
Mount Everest Foundation Expedition Reports

SUMMARISED BY BILL RUTHVEN

The Mount Everest Foundation was set up as a registered charity following the ascent of Everest in 1953 and was initially financed from the surplus funds and subsequent royalties of that expedition. It is a continuing initiative between the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).

Its purpose is to encourage 'exploration of the mountain regions of the earth'. This is exploration in its widest sense, not just climbing expeditions but also the application of other exploratory disciplines, such as geology, botany and zoology. It has now distributed some £900,000 to about 1,500 British and New Zealand expeditions, mostly to ambitious young climbers.

In return for supporting an expedition, all that the MEF asks 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.

The following notes summarise reports from the expeditions supported during 2007, and are divided into geographical areas. Support was also given to the AC 'Summits of Learning' Seminar held at the Swiss Embassy in December as part of the club's anniversary celebrations (*see report pages 193-219*).

AMERICA – NORTH AND CENTRAL

British-Irish Ruth Gorge 2007 Oliver Metherell with James Mehigan.
March-April 2007

This pair originally had designs on the east face of Mt Wake (2755m) and possibly the London/Werewolf Towers (c2250m). However, on arrival in the area, they found that their approach to Wake was barred by an open bergschrund, so were forced to seek an alternative objective on the east side of the gorge. They selected a stunning line up the couloir between the Werewolf (c2130m) and Hut Tower (c1970m), amazed that it had not been climbed already. Heavy snow falls every day set the scene for some of the most unpleasant conditions that either climber had experienced, with much of the route being up a precarious unconsolidated curtain of snow. Making the most of a brief weather window, after 24 hours on the go they were very relieved to arrive back at base camp safely having made a successful ascent of *Hut Tower Couloir* (Scottish grade VII, ED, A1). For more details see: www.super7.co.uk

MEF 07/03

Scottish Dan Beard Vivian Scott with Gareth Hughes. April 2007
Mt Dan Beard (3125m) is one of the less popular mountains to the north of Ruth Gorge, and this pair hoped to make the first ascent of its east face. They succeeded in reaching the summit by a route on the far right which avoiding climbing beneath the summit séracs. Descent was made northwards to the ridge between Dan Beard and Pt 8245 (2626m) making a return to camp after 24 hours on the go. They have called their route *Sideburn Rib* and graded it Scottish IV. They also attempted a couloir on the mountain's SE ridge; although initially making good progress they were halted by insufficient ice and forced to make an abseil descent. Later they reached the summit of Mt Dickey (2909m) by its west flank. MEF 07/06

British Lowell Glacier Simon Richardson with David Hesleden. April-May 2007

As in other areas, most expeditions to the St Elias Range of Canada's Yukon have focused on the higher peaks, with the Lowell glacier receiving little attention, so this team decided there would be plenty of scope for exploration and new routes on the surrounding mountains. However, on arrival they discovered that extremely heavy snowfall in the winter and spring had left the whole area in a very dangerous condition, and initially wondered if they would be able to even reach their chosen peaks. They did a reconnaissance of Pinnacle Peak (3714m) but did not attempt it, and their hopes of climbing the south face of Lowell Peak (3630m) were thwarted when the entire slope slid away before their eyes. The only 'safe' line therefore seemed to be the west ridge of Lowell, which they successfully climbed, thus making the second overall ascent of the mountain.

MEF 07/32

AMERICA – SOUTH AND ANTARCTICA

British Graham Land 2007 Paul Josse with Steve Brown, Mark Davidson, Mike Winters and John Venier plus Terje Lokken from Norway. January-February 2007

This was a combined sailing and mountaineering expedition, which used *Pelagic* (under Alec Hazell) to sail from Punta Williams in Chile to Graham Land in the Antarctic Peninsula, where they aimed to explore and make first ascents on the range of mountains inland from Darbel Bay. However, the combination of global warming and poor weather conditions throughout the expedition made the Erskine glacier – their intended approach – crevassed and unstable, so the team concentrated on an unnamed glacier between the Erskine and Cardell glaciers. From this, despite very bad visibility, they made the first ascent of an unnamed snow peak of 1205m via its west ridge. They graded the route as PD and have suggested *Mackenzie Peak* as its name. They also climbed Harris Peak (1002m) on the Reclus

Peninsula via its NE ridge, probably its first ascent for many years. For more details see: www.britishgrahamlandexpedition2007.co.uk

MEF 07/04

Medical Sentinel 2007 Surg Cdr Adrian Mellor with Flt Lt Jemma Austin SSgt Jason Beckett, Flt Lt Anil Cherian, Maj Tim Hooper, Capt Stevan Jackson, Cdr Stuart Jackson, LMT Baz Lawrence, LNN Cheryl Lindup, POPTI Dave Murphy, Capt Chrissy Shorrocks, Wg Cdr Steve Swindells, LNN Jason Taylor, Capt Harry Vincent, LNN Robert Wakeford and Maj Hatty Wells. January 2007

This mixed tri-service party with widely varying mountaineering experience undertook an expedition to Argentina to carry out a programme of research into the medical effects of altitude in collaboration with University College London. (See also *Project Ref 05/15* and *Expedition Ref 07/01*.) No new routes were envisaged or attempted, but to acclimatise, 15 of the team initially climbed Cerro Valecitos (5500m) before attempting the more serious Aconcagua (6959m) via the Horcónes Valley route. This summit was reached by six team members – a number largely in line with expectation. The expedition was successful in all its aims, and produced data on blood pressure and oxygen saturation that should be of great value to future high altitude climbers.

MEF 07/09

British Darwin Range 2007 Simon Yates with Andy Parkin. February-March 2007

Using the yacht *Iorana* (skipper Marcel de Letter from Belgium) to access the Cordillera Darwin Range of Chilean Tierra del Fuego, this pair of climbers originally planned to explore and attempt the first ascent of the 600m south face of Monte Frances (2200m). The peak had actually been subject to at least three previous ascents over a 40-year period – the most recent being on a trip guided by Yates, who planned to use his previous route for the descent. However, adverse winds and weather made the approach difficult – first by sea and then on land, where steep broken glaciers added to their problems, and Monte Frances was almost devoid of snow and ice. They therefore turned their attention to other peaks, and were successful in making the first ascent of two non-technical (but nevertheless serious and committing) peaks at the head of Seña Pia, which they named after the yacht – Monte Iorana I (2390m) and Monte Iorana II (2075m). (NB: 'Iorana' means 'good day' in Easter Island Polynesian.)

MEF 07/10

Rio Turbo Andy Cave with James Bracken and Leo Houlding. February 2007

In 2005 (MEF Ref: 05/05), Houlding, together with Kevin Thaw and climbers from Argentina and USA planned to climb the 1000m Mariposa Wall from the Rio Turbo Valley of Argentina's Lago Puelo National Park

(close to the Chilean border). Unfortunately heavy rains and swollen rivers delayed their approach so much that they had little time left to climb, so this was the inevitable return visit. However, once again they were afflicted by bad weather and delays resulting in a shortage of time plus multiple stings from a meat-eating yellow-jacket bee. As a result, they only managed to reach the lake below the route on Mariposa as their high point, and the available dinghy was not considered sufficiently robust to transfer climbers and all their equipment across such a serious obstacle. Although other objectives were reconnoitred, bad weather and a shortage of time once again meant that no climbing was achieved. MEF 07/11A

FRCC Cordillera Carabaya 2007 Stephen Reid with Mike Cocker and Jonathan Preston. June-July 2007

The main aim of this team was to explore the little visited Cordillera Carabaya of Peru (which lies SE of the Cordillera Vilcanota, not far from the Bolivian border) and make the first ascent of the south ridge/face of Chichicapac (5564m), the second highest peak in the area. The journey to their base camp at the western end of Laguna Chambine was something of an epic, but once there, they set to work to acclimatise, first by climbing an apparently virgin rock tower (5200m) which they named Fiesta Peak. But a reconnaissance of the South face of Chichicapac revealed that much of it was threatened by cornices and séracs, making it too dangerous to attempt. However, they were able to make the first ascent of its north ridge (D), and also the first ascents of Mamaccapac (c5450m, PD) and the south ridge of Cornice (5660m) (D). (*See article pp55-69*) MEF 07/14

Eastern Huayhuash 2007 Carl Reilly with Tom Bide, Lewis Fogarty, Martin Lane and Graeme Schofield. July-September 2007

The original objectives of this team – all current or former members of the University of Birmingham Mountaineering Club – were to explore the western side of the southern spur of the Cordillera Huayhuash and climb the west face of Jirishanco Chico (5467m). But on arrival in the area, the intended route was seen to be threatened by unstable snow formations, and an attempt was deemed unjustifiable. However, they did climb three new routes in the area – the east ridge of Quesillo (5600m) at TD–, and both the North ridge and NE face of Huaraca (5537m), both D. Moving to the Cordillera Blanca, they climbed a new route on the SE ridge of Point 5325m on Nevado Ulta (AD) and later abandoned an attempt on the SW face of Urus Oste (5420m) at half height when further progress would have entailed a bivouac, for which they were not equipped. MEF 07/20

British Contrahierbas 2007 Tony Barton with John Pearson and Xabier Arbulo. June-August 2007

Although his intended climbing partner dropped out at the last minute, this leader was lucky to recruit two replacements when he arrived in Peru,

so was still able to go ahead with his 'plan A' – an attempt at first ascents of peaks in the Cordillera Blanca. On acclimatisation trips, they were successful on Nevado Raria (5576m) but were forced to abandon the first ascent of the S face of Nevado Bayoraju (5460m) when they encountered thin hollow ice guarding a gully at 5150m. They were more successful on Nevado Cajivilca III (5419m) as they made the first ascent of its 500m SE face at AD+. On Nevado Contrahierbas (6036m) they had reached 5650m when Arbulo was hit by a falling rock: although not seriously hurt, the shock caused him to drop his rucksack, thus forcing a retreat. However the leader was able to trek into Quebrada Camchas, and thus complete his exploration of the Contrahierbas massif, a task he started in 2004. Barton reported that the proposed new regulations for climbing in Peru have been abandoned for the foreseeable future. MEF 07/27

Imperial College Quimsa Cruz 2007 Hal Watts with Bernard Lam and Ben Withers from UK, Virgil Scott from Canada and Markus Roggen from Germany. June-July 2007

For their first trip to the greater ranges these five young students selected an area to the east and north-east of Laguna Blanca of the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz of Bolivia as offering plenty of scope for exploration and new routes. Although prior to the trip they had named two specific objectives, once in the field they decided that neither looked particularly attractive, so turned their attention to others. In total, they climbed 11 routes, 10 of which were thought to be new. Eight were purely rock routes, two long scrambling 'alpine' routes and one was a mixed route. They felt that the area was an excellent destination for future rock-climbing expeditions. For more details see: www.quimsacruz2007.co.uk MEF 07/33

GREENLAND

Dronning Louise Land 2007 Russ Hore with Gerwyn Lloyd and Tim Radford. May-June 2007

Although a very detailed survey was carried out of the northern part of Dronning Louise Land as long ago as 1953, the southern part remained largely unexplored, being marked on the map as 'Eventyrfjelde' (Fairy Tale Land). Due to badly crevassed blue ice, it was not possible for this team's aircraft to land at the intended drop-off site, so a point on the edge of the ice cap 40km to the north-west was selected instead. Plans had therefore to be modified, and over the next three weeks they skied north setting up camps and climbing 19 peaks en route (to many of which they gave Welsh names): 15 of them, between 2000m and 2600m, were believed to be first ascents. Although they collected small geological specimens from each peak, there was little evidence of the meteorites they had hoped to find. For more details see: russ-hore.co.uk/expeditions/d11_2007 MEF 07/07

Exercise Boreal Zenith WO1 (ASM) Sam Marshall, with Capt Sally Brown, Maj Cath Davies, Maj Kev Edwards, Capt Beth Hall-Thompson, Cfn Ollie Noakes, Lt Dave Stanley and Ocdt Joe Williams. July-August 2007

This expedition, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Army Mountaineering Association, visited Andrees Land in north-east Greenland – an area possibly not visited by climbers since the fifties – to explore and climb new routes. With fairly good conditions throughout and only three days lost due to bad weather, they made 34 ascents, ranging from simple snow plods to steep north faces (Alpine PD to D, and up to HVS on rock). Of these, 29 were first ascents. MEF 07/13

West Lancs Scouts East Greenland 2007 Dick Griffiths with 24 Mountaineering/ Support leaders, 7 Explorer Scouts and 19 other members of the Scout Network (July-August 2007)

This positive 'invasion' of Ren Land in NE Greenland celebrated the centenary of the Scout movement. Although it was understood that several SMC members had been there recently, this is one of the lesser visited areas of Greenland. Existing maps are based on aerial photography. Expedition members were able to explore some 2,500 sqkm of glaciated mountainous terrain in the centre of the area that will improve knowledge and detail on the 1:50,000 maps: in an area they described as a 'milieu of spires and minarets' they climbed 32 separate mountains, all of which are thought to be first ascents. They are still waiting for approval of the names which they proposed for them. MEF 07/19

SMC East Greenland 2007 Colwyn Jones, with Laubus Laubscher, Mark Litterick, Ken Moore, Brian Shackleton and Brian Whitworth from UK plus Heike Puchan-Whitworth from Germany and Stephen O'Sullivan from Ireland. April-May 2007

Despite long-term popularity with climbers - particularly members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club – the Staunings Alps in NE Greenland still harbour unclimbed peaks for those who search for them, as was proved by this team. They hoped to make first ascents of four peaks c2500m around the Lang glacier (aka Stor Gletscher), plus new routes on other peaks such as Dansketinde (2795m) and Bersaerkertinde. In fact, neither of the latter peaks was attempted as they were not in condition, but the team far exceeded their aim, ticking off more than a dozen peaks up to 2600m. MEF 07/25

East Greenland (Sortebrae) 2007 David Jakulis with Andy Garman, Alasdair Garnett, Rob Green, Clare O'Sullivan, Jonathan Philips, Tracey Quine and Malcolm Sloan. June 2007

There have been very few previous visits to Sortebrae by climbers, so this team felt that it would be a good area for an exploratory expedition with the opportunity to make some first ascents. However, unusually warm

temperatures had an immediate effect on their trip when the aircraft flying in the first members became stuck on the glacier, taking two days to extract. The second group was therefore landed some 30km away. A number of glaciers received their first visits, and eight peaks up to 2800m were climbed by routes up to PD+, of which four were first ascents. MEF 07/30

HIMALAYA – INDIA

New Zealand Himalaya Alpine Style Brian Alder with Marty Beare, Kester Brown, and Craig Jefferies from New Zealand plus Adam Darragh from Australia (August-October 2007)

These climbers attempted two new routes on Changabang (6864m) in the Kumaon Himalaya. Brown and Jefferies attempted the north face and Alder, Beare and Darragh the west ridge, both groups operating independently above ABC. Unfortunately, both were curtailed at c6200m by a massive storm that dumped 50cm of snow at BC. This also prevented them attempting their secondary objective, a new route on Purbi Dunagiri (6489m).

MEF 07/12

Kalanka North Face 2007 Nick Bullock with Kenton Cool.

August-September 2007

Although several teams have tried to climb the north face of Kalanka (6931m), so far only one, from Czechoslovakia, has been successful, and that was with the aid of fixed ropes. As the face is considered to be 'one of the great prizes of the Garhwal', this strong duo was determined to climb a new route in more modern – ie Alpine – style. After acclimatisation sorties to 5800m on a nearby peak, they set off up the massive fluted snowfield at the far left of the Kalanka's north face. Although hampered by regular snowfalls, they continued for four days to a shoulder at 6200m which led to the stunning NE ridge. With food running out and the probability of several more days' technical (and 'not very appealing') climbing to the summit, they decided to curtail their ascent at this point (see article 'Bittersweet Desire', pp14-21). (This expedition received the Nick Estcourt Award for 2007.)

MEF 07/15

2007 Kharchakund Pat Deavoll (NZ) with Bruce Normand (UK) and Paul and Shelley Hersey (NZ). September-October 2007

Although Deavoll and Normand originally planned to make another attempt on Jankuth (6805m) at the head of the Gangotri glacier, the Uttarakhand state government refused a permit. However, they were able to obtain one to attempt the unclimbed east ridge of Kharchakund (6612m) in the Garhwal, and were joined by the Herseys, who had designs on other unclimbed aspects of the same peak. After scouting out two routes,

the Herseys decided that the sérac danger was too great and turned their attention to Yeonbuk (5953m). After climbing several 'bullet-proof' pitches of 60 degree ice Deavoll and Normand established themselves on the east ridge of Kharchakund, but overnight a snow storm struck and they decided to withdraw. When the weather improved six days later, they discovered that the east ridge was now out of condition, so they decided to have a look at the SW ridge, but soon realised that it would be too dangerous. However, Deavoll remembered seeing an unnamed 6465m peak further up the glacier in 2004. In a two-day push with deteriorating weather they reached its summit – probably the first people to do so – and returned to base camp where they met up with the other team members who had decided that the avalanche risk on Yeonbuk was too great to continue. MEF 07/40A

British Sikkim 2007 Roger Payne with Julie-Ann Clyma. October-November 2007

Persistence eventually paid off for this pair when they at last received permission to climb in north Sikkim, although not on Gurodongmar, at 6715m the highest peak in the area and their hoped-for objective. They were able to explore two glaciers, climb Brumkhangshe South (c5635m) and Brumkhangshe North (c5450m), make the first ascent of Eagle Peak (c5540m), make the second ascent of Pheling (c5500m) and two other sub-6000m peaks, and check out a number of routes on Chombu (6362m).

MEF 07/41

HIMALAYA – NEPAL

Caudwell Xtreme Everest Dr Mike Grocott with Summit Climbing Team: Dr Sundeep Dhillon, Patrick Doyle, Paul Gunning, Nigel Hart, Chris Imray, Daniel Martin, Dr Roger McMorrow, Mick O'Dwyer and Dr Jeremy Windsor plus Support Climbing Team: Vijay Ahuja, Maryam Koshravi, Dr Denny Levett, Paul Richards and Andre Vercueil plus Climbing Filming Team: Michael (Charlie) Brown, Graham Hoyland, David Rasmussen and Jack Tankard plus Camp 2 Support: Simon Lowe and Araceli Seagara plus 200 'volunteers'. March-June 2007

This was a complex medical research expedition studying the effects of altitude on the human body, in particular on the level of oxygen in arterial blood. More than 200 subjects were studied at a range of altitudes from sea level (in the UK) via Kathmandu, Namche Bazar, Pheriche, Base Camp to (just below) the summit of Mount Everest (8850m) which was reached by 8 doctors, 2 cameramen and 15 Sherpas. The results will take many months to analyse, but, combined with the Study carried out in 05/15 (*see below*) will provide valuable data for future individuals suffering the effects of low oxygen levels, be it due to illness or ascent to high altitude. (*See article 'Caudwell Xtreme Everest', pp220-226*)

MEF 07/01

Kanti Himal Julian Freeman-Attwood with Nick Colton, Luke Hughes and Phil Wickens. September-October 2007

When permission for his intended 'McMahon Line 2007 Expedition' (MEF Ref 07/02) was withdrawn due to internal political problems less than a week before departure, with no alternative Tibetan peak offered, this leader was fortunate to obtain a permit to attempt Rongla Kangri (6647m) in Kanti Himal, an unexplored area of west Nepal. So remote is the area that with very severe post monsoon weather all over Nepal, they never even reached the mountain. However, they were able to make the first ascents of two peaks at the head of an unnamed glacier west of the Rong La – Pk 5984m by its north ridge and Pk 5930m by its west ridge. During their debriefing back in Kathmandu, the team learned that Nepal has some 2200 peaks over 6000m, less than half of which have names and even less have been climbed. Some 250 of these lie in west Nepal, so this area alone offers plenty of scope for future exploratory trips. MEF 07/02A

CHINA AND TIBET

British Manamcho 2007 Mick Fowler with Steve Burns, Ian Cartwright and Paul Ramsden. April-May 2007

During his expedition to Kajaqiao in 2005 (MEF Ref 05/17) Fowler discovered that the name had originally been attributed to a very shapely peak to its south whose true name was Manamcho (6264m): Tom Nakamura described it as 'the Matterhorn of the Nyenchen Tanghla'. Amos and Thomas had attempted its NW ridge while Fowler and Watts were on Kajaqiao, but only reached 5880m. However, Fowler had been so impressed with its appearance that this return visit was inevitable. In a round trip of eight days from base camp (including one spent exploring the 'most beautiful area ever visited') Fowler and Ramsden completed the ascent of the NW ridge (at TD) and thus the first ascent of the peak. Unfortunately, photographs from the summit, rather than the hoped for panoramic extravaganza, 'could have been taken on any cold, snowy, misty and windswept place anywhere in the world'. Meanwhile in a four-day round trip, Burns and Cartwright made the first ascent of Peak 5935m which rises to the north-west of the large glacier plateau north and west of Manamcho and Kajaqiao. This climb involved superb mixed climbing of AD standard, and the excellent views from the summit helped to clarify the layout of the mountains in the area. MEF 07/05

British Yangmolong 2007 Dave Wynne-Jones with Steve Hunt, Dick Isherwood and Peter Rowat. October 2007

Yangmolong (6066m) is one of the few remaining unclimbed 6000m peaks in Sichuan, and only appears to have had one previous 'official' attempt.

To acclimatise, this team made the first ascent of an unnamed peak of 5596m (GPS reading) between Dangchezhengla (5847m) and Peak 5850, and then a new route from the north on Dangchezhengla, joining the Japanese route at the summit ridge. Then, in deteriorating weather, they made an attempt on the north face of Yangmolong, but found that it was steep and difficult with sérac barriers. They reached 5400m before retreating. MEF 07/22A

British Zhopu 2007 David Gerrard with Dave Sykes. April-May 2007

These climbers – aided by Zheng Lin ('Lenny') Chen, a well known local 'travel consultant' who proved to be an excellent companion – visited the Zhopu Pasture area in Tibet's Shaluli-Shan range with the intention of exploring and attempting a number of first ascents. They were successful on Hati (*aka* Hadi or Nazdenka, 5584m) via a gully line on its west face (AD, Scottish III, pitch of rock UIAA III). They also carried out a reconnaissance of the 5812m highest peak in the area which Chen insisted was called Garapinsung and not Jarinjabo as marked on Nakamura's map. A period of bad weather in the area then encouraged them to relocate to Tagong, from where they made an attempt on the south face of Haizi Shan (*aka* Ja Ra or Yala, 5820m), but after establishing a camp at 4800m they retreated due to a storm with high temperatures which caused a high risk of avalanche. MEF 07/31

British North Lungkar John Town with Kevin Clarke, Mike Dawber and Richard Sant. July-August 2007

Maps of remote areas can be most unreliable, with different heights – and names – being allocated to the same peaks. From several maps, this team spotted an unclimbed peak about 100km south-west of Gertse (*aka* Lumaringpo) in northern Tibet, variously marked as Peak 6704 and Peak 7200, and planned to make a reconnaissance and hopefully its first ascent. Satellite and Google Earth pictures proved helpful on their approach to the area from the north, and they were able to drive to a base camp at c5000m. From here they progressed via easy slopes to a camp at 6017m in the centre of a glacier. Although they did not expect to encounter monsoon conditions in this area, heavy snowfall suggested otherwise, and they triggered a number of massive snow slides which warned them of the danger in progressing any further. Although they did not have an opportunity to confirm the true height of the peak – known to locals as Tachab Kangri – they were convinced that the greater height was most unrealistic. (*See article 'The Sliding Snow of Tachab Kangri', pp84-92*) MEF 07/35

Zhongdian Caves Gavin Lowe with Sam Allshorn, Pip Crosby, Pete Hartley, Chris Rogers and Paul Swire. July-August 2007

Continuing the Hong Meigui series of expeditions (MEF 02/48, 03/49, 04/54, 05/51, 06/01 & 06/35) this team set out to prospect for caves in a compact block of mountains rising to 4706m above the Jinsha Jiang (Yangtse

river) in Sanba County, Yunnan Province, some 50km south-east of Zhongdian. With solid beds of limestone and no surface streams, the area seemed to have a lot going for it and a depth potential of more than 3000m. Despite poor weather with frequent fog and heavy rain, the area was fully explored, and nearly 30 caves found. All turned out to be very disappointing, as none were more than 60m deep. The consensus was that although the mountains are almost entirely limestone they had been raised too quickly – in geological terms – for decent caves to develop. MEF 07/42

PAKISTAN

NZ Womens Beka Brakkai Chhok Pat Deavoll with Lydia Bradey. June-July 2007

Beka Brakkai Chhok (6940m) lies in the Batura range of Pakistan. Although some years ago an unauthorised attempt was made from the north via the Batura glacier, this was the first official expedition to the peak. Weather conditions throughout this trip were generally excellent, but poor snow conditions and a rock band that required fixed ropes (which they did not have) led to an attempt on the south face being abandoned at 6200m – with possibly three days more required to reach the summit. They did however make the first ascent (up steep snow and ice) of another peak, which they named Wahine (5835m). For success on Beka Brakkai Chhok the climbers recommend acclimatising on another peak and also having an additional team member to help with load carrying (including rope for fixing) and leading, although it would sometimes be difficult to find anywhere big enough for a three-person tent. MEF 07/16

Hispar Peter Thompson. August-September 2007

This trip was originally planned for a three-man team, but when both his companions withdrew prior to departure, the leader decided to attempt first ascents of peaks close to the Hispar glacier on his own. Despite breaking the pick on one of his tools on very hard ice low down, on Haigutum Middle (6031m) he was within 50m of the summit via an Alpine AD route on its north face/east ridge when he was avalanched, falling more than 150m down the Kero Lungma side of the mountain. The lack of a second tool (and any companions), plus the onset of bad weather prevented him from attempting other peaks, but he was able to carry out a reconnaissance of the unclimbed west side of Tahu Rutum (6651m). MEF 07/28

Shingu Charpa 07 John Arran and Anne Arran. July-August 2007

Although only two days' march from Kande and thus a fairly popular area, the Nangma valley still offers opportunities for exploration plus some *very* serious rock climbing. The unclimbed east face of Shingu Charpa (aka The

Great Tower, 5600m) is one such, and was initially the main objective of what was to be a 3-person team. However, when one member withdrew, the remaining pair felt it better to concentrate on other routes. On these they were very successful, firstly in freeing the Czech aid route *Bloody Mary* on Denbor Braak (4800m) and establishing a new climb *Welcome to Crackistan* on the granite spire of Zang Braak (also 4800m). Using a portledge on both, the routes – each with pitches of 5.12d – took seven and nine days respectively, completion of the latter being accelerated when they ran out of food. With a wealth of experience for comparison, they considered it to be one of the most continuous hard jamming routes on *any* big wall.

MEF 07/37

Ikhatta Karna Luisa Giles (UK) with Sarah Hart (USA) and Jacqueline Hudson (Canada). July-August 2007

These three Canada-based rock climbers hoped to make the first ascent of the NE ridge of Peak 5700, (south of the Choktoi glacier) which they had dubbed 'Hidden Tower'. However, an early reconnaissance proved that the rock quality on the mountain was generally poor with exfoliating loose granite, so they turned their attention to a rock peak down-valley and slightly east of their original objective. They made three attempts on this, reaching a northern sub-summit (c5200m), on the multi-pinnacled summit ridge but stopping short of the highest point when they were hit by bad weather. Nevertheless, their third excursion was a fine achievement involving a 19-hour round trip.

MEF 07/39

CENTRAL ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

Kuksay 2007 John Allen with David Barker, Joe Howard, Isobel Mulligan, Kevin Mulligan, Richard Taylor and Neil Willatt. July-August 2007

Although close to the ever popular Mustagh Ata, the Kuksay glacier of West Kunlun still had several significant unclimbed peaks, and this team (all making their first visit to the greater ranges) hoped to make some first ascents. From a base camp at 4500m, they climbed several peaks with grades varying from PD to TD, giving each a local (Kyrgyz) name, viz: Pt 4976m = *Kichinekey Tagh* (Small Mountain), Pt 5582m = *Chiatuk*, Pt 5315m = *Yilpiz* (Snow Leopard), and Pt 5485m = *Tiltagh* (Tongue Mountain). They also put up a couple of traditional rock routes, no doubt the first in this area. For more details and photographs see: www.alienmountain.com

MEF 07/08A

Alpine Club Ak-Shirak on Ski Dave Wynne-Jones with Stuart Gallagher, Gethin Howells, Adele Long and Gordon Nuttall. April 2007

Based on his experience of Kazakhstan in 2003 (MEF 03/30) and 2006 (MEF 06/09), this leader selected April as the most suitable month for a

circuit on ski of the unexplored glacier systems of the north-eastern Ak Shirak area. Unfortunately the ubiquitous 'climate change' had caused an unusually warm winter with less snow than usual, making glacier travel more hazardous than anticipated. Despite this, the team managed to establish the feasibility of the trip, and succeeded in making the first ascents of five summits between 4720m and 4901m, the highest being Pik Snow Leopard. (See article 'Ski Tracks in the Kyrgyz Tien Shan', pp163-166)

MEF 07/17

Malitskovo Glacier Stuart Howard with Dave Swinburne. July-August 2007

The Malitskovo glacier lies in the central section of the Western Kokshaal-Too region of Kyrgyzstan, close to the border with China; in fact, according to recent border realignment, it now lies within China. Until 1999 visits were restricted to climbers from the USSR, but in 2006 the main glacier was visited and partly explored by an expedition from the ISM. The American Alpine Club produced a 1:150,000 map of the area in 2005 from which this year's pair identified a number of peaks c5000m which appeared to offer reasonable objectives as first ascents. They were successful on two, marked as Pik 5055m and Pik 4975m, although their own GPS, which they believe to be more accurate, recorded 5061m and 5100m respectively. They also made an attempt on Pik 4995m on which the ISM failed, but proposed the name 'Pik Kanashay'. Unfortunately a heavy dump of snow made the final slopes unstable, so they did not reach the summit. MEF 07/21

MISCELLANEOUS

Xtreme Everest Genotype Study Dr Hugh Montgomery with Dr Mike Grocott and Dr Julian Thompson. 2005 onwards

This ongoing study, being carried out at the Centre for Aviation Space and Extreme Environmental Medicine (CASE), is integrally linked to the Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition, 07/01 (see above). It is intended to expand knowledge of the physiology of normal adaptation to hypoxia, and involves studies of the DNA and high altitude performance data from several cohorts of mountaineers. In addition to the 300+ trekkers and mountaineers on the linked expedition, data have been collected from over 350 Everest summiters plus a further 140 subjects attempting to ascend above 8000m. Future studies will include 250 subjects attempting Kilimanjaro (5894m), 150 attempting Aconcagua (6960m) and 100 attempting Shishapangma (8046m). The information obtained should not only aid understanding of the variability of performance at altitude, but also identify strategies for improving the care of critically ill hospital patients suffering from low oxygen levels. One paper has already been accepted for publication, but full analysis of the results is likely to continue for several years. MEF 05/15

ALISON CHADWICK MEMORIAL GRANT

In 1978 the British climber Alison Chadwick died close to the summit of Annapurna I whilst a member of the successful American women's expedition. Three years earlier, together with Janucz Onyszkiewicz (her Polish husband) and Wanda Rutkiewicz, she had reached the summit of Gasherbrum III, at the time the world's highest unclimbed summit, and probably for ever the highest virgin summit climbed by a woman.

Following her death, a Memorial Fund was instituted in her name 'to provide grants to further British and Polish women's mountaineering in the world's greater ranges, ie: further afield than the Alps'. At the end of 1990, the entire assets of the fund were very generously passed to the Mount Everest Foundation which has continued to award grants broadly in line with the original guidelines.

However, rather than administer the Award as a separate fund, the MEF decided that it would award the grant to an applicant for MEF support – either an all-female expedition or an individual female team member – which also meets the above criteria. Hence, there are no separate application forms, and there is no need for an applicant to indicate that she wishes to be considered for the Award: eligibility is considered automatically during the normal MEF screening process. In view of the rather stringent criteria, it is perhaps inevitable that some of the country's leading female climbers have received the Award more than once.

Requests for MEF Application for Grant forms can be downloaded from the website or obtained direct from the Hon Secretary. In either case, *they must be completed and returned to him by 31 August or 31 December of the year preceding the expedition.* Early applications will be interviewed in November and the later ones in March. It is advisable to submit applications as early as possible.

MEF Hon Secretary:
WH Ruthven,
1 Sarabeth Drive
Tunley
Bath BA2 0EA
Website: www.mef.org.uk

The Alison Chadwick Memorial Grant for 2008 has been awarded to **Anne Arran**, who is leader of the **Chimanta 2008 Expedition** to Venezuela, on which she and her husband (plus one of the most accomplished local climbers) plan to explore the Grand Sabana Chimanta Massif of Venezuela and attempt to make the first recorded ascent of the steep rock walls of Chimanta (2700m). Previous exploration of the peak by cavers and ecologists has been very limited, as it has the most overhanging wall in the world (100m + overhang).