
Mount Everest Foundation Expedition Reports 2002

SUMMARISED BY BILL RUTHVEN

The Mount Everest Foundation was formed as a Registered Charity after the first successful ascent of Everest in 1953, and was initially financed from the surplus funds and subsequent royalties of that expedition: its declared aim is to encourage 'exploration of the mountains of the earth'.

Although some people assumed that it would be wound up after a few years, others thought differently, and it was agreed that only the interest from its investments should be given away as grants. Since then, some 1,400 expeditions have good reason to be grateful that the Foundation still upholds those original ideals, having received a share of the £750,000 dispensed in grants.

Each year potential leaders scour the world in search of unexplored mountain areas, and then submit applications for support from the MEF. Surprisingly more than half of the peaks over 6000 metres listed in the AC Himalayan Index still remain unclimbed – some because they are little more than minor bumps on a ridge, and others for political reasons – but there are still many worthwhile peaks awaiting the attention of adventurous young climbers. All that the MEF asks in return for its support is a comprehensive report. Once received, copies are lodged in the Alpine Club Library, the Royal Geographical Society, the British Mountaineering Council and the Alan Rouse Memorial Collection in Sheffield Central Library, where they are available for consultation by future expeditioners.

This year the Foundation has used the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the First Ascent of Everest to launch a major appeal for funds in order to improve the levels of grants offered. The principal function was a Royal Gala – 'Endeavour on Everest' – in the Leicester Square Odeon followed by a Reception in Spencer House, at which we were honoured with the presence of HM The Queen, and our Patron HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, together with several other Members of the Royal Family. Most of the surviving members of the original 1953 team were present at this and at a later Dinner given in honour of Sir Edmund Hillary to raise funds for the Himalayan Trust.

The following notes are a synopsis of reports from the expeditions and projects which were supported in 2002, and are divided into geographical areas.

AMERICA – NORTH AND CENTRAL**02/07 'The Longest Day'** Ian Parnell (with Kenton Cool). May-June 2002

This two-man team had two objectives in mind for their return visit to Alaska, one being a new route on the SE Face of Mt Foraker, 5305m. However, they discovered that this route was threatened by at least 15 séracs, making it far too dangerous to attempt. As a consolation, they attempted the *Infinite Spur* on the same peak, but were forced to abandon due to appalling snow conditions. They therefore turned their attention to the other objective, the first free ascent of *Denali Diamond* on the SW Face of Denali, 6194m. Despite – or possibly because of – almost continuous snow, they climbed this in 5 days, compared with 17 days for the first ascent, using only two points of aid. (See article 'Hell to Pay: On Denali's Diamond', page 23.)

02/12 North Wales Alaska 2002 Stuart McAleese (with Rob Collister, John Cousins and Mike 'Twid' Turner). May-June 2002

Although nominally a single expedition, the climbers operated as two separate pairs on different peaks. Collister and Cousins made two attempts on the unclimbed S Ridge of Mt Hess, 3639m, but high temperatures caused instability and substantial avalanches made climbing too dangerous. However, a ski circuit of the Hess/Deborah massif was completed. McAleese and Turner made for the Kichatna Range, hoping to climb a new line on the massive 1300m East Face of Middle Triple Peak, described as the 'Cerro Torre of Alaska'. However, the approach to Middle Triple was considered too dangerous to attempt. Attention was therefore turned to the Citadel, 2597m (to its north-east) on which, over a 9-day period, an 18-pitch eliminate of one of Andrew Embick's routes was climbed on the East Buttress. Climbing was 'free' as far as possible, but most of the lower pitches required aid, and the route, named *Off the Wall Madness*, was graded A2, E3.

02/20 West Buttress of Mount Hunter Malcolm Bass (with Paul Figg) May-June 2002

Whilst descending the West Ridge of Mount Hunter in 2001, after making the first ascent of *The Prey* on its Eastern Buttress [MEF Ref 01/ 04], these Alaskan devotees decided that their next venture would be an attempt on the West Buttress of the South Peak, 4250m. However, their arrival in Alaska followed a period of incredibly warm weather, so before committing themselves, they examined the approach from the air, and decided that the broken ground and danger from massive séracs made it unjustifiable. They therefore flew to the Tokositna Glacier and attempted a repeat of the *Harvard Route* on Kahiltna Queen, 3773m (the highest peak on the French ridge of Mount Huntington). Although they reached pitch 27 (just above the first

ascensionists' camp 2) in under six hours' climbing, they were unable to progress further, as the next section – usually an icy chimney – contained neither ice nor snow, just creaking loose blocks. Other routes in the area appeared equally unsafe due to the generalised melt-out, so they decided to cut their losses and return home early, donating their remaining food to optimistic teams which decided to sit it out.

02/31 British Donjek Glacier 2002 Geoff Hornby (with Alastair Duff, Susan Sammut and Glenn Wilks). May-June 2002

The Donjek Glacier lies in the Canadian Yukon, and is surrounded by unclimbed peaks: this team planned to fly in from Alaska in a single-engined Otter to climb some of them. Due to poor visibility the pilot decided to drop the first pair, Hornby and Wilks, on the Eclipse Glacier (between the Hubbard and Donjek systems) but as a result, he was banned from further entry to Canadian airspace. Making the best of the situation, the pair made the first ascents of Pt 3390 via its SE Ridge and Pt 3320 via its E Face and also climbed a new route on the NW Ridge of Pt 3330. Meanwhile, Duff and Sammut were forced to drive to Kluane and then, after collecting the others, to Chitina, from where they were flown to Goat Glacier in the Granite Range of St Elias National Park. Three more first ascents were achieved in this area, Mt Lola by its SW Ridge, and Mounts Jennifer and Zaylie, both by their West Faces. New routes were also climbed on the West Face of Pt 2450 and the SW Ridge of Pt 2570 by its West Face. What would they have achieved if they had been in their intended area?

AMERICA – SOUTH AND ANTARCTICA

02/03 Maestri-Egger 2002 Alpine Style Alan Mullin (with Leo Houlding and Kevin Thaw). January-March 2002

Although Cesare Maestri said that he had climbed (with Toni Egger, who was killed during the descent) a route to the summit of Cerro Torre, 3128m, as long ago as 1959, there has always been doubt in some minds as to the authenticity of his claim, and the route has never been repeated. Viewing the peak in 2001, Mullin thought that much of the ice and summit mushroom had disappeared, thus reducing the objective danger at the crux, so he determined to attempt the route himself. Using a 'caterpillar style', with one man leading a block of pitches whilst a second cleans and the third Jumars on a free line, all went well for the first 360m, but then a small foothold snapped, and Houlding fell, causing serious injury to an ankle. After evacuating him to hospital, an American climber, Johnny Copp, was recruited for a return to the fray, but the window of 'good' weather was over, and no further progress was made – in fact retrieval of the abandoned gear became an epic in itself. (See article 'Commitment and Bolts in Patagonia', page 139.)

02/08 Towers of Paine 2002 Andy Cave (with Dave Hesleden, Leo Houlding and Simon Nadin plus Neil Harvey & Ross Purdy in support). January 2002

Despite the name of this expedition, no climbing was actually done on any of the 'Towers' themselves. However, from a base in the Bader (previously Pingo) Valley a number of successes were achieved. Cave & Houlding made the first free ascent of the 800m Spanish route *Ilusiones* on Cerro Mascara (The Mask) in 1½ days at E4, 5C (the original team took 10 days and graded it A3+): Hesleden & Nadin made the first ascent of the West Couloir on Paine Chico, 2670m, and repeated the Spanish route on Los Cuernos.

02/09 Antarctic Convergence Zone Dr Alun Hubbard (with Fraser Birnie, David Fasel, Penny Goddard, David Hildes, John Millar, Andy Mitchell, Grant Redvers, Elliot Robertson, Lena Rowat and Peter Taylor). October 2001-March 2002.

In a voyage from New Zealand via Cape Horn totalling 15,000km, this team (which included representatives from Canada, NZ, Switzerland and the US, in addition to the UK) sailed to the Antarctic Peninsula on the leader's 15-metre ketch 'Gambo' to undertake a programme of mountaineering exploration and scientific research. Despite a particularly bad pack-ice year and exceptionally unstable weather, they achieved six firsts and a number of notable other ascents down the Peninsula and off-shore islands, including Mt Britannia, Stolze Peak, Laussedat Heights, Mt Luigi and two of the Seven Sisters of Fief on Wiencke Island. They also completed a two-week ski traverse onto the ice cap via The Downfall, but were forced to retreat from a first ascent of Mt Walker, 2200m, due to sustained poor weather and over-commitment. The expedition made 20 dives down to 30 metres at numerous sites, including the wreck of a whaling supply-ship at Enterprise Island. They also carried out a comprehensive environmental science programme on King Georgia Island, acquiring numerous radar profiles of the ice cap, along with snow and sub-glacial water sampling, to assess the region's long-term response to climate change before heading back to Cape Horn as winter set in.

02/23 Jirishanca Alun Powell (with Nick Bullock and Owen Samuels). May-June 2002

After acclimatising in the Cordillera Blanca by climbing the popular SW Ridge of Pisco, 5752m, (PD), Powell and Bullock moved to the Cordillera Huayhuash and made two attempts at the primary objective of this expedition, the first ascent of the Central Couloir on the SE Face of Jirishanca, 6126m. Each was thwarted by poor weather, prompting concern that another El Niño was starting. The second attempt ended after both climbers were avalanched down 60-metre gullies which they had just climbed at Scottish Grade IV, with Bullock sustaining a number of soft-tissue injuries.

At this stage, Samuels was recruited to the team, which moved back to the Cordillera Blanca. Powell and Samuels then made the first ascent of the 900m N Face of Ulta, 5875m, at ED2, Scottish VII, A1. Meanwhile, dosed up with painkillers, Bullock soloed a direct finish to the *Dawson/Cheese-mond Route* on the NW Face of Ulta at ED1, Scottish 6.

02/29 Apolobamba 2002 Gareth Gretton (with Daniel Carrivick and Jonathan Ellis from UK and Catalina Llado from Spain). June-August 2002 Despite heights and names differing from 'official' maps, the sketch map produced by Paul Hudson in 1993 has proved very useful to subsequent climbers visiting the Cordillera Apolobamba, but it is most unlikely that all the peaks marked as 'unclimbed' remain so. However, this team used it as a basis for their exploration of the Cololo Massif, where they climbed three mountains from a Base Camp at the far eastern end of the Lago Pauoche. The first was Nevado Jacha Huaracha (*aka* Pelechuco, Pt 5527 and Pt 5488) by its N Face and W Ridge at AD-, although they stopped short of the summit because of a threatening cornice; next came Nevado Nubi, 5710m, on which they placed an intermediate camp before climbing its W Ridge at AD; and finally an unnamed peak – probably Pt. 5490 on the Hudson map – which they climbed via its E Ridge at F.

GREENLAND AND ARCTIC AREAS

02/17 Lemon Mountains 2002 Dr Roy Ruddle (with Derek Buckle, Geoff Cohen, Robert Durran, Andy Gallagher, Rachel Gallagher, Martin Scott and Dave Wilkinson). July-August 2002

This mainly Alpine Club team operated as four pairs to explore and make first ascents, particularly in the North Lemon Mountains, which cover an area of 300 sq km. The most significant achievement was by Cohen and Wilkinson who, in a 34-hour push, climbed one of the highest peaks in the area, The Spear, c.2500m, via its 1300m NE Face at Alpine TD mixed. Meanwhile, Buckle, Scott and the Gallaghers concentrated on exploration, between them climbing 13 peaks, most of them first ascents. Durran and Ruddle were less successful, failing on three major new lines due variously to technical difficulty, avalanche risk and illness. (*See article 'Citrus Delights', page 57.*)

02/19 Cambridge Greenland Glaciology 2002 Chris Lockyear (with Natalie Clegg, Sam Harrison, Madeleine Humphreys and Derek Marshall). July-August 2002

Louise Boyd Land is in NE Greenland and, being rarely visited, offered an ideal venue for a programme of field research into glaciology and geology, the first step towards making a computer model of the ice cap for comparison with data on Switzerland. Although it will take some time to complete the

analysis of readings obtained, initial results showed that glacier movement ranged from 10-75cm during the three-week period covered. Two different types of granite were identified, containing large rafts of metasediment, details that will be added to existing geological maps of the area. As well as the scientific aspects of the trip, the team climbed six new routes up to Grade IV on 2000-2400m peaks close to their base camp, and then carried out a 200km ski trek from Louise Boyd Land to their pick-up point on Dickson Fjord.

02/22 University of Wales Svalbard Glacier Survey Andy Pope (with Dr Adrian Luckman, and working in conjunction with a party from the University of Leeds). April-May 2002

With a 10-15cm rise in sea level during the last 100 years, the Arctic has been identified as an area particularly sensitive to future climatic change. This team therefore planned to quantify the volume change of a number of glaciers in the Svalbard archipelago using digital photogrammetry, and compare results with those obtained from traditional methods. Work was carried out from two field sites: Ny Ålesund (between Austre Brøggerbreen and Midre Lovéenbreen) in the north, and at Svea (near Slakbreen) in the south, where a network of high-accuracy GPS points was established to use as ground control. From these, Digital Elevation Models were generated, which will be compared with archived aerial photographs held by the Norsk Polar Institute. Mixed weather with temperatures ranging from above zero to minus 30°C caused inevitable problems with computers and batteries; nevertheless, analysis of the data obtained will occupy the team for several months.

HIMALAYA – INDIA

02/10 2002 Garhwal Virgin Summit Dr Roger McMorro (with Connor Kane, Alan Manning, Mickey McCann and Angus Mitchell from UK, Sara Spencer from Ireland and Gustau Catalan from Spain). May-June 2002

The original objective of this team was to make the first ascent of Pk 6044 (NW of Badrinath) by two separate routes. However, on arrival in the area, it was discovered that the maps were unreliable, and that this was but an insipid peak in a long ridge forming the northern boundary wall of the Bhagirath Kharak Glacier. To gain the ridge it was necessary to scale Pk 6175, which they did by its SE Ridge at an overall grade of D/TD. Their arrival at the summit heralded a serious break in the weather, making safe descent a greater priority than a traverse of the ridge, and after 26 hours they eventually returned to their camp. When the weather improved, they carried out a comprehensive photographic survey of the area, which should prove invaluable to future visitors. Utilising a mix of Irish and local words, they have proposed that Pk 6175 should be named 'Draiocht Paravat', or 'Magical Mountain'.

02/14 West Gyundi 2002 Ms Mary Twomey (with Ms Penny Clay). August 2002

The Gyundi Glacier is situated in the Spiti region of the Himachal Pradesh (NW of the Bara Shigri Glacier system – one of the longest in the Himalaya) but has had few visitors despite a highway providing motorable access during summer months. This experienced duo first tried to reach the glacier from Hal in the NE, but were rebuffed by unstable terrain and swollen rivers. A jeep was therefore hired to take them NW to Losar, from where they were more successful. The Nala was explored and a photographic record obtained of unclimbed 6000m peaks on the ridge separating the Gyundi and Dongrimo valleys, and an unnamed 5000m rock peak was climbed.

This expedition was awarded the Alison Chadwick Memorial Grant for 2002.

02/13 British-Indian Suitilla Graham Little (with Jim Lowther from UK plus Ms Alka Sabharwal and Paramjit Singh from India). September-October 2002

Suitilla ('Peak of Needles') has been described as 'one of the finest unclimbed peaks in the Kumaon, if not the whole of the Indian Himalaya'. It is located in a fairly remote restricted area, 15km from the Tibetan border, not far from Pan Chuli. The walk-in was hampered by late monsoon conditions (and the unexpected arrival of a black bear), arrival at Base Camp coinciding with heavy snowfall which prevented a serious attempt at climbing the NW Face, the intended route. Singh then contracted a severe viral infection, and he and his wife, Sabharwal, left the expedition. Undeterred, Little and Lowther relocated to the south side, and succeeded in making an alpine-style ascent of the 1100m S Face, climbing continuously for 22 hours (15 up and 7 down), topping out on the horrendous cornice of the 6373m West summit. However, restricted military maps indicate that the East summit (marked as Suj Tilla), linked to the West by a serious corniced knife-edge ridge, is slightly higher at 6394m. (*See also 'India 2002', pages 259-260.*)

02/43 Shark's Fin Jules Cartwright (with Jon Bracey and Matt Dickinson). September-October 2002

Although the East face of Meru Central, 6350m, has now received its first ascent, the solo climber (Babanov from Omsk) avoided the central line on the Shark's Fin by sticking mainly to snow and mixed ground to its right (N). This team hoped to climb the true nose of the Fin – 850m of snow, ice and rock, followed by 450m of steep granite and mixed ramps, which the leader had attempted on an expedition in 1997 [*MEF Ref: 97/46*]. However, a late monsoon resulted in heavy snow with hoar frost plastering the fin, and that, combined with one member dropping out, meant that Cartwright and Bracey were unable to carry sufficient gear to get higher than 5500m.

HIMALAYA – CHINA AND TIBET

02/11 British 'Great Walls of China' 2002 Mike (Twid) Turner (with Paul Donnithorne, Alun Richardson and Louise Thomas). September-October 2002

Although the Qionglai Range of mountains in Sichuan Province lies in an easily accessible National Park much visited by local tourists, it has received little previous interest from mountaineers. This team planned to explore the area, and attempt rock routes on two of the many unclimbed peaks. Donnithorne and Richardson climbed an 8-pitch pinnacle with pitches up to E3 on one of these, but retreated without going to the summit due to storms and snow. Meanwhile, Turner and Thomas reached a col at c.5000m and began climbing a ridge above but were also forced to retreat, leaving equipment in place for a return visit.

02/32 British Siguniang Mick Fowler (with Roger Gibbs, Mike Morrison and Paul Ramsden). April 2002

In an attempt to attract visitors, the Siguniang area of Sichuan Province was declared a Reserve ('AAAA' rated!) by the Chinese a few years ago, but although popular with local tourists, it had not received any British visitors until now. Mt Siguniang, 6250m, the highest peak, had been climbed three times from the south, but the only attempt on the 1000m 'ice streaked granite' North Face (by Jack Tackle in 1981) had been unsuccessful. Over a period of eight days and nights that included his most uncomfortable bivouacs yet (during which he nevertheless endeavoured to keep abreast with the latest activities of Harry Potter) and nourished with little more than noodles, Fowler made its first ascent (ED sup) with Ramsden. After descending by the unclimbed North Ridge, he declared it 'one of the best climbs I've ever done': praise indeed! Meanwhile, Gibbs and Morrison explored the area, climbing Ptarmigan Peak, 4730m, via a mainly rock route, and then, Morrison being unwell, Gibbs made a solo ascent of the S Face of Snowy Peak – *aka* Pt 5484m – at the head of Changping Valley. (See article 'The North Face of Siguniang' page 29, and 02/11 to the same area.)

02/45 British Nyewo Chu John Town (with Nicola Hart, plus Tibetan driver, horsemen etc). 20 March-7 April 2002

The aim of this enterprising pair was to reach and photograph peaks in the extremely remote North and Western flanks of the Upper Kongpo Range (East Nyanchentangla). A road goes from Nakchu via Atsa and the Sung Chu Gorge as far as Nye, crossing two 5000m passes, but is impassable for much of the year, and consequently sees less than 100 vehicles per year. (The only known British person to visit Nye was the plant-hunter Frank Kingdon Ward in 1936). After a three-day trek from Nye they reached the village of Ekar, and although they failed to gain a view of the highest point, Peak 6842/6920m, they climbed to Chung Tso to gain a view of the

spectacular NW Face of Nyenang (Kangla Karpo), 6870m/6730m, the N Face of Jomo Taktse plus many other unnamed (and unclimbed) peaks. (See article 'Nyenang and the the Nye Chu', page 95.)

02/48 Hong Meigui Yunnan 2002 Ms Hilary Greaves (with Richard Gerrish, Gavin Lowe and Paul Swire). August-October 2002

Until 2001, there had been little interest in the caves of North Yunnan, but that year a reconnaissance expedition indicated an overall depth potential exceeding 4000m – hence this return trip. At heights up to 4935m, there were several areas of particular interest – the south of Nu Tiang Valley (near Liuku), the limestone peaks 20km W of Zhongdian and the hills between Lugu Hu and the Yangtse. The final phase concentrated on the Zhongdian area where the height difference between a resurgence cave and a high-altitude draughting cave was c.2200m. The team returned home with plenty of scope for future exploration in the Province.

CENTRAL ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

02/26 British Mongolian Mountaineering 2002 Paul Hudson (with Ken Findlay, Stuart Gallagher, John Given, Les Holbert and Karl Zientek). July-August 2002

Information about mountaineering in Mongolia is fairly limited, and this leader described the area of his interest – Ikh Turgen Uul, a National Park situated N of Tsagaannuur Village, (itself N of Ölgii) as 'Fuzziness on the Map'. Plans to fly to Ölgii were thwarted by an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease, so the team was forced to make a horrendous multi-day overland journey from Ulaanbaatar instead. Glaciation in the area was far less than expected, making it possible to walk or simply scramble up most peaks. However, Findlay and Zientek found an unclimbed 'Alpine' Ridge (which they named 'Noodle Ridge') on which they reached 4050m in a five-day exercise during the worst weather of the trip.

02/30 Khrebet Kyokkiar 2002 David Gerrard (with Karl Baker, John Cuthbert and Graham Sutton). August-September 2002

An expedition to Kyrgyzstan in 2001 (*MEF Ref 01/37*) only scratched the surface as far as this leader was concerned, so he returned in 2002 to explore further, hoping to make a number of first ascents in the process. Initially, they were unable to gain access to the Kyokkiar Range, due to high river levels making crossings too dangerous, so they returned to the Gory Sarybeles Range, the venue for the previous trip, and made first ascents of three peaks between 4200m and 4350m. Entry to the Kyokkiar was then made on horseback, and successful ascents made of another five previously unclimbed peaks between 4600m and 4760m.

02/35 British Heart of Asia 2002 Ms Nina Saunders (with Janet Fotheringham, Alan Halewood, Michael McLaughlan, Sebastian Nault, and Robert Watts). July-August 2002

Although a team of Polish visitors to the Mongolian Altai climbed many of the peaks and produced a sketch map of the area in 1967, subsequent visits have been few and far between, other than to the highest point in the area – Huiten, 4374m. This team hoped to explore further and use modern GPS equipment to augment the Polish map. Unfortunately, access to the Bayan Olgi Region was prevented due to an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (Plague and Rabies are also endemic in the area!) but they managed to visit two other areas – firstly Otgon Tenga Uul where they climbed Otgon Tenga Uul, 3905m, itself, plus two unnamed peaks c.3100m, and then Altai Tavan Bogd (*aka* Taban Bogd) where they traversed all five summits of Huiten and also climbed Snow Church, 4100m, and Kowalewski, 3800m. Some of the peaks were receiving their first British ascents and the PD+ route up the North Ridge of Kowalewski was probably a new one.

02/41 Scottish West Face of Kyzyl Asker Es Tresidder (with Neal Crampton, Blair Fyffe and Guy Robertson). July-August 2002

There is only one recorded ascent of Kyzyl Asker, 5842m, in the Western Kokshaal-Too: siege style in 1985, as part of a Russian competition. This team hoped to climb a new route on the 1500m West Face using more modern techniques, but the vehicle taking them in could not get to their intended base camp due to boggy conditions. They did, however, reach the 1200m SE Face, which was attempted by Robertson and Tresidder who climbed a number of pitches (up to Grade VII), reaching approximately mid-height before aborting owing to rapidly thawing ice. Meanwhile, Crampton and Fyffe made the second ascent of the N Face of Pik Babuchka, c.5300m, and also the first ascent of the N Ridge of Pt. 4850, a peak previously climbed via its W Ridge by a Russian team. Both these routes were c.700m TD Scottish V and, being N facing, were not affected by the thaw.

(This expedition received the Nick Estcourt Memorial Award for 2002. See article 'Kyzyl Asker', page 43.)

02/44 Borkoldoy 2002 Stephen Saddler (with Sharon Abbott, Jill Barrow, Wayne Gladwin and Mike Rosser). August 2002

Borkoldoy Khrebet in the central southern area of Kyrgyzstan runs parallel with the Kokshaal-Too for 20km, but apart from a visit in 1994 by six Brits with some Russians, previous visits by western climbers were unknown. After a flight to Bishkek and then two days in a 4WD ex-military troop-carrier, this team reached their base camp. From here, with consistently fine weather and daily temperatures varying between -10° and $+28^{\circ}$ C, they explored the major peaks of Borkoldoy to its north, and the plateau south towards the Kokshaal-Too, achieving first ascents of three straightforward peaks, the highest being Ata Peak, 4850m.

02/47 British Tyva 2002 Mel Penn (with Linda Martin, Peter Martin, Allan Richardson, and Bill Thompson from UK plus many Russian cavers and supporters). August 2002

There were three parts to this expedition making a return visit to the Ak-dovurak region of Tyva (aka Tuva), a country the size of England and Wales in the Russian Federation between Siberia and Mongolia. Part 1 was an exploration of Shagonar Pothole (*'Hole so deep man not been to bottom of'*), an exercise that, despite a surface temperature of 30°C, required crampons to descend an ice flow; however, other than an ice plug at a depth of 54 metres, nothing of great interest was found. It had been intended to use a helicopter for Part 2, but this was abandoned due to unreliability and a 6-wheel-drive 'mountain climbing truck' used instead to traverse Naryn and B'loo Valleys in the Sengilen Mountains, exploring and surveying more caves in a vast area of limestone. For the final part, the team climbed over 1400m up the western ridge to explore and survey more caves.

MISCELLANEOUS

02/38 High Altitude Medicine & Physiology Website Dr Mike Grocott (with Dan Martin). On-going from Autumn 2002

Although actual *'research into the effect of altitude upon the human organism'* (one of the topics eligible for support listed in the MEF's Memorandum of Association) must obviously be carried out 'in the field', there has long been a need to collate the results obtained by all the expeditions that have undertaken such work. Working in University College London, this is being done in the form of a database that can eventually be consulted by future climbers planning to explore the high mountains of the world. The structure of the website is now in place, but work will continue into 2003 to complete the information areas. Once this has been done, the MEF will advise how the database can be accessed.