

## EARLY ASCENTS OF MONT BLANC: SOME BIOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES

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THE monumental work of Sir Gavin de Beer and Professor Graham Brown on *The First Ascent of Mont Blanc* (1957) has enriched our knowledge of the earliest climbs on Mont Blanc, but there still remain, in the list of ascents from 1786 to 1853 printed by Montagnier in *A.ŷ.* 25, pp. 608-40 (also Vol. 30, 114-38) a number of individuals about whom very little (in certain cases, nothing) is yet known. Thanks to the work of more than one writer, but especially to Dr. J. Monroe Thorington, some of the later climbers have been brought to life, and the purpose of the following notes is to indicate what has already been done; to elucidate particulars of a few further climbers; and to call attention to others about whom information is needed. I have confined myself to British climbers because they are so much simpler to investigate, and if any of the 'blanks on the map' should be filled in as the result of this article, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

The numbers prefixed to each name are those corresponding to Montagnier's list in *A.ŷ.* Vol. 25; and the year of the ascent follows. Fuller details of each climb will be found in Appendixes lxxvii, lxxviii in *The First Ascent of Mont Blanc*, referred to above.

- (4) Beaufoy, Mark, 1787. B. March 17, 1764, d. May 4, 1827. Married his cousin Margaret Beaufoy Aug. 12, 1784. For further details see *D.N.B.*; *A.ŷ.* 40. 264; and Gwendolyn Beaufoy's *Leaves from a Beech Tree* (1930).
- (5) Woodley, William, 1788. B. 1762, d. 1810. See *A.ŷ.* 43. 308.
- (10) Undrell, John, 1819. Not many details obtained. Dr. Paccard describes him as a captain in the Royal Navy and as a native of Warwickshire (*A.ŷ.* 25. 620).

In the Navy Lists examined, his dates of commission are given as Lieutenant, Sept. 13, 1806, and Commander June 13, 1815, and he appears as a Commander in the List of 1821. Not in 1829 List.

According to *A.ŷ.* 50. 267, his full initials were T. J.; and according to *A.ŷ.* 50. 264 he was dead in 1838.

Montagnier, in a letter to Coolidge of March 10, 1909 (in Zentralbibliothek, Zürich) observes that Mettrier said that Undrell and Clark (see below) were supposed to have become insane after their ascents of Mont Blanc, and this explains the

famous remark in Murray's *Guide*. There is nothing in *A.J.* 59. 264 *sqq.* to justify this statement as regards Clark.

Mlle. Engel quotes, however, a letter to Sherwill from Catherine Hutton, Feb. 4, 1836, in which she refers to three persons having become mad after the ascent (*A.J.* 50. 264).

- (11) Clissold, Frederick, 1822. No details; he was alive on April 19, 1828, when he wrote to Sir Charles Fellows (A.C. archives; and see *A.J.* 43. 315).

- (12) Jackson, Henry Humphrey, 1823. B. Feb. 5, 1801, only son of Henry Jackson, of parish of All Saints, Lewes. D. at Brighton Oct. 21, 1841.

Educated at Westminster School (adm. Jan. 10, 1815, left April 2, 1819) and Exeter Coll. Oxford (adm. Commoner June 2, 1819, to June 1820, but never resided).

Lived at Holly Hill, Hartfield, Sussex, which property he bought in 1831. Married May 15, 1830, Charlotte Cecilia, dau. of the Rev. Sir Robert Sheffield, 3rd Bart.

(Authorities: *Record of Old Westminsters*; Burke's *Peerage*; C. N. Sutton's *Historical Notes of Withyam, Hartfield and Ashdown Forest*, p. 343; Horsfield's *Sussex*, II, p. 392; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1841, ii, p. 666.)

- (13) Clark, Edmund John, and Sherwill, Captain Markham, 1825.

(i) For Dr. Clark, *ca.* 1799–1841, see *A.J.* 59. 264.

(ii) Of Sherwill, not very much is known. Refs. occur in *A.J.* 18. 357; and 50. 262–70. He died July 26, 1845 (J. Foster, *Royal Lineage of Our Noble and Gentle Families*, ii p. 788).

According to *A.J.* 50. 264, the French translator of Sherwill's pamphlet (given by Montagnier as Alexandre P...) was one Pelletier. An unpublished letter to John Auldjo by Sherwill in 1828, in the British Museum, shows Sherwill as living at Fontainebleau and he says that in 1826 he had several talks with the Minister at Grindelwald, 'who is accounted an excellent mountaineer', about ascending the Jungfrau. Writing to Sir Charles Fellows on March 7, 1836 (A.C. archives), Sherwill says he has recently met Hawes, with whom he had ascended the Buet.

Burke's *Royal Families of England, Scotland and Wales* (1847) traces the Sherwill family as descended from Henry III (early editions of Burke must be accepted with caution), the line ending in Markham Eeles Sherwill, b. 1814, the son of Captain Markham Eeles Sherwill, b. 1787. The latter is almost certainly the mountaineer.

M. E. Sherwill, b. 1787, was a captain in the Stafford Militia, in the *List of Officers of the Militia*, 1816, with effect from May 19, 1810. His name is not in the 1825 Militia List. He married, June 15 1810, Lucy Maria Lind, elder dau. of James Lind, (1736–1812), physician to George III, and was father of Major-General M. E. Sherwill, of the Bengal Army (1814–65).

There are letters of Captain Sherwill in the British Museum, and other letters of his are to be found in Dawson Turner's correspondence in Trinity College, Cambridge, between 1819 and 1836. Turner was a great bibliophile and antiquary; Sherwill himself was a collector of autographs and on friendly terms with William Upcott (1779–1845), a notable collector of manuscripts in his day. In the British Museum Catalogue of MSS. additions, 1911–15, M. E. Sherwill is described as 'Agent for Dover Harbour' but this individual was the father of the mountaineer.

(14) Fellows, Charles, and Hawes, William, 1827.

- (i) For Sir Charles Fellows, see *D.N.B.*
- (ii) Wm. Hawes is said (*A.ſ.* 43. 313, and *Nottingham and Newark Mercury*, Aug. 25, 1827) to have been aged 20 at the time of the climb; his elder brother, Sir Benjamin Hawes, M.P. (1797–1862) published Wm. Hawes's account of the climb in 1828.

(15) Auldjo, John Richardson, 1827. B. July 26, 1805, d. May 6, 1886. Married Caroline H. Hammet, 1860. See *A.ſ.* 58. 459; and 60. 146. Also *Notes and Queries*, IV Series, iv. 261, 361, 396).

(16) Wilbraham, Hon. Edward Bootle, 1830. B. Dec. 22, 1807, d. Dec. 17, 1882. Married Emily Ramsbottom, July 8, 1841. Captain, later Colonel, Coldstream Guards. See *A.ſ.* 50. 265; and Burke's *Peerage*, 'Skelmersdale'.

(17) Barry, Martin, 1834. B. March, 1802, d. April 27, 1855. See *A.ſ.* 47. 369; and 59. 19).

(19) Waddington, Alfred, 1836.

*Le Fédéral* (Genève) of July 15, 1836, merely states that Mr. Waddington was an Englishman, and no further details about him would appear to have been published. It is not certain, therefore, if the following identification<sup>1</sup> is correct, but

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Miss Maxwell Fraser for information about the Waddington family, drawn from papers in the possession of Miss Mildred Waddington. Miss Fraser is the author of an authoritative study of the early history of the Waddington family, in the *National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol. XI (4), 1960, pp. 285–329.

no-one else of this name has been found who fits in with the dates.

Alfred Waddington, tenth child (of thirteen) and seventh son of William Waddington (1751-1818) and his wife, Grace Valentine Sykes (d. 1817) was born Oct. 2, 1801, his parents' home then being Crescent House, Brompton, London. The Waddingtons were an old Yorkshire family.

William Waddington, the father, was the head of the London house of a firm of American merchants in the 1770's and 80's, his elder brother Benjamin residing in New York. Prospering well, William Waddington retired in 1786, and married two years later. He had built a house for himself in 1783 in Chatham Place, near Blackfriars, and appears to have lived there until close on the year 1800, when he seems to have moved to Brompton, and lived there until 1810-11. Sometime after the latter date, he moved to France, where his father-in-law had lived, and he became a naturalised Frenchman, residing at St. Rémy, near Rouen. The best-known member of the French branch of the Waddingtons was William Henry Waddington (1826-94), who became French Ambassador to England from 1883-93.

Alfred Waddington was an uncle of the Ambassador. In the absence of fuller details about his life, one cannot be sure that he was the climber of Mont Blanc in 1836, but it is known that one of his nieces and several of his grand-nieces had done some climbing in Switzerland in 1891.

For what he may be worth, Venance Payot (*Oscillations*, edn. 1879, p. 182) gives Waddington's initials as E. A.

(20) Atkins, Henry Martin, and Pidwel, Samuel, 1837 (with M. Hedrengen).

(i) H. M. Atkins, b. *ca.* 1818, d. Nov. 5, 1842, was a lieutenant in the 53rd Regt. Youngest son of A. E. Martin Atkins, of Kingston Lisle, Berks.

(ii) Samuel Pidwel appears to be identical with Samuel Pidwell, only son of John Lawrence Pidwell, of All Saints, London. If so, he seems to have been born *ca.* 1808, and matriculated at Worcester Coll., Oxford, April 30, 1827, aged 19. He took his B.A. in 1835 (J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*). Mr. Hedrengen was a Swedish officer of Artillery.

(26) Nicholson, George, 1843 (with Dr. Ordinaire and others).

Is described as of London and as a barrister by C. E. Mathews (*Annals of Mont Blanc*, 163; *A. J.* 25. 634; 30. 131). Insufficient

data have been found to identify this individual; he may have been the George Henry Nicholson admitted to the Middle Temple Dec. 23, 1840, and called May 3, 1844; or possibly George James Nicholson. admitted to Gray's Inn March 20, 1827.

- (27) Bosworth, W., and Cross, Ed., 1843. No information.  
(Venance Payot, *Oscillations*, gives Cross's name in full as Edward.)

- (31) Wolley, John, and Hurt, James Thomas, 1846.

Between them, C. E. Mathews and Montagnier have misspelt both the names, one as Woolley and the other as Hunt.

- (i) John Wolley (1823-59) was the eldest son of the Rev. John Francis Thomas Hurt, Vicar of Beeston, Notts. The latter, following his marriage to Mary Wolley, dau. and co-heiress of Adam Wolley, of Allen Hill, nr. Matlock, took, in compliance with his father-in-law's will, the name of Wolley.

Their son, John Wolley, was born May 13, 1823, and died without descendants in 1859. He was educated at Eton and Trinity Coll., Cambridge, and admitted to the Middle Temple in 1846.

(Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*; Burke's *Landed Gentry*, 1952, 'Dod'.)

- (ii) James Thomas Hurt was born Aug. 14, 1827, and died in 1894. He was the son of James Hurt, of Wirksworth, Derbyshire, and Mary Margaret Webb Edge. J. T. Hurt was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford; he was twice married, in 1856 and 1866; and was High Sheriff of Notts in 1870.

James Thomas Hurt was left the estate of Strelley Hall, Notts, by his maternal uncle, Thomas Webb Edge, and in compliance with the latter's will took the surname of Edge (as his grandfather, *né* Thomas Webb, had done in his day, when he inherited an estate from a collateral, Ralph Edge).

(J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*; Burke's *Landed Gentry*, 1952, under 'Edge', 'Hurt' and 'Holden'. )

- (32) Smith, Archibald Vincent, 1847. No information.  
(Venance Payot, *Oscillations*, calls Smith 'docteur'.)

- (33) Richards, Solomon Augustus, and Gretton, W. K., 1850.

- (i) S. A. Richards, of Ardamine, co. Wexford, and Roebuck, co. Dublin, the son of John Goddard Richards, was born in Aug. 1828 and died Jan. 13, 1874. He married in 1856.

Educated at Eton and Trinity Coll., Oxford, and a student at Lincoln's Inn, 1849.

(J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*. Probably identical with the Solomon Richards shown in Burtchaell and Sadleir's *Alumni Dublinenses*, as entered at T.C.D., July 1, 1845.)

- (ii) William Knottesford Gretton is a shadowy individual. He is described as being late of the 5th (i.e. Royal Northumberland) Fusiliers in 1850. His name appears for the first time in the Army List of July 1842, where he is shown as gazetted second-lieutenant on June 3, 1842. He was promoted first-lieutenant on Dec. 5, 1843, and his name shows for the last time, still as first-lieutenant, in the List of March 1846.

Soldiering was in the doldrums in the 1840's and, presumably, Gretton got bored and left the Army. Apart from Mont Blanc, nothing has been traced of his later life.

- (34) Gardner, John Dunn, 1850. B. 1811, d. 1903. See *A.ſ.* 61. 107.

- (35) Galton, Erasmus, 1850. B. 1815, d. 1909. See *A.ſ.* 61. 102.

- (36) Smith, Albert Richard; Sackville West, Hon. William Edward; Floyd, Charles Greenwood; Philips, Francis; Vansittart, George Nicholas. 1851.

- (i) Albert Smith, 1818-60 is too well known a figure to need discussion. Mumm's *Alpine Club Register*, Vol. I, contains a summary of the life of this original member of the A.C., and Dr. Monroe Thorington's standard work, *Mont Blanc Sideshow*, deals with Albert Smith comprehensively. (See also *A.ſ.* 58. 1.)

- (ii) Hon. W. E. Sackville West, son of 5th Earl de la Warr. B. Oct. 27, 1830, d. Sept. 30, 1905. Married in 1860 Georgina Dodwell, of co. Sligo. Educated Christ Church, Oxford. Captain in Grenadier Guards; retired 1869. Bursar, Keble Coll., 1871-6; Dean, 1882.

(Burke's *Peerage*, 'Sackville'; Mumm, *op. cit.* Vol. II.)

- (iii) C. G. Floyd. B. June 14, 1830, d. Feb. 26, 1903. Son of Sir Henry Floyd, 2nd Bart. Married Edith Ellen Marcom, Norfolk. Educated Christ Church, Oxford (matriculated May 31, 1849; B.A. 1853; M.A. 1856). Rector of South Runcton, Norf., from 1866.

(J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*; Burke's *Peerage*, 'Floyd'.)

- (iv) F. Phillips. B. Jan. 8, 1830, d. March 7, 1898. Educated Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. Inner Temple 1855. Twice married, in 1856 and 1897.

(J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, Mumm, *op. cit.* Vol. I.)

- (v) G. N. Vansittart. Though the name is given as Vansittert by de Beer and Graham Brown, all other authorities appear to spell it 'art'.

Possibly identical with George Nicholas Vansittart, b. June 1814, d. May 12, 1889. Educated Eton and Trinity Coll., Cambridge (admitted 1836, B.A. 1841, M.A. 1845). Married in 1852. Inner Temple 1843. Said to have been in the Guards.

(Burke's *Peerage*, 'Vansittart'; Venn, *op. cit.*)

- (37) Behrens, Julius, 1851. Came of a family of merchants, S. L. Behrens & Co., prominent in Manchester and Bradford. Their warehouse was destroyed by fire just before the First World War and the business was disposed of to the Calico Printers' Association, and to the Bleachers. A subsidiary company of calico printers, Daniel Lee & Co., has also been disposed of. Several members of the family have been traced and I am indebted to Mr. Noel Behrens, of Denham, Bucks., and to Mr. Leonard Behrens, of Didsbury, Manchester, for information.

Julius Behrens was the son of S. L. Behrens and was born June 15, 1827, dying Oct. 21, 1888. In his will, proved Dec. 31, 1888, he is described as of 49 Park Street, Grosvenor Square, London, as well as of Manchester. At one time he and a brother had a hunting lodge at Melton Mowbray. He never married and no obituary notice of him has been found.

No notice seems to have been taken of his ascent of Mont Blanc in any Manchester newspapers; Albert Smith, *The Story of Mont Blanc*, 2nd edn., p. 178, says that one of the guides, Payot, had his feet frost-bitten on the climb, and the fore-parts of them were amputated later. Smith adds that Payot then kept a little chalet for the sale of refreshments on the path to Montanvert.

Apart from his ascent of Mont Blanc, Julius Behrens is not known to have done any other mountaineering, but a family legend exists that he at one time contemplated attempting Everest. This seems unlikely; the height of Everest, and its position as the highest summit in the world, was not established until 1852, and its name was not affixed until 1865. For the next twenty years travel in the Himalaya was largely confined to Survey of India officers, and it was not until the mid-'eighties that Himalayan mountaineering in the narrower sense began in earnest. Behrens was by then too old to have attempted anything serious, although, of course, it is possible that, having

climbed the highest mountain in the Alps, he may have felt some lingering ambition to have tried the Himalayas also.

(38) Browne, J. D. H., and Goodall, Alfred George, 1852.

(i) No details have come to hand about Browne; in a letter from Goodall to Auldjo in the British Museum, dated Dec. 1852, he merely speaks of 'Mr. Browne of Pimlico' as his companion on Mont Blanc. There is a letter from Browne to Fellows, dated Jan. 12 (presumably 1853) in the A.C., written from 6 Eaton Place South.

(ii) A. G. Goodall (1834-59). See *A.ſ.* 61. 354.

(39) Walsham, Arthur, and Salmond, James, 1853.

(i) Walsham is described in the *Journal de Genève*, July 31, 1853, as a naval officer. According to Burke's *Peerage*, Arthur Walsham, b. June 16, 1833, was a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, and fell at the battle of Alma Sept. 20, 1854. He was the 3rd son of Sir John Walsham, 1st Bart.

(ii) James Salmond was b. June 15, 1805, and died Nov. 24, 1880, the son of Major-General J. H. Salmond of the East India Coy's service. He was educated at Rugby and Oriel College, Oxford (B.A. 1826). He married Aug. 16, 1832, Emma Isabella Coke and was the father of Rear-Admiral Henry Salmond, who was a member of the A.C. from 1873 to 1887.

In 1861 another son, W. Salmond, ascended Mont Blanc. (Burke's *Landed Gentry*, 1952, 'Salmond'; Mumm, Vol. II; *A.ſ.* 50. 145; Letter from W. Salmond to the son of Sir Charles Fellows, Nov. 28, 1886, in A.C.)

(40) MacGregor, John, and Shuldham, Leopold L., 1853.

(i) J. MacGregor (1825-92), called 'Rob Roy', was educated at King's School, Canterbury, T.C.D. (1839) and Trinity Coll., Cambridge (1842). Called to the Bar, Inner Temple, 1851. Well known as a traveller and philanthropist (see *D.N.B.*).

(ii) L. L. Shuldham (sometimes written as Shieldham) is referred to in *A.ſ.* 47. 121, with especial reference to J. B. Atkins' *Life of Sir Wm. Howard Russell* (1911). There we are told of his Eton and Christ Church manner. This would suggest that the individual concerned is Leopold Arthur Francis Shuldham, and that the initials have become changed.

L. A. F. Shuldham was born *ca.* 1829 and was at Eton from May 1841 to July 1846. He matriculated at Christ

Church, Oxford, on May 27, 1847, took his B.A. (1851) and died unmarried on Jan. 28, 1887, his address being given as Phael Court, co. Cork.

He was the second son of Lt.-General E. W. Shuldham, and had an elder brother, Edmund Anderson (possibly a twin), who was at Eton from May 1841 to March 1844.

The spelling 'Shieldham' seems certainly wrong; both MacGregor, in his letter to *The Times* (Sept. 30, 1853) and the *Journal de Genève* of Sept. 22, 1853, spell the name as Shuldham, the latter paper saying he was from Ireland (see *A.J.* 30. 137).