 July they retreated from a point 600m below the summit in deteriorating weather and after experiencing a huge cornice collapse. (See article 'Success and Failure In the Tien Shan', pages 140-146.)

A group led by Ken Findlay and Paul Hudson was based near the **Moshni Glacier**. On 6-7 August Findlay, Ashley Hardwell, Hudson, and Philip Kendon made the first ascent of **Angel Peak (5200m)**, on the SW side of the Moshni glacier, via hard ice slopes at TD. First ascents were also made of **White Horse Peak (4850m)** E of **Pik 4921** from the Przhevalski glacier, **Point of Damocles (5200m)** SW of **Pik 5162** from the Bishkek glacier on the N side of the Kayndy, **Hunter Point (5250m)** E of the 30 Years of Victory Pass, via the W face, and **Pik 5050** at the head of the Moshni glacier (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/25).

Also in August a team led by Andrew Wielochowski and Sergei Semiletkin was active on the **Shokalskiy Glacier**, between the Kayndy and the Inylchek. First ascents were made of **Glade Peak (4868m)**, immediately south of the Merzbacher Glade, via the S ridge, **Marmot Peak (5448m)** via the SW ridge at D and, on 15 August, **Scimitar Peak (5330m)**, SW of the Fidel Castro Pass, via the N ridge at TD.

From the nearby **Komsomolets Glacier**, in August a team led by Guy Willett also made first ascents including **Peaks 4905m, c5000m** (NW of **Peak 5631m**), **5045m**, and **5235m** (N ridge AD+). **Peak 5330m**, (50m S of

**Scimitar Peak**) was climbed by the SE ridge (AD+) on 9 August (first ascent). On 12-15 August an attempt was made on the E ridge of **Red Army Peak (5736m)** by Willett and Richard Vecqueray, which was halted 300m from the summit after a 30m fall through the cornice.

Guided ascents of Khan Tengri, including some by British teams, have increasingly taken place from camps on the **N Inylchek Glacier**. The standard route, via the Chapaev spur right of the N face and dropping down to the col on the W ridge, is objectively safe but is longer and harder than the avalanche-prone Semenovskiy glacier route. A team led by Simon Yates acclimatised by climbing **Pik Marble Wall (6400m)** at the head of the glacier via the N ridge. Also from the North Inylchek, Andy and Chris Hall climbed **Karly-Too (5450m)** via the W ridge and a Dutch guide climbed **Bayankol (5841m)**, also via the W ridge.

A little explored area of the **Terskei Ala-Too** range, 20km S of Issyk-Kul Lake, was visited by a team including Knut Solberg and Alan Geer. First ascents were made of the two highest peaks in the vicinity at **4765m** and **4687m** and three smaller peaks, all on snow at F/PD, after which the team walked out via the Konguroleng valley (see *MEF Reports, ref. 95/46A*).

**Northern Tien Shan The Kyrgyz Range** was visited in July by a group of British climbers led by Guy Willett. First British ascents were made of peaks above the Ak-Sai glacier, **Teke-Tor (4441m)** via the N ridge, **Izyskatel (4400m)** via the N face, and **Semyonov Tien Shanskiy (4875m)** via the N ridge. **Korona (4860m)** was climbed by the route of the 1990 British team. New routes were climbed up the E face of **Ak-Too Col**, at TD-, and a 250m rock pillar on the S arm of **Korona** at HVS.

In the **Zailiskiy Alatau**, immediately south of Almaty, rock climbing and potential winter icefall climbing have been reported close to the ski area of Chimbulak, and a ski traverse has been suggested.

The **Dzhungarskiy Alatau**, further north, is not strictly part of the Tien Shan but is approached from Almaty via the town of Taldy-Kurgan. Close to the Chinese border and formerly of restricted access, the range has peaks over 4000m characterised by rocky cirques surrounding glaciers. A British team including Ian McNeill visited the Kara valley via Teleky, reporting potential for big wall climbs.

## Siberia and the Russian Far East

**Altai** In May a large number of climbers from nearby Siberian cities made ascents in the Ak-Tru area of the **North Chuiskiy** of the 1st-4th category of difficulty. In the same area, an interesting new rock route on the N face of **Kara-Tash (3600m)** was climbed by a group from Talyati at 5A/B. This range has also been visited in recent years by mountaineers from Germany and the USA.

In August 1995 the nearby **South Chuiskiy** range received its first British or Western visit by a team including Michael and Catherine Pettipher, Helen Geddes and Peter Nelson. The group travelled by road from Novosibirsk in 3-4 days. From a base in the Taldur valley in the area of **Iiktu (3942m)**, ascents were made of **Sophiya (3745m)** via the NW ridge at AD (first ascent), and **Peaks 3170m, 3205m, 3534m, 3620m, 3678m** and **c3840m**. Attempts were made on the twin snow peak of **Olga (4000m)**. Earlier the same group visited the remote hills of the **Tapduair**, climbing all six major summits including **Tapduair (3505m)**.

In the **Katun Range**, previously unreported is the ascent of **Bielukha (4506m)** from the south on 10 August 1993 by Ian Heywood, Angus Tree and Jim Walker, taking the line of the 1914 first ascent from the Katun glacier via the Blue Balcony at 2B.

**Cherskiy** Previously unreported was the ski traverse of the Buordakh massif made by a group from Estonia led by Alvar Soesoo, in March-April 1991. Lowest temperatures in March were  $-56^{\circ}\text{C}$ . An attempt on **Mt Pobeda (3147m)** was aborted owing to avalanche risk. Ski tours have previously been carried out in the area by Russians, the first being in 1968 by R V Sedov.

## Russia and Ukraine

**Crimea** A little-known coastal cliff near Arfen-Chair-Burun, just east of Balaklava, has seen some new route activity. In 1992 local climbers A Lyapun and S Streltsov climbed the first route on the main crag, making a two-day ascent up the centre of the 235m cliff (5.12, A3). In summer 1995 another route, further right, was attempted by climbers from Kiev. Approach was by boat, and the routes were started from the boat.

**Polar Urals** A team from Minsk led by V Ganopolski undertook a 430km journey on skis through the northern and southern parts of the range in March-April. Finishing in Khalmer-ju, the trip took 26 days but the weather precluded travel on 11 of these. Seven passes were crossed and ascents were made of **Kharaurdykej (1246m)** and the pre-summit of **Paj-Er (1472m)**, the true summit being technically difficult.

## Western China

In July a Russian-led expedition organised by Sergei Kurgin visited the **Mushe Shan** massif in the Kunlun, travelling overland from Novosibirsk via the Takla-Makan desert to the town of Qira. The first ascent was made of **Pik Byezymyannaya (5200m Without Name)**, and the second ascent of **Pik Central (5800m)**.

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HARISH KAPADIA

## India 1995

This season India perhaps will be remembered for one of the worst tragedies in the Indian Himalaya. Thirteen climbers from the Border Security Force (one of India's para-military forces) died on Saser Kangri in the East Karakoram. Unlike the much publicised deaths on K2 in 1986 and 1995, this tragedy went almost unnoticed. Full details are given below.

On a happier note, many other climbs were achieved. **Nyegi Kangsang**, in rarely-visited Arunachal Pradesh in NE India, and two other virgin 7000m peaks were climbed for the first time and another 7000m peak was attempted for the first time. Four 6000m peaks received their first ascents, including **Panch Chuli IV**. Many difficult but popular peaks, for example **Shivling**, **Thalay Sagar**, **Kedar Dome** and peaks in the **Bhagirathi group**, along with popular 7000ers like **Nun, Kun** and **Satopanth** were also climbed.

In November 1995, Dr M S Gill was re-elected as the President of the **Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF)** for two years. Dr Gill is also India's Election Commissioner at present. Suman Dubey was appointed as the Vice-President in charge of foreign expeditions. M Ashraf (of Kashmir) was appointed as Vice-President in charge of Indian expeditions. Major-General C S Nugyal was appointed as the Honorary Secretary. All the appointments are for two years.

The IMF has decided not to allow any foreign or joint Indian-Foreign teams to attempt the remaining virgin 7000m peaks in India. They will be reserved for Indian expeditions only. A full list is given on page 260.

### Assam Himalaya

**Nyegi Kangsang (7050 m)** An IMF expedition, led by Col. M P Yadav, made the first ascent of this peak between 13 September and 10 November, climbing the ENE ridge. Located in the East Kameng district and situated on the Indo-Tibetan border, this was one of the highest unclimbed peaks in Arunachal Pradesh. The route to the base of the peak was as long and troublesome as the final climb itself and the team conducted an aerial reconnaissance earlier in the season. The primary roadhead was Ziro and the secondary roadhead was Koloriang, which is on a motorable route, but not connected by any regular service. Some loads were ferried by helicopter from Ziro to Sarli with help from the army. The route ahead was unknown to the locals and the army. With the help of maps and some local

shikaris the team reached Base Camp after crossing many passes above 4200m. Local porters were not available as no tradition of portering exists here and the villagers, who generally carried light loads, only agreed to help in response to pressure from the local administration.

Three camps were established on the mountain, at 4100m, 5200m and 5600m, with the latter camp situated on the eastern col of the peak. The summit team, comprising Ratan Singh, Rajiv Sharma, Nadre Sherpa, Jagmohan Singh Rawat and Lobsang, left Camp 3 at 3.30am on 23 October and reached the summit at 11.30am, returning to Camp 3 the same day.

## Sikkim Himalaya

**Kirat Chuli (Tent Peak, 7365m)** An Austrian expedition led by Kurt Elbl attempted the SW ridge between 24 April and 25 May. One member of the 12-member team, Dirnbock Roman, reached the high point of 7153m on 17 May. Bad weather prevented further movement. A 10-member, German expedition, led by Wolfram Schroter, attempted this peak via the SW ridge of **Nepal Peak** in September/October. Three members reached the high point of 7100m on 25 and 26 October.

**Siniolchu (6887m)** Dr Masafumi Katayama led a 12-member Japanese expedition which operated in this area from 13 April to 5 June. On 21 May Masayuki, Chida and Takashi reached the summit via the N ridge. An Austrian expedition, led by Josef Friedhüber, attempted the N ridge in September/October, but abandoned the attempt owing to heavy snow and persistent bad weather.

## Kumaon and Garhwal

**Chaukhamba II (7068m)** A 17-member team of instructors from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi, led by Col. M P Yadav, made the first ascent of this peak, via the NE ridge, the first ascent of the SW face of **Chaukhamba I (7138m)** and the first ascent of **Pt 6736m**, via the NE ridge. **Chaukhamba II** is situated at the head of the Gangotri glacier, which is almost 28km long. Base Camp was established at 4760m on 26 June, followed by Advanced Base Camp at 4900m. Two further camps were established using 31 fixed ropes. On 9 July Ranvir Singh, Hav. Laxman Singh, Hav. Gurung and Jagmohan summited on **Chaukhamba II**, while Yadav, Major V S Joshi, Ratan Singh and Sanjay Pun summited on **Chaukhamba I**. Two days later D Norbu and C B Pun summited on **Pt 6736m**.

**Chaukhamba I (7138m)** A five-member British expedition, led by Simon Yearsley, approached the mountain in late September and attempted the NW ridge. They reached 6400m, but technical difficulties prevented them from going further. (See *MEF Notes*, ref 95/7.)

**Chaukhamba II (7068m)** A Korean expedition, led by Jai Young Jeon, attempted the NE ridge in September, but continuous bad weather from 18 to 20 September exhausted them at Camp 3 and they had to return.

**Mana NW (7092m)** A combined Indo-Tibet Border Police and Himalayan Association of Japan expedition, led by S D Sharma and Hideyuki Uematsu, made the first ascent of this peak, via the SW ridge. The expedition started from Delhi on 24 July and approached from Badrinath and Mana villages. S D Sharma, Prem Singh, T Samnla and Kulwant Singh (India) and Tomoyas Ishikawa and Uematsu (Japan) summited on 18 and 20 August.

**Mana (7272m)** An Indo-Tibet Border Police team, led by Mohinder Singh, made the second ascent of the NW ridge. The expedition started on 12 August and Base Camp was established at Vasudhara Tal on 15 August. Following the East Kamet glacier and then the northern icefall, camps were established at 5100m, 5600m, 6520m and 6600m. On 27 August 15 climbers summited after using fixed ropes. The expedition was organised in preparation for an attempt on Everest from the north.

**Kamet (7756m)** A 21-member Indian Army, Gorkha Regiment expedition led by Major H S Sahi, climbed the normal route via Meade's Col. Base Camp was established on 21 August but they waited for other expeditions to vacate the mountain. By 19 September they were ready to climb to the summit from Camp 6, established above Meade's Col. The first summit team, comprising Capt. Sanjiv Singh, Sub. K R M Raj, CHM. Dhanjit Rai and Hav. N T Sherpa, reached the top at 10.30am on 20 September. While returning from the summit, 30m below the top, the party was caught in an avalanche, possibly a windslab. The next two summit teams, which were moving up simultaneously, reached them by 11.30am and started the rescue. The injured were brought down to Camp 6. One member descended to the Pass to inform others about the accident. On 21 September all the injured, except Capt. Singh who was unable to move, were carried down. On the same day Hav. Ilyas was carried down suffering from oedema. He was carried out by a helicopter the next day. On 22 September 2nd Lt. S K Chhetri died in Camp 5. By the same night all the injured had been carried to Camp 3, but at 2am Lnk. Gopal Tamang died in Camp 3. Next day the remaining persons and the two dead were taken down to the Base Camp. All were carried out by helicopter. Both the people who died were from the team of rescuers and died from exhaustion during the evacuation.

**Kamet (7756 m)** A 17-member Indian Army team from the Jat Regiment, led by Major Sonam Thapa, climbed this peak on 16 June and **Abi Gamin (7355m)** the day before. Both were climbed from Meade's Col.

**Abi Gamin (7355m)** On 18 September a Mizoram expedition from NE India, climbed the normal, Meade's Col route. Lalsiammewia (expedition leader) and Vanlalnuata (liaison officer) reached the summit. This was one of the rare expeditions from NE India to climb a high mountain.

**Trisul (7120m)** A nine-member Spanish expedition, which was led by

L Juan Esteben, attempted the W face. They established Camp 2 at 5560m on 12 August, but no further progress was possible owing to heavy rains. An Indian expedition from Bengal, led by Samir Sengupta, attempted the western approaches of this peak in July/August at the height of the monsoon season. They reached the Ronti Saddle on 22 July, but as rains continued the attempt was abandoned on 2 August.

**Tirsuli W (7035m)** Roger Payne (UK) and Julie-Ann Clyma (NZ), made a bold attempt on this the last virgin 7000m peak in the Kumaon. They traversed two ridges to reach the W ridge and reached 6300m on 12 June. Rockfalls made the route ahead too dangerous and they had to abandon the attempt. The team had difficulty obtaining permits and clearance at Joshimath. (*See MEF Notes, ref 95/44.*)

**Nanda Devi E (7434m)** A 12-member Czech expedition, led by Josef Unerala, approached this mountain from the east, over the Longstaff Col. They reached 7100m, but on 18 May Miroslav Rychlik fell 200m while traversing the SW rock wall when a fixed rope came off. He died instantly. The expedition was called off on 24 May.

**Mana Parbat II (6771m)** A three-member Ansa Trekkers and Mountaineers expedition from Bombay, led by Vinay Hegde, made the second ascent of this peak. The four peaks in the Mana Parbat group (all above 6700m) lie on the Kalindi glacier, which is part of the Gangotri glacier. The Mana Parbat glacier drains towards the north and is not suitable as an approach. This team traversed the Gangotri glacier to its junction with the Chaturangi glacier at Nandanvan. They established Base Camp at a place locally called Khada Pathar on 27 May and four further camps, at 5242m, 5515m, 5700m and 6121m. On 5 June, after initially trying to tackle the SW ridge, they turned to the less complicated, but steeper NNW ridge. After fixing about 180m of rope on a steep slope they reached the bergschrund and gave up. Returning the following day, Hegde, Rajesh Gadgil and V Shankar fixed another 100m of rope to reach the summit at 6pm. The gradient was steep throughout.

**Bhrigupanth (6772m)** A Spanish expedition, led by Eduardo Gomel Telletxea, climbed the SE face on 23 September. Telletxea, L Miguel Egiluz, J Ramon Martin, Inkaj Ruiz and Inkaj Barcene reached the summit in a 16-hour round trip from Camp 2.

**Maiktoli (6803m)** A 12-member Indian team from Almora (Kumaon), led by Lavraj Sinh, approached this peak from the Sunderdhunga valley in the south. They established three camps on the Maiktoli glacier and, on 21 September, Bhupendra Mohan Pant, Ashok Bhandari, Rup Sinh and Ms. Vinita Verma reached the summit via the southern face.

**Panch Chuli IV (6334m)** A five-member New Zealand expedition, led by John Nankervis, made the first ascent of this remote peak in Kumaon, approaching from the Pyunshani valley. They gained the SW ridge from the pocket of névé above the top icefall between **Panch Chuli IV** and **V** at the head of the glacier, and Nankervis, John Cocks, Peter Cammell and

Nick Shearer reached the summit on 1 October. There was only the second group to visit this valley and **Panch Chuli III** is now the only virgin peak left in this lovely group.

**Nanda Kot (6861m)** A British expedition, led by Martin Moran, made the first ascent of the S face. The team approached this striking and challenging face from the Pindari valley to the Kafni glacier basin by a col at 5350m. They climbed through a major icefall on the Kafni at its right extremity, close to the Danu Dhura Pass, to establish a final camp at 5950m. On 2 October Moran, Jonathan Preston, Andy Nisbet, Richard Baskerville and Brian Shackleton climbed the face in a 12-hour push. The expedition also climbed **Lamchir E (c5550m)** via the northern slopes on 23 and 24 September, with 12 members reaching the summit.

### East Karakoram

**Saser Kangri (7672m)** A 44-member Indian Border Security Force team, led by S C Negi, approached this high peak from the west, through the Nubra valley. The summit camp was established on 25 August and a large team reached the camp intending to climb the peak next day. Owing to persistent bad weather, Deputy Leader S D Thomas decided to descend from the summit camp to Camp 3 on 27 August. As they were descending the entire team was trapped in an avalanche and 13 members died. With help from the local army units eight bodies were recovered on 28 August. This was one of the worst mountaineering tragedies to occur in the Indian Himalaya for a long time.

### Spiti (Himachal Pradesh)

**Gyagar (6400m)** An Indian Army, Dogra Regiment, expedition, led by Lt. Col. Haripal Singh Dhillon, made the second ascent of this peak, via the SW ridge. The peak is situated near the international border at the junction of Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Tibet. The expedition started from the Spiti valley along the Lingti river on 16 August. By 23 August they reached Phipuk and Base Camp was established at 4300m. ABC was 8km away at 5790m. Camp 1 was established at the junction of three nalas and Camp 2 was established on 27 August.

On 28 August the summit party (Hav. Lalit Negi, Subedar Devi Singh, Sub. Lekh Raj, Hav. Mohan Lal, Hav. Daya Ram, L/NK Mohinder, L/NK Prema and L/NK Cherring Bodh) started at 4.30am in two ropes. The route was 2km long and a mix of snow and gravel. They used crampons in parts and fixed 17 ropes. At 9.30am they came across a rocky feature looking like a camel's hump. At 11.40am the first climber, Lalit Negi, reached the summit. The summit was flat ground and they had a magnificent view.

Gyagar was first explored in 1983 and 1987 by a Bombay team, which included Harish Kapadia. They reached Phiphuk and discovered the route to the base, climbing other peaks on the ridge to the NW of Gyagar. In 1989 a team from Bombay led by Dhiren Pania entered the upper Lingti valley from Phiphuk and made the first ascent of Gyagar by the SW ridge.

## Ladakh (Rupshu)

An expedition from The Mountaineers, Bombay, led by Harish Kapadia and also including Kaivan Mistry, Divyesh Muni, Vinita Muni, Harsinh Sr. and Jr. and Kesarsinh, climbed and trekked in the Rupshu district of SE Ladakh, an area only recently opened to visitors. Base Camp was made on the eastern shore of Tso Moriri lake at 4915m. Dividing forces, one team made the second ascent of **Chhamser Kangri (6622m)** on 14 July, via the SW ridge. They found a cairn erected by Survey of India on the summit. Two camps were established *en route*, Advanced Base Camp at 5720m and Camp 1 at 6120m. For the next peak a third camp was placed at 6240m. From here, a four-member team climbed the NW slopes to the summit of **Lungser Kangri (6666m)**, making the first ascent of this, the second highest peak in Ladakh (excluding Zanskar). Both summits were flat. In the meantime Divyesh Muni and his wife Vinita climbed separately. They made the first ascent of **Lapgo (6405m)** on 10 July. Unknown to both teams they also climbed **Chhamser Kangri** by a new route, the NE ridge, on 15 July. Three members of the expedition trekked across north Rupshu, crossing 11 passes and visiting Tso Kar lake and Thugje gumpa.

**Shara Shuwa (6236m)** A five-member Japanese expedition, led by Prof. Masato Oki, made the first ascent of this peak, via the E face and the NE ridge. This peak lies in SE Ladakh, overlooking Tso Moriri lake. It is the northernmost point on the Mentok ridge rising behind Karzok village. The team approached the peak from Karzok village, establishing two camps and Yuzo Takezawa, Hiroki Takase and Roy Chaudhury (liaison officer) reached the summit on 16 August. Oki, Amma Yoshiyuki and Matsuzaki Takeshi summited on 17 August.

**Mentok I (6340m)** A two-member team from Delhi, Paramjit Singh and Alka Sabharwal, attempted this peak. It is the highest peak standing on the long Mentok range, rising parallel to the western shore of the Tso Moriri lake. **Mentok II (6172m)** was climbed in 1984 and 1993. The present team attempted **Mentok I** between 19-26 July from Karzok village. They made camps at 5200m and 5600m, the second camp being on the SE ridge. From 24 July they faced bad weather, strong winds and monsoon rain. The ridge was steep with exposed scree in some places. They reached the prominent rock step at 6100m on 26 July, but from there the route to the summit was technical mixed ground which was risky in the prevailing weather conditions.

## Unclimbed 7000 m Peaks

The following 7000m peaks in the Indian Himalaya remained unclimbed at the end of 1995. The list is based on Jill Neate's book *High Asia*:

### Sikkim Himalaya

Zemu Peak (7780m)

Kabru IV (7395m)

Kabru West (7279m)

Kabru Group:

Pt 7278m, Pt 7245m, Pt 7149m, Pt 7129m, Pt 7080m and 7060m.

Pauhunri South (7032m).

### Siachen Group

Saltoro Kangri II (7705m)

Saltoro Group: Pt 7200m, Pt 7100m and Pt 7100m.

Hardinge (7024m)

Teram Kangri West (7300m)

Sherpi Kangri South (7370m)

Ghaint East (7000m)

Sherpi Kangri East (7303m)

Apsarasas II (7239m)

Apsarasas III (7230m)

Apsarasas IV (7221m)

Apsarasas V (7187m)

Apsarasas VI (7184m)

Apsarasas East (7000m)

### Kumaon Himalaya

Tirsuli West (7035m)

### Garhwal Himalaya

Mukut Parbat East (7130m)

### Assam Himalaya

Kangto (7090m)

### East Karakoram

Saser Kangri II (7518m)

Plateau Peak (Saser Group) (7233m)

Chong Kumdan II (7004m)

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LINDSAY GRIFFIN & DAVID HAMILTON

## Pakistan 1995

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Last summer in the Karakoram was one of generally unsettled weather conditions. Intermittent bad weather was experienced from early June and a marked deterioration occurred from mid-August. The remnants of heavy snow cover from a late spring fall hampered early expeditions, while those arriving later experienced almost continuous precipitation. In spite of these difficulties there was an unusually high success rate on both the 8000m and lesser peaks. Pakistan Government statistics show that 59 expeditions from 16 countries received permits to attempt peaks above 6000m. Of the 29 expeditions to 8000m peaks 17 were successful. On the lower peaks 11 of the 29 expeditions succeeded. There were 14 fatalities (9 on 8000m peaks) among the 384 foreign climbers; a Pakistani cook and porter also died in separate incidents.

The action of the Pakistan Government in limiting the number of permits issued for each of the 8000m peaks to six per season has led to the practice of several unconnected expeditions 'sharing' a permit, an unfortunate development which may lead to complicated disputes with the Pakistani authorities in the future. Despite the growing commercialisation of high-altitude climbing, there were only four overtly commercial teams on the 8000m peaks (three on **Broad Peak** and one on **Gasherbrum II**). However, it is clear that many places on 'non-commercial' expeditions were filled by experienced climbers able to supply substantial funds from their own, or sponsors', resources.

As with 1986, it is likely that 1995 will be remembered for tragic accidents rather than for important ascents. There were, however, positive highlights to the season including new variations to existing lines on **Gasherbrum II** and **Nanga Parbat**, two new routes and an important free ascent on **Trango Tower**, an impressive repeat of the **Broad Peak** traverse, and an extreme ski and snowboard descent of **Gasherbrum I**.

**K2 (8611m)** The tragic events of 13 August overshadowed all other activities on the peak when six climbers from three different expeditions died close to the summit in freak weather conditions. In the immediate aftermath of that incident there was intense worldwide media interest focusing first on an imaginary avalanche explanation and later moving on to the perceived recklessness of the climbers involved. It later became clear from more informed sources, including other climbers who had been on **K2** and

**Broad Peak** at the time, that 'freak' hurricane-force winds had literally blown the six climbers off the mountain. Those who died were three Spanish members of an Aragon team led by Pepe Garcés (Javier Escartín, Javier Olivar, Lorenzo Ortiz), two members of a predominantly American expedition (the leader, Rob Slater, and the British climber Alison Hargreaves) and the New Zealander Bruce Grant from a multinational expedition led by Peter Hillary. At 6.30pm Olivar made a radio call stating that he had summited along with Hargreaves, Grant and Ortiz. They were about to descend and believed that Escartín and Slater were close to the summit and still moving slowly. No further communication was heard from any of this party and by 8pm Camp 4 was hit by exceptionally strong winds. In the ensuing storm several other climbers at lower camps were lucky to survive, in particular two Spaniards from the Aragon team whose tent had been destroyed at Camp 4. The following day the Canadian Jeff Lakes (a member of Hillary's expedition) died from exhaustion at Camp 2 after an epic descent from above Camp 4. There had been no advance warning of this wind storm as the weather on 13 August had seemed fine for a summit attempt. On the same day 18 people summited on nearby **Broad Peak** and were able to descend without incident.

There were seven expeditions to **K2** last summer, six on the Pakistan side and one from China. Eleven climbers from three expeditions summited, although six of these perished in the incident described above. There were three expeditions on the *Abruzzi Spur*: an American team led by Rob Slater, a Netherlands team led by Ronald Naar, and Peter Hillary's New Zealand/Canada/Australia group. On 17 July Alan Hinkes (UK) made the second British ascent with safe return of **K2** and the first British ascent with safe return of the *Abruzzi Spur*.\* On the same day, Ronald Naar (NL) and Hans van der Meulen (NL) summited, along with two Pakistani high-altitude porters, Mehrban Shah and Rajab Shah.

The German Peter Kowalzik led a commercial team to attempt the 1982 *Japanese North Ridge route* from the Chinese side. The team made good progress and were unlucky to be defeated by bad weather at 8400m on the summit snowfield. On the Pakistan side of the mountain an American team led by Larry Hall attempted to repeat the 1991 *Béghin/Profit NW Ridge route*. Three members reached a high point of 8100m, meeting with the German North Ridge team before retreating. A strong Catalan team led by Josep Aced intended to make the second ascent of the *Cesen route* on the South Face. They arrived early in the season and suffered deep snow and unsettled weather. Despite this they established Camp 4 on the shoulder at 7800m (junction of the *Cesen route* and the *Abruzzi Spur*) on 4 July and made a lightweight summit bid the next day. This failed at 8300m. During the descent, when he was almost past the difficulties, Jordi Angles fell to his death. The Aragon team led by Pepe Garcés also chose the *Cesen route* and were able to make use of the fixed ropes left by the Catalans. They made very good progress and five of them were in Camp 4 at 7950m on the night

\* The first and second British ascents of **K2** (sadly, without safe return) were made, via the *Abruzzi Spur*, by Alan Rouse and Julie Tullis in 1986. They perished on the descent.

of 12 August prior to their summit attempt. The following evening three members died after summiting in the incident described above.

**Broad Peak (8047m)** Although only six permits were issued there were eight teams on the mountain as a German, Canadian and Ukrainian team had agreed to 'share' one. Seven teams opted for the standard West Face route and all except the Ukrainians succeeded in reaching the main summit. A total of 25 climbers reached the summit by this route, including 18 on 13 August. There was one fatality on the peak when the South Korean Hyun-Jae slipped and fell on the descent after summiting. The most significant ascent of the season was the first repeat of the 1984 Kukuczka/Kurdyka traverse by a three-man Japanese team. T Hattori, T Kitamura and M Todaka traversed the North, Central and Main summits of Broad Peak in a six-day Alpine-style push, following the same schedule as the Polish first ascensionists.

**Gasherbrum I (8068m)** Six expeditions attempted the standard route via the *Japanese Couloir* on the North Face. A total of nine climbers from three expeditions summited. The highlight of the season's activity was the ski descent from the summit made by two Slovenians. Iztok Tomazin (on skis) and Marko Car (on snowboard) made the hardest technical ski descent ever attempted from the summit of an 8000m peak on 4/5 July, encountering steep sections of 50°/55° in the couloir which was only two metres wide in places. Three Spanish climbers from Jesus-Mari Lete's Basque team summited on 16 July. An unroped member of Jang Bong-Wan's South Korean team was seriously injured when he fell into a crevasse near Camp 1 on 19 July. He was rescued and evacuated by members of other expeditions on the mountain, some of whom were also injured in the process. The Korean team gave up their attempt after reaching a high point of 7300m. Czech and American teams were also unsuccessful, reaching only 7000m in the deteriorating late-season weather. A large Tibetan expedition including a number of very experienced foreign climbers received special permission to attempt both **GI** and **GII**. After placing 13 members on the summit of **GII** (details below) they turned their attention to **GI**. None of the Tibetan climbers succeeded but Ed Viesturs (USA), Carlos Carsolio (Mexico), Krzysztof Wielicki (Poland) and Jacek Berbeka (Poland) summited on 15 July.

**Gasherbrum II (8035m)** There were seven teams on the mountain, all tackling the standard 1956 *Austrian SW Spur route*. Only three of the expeditions were successful, putting a total of 18 climbers on top. These included 12 members of the Tibetan Alpine Club expedition: eight Tibetans and the four listed above as **GI** summiters. All 12 ascended by the standard route, except Carsolio who broke away from the group at 7400m to solo a previously unclimbed line on the WSW face. Rob Hall (NZ), who was unwell, returned at c7700. The other successes on the mountain were the Swiss pair Dieter Porsche and Josef Wangelier (who summited on 17 June) and four Pakistani members of a joint military expedition including Jawad

Pirzada, the expedition leader, who summited on 7 July. Two German teams and one each from Austria and Japan were unsuccessful.

**Gasherbrum IV (7925m)** The extremely difficult and dangerous West Face of **GIV** has not been attempted since the Kurtyka/Schauer first ascent in 1985. This year two separate expeditions hoped to climb a new route up the Central Spur of this face. The legendary Slovenian climber Slavko Sveticic intended to make the most audacious ascent in the history of Himalayan climbing with an Alpine-style solo ascent. In complete contrast a 14-man South Korean team led by Cho Sung-Dae planned a more traditional ascent. Sveticic climbed part way up the NW ridge to cache equipment for his descent before attempting the West Face. Climbing by night and resting during the day he reached 7100m in two days before encountering bad weather and heavy snowfall. Two days later, on 19 June, he radioed to Base Camp that he was about to retreat. Nothing further was heard from him and it is thought that he fell to his death soon after this. The Korean group gave up on the West Face, deciding that it was too dangerous after reaching a high point of 6400m on 12 July. Two members then attempted the NW ridge reaching 7800m before retreating with frostbite.

**Trango Tower (6237m)** This hugely impressive granite spire attracted no fewer than five expeditions, more than any other sub-8000m peak. Four of these teams were successful with two of them establishing important new routes and another making a very impressive free ascent. A USA team led by Eric Brand put up a difficult new route on the NE face. All four climbers summited on 4 August after a 20-day capsule-style push using portaledge. They graded the ascent as VII, A4 with rock at 5.10b and ice at W14. A five-man Basque team led by Miguel Zabalza split into two groups. Three climbers made a repeat ascent of the 'standard' *Slovenian route* in seven days, summiting on 7 July. Two others (Julián Beraza and Txema Ruiz) succeeded in climbing a new route on the 1200m NW face in two weeks giving it a grade of F6a and A3. An American team featuring Todd Skinner was successful in creating the most difficult free ascent in the Karakoram to date. They chose the 1988 *Kurtyka/Loretan East Face route* and over a 60-day period worked at freeing each of the 29 individual pitches, whilst making a major 300m variation in the middle section of the route. They graded one pitch at 5.13, two at 5.12d, two at 5.10c, and many others at 5.12 and 5.11 (all four climbers summited although only Skinner made a 'free' ascent). A four-man UK team intending to climb on the N face had to change their plans as two of the above parties were already in place. Instead they made an ascent of the Slovenian route, with Wainwright and Pritchard summiting on 13 August (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/12). The all-female UK team of Bull, Claridge, Phillips and Westrupp, aiming to climb the *Slovenian route*, was defeated by a combination of poor weather and time constraints (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/16). A strong four-man Spanish team failed to climb the neighbouring 1000m high SE face of **Uli Biaho (6083m)**. Further south in the Charakusa glacier (off the Hushe valley) a

seven-person USA team led by Angela Hawse failed on another big wall objective: the 1200m N face of **P 6190** after suffering sustained bad weather. Also in the Hushe area, seven Italians led by Oreste Forno failed in their attempt to make the first 'official' ascent of the superb spire of **Laila (6096m)** above the left bank of the Gondokoro glacier.

Two teams from the USA attempted **Masherbrum (7821m)**. Gary Wilmot's group approached from the north aiming to make the second ascent of the 1984 *Austrian route*. Alan Scott Moore's expedition opted for the southerly approach to the original 1960 *American SE face route*. Neither were successful. An Italian expedition led by Livio Intini intended to climb **Skil Brum (7360m)** on the Pakistan/China border 8km west of **K2**. This peak does not seem to have been climbed since the first ascent by Austrians in 1957. However, this year's attempt failed in the poor late-season weather. A UK team led by Rob Dawson attempted **Bobisghir (6416m)** in September (see *MEF Reports, ref. 95/21*).

The two big technical peaks of the Biafo glacier were each visited by one expedition. The South Pillar of **Baintha Brakk (7285m)** was attempted by two young French Alpinists, Jean Annequin and Pascal Chataing. This route has not yet been completed to the summit but the rock pillar was successfully climbed by another French party in 1983. The complete ascent proved to be beyond the reach of the lightweight tactics employed by this year's team and they reluctantly retreated from c6400m having climbed the rock pillar, the hardest part of the route. A strong German team led by Jan Mersch attempted to force a new route up the 800m 'big wall' on the SW face of **Latok 2 (7151m)**, but were unsuccessful.

A five-man British team led by Dave Wilkinson made the first ascent of the snow and ice pyramid **Haramosh II (6666m)** south of the Chogo Lungma glacier. The entire party summited on 6 August, but during the descent Paul Nunn and Geoff Tier were killed by a sérac fall within a few hundred metres of their top camp (see *MEF Reports, ref. 95/24*). Doug Scott described the accident as follows: 'On 6 August Paul Nunn and Geoff Tier were descending from the summit of Haramosh II, in the Karakoram range, when they were overwhelmed by a massive icefall collapse and were buried. Three other members of the same expedition had already returned safely from the summit that day – Dave Wilkinson, Brian Davison and Colin Wells. They were within earshot of Nunn and Tier. They would have all been safely back in Base Camp if that ice had broken a few minutes before or after. This accident was sheer bad luck, for these men were not driven to take undue risks. They were there for the sheer fun of climbing ...'

A four-man Japanese expedition to **Kunyang Kish (7852m)** led by K Tobita was unsuccessful, as was Kim Yo-Hung's four-man South Korean team attempting the unclimbed N face of **Lupghar Sar (7200m)**. Two groups attempted **Spantik (7027m)** by the normal SE ridge route. Five Swiss led by Martin Settler failed in June owing to deep snow and attendant avalanche risk. Five French climbers also failed in late August owing to bad weather.

A five-man Columbian expedition led by Volker Stallbohm made an impressive ascent of the NW ridge of **Rakaposhi (7788m)**. The summit was reached in a solo push by Anibal Pineda making only the third ascent of this route.

**Nanga Parbat (8125m)** was visited by five expeditions. The most popular line for recent ascents, the *Kinshofer route* on the Diamir face, was attempted without success by three teams. Italians led by Oscar Piazza, Japanese led by Tadakiyo Sakahara, and three Canadians led by Peter Spriceniaks, all seem to have failed at a high point of 6800m. The only success of the season came on 23 July when Hiroshi Sakai, Yukio Abe and Takeshi Akiyama, members of a 10-strong Japanese expedition, reached the summit via a variation of the original 1953 *Rakhiot Flank route*. Doug Scott led his third attempt on the 12km-long Mazeno Ridge with a strong UK/Polish/Australian expedition but was defeated by a combination of illness, lack of time and the sheer scale of the route (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/17).

Despite a reputation for stable weather, particularly early in the season, the Hindu Kush has been visited infrequently by mountaineers in recent years. 1995 saw four expeditions attempt the area's highest and third highest peaks. **Tirich Mir (7708m)** was successfully climbed by a total of seven climbers from three expeditions. All followed the most popular line of ascent, the 1967 *Czech NW ridge route*. On 7 July Ayumi Nozawai summited with two Japanese companions after a lightweight push in five days from Base Camp. David Hamilton (UK) and Grant Dixon (Australia) reached the top on 17 July, three of their companions (Stephan Fuller, Geraldine Goldsmith and Phil Wickens) having turned back at 7350m. A South Korean expedition led by Lee Hae-Bong met with triumph and tragedy on 24 July when Kim Jae-Poo and Cho Jung-Hung summited in the early evening but fell to their deaths while descending. An Austrian group led by Reinhold Stauber succeeded in climbing the complex massif of **Istor-O-Nal (7403m)** on 26 July, making the second ascent of the 1971 *Yugoslav route*. The highest peak in the neighbouring Hindu Raj, **Buni Zom (6551m)**, was attempted unsuccessfully by a Japanese team under the leadership of Kiyokatsu Saito during August.

Accurate details of climbing activity on sub-6000m peaks is more difficult to collect as this information is not recorded by the Pakistan authorities. A four-man team made a probable third ascent of the original West Ridge route on **Shani (5800m)** (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/41).

At least six teams attempted the elegant granite spire of **Bubulimotin (c6000m)** above Karimabad in the Hunza valley. A German pair failed on the original 1982 *French route* from the Ultar glacier, while on the opposite side of the mountain three more small groups (Australians, New Zealanders, and Italians), approaching the 1991 *Swedish route* from the Hasanabad glacier, were also unsuccessful. On the impressive SE face a small Anglo-American team failed, while a large Japanese group used siege tactics to climb a new route on the 1000m wall.

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BILL O'CONNOR

## Nepal 1995

*I am grateful to Elizabeth Hawley in Kathmandu and Józef Nyka in Warsaw for their help in compiling these notes.*

The mountains of Nepal continue to attract large numbers of mountaineers although the draw of the 8000ers and Everest in particular remains the main attraction. Increasingly, expeditions to the higher peaks are multinational and commercial, an almost inevitable consequence of very high permit fees. There was an increase in the number of expeditions climbing Everest from the north. During the year 137 expeditions were active on Nepalese peaks, as well as on the Tibetan side of border peaks such as Everest and Cho Oyu. For British mountaineers there were some significant firsts on Everest, Makalu and Cho Oyu.

Freak, heavy snowfall during November led to a large number of deaths amongst trekkers and local people throughout the mountain regions. In the Khumbu a large party of Japanese trekkers were avalanched at Pangka just below the lakes at Gokyo, and a similar situation occurred in the Kangchenjunga region. Throughout Nepal more than 50 people are known to have died and other lone trekkers are feared missing. Over 500 people were air lifted to safety – a feat only recently made possible by the privately-run Russian helicopters now operating in Nepal.

### Spring Season/Pre-Monsoon

**Ama Dablam, 6812m** John Cleary and Dave Bridges summited via the SW ridge on 25 April.

**Annapurna I, 8091m, North Face Route** One of the most significant accomplishments of the pre-monsoon season was the first continuous ski descent of Annapurna. A Slovene expedition, led by Tone Skarja, established Base Camp on 12 April. The six Slovene members were joined by Croatian Stipe Bozic and Mexican Carlos Carsolio. Throughout poor weather conditions they established four camps at 5100m, 5800m, 6600m and 7400m. The last camp was placed by Carsolio and Slovene brothers Andre and Davorin Karnica from where they summited on 29 April. The Slovenes skied from the summit taking seven hours to cover the 3700m of descent to Base Camp. Carsolio followed on foot, reaching Base Camp the same day in under eleven hours. On 6 May Tomaz Humar also reached the summit by the same route.

**Baruntse, 7129m, SE Ridge** A German expedition led by Renate Link was successful on 19 May. Andreas Dittrich, Florian Engert and Dirk Mathess reached the summit.

**Cho Oyu, 8201m, NW Side** The mountain was busy during April and May, with 45 ascents by Slovenian, German, Austrian, Mexican, Argentine, Swiss, French, Japanese, American and British climbers. Several of these expeditions were commercial, Cho Oyu representing a relatively easy 8000er for 'mail order mountaineers'. In particular, an American group led by Eric Simonson put 15 climbers on the summit during a fine spell in May! Also during May, UK climbers Paul Walters, Iain Peter (Guide) and Norman Croucher summited. Croucher, now aged 54, is the first double amputee to climb any 8000m peak.

**Dhaulagiri I, 8167m, NE Ridge** Four members of a Russian expedition led by Dimitri Botchov reached the summit on 9 May, including Miss Anna Akinia. Five days later, four more members climbed the mountain.

At the time, a multinational group led by Norbert Joos were also climbing the route. Mexican Carlos Carsolio reached the summit on 15 May. On 17 May Swiss Renate Schmid and Mario Kofler climbed the mountain and on 19 May Joos, Ennemoser, Braschler and Hammann were successful.

**Drangnag-Ri, 6801m, (First Ascent) E Ridge** A Norwegian/British expedition led by Arne Naess made the first ascent of this fine mountain. Chris Bonington, Pema Dorje, Lhakpa Gyalu, Ralph Høybakk and Bjørn Myrer Lund reached the summit on 30 April. (*For full details see 'Drangnag-Ri', pages 77-82.*)

**Everest, 8848m, South Col, SE Ridge** A commercial group led by New Zealander Rob Hall (Guide) were successful when Lobsang Jangbu Sherpa reached the summit on 7 May.

**Everest NE Ridge** Two members of a Japanese expedition and four Sherpas reached the summit on 11 May. This was the 200th ascent of the mountain.

**Everest North Col to North Ridge** This side of the mountain was blessed by fine weather and lower costs than the Nepal side, making it very busy, not to say confusing. Twelve expeditions were climbing the mountain at the same time, with separate groups reaching the top on the same day having roped up with someone from another expedition – an interesting situation.

A Russian/North Ossetian group led by Kazbek Khamitsayev put three climbers on the summit on 11 May and five more on 13 May, including Everest veteran Ang Rita Sherpa. A Polish-Italian group were successful on both 12 and 13 May, although it seems that several climbers teamed up in this case with a commercial group led by Henry Todd (UK) who had climbers reaching the summit on 12, 14, 17 and 23 May, when British climber Crag Jones reached the summit with Dane Michael Jorgensen.

Two members of a Taiwanese expedition, plus three Sherpas, reached the summit on 12 May. A multinational, commercial expedition, organised by UIAGM Guide Russell Brice, included several high profile members. On 13 May Alison Hargreaves reached the summit, having climbed the mountain unaided and without oxygen. (See *'Everest Unsupported'*, pages 9-14.) Her magnificent achievement was followed on 17 May by Romanian Constantin Lacatusu and on 26 May by Greg Child with Karsang Sherpa and Lobsang Temba Sherpa.

Meanwhile on 14 May a Latvian/Italian expedition made two separate ascents of the mountain during the day. First up was Italian Reinhard Patscheider, followed later in the day by Latvians Teodors Kirsis and Imants Zauls. However, between the Italian and the Latvians had slipped seven members of an American/Australian team including Australian George Mallory, retracing the steps of his famous ancestor. (See page 352 for details.) That same expedition put six more members on the summit on 16 May. Between times an ascent was made by Frenchman Luc Jourjon and Babu Tshering Sherpa on 14 May, both members of a commercial expedition led by Jon Tinker. This group also put a Russian and a Turk on the summit on 17 May. Tinker's highly successful expedition had further success on 24, 26 and 27 May, with a further ten climbers summiting.

A few days earlier an Austrian expedition led by Willi Bauer had success when Josef Hindling reached the summit on 14 May, having found space behind the Latvians. An American/Peruvian expedition meanwhile put Tony Tonsing (US) and Tamang Musal Kazi on the top on 16 May.

Maintaining an accurate record is made more difficult by the fact that at the same time climbers were active on the Nepalese side of the mountain, climbing the now relatively quiet and highly expensive South Col route.

On 15 May a joint American-Argentine-Indian expedition put two members and three Sherpas on the summit.

During May and April a total of 74 climbers reached the summit of Everest, including climbers from Britain, Nepal, Russia, Japan, Poland, Italy, Brazil, Denmark, Taiwan, Romania, Australia, Latvia, France, Turkey, Ireland, Austria and Argentina. I am not sure whether there is a moral to all this – although I did find relative solitude on the summit of the Matterhorn last August.

**Lhotse, 8516m, West Face** On 6 May Australian Michael Groom and Finn Veikka Gustafsson climbed the West Face. On 10 May Keith Kerr (UK) and Brent Bishop (US) with Sherpas Kipa and Danu reached the summit.

**Makalu, 8463m** On 7 May French climbers Benoît Chamoux and Pierre Royer climbed the NW ridge.

On 8 May the route was repeated by a Spanish/South Korean expedition. Four members reached the summit. Australians Mark Auricht and David Hume also reached the summit. Hume, the leader of the Australian

expedition, died in a fall during the descent. On 9 May Spanish climber Alberto Zerain was successful.

An ascent of the mountain was made by the same route on 18 May by Rob Hall (NZ), Ed Viesturs (US) and Veikka Gustafsson (Finland). Twelve days before, Gustafsson had been on the summit of Lhotse!

A Japanese expedition led by Tsuneo Shigehiro climbed the NE ridge to the plateau east of the Makalu La and then, via the NW ridge, to the summit. Four members reached the summit on 21 May and four on 22 May.

**Manaslu, 8163m, NE Face** Three members of a German expedition led by Holger Kloss reached the summit on 7 May. Manaslu maintained its reputation for seriousness after two members were killed in separate falls.

**Taweche, 6501m** Mick Fowler and Pat Littlejohn climbed a difficult new route up the NE Pillar right of the Lowe/Roskelley line. Technical climbing and uncomfortable bivouacs were features of the route. The summit was reached on 29 April. Descent was via the SE ridge. (*Full details in 'Taweche North-East Buttress', pages 68-76.*)

## Autumn/Post Monsoon

**Ama Dablam, 6812m, SW Ridge** One of the most popular and accessible peaks in Nepal, attracting an increasing number of commercial expeditions. The SW ridge offers delightful, objectively safe climbing on both rock and ice. Camps 1 and 2 are restricted, especially Camp 2 on the Yellow Tower. Fixed ropes often drape the fine, almost horizontal lower rock ridge.

Seventeen expeditions were active on this route during October and November, with 70 climbers known to have reached the summit. British climbers reaching the summit include Alan Burgess, Alison Palmer, Simon Yates (twice), Robin Barley, Joseph Davies, Mark Rogers, Richard Rogers, Anthony Morris, Henry Todd and Keith Howlett.

**Annapurna III, 7555m, West Ridge** A Japanese climbed the W ridge from the south. Tsutomu Saito, with Tsuldin Dorje and Gyalzen Sherpa reached the summit on 2 October to make the 10th ascent of the mountain.

**Baruntse, 7129m, West Pillar** A Russian expedition led by Sergei Efimov made a fine route on the West Pillar, reaching the summit on 11 October. They descended by the easier SE ridge.

**Cho Oyu, 8201m** A large number of commercial expeditions were active on Cho Oyu climbing the W side from the north. A total of 14 expeditions put 76 climbers on the summit, taking the total number of ascents to 192.

**Cholatse, 6440m** This stunning Khumbu summit received its 13th ascent on 26 October, when a French expedition led by Paul Robach climbed the difficult N face.

**Dhaulagiri I, 8167m, NE Ridge** Nine expeditions tried this route. Six were successful, putting a total of 26 climbers on top and bringing the total number of ascents of the mountain to 86. There were expeditions from Japan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, Belarussia, Austria, Holland, France, Spain and Italy.

**Everest, 8848m** Three South Korean teams attacked the mountain from north and south. On 14 October Jo Yong Il and Zangbu Sherpa climbed the North Ridge via the North Col. A Sherpa was killed in a fall. An attempt on the NE Ridge, led by Lee Dong Ho was unsuccessful and abandoned after a Sherpa was killed in an avalanche in September. The same expedition were successful on the North Ridge, also reaching the summit on 14 October. Not to be outdone and obviously well co-ordinated, the third team, led by Cho Hyung-Gyu, climbed the SW face, also reaching the summit on 14 October.

**Gimmigela (Twins), 7350m** This little-known peak received its third and fourth ascents by a large Japanese/Nepalese expedition on 16-17 October via the W ridge, climbed from the N side. 17 climbers reached the top.

**Kangchenjunga, 8586m** Six expeditions attempted the mountain via the SW face to the W ridge. Swiss climbers Erhard Loretan (on his 14th 8000er) and Jean Troillet (on his 8th 8000er) reached the summit on 5 October. On the same day, the well-known French climber Benoît Chamoux disappeared on the mountain having reached 8545m. (*Further details on pages 57-58.*) On 14 October, Italians Sergio Martini and Abele Blanc reached the summit.

**Lhotse, 8516m, West Face** On 27 September Spanish climbers Alberto and Felix Inurrategi with Onchu Lama made the third ascent of the mountain, followed on 2 October by Juanito Oiarzabal, Juan Vallejo and Um Hong Gil (Korea).

**Makalu, 8463m, SE Ridge** An international expedition led by Daniel Mazur climbed the mountain on 9 October by the SE ridge. Four climbers reached the summit: Daniel Mazur (US), Alex Nikiforov (Russia), and British climbers Jonathan Pratt and Andrew Collins. This was the first British ascent of the mountain. (*See article 'Hidden Peak 1994 and Makalu 1995', pages 61-67.*)

**Pumori, 7161m** Swiss, Italian, American, German, Czech, Austrian, British and Greek climbers were active on Pumori, climbing the standard SE ridge and face to the E ridge. A total of 25 climbers reached the top.

**Tsokarpo Kang, 6556m** In West Nepal there was some activity in the Kanjiroba Himal and an Anglo-American group led by Jeff Tabin made the second ascent of this peak via the SW ridge. Other members of the same group climbed the SE face on 1 October, making the third overall ascent.

## Trekking Peaks

On 'Trekking Peaks' there were several important new routes which point to the full potential of these low-budget, low-bureaucracy objectives. Two Slovene teams were active in the Annapurna Sanctuary, achieving outstanding solutions to some well-trying problems. (See article 'Trekking Peaks - By any Other Name', pages 189-191.)

**Hiunchuli, 6441m** The 1200m high NE face of Hiunchuli has been the scene of several attempts. After two reconnaissances, the team of Tadej Golob, Dusan Polenik and Tomas Jeras completed a difficult ascent to the summit of the lower East Peak (6005m), albeit placing fixed ropes on the lower difficulties.

The most technical, lower section of the route was fixed with rope. On 11 October the final ascent began late in the day (3pm). A 50m ice barrier and difficult séracs in the middle of the face presented the technical crux. Climbing throughout the night, they reached the East Summit at 8am on 12 October. Dangerous snow conditions prevented them reaching the main summit and descent was via the ascent route (7 rappels and down climbing). The route was named *Terra Nostra*.

**Singu Chuli, 6501m (Fluted Peak)** Commanding the centre of the Sanctuary, 'Flutters', first climbed by Noyce and Cox in 1957, received a rare ascent via an important new route by Slovene climbers Bojan Počkar and Ziga Petrič.

Their route climbs what is often referred to as the South Face but in fact is angled East-South-East and is made up of the characteristic 'fluted' snow and ice that led Jimmy Roberts to call it 'Fluted Peak'. The face is 1450m high with an average angle of 65° and is a complex snow and ice slope of narrow couloirs overhung by a barrier of séracs.

Climbing through the night, their pure Alpine-style ascent began at 9pm on 6 October from a camp (5000m) on the glacier below the face. Their route lay up increasingly steepening ice, below threatening séracs. The last six pitches were mixed involving VI+ rock and 90° ice. The summit was reached at 3pm on 7 October. The route was named *Perun* after the Slovene God of Thunder, Fire and War. Graded Alpine ED.

**Pisang Peak** Scene of a tragic avalanche accident in the 1994 post-monsoon season, Pisang Peak, 6091m, (Manang Region), was the scene of another climbing accident last autumn. Four members of a 20-strong Slovene trekking group, having crossed the Thorong La, attempted the relatively straightforward Pisang Peak. Descending from the summit unroped, Drago Zlof slipped and fell 700m to his death. It was his birthday.

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CHRIS CHEESEMAN

## South America and Antarctica 1995

*Chris Cheeseman would like to thank Marcello Scanu for his help with preparing these notes.*

Peak fee fever seems to be ready to invade South America as the respective governments appear to view foreign expeditions as a source of quick and easy foreign currency. Judging from the general reaction in Chile to the imposition of such fees and the attitude of the park authorities, many climbers may well be persuaded to seek alternative venues.

### Ecuador

**Chimborazo** One of the most popular excursions in Ecuador saw the biggest single loss of life in Ecuadorean climbing history when ten climbers were killed in an avalanche on the standard Whymper route.

### Venezuela

Franco Perlotto completed a new route on the very infrequently visited **Roraima (2810m)** in a single, long day. His solo ascent was via a line of prominent cracks and corners, with pitches of VI, on the W face and finished on ramps on the SW face.

### Peru

There are no official regulations or peak fees in Peru. Any approach for peak fees is, more likely than not, unofficial. No significant activity has been reported, but a new guide to Peru and Bolivia is currently available and it is to be hoped that this may stimulate further activity in the area.

### Bolivia

As yet, no peak fees have been introduced in Bolivia. This country seems to be increasingly popular, perhaps partly because of the improving safety of the area as a whole.

A team, led by Americans Brian Cox and John Culberson, climbed a new route on the W face of **Cerro Wampa** and another new route on the E side of **Chachacomani (6066m)**.

**Cordillera Real** The Joint Services Expedition completed an ascent of **Ancohuma (6427m)** along with another four peaks in the surrounding area and the launch of two hang gliders from Ancohuma (see *MEF Reports, ref. 95/3*).

Liam O'Brien (US) and two Bolivian guides Gregorio and Juan Mamani completed the first traverse of the ridge from Paso Mullo, over Cerro Jankho Hoyo (5512m) to Cerro Jishka Pata (5508m), crossing eight distinct peaks, each over 5395m, in two days. On 12 October 1995 they climbed a previously unclimbed and unnamed 5669m peak at UTM coordinates 569700E, 8228300N on the IGM map 5945 IV Lago Khara Khota.

**Heights in the Cordillera Real** During 1994 Liam O'Brien, Defense Mapping Agency, La Paz, made differential GPS surveys of Sajama and Illimani to determine the heights, in conjunction with the Bolivian Instituto Geográfico Militar. Sajama was found to be 6548m above mean sea level and Illimani 6439m, which do not greatly differ from the generally accepted altitudes of these peaks. An attempt to measure the height of Ancohuma (currently believed to be 6427m) by La Paz-based geologist Dennis Moore failed when the base GPS failed. Mr Moore believes the mountain could be up to 6500m high, but not higher. (*The Times World Atlas* says it is 7012m).

A new route was reported on the N ridge of **Huanacuni (5796m)**, which was the second ascent and the first British ascent of this mountain. In the same expedition, the first ascent of **Pt. 5550** in the **Huanacuni group** and the first British ascent of **Pt. 5550** in the **Katantica group** was reported. Team members were Gerry Arcari, Yossi Brain, Mike Franklin and Jon Garside.

In June 1995 Evelio Echevarría soloed **Pirhuata (5060m)**, the highest peak in the Cocapata range.

## Argentina

Argentina probably remains the most economically and politically stable country on the South American continent. Currently, there are major efforts being undertaken with regard to mapping and road building which would seem to make access to the mountain regions increasingly easy in the future. However, caution is still advised in the border area with Chile, since cross-border expeditions may be regarded as illegal by border police and offending parties may be liable to arrest. Potential summit baggers on **Aconcagua** should note that a fee of \$80 is well and truly established, permit available in Mendoza.

In the Chollay region, Swiss brothers Stephane and Raphael Joliat reached the summit of **Cerro El Torro (6160m)** by taking the NW ridge and joining

the summit ridge near the Chilean route of 1981 – note the change of height to this peak.

The Joliat brothers continued their activities in the **Cordillera de Colanguil** region and, joined by an Italian-Argentine group, succeeded in the first ascent of **Cerro Laradero (6122m)**. A subsidiary summit (**Pt 6020m**) was reached by Stephane Joliat and Andre Weber, the main summit and a second subsidiary being reached solo by Weber.

**Pissis (6882m)** was attempted by Robert Villarreal, Greg Horne and Fritz Radum but instead they climbed another volcano, **Tres Cruces (6749m)**, and Horne pulled off a magnificent adventure by climbing **Bonete (6759)** after an incredibly long walk-in and out.

In a single push, a strong Italian team (Maurizio Giarolli, Elio Orlandi and Odoardo Ravizza) created the line *Crystals in the Wind* on the W face of **Cerro Torre**. The route took in a series of cracks on the left side of the wall giving 6a A1 on relatively ice-free rock, the route concluding on the N Buttress.

**Fitzroy** saw an excellent new route on the NW face by Italians Mauro Giradi, Lorenzo Nadali and Andrea Sarchi creating *Ensueno*, a 36-pitch route at VII– and A1.

Charlie Fowler (US) and Rolando Garibotti (Argentina) forged a new route on **Aguja St Exupéry** by a 700m line at American grade 5.10 on the W face. Taking advantage of exceptionally clear weather, the pair climbed **Aguja Rafael** and **Poincenot** in successive days. The unclimbed SE face of **Aguja St Exupéry** saw a 700m route by French alpinists Jérôme Arpin, Phillipe Batoux, Gael Bouquet des Chaux, Emmanuel Pellicier and Benoît Robert which they called *Le Petit Prince* (A4 and VII/VII+).

The little-visited peak of **Aguja de l'S (2335m)** was graced by the presence of Lionel Daudet who soloed two excellent 450m slab routes: *Qui se Souviendra des Hommes* (ED1) and *La Femme de ma Vie* (ED3).

## Chile

Reports of peak fees being charged for climbing in the Torres del Paine National Park continue. Charges of between \$250 and \$825 have been reported, although the Federación de Andinismo de Chile has not been officially informed of this arrangement.

In the **Central Cordillera**, Jirkal and Farias made a significant ascent of **Cerro Morado** in less than 24 hours, by following the *Vasquez route* on the S face. They started in the morning of the 15 February and, after being subject to severe rock fall and climbing through poor-quality ice and snow, returned to Base Camp by breakfast the next day.

A six-man RAF team led by Richard Gammage made successful ascents of the **North Tower of Paine**, in addition to finding themselves coming to the rescue of Chilean climber, Ricardo Dorado, who sustained serious injuries whilst attempting the **South Tower**. A splendid new 750m route

on the E face of the **North Tower of Paine** was completed by Slovenians Marko Prezelj and Andrej Stremfelj over eight days. They called it '*Born Under a Wandering Star*'. (See article on pages 90-96.) On the **Central Tower**, a Basque group completed the first ascent of *Insumisioa* (VII/VII+ A4).

Chris Breemer, Brad Jarrett and Christian Santalices climbed a new route on the dramatic E face of **Cerro Escudo (The Shield)**. Their 19-day, single-push ascent, which included some serious climbing on very bad rock, was followed immediately by a 24-hour abseiling marathon to descend. *The Dream* gives six pitches of A4+ and pitches of 5.10 (UIAA grades).

**Cerro Castillo (2790m)**, a technically difficult and steep mountain with multiple towers, was reported to have received its first ascent.

The first ascent, amidst atrocious weather conditions, of **Pico Anwa (1760m)** in the **Cordillera Sarmiento** was made by David Hillebrandt, Keith Atkinson and Robin Earle (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/5). A multinational team (USA, British and Australian), led jointly by Jim Wickwire and Stephen Venables, successfully completed a new route on the West Peak of **Monte Sarmiento (2404m)** (see *MEF Reports*, ref. 95/49). Immediately to the north of the **Cordillera Darwin**, an unnamed peak was climbed by Julian Freeman-Attwood, Doug Scott, Francis McDermott and Skip Novak by climbing through sound rock buttresses of grade IV/V. The peak was named informally **Cerro Pelagic** along with a minor subsidiary summit, also climbed, **Poltroon**. (See article pages 83-89.)

## Antarctica

On the ridge south of **Mount Vinson**, Spanish climbers Manuel Alvarez and Alfonso Juez climbed an apparently unclimbed peak, which they christened **Monte España (4860m)**. Further peaks climbed in this increasingly well explored range include **Pico Jaca (3540m)** by Juez and Perezgrueso via a 40° ice face above Branscomb.

Congratulations must be offered to Norman Vaughan, who reached the summit of **Vaghans Peak (3139m)**, named after the gentleman himself, some 65 years after his first attempt on the 1928-30 Byrd expedition and days before his 89th birthday.

Queen Maud Land saw an impressive effort by a Norwegian team, led by Ivar Erik Tollefsen, which completed no less than 36 first ascents including the NW face of **Ulvetanna (2931m)** on a 990m route with 70° ice, some A2 and graded as VIII+. In February, the N face of **Kinntanna (2724m)** was climbed by Tom Cosgriff, Jan Age Gundersen and Tronde Hilde (VII+ and A1).

On 29 December Erhard Loretan made the first (and solo) ascent of a 2500m peak in the **Ellesworth mountains** in a 9-hour push.

**South Georgia** saw a Bavarian-Austrian team put up a new route on the NE face of **Mount Paget (2934m)**, and descend via the NE ridge.

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SIMON RICHARDSON

## Scotland 1994-95

At first glance the 1994/95 Scottish winter season was a disappointing one. A warm November and April limited activity to just four months, and consistently wild and windy weather throughout January and February thwarted many plans. However, over 140 new routes were recorded: nearly as many as the previous winter which is generally regarded as one of the best in recent years. Standards were also high with over 40 new routes graded V or above, again a similar statistic to last season. Few ice routes were climbed and attention mainly focused on new mixed lines. A selection of the season's important repeats and significant first ascents are described below, and full details can be found in the 1995 *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*.

### Northern Highlands

The SE cliff of **Fuar Tholl** was the scene for one of the finest new routes of the winter when Andy Nisbet and John Lyall climbed *Fuar Folly Direct* (VI,8), the obvious rounded pillar to the right of *Führer*. A little to the west on **Sgurr a'Chaorachain**, Nisbet and Brian Davison ticked off the all-too-obvious *North Gully of the Cioch* (III), and on the Cioch ridge, Martin Welch and Rob Shillaker added the excellent *Yodel* (IV,5), which takes the well-defined straight gully to the right of the descent route.

By late January, the icefalls on **Liathach** had come into condition, and the classic *Poacher's Fall* (V,5) and *Salmon Leap* (V,5) saw several ascents. On the S side of the mountain, Andy and Gill Nisbet visited Pyramid Buttress and climbed *Busman's Holiday* (V,5), the thin ice streak in the depression between *Pyramid Right Icefall* and *Right Edge*. Further north, in the Fisherfield Forest, Chris Cartwright and Ian Stevens made an enterprising first winter ascent of *Central Buttress* (V,5) on the remote N face of **Beinn Dearg Mor**. This impressive peak, which is prominent from many viewpoints to the north, is often talked about, but visits by climbers are rare.

**Quinag**, the most northerly, and previously one of the more neglected **Coigach peaks**, witnessed an unprecedented amount of activity. On the impressive Barrel Buttress on the N face, Roger Webb and Simon Richardson made a winter ascent of the *Raeburn, Mackay and Ling Original Route* (VI,7). This was Webb's seventh visit to attempt this compelling corner line. Most attention focused on Bucket Buttress however, which lies directly beneath the summit of **Spidean Choinich**. Although short, the crag

provides excellent steep and sustained climbing on good quartzite similar to that on **Beinn Eighe**. The cliff was discovered by Steve Aisthorpe and John Lyall in April 1992, when they added a couple of routes, including *Pick Nicker* (V,6), the superb central corner-line. Last winter Lyall set about developing the cliff in earnest, adding nine further routes mainly in the IV to V grades in the company of Malcom Sclater, Andy Nisbet and Emily Kane. At just over an hour from the road, the routes have a winter cragging feel, and the cliff could well become the far north-west's equivalent to the Northern Corries.

In the far north, Cartwright and Neil Wilson made a fine first winter ascent of *Seer's Corner* (V,5) on **Creag Dubh** on **Foinaven**. A good ice build-up on this VS summer route is a prerequisite for success. On Skye, Mick Fowler and Andy Cave visited **Sgurr Mhic Choinnich** and climbed the very narrow *Exiguous Gully* (V) to the left of *King Cobra*, which provided sustained steep climbing up a series of steep grooves and corners.

## The Cairngorms

The **Northern Corries** were as busy as ever, but after the intense activity of recent years, new route possibilities are becoming scarce. There are still a few gaps, however, as demonstrated by Allen Fyffe and Jaz Hepburn who added *Appetite for Destruction* (V,7) to the left of *Demolition Man*, and *Coronary Bypass* (V,7), the crack left of *Auricle*. Also in **Coire an Lochain** was the long awaited second ascent of *Bulgy* (VII,7), the very strenuous and poorly-protected hanging groove on the left arête of *Savage Slit*, by Neil Main and Graeme Ertle.

Across on **Carn Etchachan** in the Loch Avon Basin, Andy Nisbet and John Lyall linked together the much-eyed line of cracks and grooves between *Route Major* and *Red Guard* to give *The Winter Palace* (V,7). The same pair also added *The Crystal Maze* (V,7) on the same area of the cliff, although this time they were accompanied by Ertle and Main who added a three-pitch variation start.

**Lochnagar** saw a high level of activity with a number of good new mixed routes including *Shadowlands* (VI,7), the untouched headwall on the front face of *Shadow Buttress A*, and *Hiawatha* (VI,8) possibly Lochnagar's last unclimbed winter buttress, to the right of *Raeburn's Gully*. The hardest new route fell to Alastair Robertson and Simon Richardson who took advantage of very snowy conditions in late February to make a direct ascent of the narrow buttress left of *West Gully*. The eight pitch *Quasimodo* (VII,8) takes in the crux of the summer HVS *Dod's Diversion* and continues up a direct line on the final headwall.

Without doubt, the Walker Spur of the Cairngorms is the 200m high *Mitre Ridge* in the remote Garbh Choire on **Beinn a'Bhuird**. The *Original Route* (V,5), which follows the diagonal line of weakness crossing from the

right to left, was first climbed by Brooker and Patey in 1953. It is a superb but serious expedition which has now become quite popular. In February, the true crest of the buttress was climbed by Richardson and Roger Webb. *The Cardinal* (VIII,8) proved to be a very sustained expedition, and hints at the possibilities for high-standard mixed climbing away from the more accessible areas and well-known summer routes. Also on Mitre Ridge, James Turner and Simon Frost made a rare ascent of the excellent *Cumming-Crofton route* (VI,6). They added to their adventure by approaching from Tomintoul and finishing at Aviemore, thus traversing the Cairngorms in the process.

## Ben Nevis and Glen Coe

Heavy snow considerably restricted activity on Ben Nevis, although cold weather in late March brought some of the lower ice routes into condition. The hard classic, *The Shield Direct* (VII,7) saw at least one ascent, and Mark Garthwaite and Adam Wainwright picked a major plum with the fine ascent of *The Bewilderbeast* (VI,6), a counter-diagonal to *Gemini* on the N wall of Carn Dearg.

In Glen Coe, Garthwaite achieved another major coup by making the second ascent of *Neanderthal* (VII,8) with Pete Benson. This magnificent route, which takes an improbable line up the huge corner right of *Pterodactyl* on Lost Valley Buttress, was first climbed by Rab Anderson and Grahame Nicoll in February 1987, and has come to symbolise the best in Glen Coe mixed climbing.

## Southern Highlands

Good conditions on **The Cobbler** in early January resulted in several new routes. On the South Peak, Colin Stewart and Tom Prentice climbed the strenuous *Aeon Variation* (VI,6), and on the North Peak, Robin McAllister and Dave McGimpsey added a fine technical test piece with the first winter ascent of the summer HVS *Direct Direct*. A bold first pitch led to a very strenuous final wide crack, resulting in a fierce VI, 8 grade. The same pair also made the second ascent of Rab Anderson's excellent, but intimidating *Deadman's Groove* (VI,7) on the South Peak.

Across on **Beinn Ime**, the highest peak in the Arrochar Alps, attention focused on the unclimbed buttress, cut by twin grooves, which bounds the right side of the classic chimney line of *Ben's Fault*. Tom Prentice, Charlie French and Simon Richardson were first on the scene and climbed the left-hand groove with a spectacular finish through the headwall above (V,6). Hot on their heels the following weekend were Rab Anderson and Rob Milne who climbed *Headfault* (VII,7), the steeper right-hand corner, with a long and sustained pitch through the headwall.

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TONY HOWARD

## Middle East and North Africa 1995

### Jordan

The climbing development in Wadi Rum has continued at such a pace since our discovery of this area in 1984 that these annual updates are in danger of becoming an endless series of new routes. Since these are fairly meaningless unless you are familiar with the area, I will simply concentrate on the best of the 1994-95 crop to demonstrate the trends and the potential. Albert Precht and friends, of Austria, continue to dominate the bold big-wall scene with the 500m vertical and weirdly wind-sculpted walls of **Nassrani** being their favourite playground, producing routes in the grade VI and VII (UIAA) category. Also, last spring, they and Austrian climbers Behm and Reidl continued to develop the **Vulcanics Towers** area, adding some 300m grade VI routes.

Meanwhile, behind the campsite, on the E face of **Jebel Rum**, perhaps the hardest new route of the season was the 450m grade VIII, 14-pitch route from Tyrolean climbers Gargitter, Hainz and Obrist, climbed over 4 days and given the strange name of *Raid mit the Camel*. Whilst the use of bolts was minimal on this route, they unfortunately also created some bolted sports routes at the foot of this wall which is a pity when we have been doing our best to discourage unsightly bolting in this adventure-climbing area.

Geoff Hornby and team were active again both on the big slab routes in the east of the area, where they found a number of routes of up to 400m/5+, as well as around the **Khazali** area, where they added some nice crack climbing including what looks like a very enjoyable direct line to *Purple Haze* (300m 6b) - named *A Red Guitar, Three chords and the Truth!* They (like others) also failed to make much progress on the big crack-line splitting the W face of **Abu Judaidah**, ascending only the aptly named first pitch: *The Start of the Beginning* (6b+). Another active British team was Andy Nelson and friends, who clocked up a number of new routes also out in the E of Rum including the 450m slabs of *Red Admiral* (6b) on **Burdah's** E face.

Old regulars Mick Shaw, Di Taylor, and myself continued our search for esoteric delights. We were rewarded with the 280m *Hadj* (5+) up a superb wall almost on the Saudi border, as well as solving the long-standing riddle of the *Bedouin route* which crosses the northern ramparts of **Jebel um Ishrin**, starting up *Mohammed Musa's route* and ending down a 2000-year-old Nabataean rock-hewn staircase. This is a magic day out with a lot of grade 3 and 4 soloing: a real mystery tour!

The other annual regulars, Wilf Colonna, his girl-friend Emmanuelle and Bernard Domenech continue to be active and between their guiding commitments are concentrating on winking out the better-quality lines, the epitome of which, when it is completed, will be their project in the atmospheric canyon of **Rad al Beidah**. This ascends a magnificent smooth-walled and slightly overhanging 200m corner at 7a and will hopefully finish up the headwall above.

With two editions of the guide now sold out in the first ten years, the third should be out in the shops by autumn 1996: if you want to take part in the continuing bonanza, don't delay!

## Turkey

French guide Wilf Colonna reports wonderful ski-touring and climbing, with considerable scope for new routes. He is pleased to pass on a request from members of the Turkish Mountain Federation that **visitors should not place bolts**. These are against the current Turkish ethic and at the present stage of development there is plenty of potential using traditional nut and peg protection.

## Egypt-Sinai

It is rare to see non-Israeli climbers here but Swiss climbers Danny Wolfstein, Urs Neu and friends were active in recent years, adding a number of reputedly good 300m routes in the **Mount Sinai** area as well as some bolt-protected sport climbs: God is said to have delivered The Ten Commandments to Moses from the summit of Sinai but it seems that even this mountain region is no longer sacrosanct!

## Ethiopia: 'The Roof of Africa'

The **High Simiens** of Ethiopia, known as The Roof of Africa, culminate in Ras Dashan at 4620m – Africa's fourth highest summit. (Maps vary on the precise altitude.) Our plans to visit another mountain region of North Africa having fallen through owing to bureaucracy, Di Taylor and I made a snap decision to visit the Simiens in October 1995. By late October we were at the spectacular Blue Nile Falls and Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile. A couple of days later we reached Debark, like the capital Addis Ababa at 2400m, surrounded by rolling hills which are dotted with settlements and eucalyptus plantations (an Australian tree imported to stop the last indigenous trees from being used as fuel).

Debark, a dusty village on a dusty road, is the location of the Simien Mountains National Park Office, and here we signed on our compulsory minimum accompaniment of guide, mule-man and armed scout for the sum of less than twenty pounds a day, mules and food included. It's a six-day trek to Ras Dashan, including a rest day enabling you to include the summit of **Imet Gogo (3926m)** which forms a narrow peninsula projecting out above the Geech Abyss plunging almost 2000m to the so-called lowland hills. Unfortunately the basalt cliffs, like the nearby isolated volcanic plugs rising dramatically from the ambas, are all quite vegetated and appear to present nothing of real interest to the climber. However, whilst on Imet Gogo we did see two families of *Walia Ibex* (an endemic and endangered species numbering less than 200), as well as a troupe of hundreds of *Gelada Baboons* on the cliff-top plateau. Bird life is also plentiful, with eagles, buzzards, vultures and lammergeiers soaring very close on the thermals and numerous smaller species evident on the giant heathers, thistles, lobelias and other exotic flora.

Two of the campsites *en route* to Ras Dashan were once stone-built shelters but both were destroyed by Russian MIGs under Mengistu's regime in an effort to wipe out the EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front) who were using them as a mountain retreat. There are plans to rebuild them, as nights are often sub-zero and rain is not too uncommon even outside the rainy season, resulting in thickly iced-up tents!

Generally we camped near the villages, buying local food and accepting the hospitality of the local people who fed us in their thatched 'tukuls' on roasted beans and barley followed by coffee and wheat beer or, whilst walking, handing us armfuls of bean shoots or handfuls of wheat: their hospitality is, as yet, unspoiled by tourism.

The fifth day of the trek is the longest, entailing a climb from around 3500m to a col just below the summit of **Buahit** at 4430m and then down to a hot, verdant, 2700m and back up to camp at 3300m, in a total distance of about 15km. The next day takes you to the top of **Ras Dashan** by a pleasant, gradually-rising ascent finishing with 50m of perfect basalt giving an excellent little climb for those starved of rock!

The journey back takes much the same route over two or three days, or variations are possible, descending off the high amba down to the lowlands at the foot of the great escarpment and so back to Debark in a total of about 10 days.

It's a unique area still virtually unspoiled by tourism, though organised groups have been visiting the region with increasing frequency since the fall of the Marxist government in 1991. According to the Simien Park Office, around 500 people visited the region in 1994-95. They expect this figure to double in 1995-96 and double again the next season though most groups only go to the second or third camps. If you are going to visit this area of high mountains with its fascinating people, flora and fauna, now's the time to do it!

### **Climbing potential**

Whilst the escarpments and various volcanic cores visible from the trek are big - sometimes over 1000m - they offer no climbing potential, being heavily vegetated. However, 100km to the NE and about 20km E of Axum (reputed location of the Queen of Sheba's ancient empire with its ancient granite stelae - at up to 500 tons, the largest man-made monoliths of their time), is a cluster of basalt towers and domes that could offer good climbing. We had no gear but trekked in for a closer look: there are a couple of dozen tops with walls between 100m to 400m located east of Adwa and as far as the 2500-year-old ruins of Yeha. A four-wheel drive would be useful!

### **Footnote**

We travelled independently but a number of UK companies arrange treks and tours in the Simiens. In Ethiopia itself, the NTO (National Tourist Organisation), and EET (Experience Ethiopia Travel) both organise treks. EET has an office in London (tel. 0171 738 3197) and offers a very professional and environmentally-aware service. Should you arrive independently at Debark, our guide Mohammed Abdelkadir, scout Brahim, and muleman Naga were excellent - I recommend them.

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## Indonesia 1995

### Carstensz Pyramid, Irian Jaya

#### **A new route on the North Face**

On 12 May 1995 I climbed my 'seventh summit'. My companions were my wife Sharu, Chris Brown from the UK, and Mark Bowen and Tom Calaghan from the US. On 13 May we climbed a new route on Carstensz North Face, taking a line to the left of the 1972 Isherwood route. All the pitches were long, around 5.8/5.9, on superb rock with the occasional peg belay, but usually protection was from wires and Friends wedged in between the spiky flutings.

This was a very fine mountain route, about TD or Grade V, on delectable high mountainous limestone. There are now six, possibly seven, new routes on the North Face but there is ample scope for many more. Access will always be a problem and the other big problem is the weather. This area has a reputation for heavy rainfall and in our experience the climbing had to be completed by noon, or 1pm at the latest. On the descent from our new route, the gullies to left and right of some of the flutings down which we abseiled were running streams of water. Nevertheless it is an extremely good rock-climbing area, with scope not only on the North Face for new routes, but on all the outlying peaks, pinnacles and ridges. It is also tremendous walking country and no one has yet made a traverse all the way from Carstensz to Trikora Peak (4730m) over in the east. That would be a fantastic walking/mountaineering expedition.

*Doug Scott*

#### **South Face Variation**

From 8-10 November our party of ten climbers completed an approximate 25-mile approach to the base of the South Face of the Carstensz Pyramid. Thereafter, nine of our climbers summited the mountain on 11 and 12 November, including Dolly Lefever, the first American woman to climb the seven continental summits (both Kosciusko and Carstensz options). British leader Nick Banks and New Zealander Colin Monteath fixed a Tyrolean traverse across the summit ridge's crux notch, eliminating the more time-consuming rappel and 80ft South Face pitch (5.8), classic finish to this route. Other summiters included Americans Bill Martin, Mike Hightower, Randy Carnahan, Richard Birrer and Paul Pfau and Indonesian Ripto Mulyono. Australian Martin Reeve was also an expedition member.

*Paul Pfau*