Club Staff
During 1976 the Club lost by retirement the services of its caretaker, manageress and housekeeper, Dorothy Lewis. A new caretaker, Mr Warner, has been engaged and has taken up residence. A new, permanent, young, efficient Assistant Secretary has also been engaged. Her name is (Miss) Sue Lawford. The function of managing the gallery is at present being shared between the Officers and the Assistant Secretary and our member R. H. McCall who has rendered invaluable service in this and other matters over the past year.

Obituary
We regret to record the deaths of our members: Dr A. W. Barton (1957), P. H. Biven (1964), T. S. Blakeney (1930, Hon. Member 1969), K. M. Cameron (1921), R. D. S. Carpendale (1955), B. T. Dickson (1959), Mrs J. Dunsheath (LAC 1951), J. W. Healy (1935), H. A. Haworth (1925), R. L. Holdsworth (1931), Prof. K. W. Mason (1914, Hon. Member 1973), G. C. Miles (1950), E. F. Pilkington (1910), M. R. Tatham (1938), Mrs R. Underhill (Miriam O'Brien, LAC 1936, Hon. Member LAC 1970, Hon. Member AC 1975), Dougal Haston. See also p. 265.[1]

Membership
New members are welcome at all times. Correspondence on membership should be addressed to: Frank Solari, Oakside, Duffield Lane, Stoke Poges, Slough SL2 4AH, Bucks.

Miscellanea and Editor's Notes

The Alpine Club Library From its inception in the early days of the Club until 1972 the Alpine Club Library was developed and maintained by the devoted labours of a succession of Honorary Librarians, but by the later '60s it became evident that the Library could no longer be run satisfactorily without far more effort than could be generated voluntarily—professional assistance would be necessary to restore the Library and to maintain it so that it could provide an acceptable service to members and be a credit to the Club. The cost of engaging professional assistance was, however beyond the Club's resources and it would be necessary to find additional sources of income if the rehabilitation of the Library was to be undertaken. After much study of the problem (in which the dispersal of the Library was dismissed as unthinkable), the Club Committee accepted a proposal by the Hon. Treasurer to set up a Charitable Trust to which the Club's books, etc., would be lent and which would be able to attract funds and benefit from tax concessions (*AJ* 75 288). The Alpine Club Library was duly incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 22 February 1971 with Lord Tangley as Chairman, and shortly afterwards it was officially registered as an Educational Charity. The Memorandum of Association and Articles of the Alpine Club Library provide for the Members of the Library to be 7 in number, of which 5 are nominated by the Club and one each by RGS and the BMC. The management of the Library is vested in a Council which consists essentially of the same 7 Members, at present Sir Douglas Busk (Chairman), and Messrs H. R. R. Fedden, L. Frank, R. Lawford (Hon. Librarian of the Club) and E. Viney nominated by the Club; Mrs D. Middleton nominated by the Royal Geographical Society, and Mr J. H. Llywelyn Jones, FCA (Treasurer) nominated by the British Mountaineering Council. Mrs J. Lancaster-Jones, former Hon. Librarian of the Ladies' Alpine Club, is professional adviser, and Mr F. Solari is Secretary.

The first task of the new organization was raising funds so that a professional Librarian could be engaged to undertake the re-cataloguing of the Library. (The re-organization and re-cataloguing had been begun by the previous Hon. Librarians as

[1] Where no obituary notice is included, the notice will, wherever possible, appear in the next Journal.

reported in *AJ 74* 356–8, and it was their work that first revealed that scale of effort that would be needed to put the Library into good order.) For its part, the Alpine Club covenanted to give annually as much as it could afford from its own resources and a most valuable grant was made by a charitable foundation which made it possible to engage a Librarian in 1972. Subsequent appeals have yielded further donations from charities and donations and covenanted subscriptions from Club members, members of British and foreign mountaineering clubs and the general public. We are particularly grateful for the generosity of several American members of the Club.

During the last 4 years order has taken over from chaos. Over 17000 volumes have been catalogued, using the systematic classification devised by Edward Pyatt (*AJ 74* 357), under both authors' names and subjects and it is hoped that the first volume of a printed catalogue will soon be available. The British Library has made a most generous grant towards this work of cataloguing and towards the rebinding and repair of older volumes, which has been a major anxiety to the Council of the Alpine Club Library. Sizeable sums have also had to be expended on the purchase of books missing from the Library in earlier years and, more happily, in buying new publications. The Editor of the Alpine Journal consigns review copies of new publications to the Alpine Club Library, but a close eye has to be kept on new works of permanent value appearing in French, German and Italian; the Alpine Club Library must be kept up to date, despite the rising cost of books.

Meanwhile it has been most gratifying to note the number of visitors to the Alpine Club Library from all parts of the world. The Library is used for historical and technical research, often by correspondence, which imposes a serious burden on the Librarian, whose task of meeting demands for copies of articles or passages in books has been slightly alleviated by the purchase of a photocopying machine.

The task of cataloguing and reorganization will continue for some years, since there still remain to be dealt with such of the 'archives' of the Alpine Club itself as can appropriately be included in a second volume of the catalogue, a vast miscellany of photographs, dating back over a century and many of great historical value, and no less than 120 massive volumes of 'Tracts' in which during the years learned Papers and accounts of expeditions were bound. Each 'Tract Volume' contains some 30 items and each one of these must be catalogued separately, under author and subject. Several more years work by the Alpine Club Library's Librarian will be needed for this alone. Even when the task of sorting, recataloguing and organization has been completed, the Alpine Club Library will still have to employ a professional Librarian. The mere maintenance of the Library, the continuous flow of accretions and dealing with visitors will be quite beyond the capacity of an Hon. Librarian, no matter how willing. In this connection it should be mentioned that the work in this capacity of R. Lawford has been beyond all praise.

The Alpine Club Library hopes that members of the Alpine Club, of the ACG (who make much use of the Library when planning expeditions) and of others interested in maintaining this unique collection, will contribute towards its advancement.

Douglas Busk

Sesiajoch *AJ 81* 94 is not correct in stating that the Sesiajoch had only been crossed once before the passage by the Misses Pigeon. There had been 3 previous crossings. The first was made on 11 July 1862 by A. W. Moore and H. B. George with the guides Christian Almer and Matthäus zum Taugwald. Three years later, on 4 July 1865, Moore made the second crossing, this time accompanied by Horace Walker and the guide Jakob Anderegg and by Jean Michel of Interlaken, who was anxious to cross to Zermatt on his way home and offered his services for 5 francs, but he 'proved a great encumbrance and had, in fact, to be dragged and helped by Walker over every place which presented any difficulty'. After having twice crossed the pass Moore described it as 'a route continuously difficult but at no point offering obstacles which need deter a party of fairly practised mountaineers, well led, from attempting it, either from the side of the Val Sesia or from that of Zermatt; at the same time, anyone trying to descend on the Italian side without knowing something of the ground might easily be led into serious trouble'. Jakob Anderegg had one of his greatest seasons in 1865, having been engaged as sole guide by Moore and Walker, a remarkable tribute to his

powers because it was unusual in those days to climb with only one guide.

The third passage was made by W. A. B. Coolidge on 24 July 1869 with Christian Almer and Anton Ritz. 'I cannot recommend this way to anyone', wrote Coolidge.

The first 3 crossings were all made from the Val Sesia to Zermatt. The Misses Pigeon, however, made the first crossing from Zermatt to Alagna on 12 August 1869 with the guide Jean Martin of Vissoie and a porter. The party set out with the intention of crossing the Lysjoch which Martin had crossed 4 years previously and the porter claimed to know that route; but the latter proved 'of no use whatever except to carry a knapsack', So useless was he that one of the ladies had to come down last on the rope. The remarks about this porter attributed to one of the ladies in *AJ 74* 341 were in fact made by the then editor of the *AJ* in his comments on the Misses Pigeon's passage. Subsequently the Sesiajoch began to lose its reputation for difficulty and by 1884 it had been crossed several times in both directions. **D. F. O. Dangar**

Colloque Médecine et Haute Montagne This Symposium, the first of its kind in France, was held at the University Medical School of Grenoble on 11/12 June, 1976. It was organized under the auspices of the FFM and the University of Grenoble, by Dr. Jean Rivolier (FFM) and Professor Tanche (University of Grenoble Medical School).

About 300 doctors and scientists from most European countries were present. Dr Charles Clarke and myself attended from Great Britain. The subjects covered by Papers included: Cold Injury (Frostbite and Hypothermia); Acute Oedema at Altitude; Physiology at High Altitude; Training Methods; Rescue Techniques; Psychological Tests for Assessing the Suitability of Members of Expeditions; Costs of Individual Rescues. Medical equipment for expeditions was also covered. One of the most interesting Papers was that concerning scientific work carried out on the Italian Everest Expedition, by Professor Cerretelli. In addition to the scientific papers, which will be published as a separate proceeding in due course, Dr Charles Clarke showed slides on the recent British Everest Expedition whilst Dr Jean Rivolier showed a film of the ascent of Ross Peak in the Kerguelen Islands.

Michael Ward

Longest line of sight on the surface of the Earth Terris Moore (who himself reports a sighting of 230 miles of Mount McKinley from Mount Sanford) has brought to our attention an article 'The Arctic Mirage and the Early North Atlantic' by H. L. Sawatzky and W. H. Lehn (*Science' 192* 1300). This emphasizes the important role of unusual refraction conditions in all long distance sighting reports. The problem turns out to be one for sailors in high latitudes rather than, as might have seemed reasonable, one for mountaineers.

When the vertical temperature gradient in the air along the line of sight exceeds a value of +0.11 °C per metre the refractive capability of the air will be sufficient to equal the curvature of the earth, which will then appear flat; above this value (gradients as high as 0.5 °C per metre have been recorded) it will appear concave upwards. Even values below the critical will considerably distort the simple mathematical picture. Such temperature gradients, relatively commonplace in higher latitudes particularly for lines of sight over the sea, lead to some interesting observations. In July, 1939, for example, Snaefells Jokull (1430m) was sighted from a ship in the Atlantic Ocean 500km away to the SW, a well authenticated event.

Though not normally intervisible, the mountains around Gunnbjorns Fjeld in Greenland can be seen under special refraction conditions from the mountains of NW Iceland (over 300km away), while it is probable that Iceland (Vatnajokull, nearly 2000m) can be seen from the Faeroe Islands (nearly 400km away). The authors feel that these sightings account for the spread of Celtic and Norse exploration centuries ago in this general NW direction. They contend finally that these phenomena 'may furnish a logical basis for the pervasive ancient and medieval concept of a flat or saucer-shaped world', for that indeed is how it often appeared to observers in these parts.

Hannibal As reports come in of the departure of the 1976 expedition which intends taking elephants across the Alps in the steps of Hannibal, a letter appears in the press pointing out that they are not going the right way. They are to cross De Beer's selection,

the Col de la Traversette; the letter contends that the passes of Montgenèvre or Mont Cenis accord more closely with historical evidence, As the exact route is never likely to be known now, it would seem more becoming for 'experts' to accept this rather than behave as though each one possessed irrefutable evidence, revealed to him alone, for his own particular theory. The evidence presently available is open to a variety of interpretations and that is as far as we can go.

One is reminded of an even greater issue. We are never likely to know the true identity of the greatest playwright of the Elizabethan era; the arrogance of 'experts' who attribute the plays, and indeed the whole breadth of the works, to a small-time actor from Stratford-upon-Avon is equally beyond comprehension.

Hut statistics from Switzerland From 'Les Alpes' (4/76) we learn that for the year —Autumn 1974 to Autumn 1975—a total of 228,345 hut nights were spent at the 148 huts and bivouacs of the CAS (which between them offer 8477 places), a total of 487,621 SF accruing to the Central Committee. The Monte Rosa hut leads with 8178 hut nights—a considerable problem in feeding, sanitation and so forth. The list indicates also those which are comparatively little visited, valuable information for some of us. Overnight fees for the 1976 season vary from 9 to 15 SF, which at the present rate of exchange makes them very expensive indeed for visitors from Britain.

'Attempt to canoe down Everest' said a rivetting press release of July 1976. Unfortunately for mountaineering record books it turned out to mean an 85 mile trip down the Dudh Kosi starting at around 16,000ft.

Climbing morale Under this heading the Daily Telegraph (4-9-76) reported (accompanied by a bad attack of proof-reading gremlins): 'About 1200 employees of Japan National Railways are to make a mass assault on 123 peaks throughout the country on Sunday week, to boast (sic) morale flogging (sic) because of the railway's worsening financial crisis.'

Protecting Mount Everest Earlier in the same week (2-9-76) the Daily Telegraph carried the following, which has to be quoted verbatim:

'Eric Shipton, perhaps the doyen of 20th-century British explorers, made a stinging attack yesterday on the "sheer nonsense of mammoth expeditions", now costing as much as £150000 to climb Mount Everest.

At a 'meet the author' session with John Ridgway in Edinburgh, Shipton, who led the training expedition for the 1953 conquest of Everest, said that for 45 years he has been waging a campaign against massive assaults on the Himalayas.

He has seen the environment around Everest "destroyed by parties of 900 porters", while the "whole value of the essentially personal and philosophical enjoyment of close contact with the country is distorted".

Again urging the mountaineering establishment to encourage "small homogeneous parties", Shipton said his efforts had merely earned him a reputation as an amiable eccentric. "Maybe I should have lobbed a bomb into the Alpine Club".'

The native name of Mount Everest In 1953 (*AJ 48* 127), N. E. Odell contributed a lengthy note on the above, in which he concluded that there was no native name for Mount Everest on either the Tibetan or the Nepalese side of the range. Chomo-lungma should be expunged from our maps, while Chamlang applies to the district and not to the mountain dominating it.

In 1966 it was suggested that the official name for Everest in Nepal is Sagarmatha. Odell has now learned that this is only an invented word derived from Sanskrit (meaning 'sky head'), which Nepal adopted during the 1960s during arguments with China over the ownership of the mountain. China responded with Qomolungma Feng, apparently equally baseless.

The Duke of the Abruzzi's guides on Mount St Elias were not Swiss (*AJ 81* 25) but Italian as follows—Giuseppe Petigax and Lorenzo Croux of Courmayeur and Antonio Maquignaz and Andrea Pellissier of Valtournanche. Communication from Gustavo Gaia.

More about Metric Conversions On taking over the Editorship in 1970 I decided that it was a convenient moment for the AJ to go over to metric measurements and thus align with many other aspects of national life. Since then the heights of mountains and spot heights on mountains have been figured in metres, but I have retained for the present Imperial measure for height increments, such as the lengths of pitches, to which the estimating UK eye is even now more readily adapted. Imperial measures also appear in quoted or reprinted material. In practice the national changeover has not been carried through as rapidly as was once thought possible, leaving the *AJ* rather exposed in the forefront of a movement which progresses but slowly. Metric measures have been used for length, mass etc., turn and turn about with Imperial measures, just as written by the various authors. Eventually all these too will be metric. In the meantime certain difficulties arise from time to time, involving pained protest particularly from countries, such as USA, which are not so far along the road to metrication as even we are.

Last year (*AJ 81* 259) I pointed out some of the pitfalls in the conversion process, into which various recent publications had been seen to tumble, notably the necessity for appreciating that the implied accuracy of the converted figure must not differ substantially from the implied accuracy of the original—both should be subject to the same degree of rounding. However, the real accuracy of the original is not always obvious from the text and this has produced anomalies in some places in the *AJ*, particularly in the review of Alaskan mountaineering contributed to our 1976 issue (*AJ 81* 19) by Terris Moore and Kenneth Andrasko. The heights of many Alaskan mountains, as I should have known, have 'Large plus or minus uncertainties'; this was not obvious from the feet figures in the manuscript and certainly does not emerge from the metre figures in the printed account. The conversions to metres were carried out as Editorial policy and were not in this case the work of the authors.

The policy of the *AJ* will continue as outlined in the first paragraph of this note. I hope that my readers will bear with me during this awkward and unduly protracted transition period.

The birth of a false legend From a report on the Buxton Conference by a contemporary: 'Continuing the theme of the pre-war era, Wynford Vaughan Thomas spoke of the intellectual bourgeoisie climber who has now been replaced by the daring, thrill seeking, ego-tapping(!?) working class lad out for kicks rather than any communion with nature'. This is nonsense and just telling the audience what they want to hear. His use of the strongly emotive 'bourgeoisie', a leftist sneer word, places him firmly where no one cares what he thinks. The difference between the post and pre-war periods is one of degree and not, we repeat, one of principle. There were plenty of working class climbers before the last War, as I am personally aware, but there is corroboration in for example Eric Byne's *High Peak*. Moreover it was considerably harder to climb actively and continuously than it is now, when the 'daring, thrill seeking etcs' have a 5-day week, wages huge by comparison, vast organizations for training, hugely improved transport facilities and every sort of specialized equipment. In fact they are all 'bourgeoisie' now.

Transposition Our member, John Wilkes, has pointed out that the Pré de Madame Carle, located in the Pyrenees by the author of an article in *AJ 81* 55, is in fact in the Dauphiné. The author in question cannot understand how he came to make the error; the Editor's inadequate knowledge of both places led him to miss it also.

'Shining mountains, nameless valleys' I deeply regret that special circumstances have enforced the holding over of Pt 2 of this article to our 1978 issue.

Acknowledgements In addition to the official editorial staff, I would like to thank Michael Baker, Kevin FitzGerald, C. A. Russell and Peter Stubbs, who have contributed annually for a number of years, and a newcomer, Geoffrey Templeman, who is responsible here and in future for the organization of book reviewing and for general assistance with proof-reading.

Our regional notes and progress reports owe much to a band of local correspondents in various parts of the world.