

## 16 MOUNTAINEERING AND TREKKING EXPEDITIONS

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Whether you are considering the “last great” mountaineering challenge or thinking about your first climbs in the greater ranges, you would be wise to ensure that you have accumulated a solid base of mountaineering and alpine experience closer to home first. The British Mountaineering Council can provide details of local climbing clubs, and details of courses including those run by the national centres for mountain sports at Plas y Brenin and Glenmore Lodge.

Having acquired sufficient experience, the first problem is to identify a suitable objective. The best way to approach this is to consider carefully the different areas in which you wish to travel or climb. Select an area that does not pose too many political and logistical problems. As Alan Rouse said, “It is nice to get to the top first time round.” For example, some valleys in Nepal have very good access with relatively straightforward approaches to the peaks, whereas remote Karakoram passes and peaks have proved completely elusive to inexperienced groups! Consider the likely weather and conditions: Alaska and Patagonia can produce conditions as extreme as their positions are relative to each other. Do not make your first trip to the greater ranges your last!

Fortunately, mountaineers have a habit of recording their explorations so there is a vast amount of information available to would-be expeditioners. Apart from the obvious British magazines, some European titles and the Japanese *Iwa to Yuki* (which includes English summaries) are worth consulting. However, the best source of information is the various journals: the Alpine Club’s own journal, *The Alpine Journal*, is excellent while the *American Alpine Journal* tries to give a comprehensive worldwide summary and can be considered definitive for South America. The *Canadian Alpine Journal* is excellent for Arctic North America, and *The Himalayan Journal* and *Indian Mountaineer* are very good for those regions. You can try contacting contributors to the various journals for detailed information, via either the journal editor or the club of which they may be members. These journals are all available in the Alpine Club Library, which is one of the best collections of mountaineering liter-

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ature in the world. Other useful collections can be found in the smaller specialist libraries listed at the end of the chapter. Past expedition reports are often an excellent source of information. The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers or IBG) is the repository for reports from British expeditions including those supported by the Mount Everest Foundation. An increasing number of traditional-style guidebooks are being produced for trekkers and mountaineers.

In addition to housing its excellent library, the Alpine Club has an online Himalayan index listing most known peaks over 6000 metres in Asia (excluding countries of the former Soviet Union). In recent years, the Alpine Club has organised an annual symposium on climbing in the greater ranges. These tend to concentrate on specific mountain areas and are held in November each year at Plas y Brenin. The proceedings of these are sometimes published. Your local library may also have one or two useful reference books and, of course, you can order other books through them.

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) has a range of information sheets covering most mountain areas to help in the early stages of planning. In addition, if you have problems after doing your initial research you can always contact the BMC office for advice or an opinion. The BMC keeps copies of reports from BMC-supported expeditions and some other reference works for visitors. The Council also has comprehensive insurance schemes available with worldwide, extended period and expedition cover for mountaineers.

All the Himalayan countries, and to a lesser extent most other less developed countries, have rules and regulations governing access to their mountains. It is essential that you obtain the latest up-to-date regulations and adhere to them no matter how frustrating they may seem at times. If you think dealing with bureaucracy will be a problem for you, choose instead an area with unrestricted access, such as in much of North America. Check with the appropriate Embassy or High Commission for the current situation, rules and regulations, or (where they exist) the national mountaineering authority.

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the trip you may be eligible for various grants (e.g. the Alison Chadwick Memorial Fund for women climbers, the Nick Estcourt Award for teams tackling difficult peaks and the Eagle Ski Club for ski mountaineering expeditions) but the two main grant-giving bodies for mountain expeditions are the Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) and the BMC. The basic criteria for these grants are that you are attempting first or first British ascents of peaks or routes in a new style, and that you have the necessary experience to stand a reasonable chance of success. The MEF also provides grants to those doing research in high mountain areas. Both grants are administered via the Honorary Secretary of the MEF from whom further details of eligibility and application forms are available.

The UIAA (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme), which is the world body for mountaineering, produces guidelines to promote good ethical

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practice in developing sustainable mountain activities. At an early stage in your planning you should acquaint yourself with the Kathmandu Declaration, the Ethical Code for Expeditions and the International Mountain Code, all of which are available from the BMC or from the UIAA website.

Also, as part of your preparation it is essential that you consider likely medical problems, and accident and emergency procedures. The UIAA Mountain Medicine Data Centre produce a range of excellent information sheets covering problems concerned with acclimatisation, cold, injury, etc. In most circumstances in remote or high mountain ranges you will need to be prepared to effect your own evacuation in the event of an accident.

It is always worthwhile consulting others with expedition experience as part of your expedition planning. If you are considering training in Britain as part of your preparation, make sure that those who are providing the training are properly qualified or experienced. In Britain there are various levels of qualification that are recognised in Europe and internationally. For further guidance you can contact the BMC's Training Administrator or the Mountain Leader Training Board (MLTB).

Depending on the country that you propose to visit there are different services available to transport expeditions to and from their base camps. This often involves the expedition hiring local people to transport goods and equipment. Some countries have systems for registering porters and local guides etc., and set terms and conditions for their employment. In 1997, the International Porter Protection Group was formed to look after the safety and welfare of the trekking porter at work in the mountains after a series of tragic deaths. You should make sure that you are aware of their guidelines and follow them when hiring local labour.

Opportunities for inexpensive travel and access to unclimbed peaks and unexplored areas have never been greater. Careful preparation, good teamwork and previous experience help to ensure successful and enjoyable expeditions. In your enthusiasm to travel and climb in the greater ranges do not neglect basic principles such as an environmentally aware approach and respect and fair treatment for local people. It has been said many times before but it is worth finishing on here: "Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs, change no one but yourself".

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Useful addresses

Alpine Club, 55 Charlotte Road, London EC2A 3QT. Tel: +44 20 7613 0755, email: [sec@alpine-club.org.uk](mailto:sec@alpine-club.org.uk), website: [www.alpine-club.org.uk](http://www.alpine-club.org.uk)

British Mountaineering Council (BMC), 177-179 Burton Road, West Didsbury, Manchester M20 2BB.

Tel: +44 870 010 4878, email: [office@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:office@thebmc.co.uk), website: [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

International Porter Protection Group. Website: [www.ippg.net](http://www.ippg.net)

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Mountaineering Council of Ireland, House of Sport, Longmile Road, Walkinstown, Dublin 12, Ireland.  
Tel: +353 1 450 7376, email: mci@eircom.net, website: www.mountaineering.ie  
Mountaineering Council of Scotland, The Old Granary, West Mill St, Perth PH1 5QP. Tel: +44 1738  
638227, email: info@mountaineering-scotland.org.uk, website: www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk  
Mountain Leader Training England, Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, Conway LL24 OET. Tel: +44 1690  
720314, email: info@mlte.org, www.mltb.org  
UIAA Associations d'Alpinisme, Postfach, CH-3000 Bern 23, Switzerland. Tel: +41 31 370 1828, fax: +41 31  
370 1838, email: office@uiaa.ch, website: www.uiaa.ch/  
UIAA Mountain Medicine Data Centre. Website: www.thebmc.co.uk

### Training centres

Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore, Inverness-shire PH22 1QU. Tel: +44 1479 861256, website:  
www.glenmorelodge.org.uk  
International School of Mountaineering, Club Vagabond, 1854 Leysin, Switzerland. Tel: +44 1766 890441,  
email: ism@alpin-ism.com, website: www.alpin-ism.com  
Plas Y Brenin, Capel Curig, Gwynedd LL24 oET. Tel: +44 1690 720214, website: www.pyb.co.uk

### Specialist libraries

Alpine Club Library, 55 Charlotte Road, London EC2A 3QT. Tel: +44 20 7613 0755, email: info@alpine-  
club.org.uk, website: www.alpine-club.org.uk  
Graham Brown Memorial Library, c/o Scottish National Library, Edinburgh  
Fell and Rock Climbing Club Library, Lancaster University  
Alan Rouse Memorial Library, Central Library, Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 1X2. Tel: +44 114 273 4760  
Rucksack Club Library, Manchester Central Library  
Yorkshire Ramblers Club Library, Leeds Central Library

### Specialist publishers and distributors

Cicerone Press, 2 Police Square, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7PX. Tel: +44 15395 62069, email:  
info@cicerone.co.uk, website: www.cicerone.co.uk  
Cordee, 3a DeMontfort Street, Leicester LE1 7HD. Tel: +44 116 254 3579, fax: +44 116 247 1176, email:  
info@cordee.co.uk, website: www.cordee.co.uk  
Omnimap, 1004 S. Mebane St, PO Box 2096, Burlington, NC 27216, USA. Tel: +1 336 227 8300, email:  
custserve@omnimap.com, website: www.omnimap.com  
Excellent source for obscure maps.  
West Col, Goring, Reading, Berkshire RG8 9AA. Tel: +44 1491 681284

### Principal national mountaineering authorities

American Alpine Club, 710 Tenth Street, Suite 15, Golden, CO 80401, USA. Website:  
www.americanalpineclub.org  
Chinese Mountaineering Association (CMA), 9 Tiyuguan Road, Post Code 100763, Beijing. Tel: +86 10  
671 23 769, fax: +86 10 671 11 629, email: cmaex@ina.com.cn, website: www.cma.com.cn  
Greenland: Danish Polar Centre, Strandgade 100 H, DK 1401, Copenhagen, Denmark. Tel: +45 32 88 01 00  
or 32 88 01 20, fax: +45 32 88 01 01, email: dpc@dpc.org, website: www.dpc.dk  
Indian Mountaineering Foundation, Benito Juarez Road, Anand Niketan, New Delhi 11002. Email:  
indmount@vsnl.com, website: www.indmount.org  
Pakistan Alpine Club, 509 Kashmir Road, R.A. Bazar, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Tel: +92 51 927 1321, email:  
alpineclub@meganet.com.pk, website: www.alpineclub.org.pk

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Mountaineering Association of Tibet (CTMA), No 8, East Linkhor Road, Lhasa, Tibet. Fax: +86 891 36366  
 Mountaineering Association of Xinjiang (CXMA), 1 Renmin Road, Urumqi, Xinjiang, China. Fax: +86  
 991 2818365  
 Mountaineering Federation of Russia, Lushnetskaj naberzhnaja 8, 119871 Moscow, Russia  
 Nepalese Mountaineering Association, PO Box 1435, Nag Pokhari, Naxal, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: +977  
 143 4525, email: office@nma.com.np, website: www.nma.com.np

### Grants

Alpine Ski Club Awards. Email: grants@alpineskiclub.org.uk, website: www.alpineskiclub.org.uk  
 Eagle Ski Club. Website: www.eagleskiclub.org.uk  
 Nick Estcourt Award, 24 Grange Road, Bowdon, Altrincham WA14 3EE  
 Andy Fanshawe Memorial Trust, c/o Ed Douglas, 181 Abbeydale Road South, Sheffield S7 2QW. Tel: +44  
 114 236 5589, website: afmt\_adm@hotmail.com  
 Fred Harper Memorial Trust, Weston Cottage, West Way, Crayke, York YO61 4TE  
 For the advancement for public benefit of education and training in the skills necessary for safe  
 mountain walking and climbing.  
 Mount Everest Foundation, c/o Hon. Secretary: Bill Ruthven, Gowrie, Cardwell Close, Warton, Preston,  
 Lancashire PR4 1SH. Website: www.mef.org.uk  
 Polartec Challenge. Website: www.polartec.com

### Reference books and further reading

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 Barton, B. and Wright, B. (2000) *A Chance in a Million? Scottish Avalanches*. Scottish  
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 Essex.  
 Daftern, T. (1983) *Avalanche Safety for Skiers and Climbers*. London: Diadem, www.diadembooks.com  
 Deegan, P. (2002) *The Mountains Traveller's Handbook: Your companion from city to summit*. Manchester:  
 British Mountaineering Council. Highly recommended. Available from www.rgs.org/eacpubs  
 Echigo, K. (ed.) (1977) *Mountaineering Maps of the World*. Vol. 1: *Himalaya*. Vol. 2: *Karakoram-Hindu  
 Kush*. Tokyo: Gakushu Kenkyu-sha (Gakken).  
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 www.cordee.co.uk  
 Higgs, D. (1990) *Mountain Photography*. London: Diadem.  
 Houston, C. (1987) *Going Higher: The Story of Man and Altitude*. New York: Little, Brown.  
 Kapadia, H. (2001) *Trekking & Climbing – Indian Himalaya*. Leicester: Cordee Books.  
 Kelsey, M. R. (1990) *Climbers and Hikers Guide to the World's Mountains*. Kelsey Publishing, 456 E. 100N,  
 Provo, Utah, USA 84606. Tel: +1 801 373 3327.  
 Langmuir, Eric (1995) *Mountaineering and Leadership: a handbook for mountaineering and hillwalking  
 leaders in the British Isles*. Aviemore, Scotland: Scottish Mountain Leader Training Board.  
 Maier (1999) *Trekking in Russia & Central Asia*. Seattle: The Mountaineers.  
 Mason, K. (1987) *Abode of Snow*. London: Diadem.

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- Mehta, S. and Kapadia, H. (1991) *Exploring the Hidden Himalaya*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.  
Especially good reference for Garwhal, Kishtwar and Kulu.
- Moran, M. (1988) *Scotland's Winter Mountains*. Newton Abbot, Devon: David and Charles.
- Neate, J. (1987) *Mountaineering and its Literature*. 2nd edn. Milnthorpe, Cumbria: Cicerone Press.
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- Vallotton, J. and Dubas, F. (1991) *A Colour Atlas of Mountain Medicine*. Aylesford: Wolf Publishing.
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