

EVEREST 1921 – A RECONNAISSANCE

With the kind permission of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), this exhibition showcases a selection of platinum prints of the approaches to Mount Everest, and the mountain itself, taken in 1921 and reconstructed from newly digitised fragile silver nitrate negatives, preserved for the Society by the British Film Institute, and celluloid and glass plate negatives held at the Society.



Camp at 20,000 feet – The last day. Photographer: George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924) by kind permission of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

The photographs were originally intended to complement the purpose of the Expedition – to carry out new and more detailed survey work in the region. Not only do they capture the sublime beauty of the high Himalayas but they also provide the very first recorded images of the Tibetan people.

It is possible to purchase the prints; inquiries should be directed to 'Images@rgs.org' or by using the following link:

<https://www.rgs.org/about/our-collections/image-library/platinum-prints/everest-1921/>

List of Prints

Print 1 Second Advanced Camp, West Rongbuk Glacier, 18,500 feet *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 2 Camp at 20,000 feet, in cloudy weather after snowfall *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 3 Above: Team member in foreground with Mount Everest, Kangshung Face and Lhotse from the Karta Glacier *Edward Oliver Wheeler (1890-1962)*
Below: Cho Uyo from Dirty Glacier Summit on east slope Kyetrak Glacier opposite Cho Rabsang *Edward Oliver Wheeler (1890-1962)*

Print 4 Mount Everest from head of Kama chu *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 5 Mount Everest in cloud from summit north of Advanced Base *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 6 View along ridge to 21,300 ft. snow peak. Summits of Chomo Lünzo and Makalu in centre *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)*

Print 7 Cairns at a rest stop on the way up to the Kharta Glacier *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 8 View from 17,000 ft. looking across Kama Valley to 21,000 ft. peak on Nepal frontier *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)*

Print 9 Chomolönzo and Makalu from summit 21,200 ft. south-west of Advanced Base *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 10 Above: Temple at Lapchi Kang *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)* Below: Kampa Dzong *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 11 Left to right: The Dzongpen of Kharta and his wife *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)* / Tibetan woman *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)* / Three nuns at Nunnery at Tatsang *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)*

Print 12 Left to right: Looking up Kama Valley from 10,000 feet *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)* / Valley of Lakes. Sanyun La in distance *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)* / Kharta Valley looking West *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)* / Looking down Kama Valley to junction of E. Makalu Glacier *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)* / North peaks of Makalu from Kama Valley (looking S.W.) *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)*

Print 13 View of Everest summit (top) and Great Couloir in centre of North Face *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 14 Left to right: The Kama chu *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)* / Headman and Ang-Jenge in forest of Kama chu *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)* / Juniper trunks in forest of the Kama chu *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)* / Rapids of the Kama chu: here it descends 800 feet in one mile *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)*

Print 15 Above: Untitled *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)* Below: Looking down Arun Valley from slopes south of Shiling *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 16 Left to right: Everest and South Peak, in cloud, from Island, West Rongbuk Glacier *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)* / Untitled *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)* / Looking east from summit south-west of Advanced Base *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 17 Above: Makalu *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)* Below: Makalu *George Leigh Mallory (1886-1924)*

Print 18 View from Windy Col Camp, 22,500 ft., showing Everest, North Col and North Peak looking W. *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)*

Print 19 The Abbot of Shekar Chote *Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury (1881-1963)*



Members of the 1921 Expedition at 17,300 ft. Camp.

Top, left to right: Wollaston, Howard-Bury, Heron, Raeburn; Bottom, left to right: Mallory, Wheeler, Bullock, Morshead. *Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston (1875-1930)*

On seeing this photograph, George Bernard Shaw memorably remarked that it looked like 'a Connemara picnic surprised by a snowstorm'.

Many of the images in this exhibition were taken by one of the most famous alumni of Magdalene College, George Leigh Mallory (1905-1909). Mallory was a member of the 1921, 1922 and 1924 Expeditions to Everest, falling to his death while descending the mountain in June 1924; whether or not he and his climbing partner, Andrew 'Sandy' Irvine, reached the summit remains a matter of speculation to this day. We include display materials from the College archives on his time as a student at Magdalene, letters home from Tibet in 1921 and a collection of climbing equipment typical of that used in the 1920s.