

EUROPE

The UIAA Mountain Medicine Centre, London. The UIAA Medical Medicine Commission, founded in 1980, has flourished as an international group which now meets annually and attracts delegates from 26 countries. One of its principal functions is to collect information for the climber members of the UIAA and advise them about mountain medicine and in particular about problems of high altitude. The Mountain Medicine Centre, initiated in 1981, is run on a voluntary basis by me, a neurologist at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, with the assistance of Mrs. Ann Tilley. We aim to provide information to climbers and trekkers about a wide range of topics and use a series of information sheets to tackle common problems. Difficult issues are handled personally and on occasion by formal consultation and investigation. Currently we receive about 800 enquiries per year. The Information Sheets cover the following topics: Acute Mountain Sickness, Pulmonary and Cerebral Edema; Problems of Climbing at Extreme Altitude; Frostbite; Medical Aspects of Avalanche Rescue; Oxygen Systems for use at High Altitude; Portable Compression Chambers; Rock-climbing Injuries and How to Prevent Them; The Causes of Death at Extreme Altitudes; First-Aid Kits for Expeditions. The Centre is funded by a small grant from the UIAA and contributions have been received from the Swiss Alpine Club, the Mount Everest Foundation, the German Alpine Club, the American Alpine Club, the Alpine Club of Canada and personal donations. A small charge is made to cover printing and postage. All enquiries should be made to the Mountain Medicine Centre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London EC1A 7BE, England.

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ANTARCTICA

South Pole International Overland Expedition. During the austral summer of 1988-89, the first privately funded cross-country ski expedition to the South Pole took place. Eleven members representing five nations reached the South Pole on January 17, 1989. The journey took 50 days and covered a distance of 750 miles. This was 77 years to the day since George Fallon Scott's expedition had arrived at the pole. We had just finished the first overland crossing from the South American side. We started from Hercules Inlet off the Ronne Ice Shelf at 80° S, 80° W and paralleled the Ellsworth and Thiel Ranges. Supported by snowmobiles and pre-arranged caches, we averaged 15 miles a day with temperatures down to -35°. We navigated ten days in whiteout conditions with only a compass, resting only when the storms deteriorated into a summer blizzard. The