
CHRIS CHEESEMAN

South America and Antarctica 1995

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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 Ecuadorian 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.