

IN MEMORIAM

EDWARD GLOSSOP WELLS

1878-1952

THE late Canon Wells, who died on March 19, after prolonged illness, was elected to the Club in February 1908, on a qualification extending from 1903 and including a considerable number of standard routes in the Valais and Oberland. From Saas-Fée he had made most of the usual courses—Fletchhorn-Laquinhorn, Weissmeis, Portjengrat, Nadelhorn, Dom, etc., and from Zermatt, apart from numerous small fry, the Rothorn (tr. to Zinal), Triftjoch, Gabelhorn, and Weisshorn. He was fond of passes and his application form contains a larger number of these than is customary. Unfortunately, after World War I he was unable to do any serious climbing, on the score of expense.

He was a graduate of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and took orders in 1906. He was an Assistant Master at Marlborough from 1904-9, when he was appointed curate of St. Mary's, Southampton (1909-15). He became an Army Chaplain in 1915, serving in France, Italy and Malta, mostly with the 23rd Division; his record is sufficiently attested by his receiving the M.C. with two bars, and the Italian Bronze Medal for valour.

In 1919 he was appointed Vicar of Eastleigh, a parish of some 18,000 people and took a keen interest in local government, having especially at heart improvement in housing conditions. Nor was he less active in Church affairs, and was justly proud, when he left Eastleigh in 1934, that there were 1,200 children in his Sunday Schools and over 100 teachers. While he was Rector of Overton (1934-51) he was equally busy, carrying through successfully the restoration of St. Mary's Church, and finding time for many other duties: as a Governor of various schools; on the Kingsclere & Whitchurch Rural District Council; and as Vice-Chairman of the British Legion.

He was greatly beloved, especially by the old and infirm, and he did much to promote good feeling between the Anglican and Free Churches of the parish. He was appointed Honorary Canon of Winchester in 1946 and had been editor of the *Diocesan Leaflet* for 16 years. Ill-health compelled his retirement, to Woking, in October 1951, and there will be many in Hampshire, where most of his life was spent, who will regret his passing.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

HUGH CAMPBELL CHAMBERS

1889-1952

HUGH CHAMBERS, who died on March 17, was the son of John Chambers, one of the early settlers in Hawkes Bay, N.Z., and a sheep farmer on a large scale.

He began climbing before 1910 and made several first ascents. With the late H. F. Wright (A.C.) he did great work, notably the first complete ascent of Mt. Cook by Green's route. He and Wright were a strong combination. Chambers joined the N.Z.A.C. in 1914, and served on the Committee for some time as a regular and valuable member, becoming President in 1938. He was elected to the A.C. in 1918. During World War I he served overseas.

Though doing much useful work in many capacities, Chambers was of a curiously retiring nature, very modest, and it was hard to induce him to talk much of his climbing. He disliked the limelight, but those who knew him realized the sterling character which lay behind his reserve. He will be affectionately remembered by many.

A. P. HARPER.

Mr. H. E. L. Porter writes :

Hugh Chambers' lifelong devotion to mountains originated in a family visit to the Hermitage in 1907. From 1909 to 1915 he never missed a season, and climbing mostly with H. F. Wright, the best amateur of his day, and the guides Jack Clarke and Jim Murphy, he achieved a large number of ascents, of which the most notable were the first complete ascent of Green's original route on Mt. Cook via the Linda glacier in 1912, and first ascents of Low, Jellicoe and David's Dome from the head of the Hooker with Conrad Kain in 1915. During all these years Wright and Chambers were almost the only New Zealand amateurs to carry on the tradition of the pioneers in the Mt. Cook district, and in doing so they deliberately avoided the limelight, which was focused on the exploits of the Australian Miss Du Faur, the Canadian Otto Frind and the Englishman Samuel Turner.

After the war, in which he won the D.F.C. serving in France, he signalized his return to the mountains and fulfilled an old ambition by making the first ascent from the east of La Perouse with Peter Graham. From 1923 onwards I had the privilege of his company for many seasons. He was a busy man and did not allow himself long holidays. All too often they coincided with a patch of bad weather which frustrated our most ambitious plans. Our best achievements were the Two Thumbs and Alma from the Rangitata valley (first ascents), the North peak of Haidinger, the traverse of Haast and Lendenfeld with Marcel Kurz, and the sixth ascent of Aspiring. His favourite peak in New Zealand was the fine rock-peak, Malte Brun, which he climbed again and again. In 1912 he had a long and successful season at Zermatt, and it was to Zermatt that he always returned on his numerous visits to Europe between the wars. In 1924 I persuaded him to sample the rival attractions of Mont Blanc : it was one of the worst of seasons, and we only achieved the Aiguilles du Chardonnet and d'Argentière, the Dent du Géant and the traverse of the Grépon, in which he revelled.

Hugh had every quality of a great mountaineer except a robust physique. He was an excellent judge of routes and conditions, utterly

reliable in an emergency, a beautiful mover on all surfaces and especially on difficult rock. He was a delightful companion on a mountain, and shone also in the art of hut and tent life, an art of vital importance in a country where so much of a climbing holiday is spent sheltering from the nor-wester. He was not a great talker in ordinary life, but his extensive knowledge of all that had ever happened in the Southern Alps helped to pass many a weary, storm-bound hour, to which end his considerable skill as a cook also contributed.

His last real climb was a reconnaissance of Earle's route on Mt. Cook in 1936. After that increasing ill-health limited him to less energetic pursuits, but did not diminish his interest in the doings of the younger generation on the mountains he knew so well. He has made for himself a secure niche in the annals of New Zealand climbing and the affection of his old companions.

WILLIAM GRAHAM SINCLAIR BROOKE

1914-1952

GRAHAM BROOKE, who was killed recently flying in New Zealand, was the youngest son of Canon H. S. Brooke, a former member of the Club. He was one of our younger members both in age and in length of membership, having only joined in 1948.

His early climbs were with his parents, brothers and sister, and later he and two of his brothers, who were both killed in the war, usually climbed together; a party which, to judge by Graham Brooke, must have been both energetic and capable. They usually climbed guideless on the lesser Alpine peaks and Graham's climbs included the Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla, the Grand Combin by the Valsorey arête, the Zinal Rothorn, the Blaitière and the Charmoz-Grépon traverse, this latter with his brother Paul Brooke and a guide.

In 1947 he joined me in running a club meet in the Alps and his climbs that season included traverses of the Aiguilles Dorées, the Ecandies, the Jägigrat and the Obergabelhorn; and ascents of the Aiguille d'Argentièrre and the Portiengrat. During the traverse of the Dorées he led the Javelle chimney without recourse to the throwing of a knotted rope, an unusual effort by anyone doing the climb for the first time. On the Aiguille d'Argentièrre, he left the route finding to another member of his party who had been on the mountain before. Although they were descending by the normal route, disaster nearly overtook them and it was Graham Brooke himself who took the party back almost to the summit and descended by the route taken on the ascent.

The records of his climbing for the next three years are not complete, but in the winter of 1948 he was skiing in the Engadine. Three years later he did some skiing in the Silvretta group and from Obergurgl.

In 1949 he was climbing from Saas Fee and also in Skye, and in the following year he went to Zermatt and Cortina.

There is no doubt that he did quite an appreciable amount of climbing in these three years, although it is hard to ascertain what peaks were climbed.

In 1951 he commenced climbing in the Bregaglia and then moved to the Valais and climbed the Weissmies by the north ridge and the Rothorn by the Rotgrat. He then joined the R.A. Alpine Club meet at Chamonix. Bad weather was preventing any good climbing there and Brooke took the party, seven strong, into Switzerland and from Chanrion by the High Level route. During this trip he took the party up Mont Blanc de Seilon and the Dent Blanche.

In the autumn of 1951 he helped a friend fly an aeroplane out to Australia and then immediately joined me at the Hermitage for some climbing in the New Zealand Alps. Very bad weather prevented climbing for all but eight days of January this last season. All but one of these days found us trying some climb or other and we made two attempts on Malte Brun, once by a very difficult route and once by the ordinary route from which we were turned back by bad weather. We were successful in reaching Pioneer Col and the summits of Elie de Beaumont and Tasman, this latter being his last climb and a worthy one.

His early climbs with his family had made him thoroughly at home on either steep ice or severe rock. No man is infallible, but he made fewer mistakes perhaps than most climbers. He was quick to make up his mind about a climb and its difficulties and his judgement was sound; he was withal safe and it gave a great sense of security to a tired party on a late descent to have him in the responsible position at the top end of the rope.

He was a very active man, of excellent physique. Besides being a mountaineer, he was an Army P.T. instructor, a pole jumper of merit and played rugger for Richmond and the United Services, Portsmouth. During the war he took up flying and later commanded an Army flying unit.

His interests were varied. He took a great interest in architecture and archæology and spent some time with archæological parties unearthing old buildings. He knew a great deal about cars and was a member of the Vintage Car Club, but his greatest interest is shown by his almost invariable answer to the question, 'What have you been doing lately?' 'Climbing mountains and listening to concerts.'

He was a delightful companion, quiet but cheerful, with a sense of humour that would enable him to relieve the tension in a party when things were going wrong. His remarks might be terse and to the point, but even the one responsible for letting things go wrong could see the funny side—I never knew of an occasion too serious to have one—and in any case with Brooke on the rope very rarely did anything go wrong; his own competence prevented that.

A mountain had to have merit in itself to please him; its name and

reputation were no lure, he never climbed to be in the limelight and although the greater part of his climbing was on the lesser Alpine peaks he had none the less the makings of a great mountaineer and one whom the Club could not afford to lose.

E. H. MARRIOTT.

WE regret to record the death, on July 9, 1952, of an old member, G. A. Hasler, originally elected to the Club in 1901. An obituary notice of him will appear in the next issue of the JOURNAL.

THE HEAD LAMA OF RONGBUK MONASTERY

MR. W. H. MURRAY has brought home the sad news, heard at the Thyangboche Monastery in 1951, that the old Lama of Rongbuk died in the previous year, and I feel honoured by the suggestion that I should write an obituary notice regarding this good and distinguished friend of many expeditions to Mount Everest.

He was not known to the members of the 1921 Reconnaissance, being at the time of their arrival engaged in meditation. It is not unlikely that, prizing as he did the advantages of isolation from the busy world, he was reluctant to meet strangers.

But in 1922 the irresistible personality of General Bruce persuaded him that here was a reincarnation of a Tibetan lama, and deep called unto deep. He himself claimed to be re-incarnation of the nine-headed god Chenresi ; and once satisfied that the purpose of an expedition to Mount Everest was pilgrimage, he willingly gave the enterprise his blessing : the more so because the Sherpa porters from Solah Khumbu were his parishioners. Naturally he upheld the age-old tradition that no living thing should be killed in the Rongbuk valley : and while undisturbed by the superstition that local demons might be upset, he did not deny that the upper Rongbuk harboured no less than five ' wild men.' The human and kindly side of him was displayed when he held a special service after the avalanche which killed seven porters.

It seems probable that the arrival of the 1924 expedition renewed his anxiety for a quiet life of contemplation ; yet he willingly gave his blessing to General Norton's party when the fearful hardships at Camp III had temporarily affected the porters' morale. I feel sure that he would have been deeply affected by the tragic ending of that expedition, but the record is silent.

The impression left by General Bruce was never effaced, because each successive leader of expeditions was asked what relationship he bore to that great prototype ; the questions were very searching and the Lama's countenance and expression somewhat formidable. But he could and did smile in the most charming manner and his sense of

humour was always at hand—for instance when poor Frank Smythe endeavoured to pronounce the formula ON MANE PADME HUM with notable lack of success.

I first met the Lama in 1933, and again in 1936. In the latter year he was 71 and had ruled his monastery with strength, wisdom and dignity for more than fifty years. His authority over wild Tibetans and high-spirited Sherpas was absolute; and during the last fifteen years he had met a few disciplined Gurkha soldiers and a number of those strange English whom the Dalai Lama had allowed to come, but whose purpose was still obscure. However, no harm seemed to have been done and he was old and tolerant. His blessings and prayers for the safe return of all were then renewed with touching sincerity.

I shall never forget his last words to me when I went to say good-bye in 1936. He now believed that our motives were not materialistic and that we underwent a spiritual experience on Mount Everest. He gave me a little silver cup, a pamphlet printed at the monastery for the use of pilgrims and a cordial invitation to visit him again. On my saying that I was too old to climb again but would like to sit at his feet and learn wisdom, he laughed happily and gave me his blessing.

He was a great and good man: scholar, administrator and saint. May he rest in peace.

HUGH RUTTLEDGE.

JOHN ADAMSON

MR. JOHN ADAMSON died at his home in Greymouth, New Zealand, in August 1951, at the age of 84. Mr. Adamson was manager of the Hermitage at the time of the first ascent of Mount Cook (1894) and the climbs done by the Fitzgerald-Zurbriggen parties. (He was also for a time lessee of the hotel.) He did a number of climbs, in one of which he accompanied Zurbriggen on the latter's solitary ascent of Mount Cook, apparently as far as the foot of the summit rocks where Zurbriggen's ridge merges into the Linda route; and he acted as a guide to several early travellers. He visited the headwaters of some of the West Coast rivers in the course of gold-prospecting expeditions. His reminiscences of the early days often put history in a new perspective: his views of some persons were pungently iconoclastic. He was very modest and self-effacing, but in retirement still took an interest in mountaineering matters.

DAVID HALL.