

IN MEMORIAM

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY:

*Year of
Election*

Smith, G. O. Howard 1908

Turnbull, H. W. 1931

ALEXANDER CREIGHTON KERR

1924-1961

It is with deep regret that members will have learned of the death of A. C. Kerr, after a painful illness in Boston, U.S.A., on February 5 this year, after being a member of the Club for eight years.

Kerr was born on August 2, 1924, and brought up in Inverness, his father being Headmaster of the High School, Inverness. Perhaps from this home background he developed his intense interest in people, which deepened his enjoyment of travel and enabled him to make many friends in various countries.

He went to school at Inverness Royal Academy and continued his training in the Dental School of Glasgow University, where he graduated in 1948.

He was immediately called up for the Royal Army Dental Corps for National Service and was drafted to the R.M.A. Sandhurst where he was in charge of dental surgery. He was much interested in his work and through it became interested in preventive dental medicine. Returning to civilian life he refused the more lucrative prospects of dental practice and won a Nuffield Scholarship for research, enabling him to go back to Glasgow University where he later took a degree in Physiology.

He then joined the dental staff of Guy's Hospital, for research, mainly on the performance of the salivary glands, until he joined a research team in Boston for a three-year period in 1958.

His interests ranged widely from music to mountaineering, extending to sailing, squash, and Continental travel. He played a violin in the Guy's Hospital Orchestra and carried a recorder to mountain huts in his rucksack.

Being already experienced in hill walking, camping and sailing, he joined the R.M.A.S. Mountaineering and Exploration Club, doing his first climbs in North Wales and Glen Nevis, in preparation for his first introduction to the Alps which took place in 1949 when he took a party

of R.M.A.S. cadets to a military camp in Austria where guides had been laid on to lead them. It was typical of him that he developed a friendship with his own party's guide, Herr Lager, and corresponded with him for many years.

He continued his British climbing in the Glasgow University Climbing Club during his further three years there.

During this time he combined his Alpine summer holidays with leisurely travel, often hitch-hiking in the days of currency restrictions, his kilt arousing the interest of many motorists. He made friends easily and it was like him that he was asked and accepted to be godfather to the son of friends he made in the Langental.

Until 1954 he visited the Alps each season, and less regularly afterwards, climbing in guideless parties with the various contacts he had made at Sandhurst, particularly G. F. Dixon, Donald Ross, O. B. Howl and A. J. Imrie. He became a thoroughly reliable exponent on ice and rock.

He figured in G. F. Dixon's account of a holiday in the Zermatt District, 1950, when our fare included Monte Rosa, Dent d'Hérens, the Schalligrat of the Weisshorn, the traverse of the Pointe de Zinal, Col du Mountet, and the ascent of the Hörnli Ridge in conditions which robbed us of all view. Among his other climbs were the Aletschhorn, Nesthorn, the Aiguille de Bionnassay traverse, the Aiguille Ravanel, and the first ascent of Pt. 3675 on the ridge between the Geishhorn and Aletschhorn.

He was imperturbable in the face of difficulty or danger, but gave no countenance to slipshod methods or unnecessary risks. He deeply enjoyed his days in the mountains, was always a cheerful and optimistic companion, having an abundant interest in everything around him. Though he was not an outstanding performer, at his death the Club has lost a genuine lover of our sport and of the hills and many of us mourn a great friend.

To his wife we extend our sympathy in her bereavement.

O. B. HOWL.

ANTHONY DOUGLAS BERTRAM SIDE

1896-1961

DOUGLAS SIDE died on February 16, 1961, at the age of sixty-four years after a life closely associated with mountains and mountaineering from an early age, and his death removes one of the most sturdy characters of the Club. He was also well known in other climbing clubs in this country, and was a member of the Wayfarers' Club (for whom he sat on

the British Mountaineering Council) and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. He played a considerable part in founding the Mountaineering Section of the Camping Club in the early nineteen-thirties, and was its first Chairman.

Douglas Side began his mountaineering in his teens, and visited Gilgit with his father as early as 1913. In 1914 he began climbing in the Alps, at Zermatt and Arolla, and, after service in the 1914-18 war as an Artillery Officer, he was able in 1919 to pay a visit to the Darjeeling area. Following this he was for a time in 1920 at Grenoble University in close reach of the Dauphiné mountains, and this was the beginning of an alpine climbing career which continued until within a year or two of his untimely death. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1937 with an extensive list of climbs in the Dauphiné and Mont Blanc groups in particular, and by the end of his life he had climbed widely in practically all the major groups of the Western Alps. He was proposed for the Club by G. R. Speaker and seconded by P. J. H. Unna. He was a member of the Committee from 1954-56.

His association with Lake District climbing was an important part of his life and climbing career, and in 1932 he married Margaret Boothroyd, of a family well known in the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. A great deal of his climbing over many years was with his wife, and they celebrated their silver wedding in the Lake District in 1957 at Grasmere, where they had been married. We convey our sincere sympathies to her and to their son.

At the beginning of the 1939-45 war, Douglas Side was called to the services from the reserve, and was in 1943 sent to the Middle East in a financial advisory capacity. He was in civil life an Inspector of the Midland Bank. In Cairo on the way he was suddenly transferred to the Mountain Warfare Training Centre that had by that time been set up in the Lebanon, and he remained there for approaching a year and a half, giving instruction in mountaineering. When the Centre closed in September, 1944, he was posted to the Mountain Training Teams in the Apennines in Italy. This notable experience served him well in the years after the war in training young climbers. He was one of the leaders in the A.C. Novices Meets held after the war, and many climbers owe a great deal to him for his encouragement in their early days.

After the ascent of Everest in 1953 and the subsequent establishment of the Mount Everest Foundation, Douglas Side became its first Honorary Secretary, and much of the burden of work in the earlier years of the Foundation fell on him. The assistance he gave to the Himalayan and other expeditions supported by the Foundation will be well remembered.

Douglas Side was a fine mountaineer, and a rock climber of ability. He was a man of outstanding integrity and firm principle, and he set

standards of behaviour for himself that few of his friends could match but which he never seemed to expect of them. Indeed towards his friends he showed a quizzical liberality of thought and an ironic humour which made him a wonderful companion in the mountains, and he was capable of generating a feeling of affection which is given to few men. It is not for nothing that one of his friends said to me after his death that for him the Club would never be quite the same again. He was a sick man for many months before his death, but some of us saw to it that he attended the meetings of the Club during this time, and he was there a month before he died.

I myself first met Douglas Side in the early nineteen-thirties soon after my student days, and I climbed with him both in the Alps and in this country well before the war. He proposed me for this Club. Over the war years I did not see much of him and I was in Berlin until 1948, but after my return to England he and I took to climbing together in the Alps, and we were together in successive years, alone or with others such as L. R. Pepper and my brother, until illness overtook him. Over these years we were in Zermatt, Saas Fee, the Oberland, Chamonix, the Italian Alps and other places as well, and I recall those occasions with pleasure and gratitude. My best recollection of him I have recounted elsewhere, but it is appropriate to repeat it here as characteristic of the man. It was on the Wildelsigen Ridge of the Balmhorn in 1956, when he and I set out from the hut along with two other parties, one a Swiss guide and his client and the other, two young English climbers. The other two parties soon went ahead, but in the middle of the morning a blizzard fell upon us and turned the day to the worst I have ever spent on a mountain. The Swiss guide and his companion struggled over the summit; the two English lads were never seen again. Douglas and I turned back, and took six hours to climb down seven or eight hundred feet of the open rocky couloir sheeted with rain and sleet and with hardly a belay. At its foot late in the afternoon I muttered that it had been an even chance, but he turned in surprise and bleakly replied that he had never been in any doubt.

C. G. WICKHAM.

HERBERT WESTREN TURNBULL

1885-1961

PROFESSOR H. W. TURNBULL, F.R.S., was born on August 31, 1885 and died at Grasmere last May in his seventy-sixth year.

He joined the Alpine Club in 1931, after extensive climbing at home in the English Lake District and in Scotland, and with four good seasons

in the Alps. Up to the outbreak of the War in 1939 he was in Switzerland most years; he was out again in the Alps in 1948 and his last real climbing visit was in 1949. Besides climbing in Switzerland, he did a little in Norway and Austria, and in 1950 he had the opportunity of making some climbs in the American Rockies.

His major ascents include Lenzspitze, Rimpfischhorn, Monte Rosa, Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, Combin de Corbassière, Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla, Zinal Rothorn, Mont Blanc, and Aletschhorn (tr.).

He came to Scotland in 1921 as Regius Professor of Mathematics at St. Andrews University, having already won notable distinction whilst up at Cambridge. He climbed, thereafter, extensively in the Glencoe area and Ben Nevis, most of his home climbing being with the late J. Y. Macdonald of St. Andrews, with whom he did some first ascents. He and Macdonald for many years did a great deal to keep the St. Andrews Mountaineering Club in action.

He served on the Committee of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and was Vice-President of that Club from 1946-1948, and President from 1948-50.

He was a most distinguished mathematician and published over sixty papers, and founded a school of study which, through younger men, has now moved over to more abstract mathematical studies. His name will be associated with certain text-books on determinants and matrices.

He was the author of a small book entitled *The Great Mathematicians*, published in 1929, and he discovered hitherto unknown documents relating to the work of the Scottish mathematician James Gregory, 1638-75. He was able to complete the James Gregory Tercentenary Memorial volume in time for the celebrations which took the form of an International Congress of the Edinburgh Mathematical Society in July 1938, in which, as host and participant, he was the central figure.

He retired from St. Andrews University in 1950 so as to undertake for the Royal Society the project of editing the Correspondence of Sir Isaac Newton, and at his death had published the first two volumes.

Apart from his activities as a mathematician and as a mountaineer, Turnbull was a pianist of very considerable merit. In character, he was retiring and quiet; as a mountaineer, although lightly built, he was an excellent goer, with immense spirit and quite fearless when attacking any difficulty.

ALEXANDER HARRISON.