

IN MEMORIAM

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY		Year of Election
Fisher, Joel E.	.	1913
Murray, G. W.	.	1925
Brown, T. Graham	.	1926
Wilson, General Sir Roger	.	1927
Wager, L. R.	.	1928
Pleydell-Bouverie, Hon. B.	.	1934
Handley, C. B. C.	.	1960
Bazarrabusa, T. B.	.	1963
Harlin, J.	.	1966

JOEL ELLIS FISHER

1891-1966

J. E. FISHER died suddenly on January 6 while *en route* by car to a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Melville Shoe Company. He was in his seventy-fifth year. Born in New York City, Fisher graduated from Yale with honours in 1911, the youngest man in his class, Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma XI. During World War I he was a naval lieutenant on the U.S.S. *Isabel*. For many years he was president of the North-western Terminal Railroad in Denver, secretary and director of the Melville Shoe Company, treasurer and vestryman of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, president of the Samaritan Home for the Aged, director of the Babson Gravity Research Foundation and the Washington Institute for Biophysical Research.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1913, and was President of the American Alpine Club 1935-37, having joined in 1921. He was also a member of the Swiss, French and Italian Alpine Clubs, and an honorary member of the Yale, Harvard and Colorado Mountaineering Clubs. His climbing in the Alps began in 1906 and, in a span of fifty-seven years, included over 150 major ascents. He had done the Matterhorn six times, the last in 1950. He had also climbed in Mexico and Canada. For many years he privately sponsored research on glaciers and gravitation. He attended the A.C. Centenary in 1957 and was present at the Matterhorn dinner at the Monte Rosa Hotel on July 13 of last year, during that week ascending the Riffelhorn.

He is survived by his widow, Eleanor Darlington Fisher, a sister, a son, a daughter and three grandchildren.

J. MONROE THORINGTON.

THOMAS GRAHAM BROWN

1882-1965

GRAHAM BROWN was born in Edinburgh on March 27, 1882, and died there on October 28, 1965.

By profession he was primarily a scientist; after graduating from Edinburgh with a science degree in 1903 he qualified in 1906 as a medical man and then devoted himself to physiology. He was Professor of physiology in the University of Wales from 1920 to 1947, and in 1927 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

His climbing career started late, when he was over thirty, and his Alpine climbing did not begin until he was forty-two. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1926. From 1924 to 1938 he was climbing every summer either in the Alps, in Alaska, or in the Himalaya; in those years he played an important part in many ascents and expeditions, amongst which the following are the most notable:

- 1924 Monte Rosa.
- 1925 Finsteraarhorn.
- 1926 Gran Paradiso, Wetterhorn, Gross Schreckhorn, Jungfrau, Grand Combin, Mont Blanc, Aiguille Purtscheller, Tour Noir.
- 1927 Requin, Grands Charmoz, Aiguille de Trélatête.
Mont Blanc by Red Sentinel Route.¹
Les Courtes by S.S.W. buttress.¹
- 1928 Grépon, Aiguille Verte by Moine ridge, Trident de la Brenva.
Mont Blanc by Route Major.¹
Grandes Jorasses, Weisshorn traverse with descent of Schalligrat.
- 1929 Breithorn by Triftjegrat, Täschhorn-Dom traverse, Nadelgrat traverse from Lenzspitze to Galenhorn, Grand Combin, Mominggrat traverse from Zinal Rothorn to Schallihorn.
- 1930 Wellenkuppe-Gabelhorn traverse, Dent Blanche by Viereselsgrat, Dent d'Hérens by W.N.W. face, Monte Rosa-Nordend to Signalkuppe and Parrotspitze over Lyskamm, Castor and Pollux to Furggrat on two successive days, Piz Palü, Bernina up the West face and down by Biancogrät, Piz Scerscen, Piz Roseg, Täschhorn by Teufelsgrat and Breithorn by Klein Triftjegrat.
- 1931 Grands Charmoz, Tour Ronde, N.W. ridge of Mont Mallet, Rochefort ridge, Aiguille du Géant, Aiguille des Pèlerins, Mont Blanc by Old Brenva route.
- 1932 Aiguille du Tacul, Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey traverse, Punta Innominata, Pic Eccles, Mont Blanc by Peuterey ridge.

¹ First ascent.

- East face of Mont Brouillard.¹
 First crossing of Col Maudit.¹
- 1933 Wellenkuppe North face, Mont Dolent, Mont Blanc by Route Major, Mont Blanc by Bionnassay ridge and descent by Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc du Tacul, Mont Blanc by Brouillard ridge.
 Mont Blanc by Pear route.¹
 Mont Blanc by Innominata ridge, Mont Blanc by Chamonix (N.W.) face, second south-north crossing of Col du Dolent, Le Râteau, traverse of Meije, traverse of Les Ecrins (West and East ridges).
 Complete traverse of summit ridge of l'Ailefroide.¹ Les Bans by East buttress of North face.¹
- 1934 Mount Foraker, Alaska.
- 1935 Zinal Rothorn by Rothorngrat, Lyskamm, Nordend from Marinelli hut and down by North ridge to Jägerjoch, first traverse of Dent Blanche up Ferpècle ridge and down Viereselsgrat to Col de Zinal.
- 1936 Nanda Devi expedition: reached about 23,000 ft.
- 1937 Mönch, Gross Fiescherhorn, Eiger by Mittellegi ridge, Gross Lauteraarhorn.
- 1938 Karakoram, Masherbrum expedition: reached about 21,000 ft.

From 1948 to 1952 he did a certain amount of guideless climbing which included the Mönch, Finsteraarhorn, Strahlhorn traverse, Dent Blanche and Matterhorn. He climbed the Matterhorn by the Hörnli ridge in 1952 because, after waiting for good weather to do it by some other route in earlier years, he thought that now, in his seventieth year, he should seize an opportunity which might not come again.

It was Graham Brown's wish that his obituary notice in the *A.J.* should consist of nothing more than his climbing record, a complete list of his climbs in the remarkable year 1933, and a list of only the unusual climbs in other years. Whilst respecting his wishes and endeavouring to carry them out in spirit, I find it impossible not to add some notes of a more personal kind.

I have included in the record a good many climbs that in themselves are in no way unusual; this I have done because the sheer number of expeditions accomplished illustrates one characteristic of Graham Brown's approach to mountains: the intense, sustained, energetic application to an activity that was of absorbing interest to him. Climbing, writing about it with meticulous scholarship, finding out with a scientist's attention to detail what was being done by others, his dominant interests were mountaineering and mountaineers. The result was that in his later

¹ First ascent.

years he could know and help the younger British climbers who were active after 1946 as no other of his generation could. He gave them excellent talks and showed them his splendid photographs, he discussed plans with them, and even in his seventies he joined them in the mountains, sharing and enlivening their climbs and bivouacs under all conditions of weather. No one will ever know how many individuals were inspired by him at this period of his life.

I first met him at Courmayeur in 1949 when I had just completed a traverse of Mont Blanc. Four days later I came down again to Courmayeur after the fatal accident to Richard Hull above the Col Emile Rey, and found Graham Brown on the eve of departure for England. He was almost a stranger to me but I told him that I knew no one else in Courmayeur, and he at once cancelled his own arrangements and took me under his wing. The result was that from that moment the authorities of the town, and particularly the guides of Courmayeur, were all concerned to help me, and in the most friendly fashion possible.

To climbers of a younger generation than his own Graham Brown was especially kind and friendly, and he will be remembered with great affection by those of us who had the good fortune to know him.

R. C. EVANS.

MR. B. R. GOODFELLOW writes:

Although Graham Brown asked that he should be remembered only by his greatest climbs, I feel with Charles Evans that I cannot refrain from adding a few personal remarks. For Graham Brown was for nearly thirty years a much loved and most generous friend.

There were very few who were accorded the honour of being invited to join Graham Brown in the Alps when he was at the height of his powers as a guided mountaineer. I had the unforgettable experience of being with him for two short seasons, in 1931 with Alexander Graven and Josef Knubel and in 1933 with Graven and Casimir Rodier.

Having by then barely served my guideless apprenticeship, to climb with this enormously competent party was an experience in new dimensions. Especially, the gain in speed and the relaxing of tension added so much not only to achievement but to enjoyment of the environment. Graham Brown's relations with his guides were those of perfect harmony. He was the planner and he was the master. His discipline was strict and he allowed no guides' misgivings to frustrate his plans; he would defer to them only on details of route-finding or on judgement of the weather. His guides provided technique and speed. For Graham Brown was neither a fast mover nor a climber of conspicuous virtuosity on rock or on ice. When difficulties were met he suffered from none of the British rock-climber's false pride about overcoming them unaided; he would simply use the rope, and time was saved. He was quite inexhaustible.

At the end of the longest day his speed was unchanged whilst I, twenty years his junior, had had enough and would seek every excuse for a rest.

Evans has referred to his meticulous planning. He conducted a large correspondence with the most knowledgeable of the older generation, especially Colonel Strutt, who certainly indicated the possibilities of some of the great routes which Graham Brown made. Being one of the first to see the scope of miniature photography in mountaineering he acquired one of the very earliest Leica cameras. At every halt or check he would not only fire a dozen shots in all directions but would catalogue them precisely in his notebook. This mass of material provided his data for a winter of evenings of patient research conducted in the solitude of his laboratory in Cardiff and in his hotel room. For he was an uncompromising bachelor. Few can have written up their expeditions in the *A.J.* with such thoroughness of detail.

In the decade before the second war Graham Brown thus built up a unique Alpine reputation. Indeed he was the only British mountaineer of his time whose record in the Alps is internationally respected. His much maligned younger British climbing contemporaries may rest on their Himalayan laurels.

A word must be added about his generosity. I am in his debt for too many kindnesses to recount; not least that he never allowed me, I am sure, to contribute my full share of employing the best guides in the Alps.

To have known Graham Brown and to have climbed with him was indeed to have savoured the golden age before the first war. His death has closed the last chapter of a hundred years of traditional British guided climbing.

JOHN EGBERT JAMES

1876-1965

JAMES was a solicitor by profession. After many years in private practice in the City of London he left, after the 1914-18 war, to become secretary of the United Alkali Company in Liverpool. Shortly after this company was absorbed into the newly formed Imperial Chemical Industries he became, in 1929, the secretary of I.C.I. He held this post until his retirement in 1945. During these years he also served as a vice-president of the Trade-marks, Patents and Designs Federation, and was a member of the Board of Trade Trade-marks Committee in 1933. He was a member of various advisory committees to the Ministry of Health.

An I.C.I. colleague and successor as secretary writes of James as 'a first-rate lawyer with a passion for essential detail; his thinking was as clear as a crystal and never tortuous'. 'A hard, determined worker in all he undertook, James never spared himself. He was outspoken and

fearless in argument. To some, no doubt he could appear formidable; but his nature was essentially cheerful and kindly; those who worked at close quarters with him sooner or later came under his spell and became devoted to him.'

It is less easy to do justice to his record as a mountaineer, for he gave up Alpine mountaineering when he married in 1909, and none of his earlier companions has survived him. He was an active and regular visitor to the Alps in the later 1890's and in the first decade of this century. He climbed with his own group of companions who included W. W. James, his brother, also a member of the Alpine Club, who also died in 1965. The records in his family show that his party made many of the conventional climbs around Zermatt and Chamonix and in the Oberland.

With his brother, W. F. Reeve and two guides he made one new route; an ascent of the Altels from the north by a direct route from the Balmhorn hut onto the North ridge. This involved some difficulty on the steep lower slopes above the Gasterental, and with five on the rope the ascent took twelve hours. The S.A.C. Oberland guidebook infers that this route has rarely if ever been repeated. The expedition is recorded in *A.J.* 23. 534.

Although James did not undertake any major climbing again after his marriage, he certainly maintained his interest in the mountains, and in the 1920's was a regular member of the Pen-y-Gwryd Easter parties. He is to be seen in many of the groups in Geoffrey Winthrop Young's famous album of P-y-G and Pen-y-Pass photographs, and in a picture which hung for many years in P-y-G showing Crib Goch in snow James could be recognised in the foreground.¹

B. R. GOODFELLOW.

WILLIAM WARWICK JAMES

1874-1965

W. W. JAMES was the elder brother of J. E. James, whose death is noticed above. He was born on September 20, 1874, and was elected a member of the Alpine Club in December, 1909, having started his alpine climbing in 1906. Some of his ascents had been made with his brother, and the records show him as active in the Valais, Oberland and Chamonix.

He made a distinguished name for himself as a dental surgeon, studying at the Royal Dental Hospital and the Middlesex Hospital, and acquiring one of the best dental practices in London. For his researches on dental pathology, he was awarded the John Tomes Prize of the

¹ A few lines of this notice are reprinted, by permission, from *The Times*, August 10, 1965.

Royal College of Surgeons (1922-4). His interests were widespread—medicine, anatomy, botany, geology, in addition to his strictly professional concerns, and in his recreations mountaineering had to compete with golf, chess and music. The latter subject was one in which he took great interest, and he contributed an article in *T. E. Lawrence: by his Friends*, dealing with Lawrence (whom he first met in 1922) as a lover of music.

T. S. B.

BARTHOLOMEW PLEYDELL-BOUVERIE

1902-1965

THE HON. B. PLEYDELL-BOUVERIE, elected to the A.C. in 1934, was the third son of the sixth Earl of Radnor. He was educated at Harrow and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he got his blue for rugger. During the Second World War he was in the Grenadier Guards, but was seconded for duty with S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive), a 'hush-hush' organisation whose activities are the subject of a recent book, *Baker Street Irregular*, by Bickham Sweet-Escott.

Pleydell-Bouverie was a banker by profession, and at the time of his death was deputy chairman (resident in the U.S.A.) of the Bank of London & South America. His climbing was necessarily hindered by the outbreak of the war, and after it he was unable to continue, being considerably crippled by rheumatoid arthritis.

T. S. B.

HUGH LEWIS PRYCE

1907-1965

HUGH PRYCE was brought up in North Wales and the love of the hills was born in him. After he left school at Clifton he went up to Balliol and there joined the Oxford University Mountaineering Club, and through the club he was introduced to rock-climbing and mountaineering and to nearly all the companions with whom he climbed in the future. His first visit to the Alps was in 1928 with the O.U.M.C. meet in the Graians, followed in 1929 with the club at huts above Maloja and in 1930 at the Punteglias hut.

In the years that followed, up to the war, he often climbed with G. F. Smith-Barry, A. M. Binnie, H. R. Herbert and myself, learning immensely by example from Smith-Barry, a mountaineer of great experience and artistry. He had good seasons in the Oberland in 1933, in the Dauphiné in 1936 and many other expeditions to the smaller mountains. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1936. In 1947 he and I paid a brief visit to the Himalaya, making a trek in Kumaon in the

mountains to the east of Trisul, where we climbed a small peak near to the southern rim of the Nanda Devi basin. He delighted in all the new experiences, in the company of two Sherpas and of the local porters, and in the camping life.

After that he returned again to the Alps many times in the summer, and also again took up ski-ing.

He was considerably below average height and was not naturally athletic, so never found rock or ice climbing as easy as some do; but he always laughed at his own difficulties, as indeed at many things, and only protested mildly if the steps were cut too far apart, or he was unable to reach across a backing-up pitch. His gnome-like features were always twinkling and his happiness and chuckles were infectious. He was an ideal climbing companion, always ready to do more than his share of chores in the hut and never out of humour.

By profession he was an accountant, for many years with Messrs. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., and was latterly comptroller of the Colonial Development Corporation.

He was one of the Club auditors from 1948 to 1950, and was auditor of the Club Pension Fund from its start in 1948 until his death. He took immense trouble over these tasks, which sometimes involved much investigation and accounting before the audit could be carried out: the Club owes him much for the trouble he took and his quiet and patient work.

A. D. MALCOLM.

ROGER COCHRANE WILSON

1882-1966

GENERAL SIR ROGER WILSON died suddenly at Cape Town on February 5 last. He was born on December 26, 1882, and was educated at Wellington, whence he passed into Sandhurst. He was commissioned in May, 1901, into the Cheshire Regiment, but transferred in 1904 to the Indian Army and spent almost the whole of his career in that service, finally retiring in 1941. He served in Mesopotamia during the First World War, and in a variety of posts on the North-West Frontier of India, and for three years was Commandant of the Staff College at Quetta. He became Adjutant-General in India in 1937, and was promoted to full General and A.D.C.-General to King George VI, in 1940. He was created K.C.B. in 1937.

Wilson was elected to the Club in May, 1927; inevitably, his climbing seasons in the Alps had been very intermittent; between the years 1894 and 1924 he had made a number of the standard routes round Zermatt, Zinal and Arolla. In 1925 he and Hugh Ruttledge reconnoitred the Pindari and Milam glaciers, and they joined forces again in 1926.

On his retirement from India, Wilson went to live in South Africa, but returned to England in recent years. He had been President of the Mountain Club of South Africa and there will be many there to join with us in regretting his death.

MR. T. HOWARD SOMERVELL writes:

In 1926 my wife and I went to Almora to join Mr. and Mrs. Ruttledge and Colonel Roger Wilson (as he then was) in an expedition to the Nanda Devi group of mountains. When we got there, a message arrived from Wilson in Waziristan to say that his war would finish in ten or twelve days (would that we could say that about Vietnam!) and he would be at Almora in a fortnight. He was. After a day or two we started, with a large cavalcade, to walk 100 miles or so to our mountains near Milam. We climbed several, but none, alas, to the summit; the condition of the snow was too delaying and in places too dangerous. Perhaps I was a bit too cautious, with fresh memories of the avalanche on the North Col of Everest in 1922.

Roger Wilson proved to be a keen mountaineer, a good friend to us all, a placid and unselfish companion. My wife and I had to return to Almora and on to South India to my job, for I had only six weeks' leave. But Wilson and the Ruttledges went on into Tibet, and Wilson, with one Sherpa, Satan, an Everest porter, visited the sacred mountain Kailas, and was the first European to set foot on this abode of the gods¹. For our return, Wilson kindly lent his cook to my wife and myself, an unselfish act entirely characteristic of a kind and charming man.

¹ Wilson's narrative of this expedition will be found at *A.J.* 40. 23. Although he did not, in strictness, climb on the mountain itself, he and Satan reached, from the south, the col that can be seen in the photograph at *A.J.* 66. 333, a little to the right of the extreme left hand edge of the picture. Just out of sight, to the left, is the prominent gendarme 'G' to which Wilson refers; the gendarme has some resemblance to a seated figure and popular mythology identified it with Hanuman. To descend from the col, Wilson's party had to make their way back along the South-west ridge, whence a reasonable route down to the west of the mountain was found.

Other human beings have established some contact with Kailas; Wilson refers to a row of votive tablets erected by monks from the monastery on the southern side of the mountain (in 1945 these were sizeable cairns); and Swami Pranavananda (see *A.J.* 61. 110) has told me that, on the northern side, from Diruphuk Gompa, he has been right up to the face and laid his hand on the mountain, for the sheer satisfaction of doing so.—T. S. B.