

Alpine Club Notes

Office Bearers and Committee for 1986

President	Sir Anthony Rawlinson, KCB
Vice Presidents	Lady Evans ¹
	Dr H G Nicol
Honorary Secretary	S W Town
Honorary Treasurer	R A Coatsworth
Committee: Elective Members	A D S Bankes
	P J O'B Ledebor
	D J Lovatt
	W G Lowe, OBE
	Colonel J D C Peacock
	Professor E H Sondheimer
	Mrs Larsen
	G W Templeman
ACG Co-opted Members	A V Saunders
	S Venables
Honorary Librarian	R Lawford
Honorary Archivist	V S Risoe, MBE
Assistant Archivist	E H J Smyth, FRCS
Honorary Keeper of the Club's Pictures	Dr C B M Warren, FRCP
Honorary Editor of the Club's Journal	J M Fairley
Assistant Editors	P M R Bartlett
	G W Templeman
Honorary Guidebooks Editor	G L Swindin
Chairman of the House Committee	G W Templeman
Assistant Honorary Secretaries	
Annual Winter Dinner	Mrs Larsen
Candidates	A N Husbands
Lectures	J S Cleare
Meets	M Pinney
Trustees	M Bennett
	A Blackshaw
	J G R Harding
Honorary Solicitor	S N Beare
Auditors	A M Dowler
	R F Morgan

¹ Lady Evans replaces Sir Anthony Rawlinson as President as a result of his death.

General Meetings of the Alpine Club 1985

15 January	Garry Gibson, <i>First Ascent Essay</i> .
12 February	Jack de Coninck, <i>Wings over Everest</i> .
12 March	Jim Curran.
16 April	Bill March, <i>Canadians on Everest</i> .
14 May	Stephen Venables, <i>Alpine Climbs in France, Switzerland, and Afghanistan</i> .
17 September	Stephen Venables, <i>AC-IMF Expedition to the Siachen Glacier</i> .
15 October	Peter Bicknell and Dr. Charles Warren, joint meeting with the Turner Society, <i>Artists in the Lake District</i> .
12 November	Will Hurford, <i>From Greenhorn to Guide</i> .
2 December	Annual General Meeting: the President's Valedictory Address.

Climbing Meetings 1985

19–20 January	Lake District. FRCC hut, Brackenclose, Wasdale.
9–10 March	North Wales. Informal dinner with lecture by Tony Saunders, <i>Eiger North Face</i> .
6 June–29 July	East Karakoram. Joint AC-ACG and Indian Mountaineering Foundation expedition to the Siachen Glacier area.
19 July–2 August	Cornwall. CC hut, Bosigran. Family meet held jointly with Climbers' Club.
27 July–10 August	Berner Oberland. Joint meet with Climbers' Club and ABMSAC based at Grindelwald.
August	Karakoram. Meet based on Chogolungma glacier.
28–29 September	Lake District. Informal dinner with lecture by Mal Duff, <i>Muztagh Tower</i> .

The Membership Survey

Few would doubt these days the value of survey data as guidance for decision making — widely practised in commercial life even if, rather unfairly, this professional approach occasionally gets a blowback in terms of 'the opinion polls got it wrong'. For the Club the conducting of a membership survey in 1985 must be seen as a significant development in the process of management.

The object of the exercise was to obtain members' views on possible ideas for increasing the attractions of the Club, which the Committee had been discussing, and to take advantage of this vehicle to collect profile information about the membership as a whole. Almost 1000 questionnaires were sent out in late July, and by the end of September the response was 40% — quite reasonable, considering the time of year. Although in statistical terms this was not a representative sample, the results correlate quite closely with the known age breakdown of the membership, and the level of response may be taken as pretty representative. The main findings may be summarized as follows:

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Sex	We are still 90% male (even though one member preferred not to answer!)
Age	It is perhaps understandable that only 11% are under 35, but from then on age is fairly evenly spread through 15-year age groups. This may come as a surprise to some.
Duration of membership	35% have joined in the last 10 years and a further 25% in the last 20 years, so perhaps we are not so antique after all!
Area of residence	Nearly half the membership live south of the Midlands, and 15% in the mountain areas of North Wales, the Lake District and Scotland.
Visits to the Club	Roughly half the membership has not visited the Club in the last two years either for General Meetings or the Library, but distance from home evidently plays a part.
Visits to the Alps	As an indicator of activity, nearly 50% of members have paid at least five visits to the Alps or similar ranges in the last five years.

TIME SPENT IN NORTH WALES AND THE LAKE DISTRICT

Bearing in mind the visits to the Alps and similar ranges, it is interesting to note the time spent by respondents in North Wales and the Lake District in the last year:

	<i>North Wales</i>	<i>Lake District</i>
<i>Nights spent</i>		
Nil	44%	39%
*Under 10	31%	39%
<i>*By type of accommodation</i>		
Hut	39%	24%
Own	24%	22%
Camping	11%	16%
Hotel, guest house, B & B	8%	16%
Other (includes a high proportion with friends or relatives)	18%	22%
	100%	100%
<i>*By type of activity</i>		
(Total of days up to 10)		
Climbing	234	206
Walking	171	220

This represents the bulk of activities, excluding such exotic items as ballooning and water sports!

USE OF CLUB HUTS

A series of questions covered the use of other club huts with a view to assessing whether would be interest in an AC hut or cottage.

Membership of other clubs

No other club	31%
1 other club only	45%
2 other clubs	18%

Use of other club huts

Less than half of the '1 other club only' members spent nights in their huts in the last year, but these averaged 10 nights per member — notably members of the Climbers' Club.

Possible use of AC hut/cottage

Proportion of respondents who would spend nights:

	<i>North Wales</i>	<i>Lake District</i>
Nil	58%	46%
1-10	32%	42%

This does not suggest great interest, bearing in mind that the occupancy level of those who would use it works out at 10 nights per year per respondent, exclusive of guests. Perhaps the 'hutters' have sufficient access arrangements already.

CLUB FACILITIES

The remaining questions covered possible additional facilities that members might like.

London accommodation

A possible arrangement with a West End club for bed and breakfast at £30 per night was of minority interest, although some overseas members were attracted.

A few optimists preferred hut-type accommodation at the Club!

Other facilities

Suggestions were few — in fact nearly 70% of respondents had none. Those suggestions that were offered had some interesting pointers, including more arrangements for use of huts, regional meetings, improved Library facilities, better pre-lecture refreshments and, last but not least, improvements to the ladies lavatory!

So now you know.

Peter Ledeboer

The Club's Archives

In the 1973 Alpine Journal there appeared an article by N R Rice, the Honorary Archivist at that time, entitled 'A Guide to the Archives of the Alpine Club'. There was an introduction by T S Blakeney who had read a paper on the AC archives at a meeting of the Club in June 1966. Rice died shortly after his article had gone to print and I took over.

Rice's guide to the archives contained abridged lists of the more important correspondence, letters and diaries in the archives. Since then, more material has been found and more has been donated to the Club and it might be of interest to members to have details of some of the more important recent acquisitions. These are:

- The manuscript in three volumes of D W Freshfield's *Life of de Saussure*.
- Letters from Dr A M Kellas to J P Farrar about his climbs in Sikkim in the early part of the century and a paper written in 1920 entitled 'A consideration of the possibility of climbing Mount Everest'.
- Geoffrey Winthrop Young's Pen-y-Pass manuscripts.

- A bulky file of letters from W A B Coolidge to H F Montagnier written between 1908 and 1917.
- T G Longstaff's climbing diaries from 1894 to 1933 presented by his widow. There are 45 in all, covering climbs in the Alps, the Caucasus, the Himalaya and Karakoram, Canada and Greenland.
- H E L Porter's climbing diaries in three large volumes illustrated by photographs covering the period 1905 to 1966.

Among the Whymper papers, I recently came across an anonymous letter to him dated 25 August 1865. I reproduce it as an extreme example of the sort of anti-mountaineering hysteria which gripped some of the public following the Matterhorn accident. It appears to have been a response to an appeal for Michel Croz.

'Touched by your recent appeal I enclose what I believe to be the full damage actually sustained by society by the late loss of life on the Matterhorn or *Madder-horn* (?) peak. The view of *The Times* and the opinions lately expressed in that paper by intelligent "Swiss" coincide with my own and with the general opinion of the English public. *The Saturday Review* mistakes bravado for bravery and fool-hardiness for manliness. The fact is that the members of the Alpine Club are generally a *vain* set. As the "Swiss" say — the motive of these ascents is a base and corrupt one. Vanity — the love of notoriety — a morbid hankering for the applause of "stupid starers" and demoralised gobemouches is the prime and only motive. I never read the accounts of these rash adventurers and if the public only "mopped" the idiots of the Alpine Club by ignoring their existence and manifesting a cool indifference to their pranks the rash ascents would be unheard of. Prof Tyndall is an exception — he risks his life, and nobly, for science and truth. But what benefit do the ordinary mountain climbers confer on anybody? None — less than nil! Take my halfpenny for poor Croz and divide it fractionally so as to represent the value of the lives of those who perished suicidally on that occasion. I did not read your own "whimper-ing" account.

signed "Antihumbug".'

Although the letter was written from Winchester, F Morshead, to whom Whymper had shown the letter, did not think it could possibly have been written by a Wykehamist!

Bill Risoe

The Whymper Photograph

Among the Club's collection is a fine framed photograph of Edward Whymper in June 1865, with a tablet recording its presentation to the Club in 1911 by the then President, Sir Edward Davidson. This is the much-reproduced and well-known study of Whymper as a young man wearing a wide-brimmed hat and holding an ice-axe — clearly a posed studio shot. It was recently removed from the frame for copying when the following manuscript note was discovered:

Edward Whymper in June 1865

enlarged, from an original 'carte de visite' taken by Boissonnaz of Chamonix, and now in the possession of Dr Alexandre Seiler of Brigue and Zermatt, by Dr Charles

Atkin Swan, and presented to the Alpine Club by Sir Edward Davidson, President: January 16th 1911.

The platinotype enlargement was produced more than 45 years after the original 'carte de visite' which is now much faded, was taken.

Dr Atkin Swan (1863–1923) was a distinguished physician, an active mountaineer, and an outstanding amateur photographer of his time, becoming President of the Royal Photographic Society 1918–1920. He exhibited many alpine photographs at the Annual AC Photographic Exhibitions from 1906 to 1914 — his telephotographs were particularly singled out for favourable comment in the reviews in the *AJ* of several of the exhibitions (eg *AJ* 25 649). On the outbreak of war in 1914 he was called to found the photographic section of the RFC, flew over the lines in France and was one of the first to take photographs from an aeroplane. Later the RAF claimed his medical expertise, and after the war he lectured on the effects of oxygen deficiency at altitude and was the author of a paper to the Royal Aeronautical Society on 'Physical and Psychical Effects of Altitude.'

Dr Atkin Swan's use of the platinotype process (in which platinum is used instead of silver) in copying the old and faded photograph of Whymper was doubtless because a print so made is far more permanent than any print having a silver image can be.

Frank Solari

Mountaineering Books and Ephemera in the Salerooms

Perhaps it would not be out of place, and even of interest to our members, to point out what has been happening in the sale rooms and rare book trade recently with regard to alpine ephemera, old photographs and early editions of the alpine classics, because some of this material has been changing hands at quite phenomenally inflated prices to a few dealers bidding on behalf of wealthy collectors abroad.

Early books on mountaineering are much sought after these days and so have become quite good business for the specialist antiquarian book trade; and that is fair enough; but when such items turn up in the auction rooms collectors should beware, because the prices being paid for these are sometimes ridiculously inflated. Let me give an example or two of what has been happening, the first from a personal experience.

At a sale at Sothebys recently a Jane Austen item came up in which my wife was interested and we went to look at it, but in the catalogue of that sale I happened to notice another item of an entirely different kind which interested me. This was a 'lot' consisting of some personal effects of my friend Peter Oliver, the Everest climber who was with us in 1938, and so I had a look at it. But what a lot of rubbish practically all of this was — a trunk full of old magazines, bad photographs and old diaries, including one about Everest in 1938 which, however, was of no real interest because it consisted merely of day to day jottings of where the expedition had got to. But would you believe it? This load of indifferent material sold for £850! Indubitably this was a question of mis-advice on the part of the dealer to his client.

At an earlier sale a Bullock Workman miscellaneous lot of a similar nature,

but much more interesting, fetched no less than £16,000. But what a pity it is for ordinary collectors of mountaineering books that a few very wealthy collectors should spoil the market for them by paying inflated prices for indifferent material. My advice to collectors of books on mountaineering would be: seek the help of a reputable specialist in the mountaineering book trade before you bid in the auction rooms. I have good friends in the book trade and at Sothebys and I am sure that they would always give fair advice.

Charles Warren

The UIAA Mountain Medicine Data Centre

The UIAA is the international federation which co-ordinates mountaineering activities in its 26 member countries and advises on mountain rescue, equipment safety, access to mountains and the environment.

The UIAA Medical Commission was established in 1980 with the object of collecting information about medical problems in the mountains and advising mountaineers about them.

The Mountain Medicine Data Centre which is funded by a small annual grant from the UIAA and the Mount Everest Foundation is an office whose purpose is to advise climbers and answer their questions about medical problems. Our specific areas of interest are:

Acclimatization, Acute Mountain Sickness

High Altitude Pulmonary and Cerebral Oedema and related problems

Frostbite and hypothermia

Expedition Medical Equipment

Injuries during mountaineering

Problems of extreme altitude

Medical problems of trekking and mountain holidays

Fitness to travel to high altitudes

The Centre is run on a voluntary basis by Dr Charles Clarke, FRCP who is a Consultant Neurologist and has wide knowledge of the problems of expedition medicine and high altitude research. The secretarial work is carried out on a part-time basis by Mrs Ann Tilley. Enquiries from many countries are handled regularly.

Any questions on medical problems should be addressed to the Data Centre. If it is necessary to see those with enquiries as patients, a letter from a general practitioner is usually necessary.

A reading list is available, together with specific publications by the MMDC. A reference list of articles of interest to climbers is kept up-to-date and literature searches can be undertaken for special problems.

The address is:

UIAA Mountain Medicine Data Centre

Department of Neurological Sciences

St Bartholomew's Hospital

38 Little Britain

London EC1

Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope with all enquiries,

Charles Clarke & Ann Tilley

Alpine Avalanche Warning Service

Information about the likelihood of avalanches and the condition of the snow-cover in the Alps can be obtained by telephone by means of pre-recorded announcements from the following regional telephone numbers. These numbers give the code for calls from Britain. For calls within each country the international code (first bracket) must be replaced by the number '0'.

France

Haute Savoie	(010 33) (50) 531 711
Savoie	(010 33) (79) 070 824
Isère	(010 33) (76) 511 929
Hautes Alpes	(010 33) (92) 201 000
Alpes Haute Provence	(010 33) (92) 649 050
Alpes Maratimes	(010 33) (93) 723 133

Switzerland

(French)	(010 41) (22) 120
(German)	(010 41) (28) 120
(Italian)	(010 41) (93) 120

Germany

Bayern	(010 49) (89) 12 59 555
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Austria

Vorarlberg	(010 43) (5522) 16
Tirol	(010 43) (5222) 196
Salzburg	(010 43) (6222) 196
Steiermark	(010 43) (316) 840
Kärnten	(010 43) (4222) 16

Italy

Cuneo Imperia	(010 39) (171) 66 323
Torino	(010 39) (11) 32 90 191
Val d'Aosta	(010 39) (165) 31 210
Novara Vercelli	(010 39) (324) 2670
Lombardia	(010 39) (342) 901 280
Bolzano (Italian)	(010 39) (471) 994 114
Bolzano (German)	(010 39) (471) 994 111
Trento	(010 39) (461) 981 012
Veneto	(010 39) (436) 79221
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	(010 39) (432) 208 633

Information from the International Alpine Mountain Rescue Commission, IKAR/CISR.

Errata

The following errors in *A790* have been noted:

p24. The Chinese name for Broad Peak is Buwde. Gasherbrum I and II are known as Kiaxiu Buwma.

p28. Galen Rowell was assistant leader of the ascent of Anye Maqen. The leader was Kim Schmitz.

p30. Jialobaili is also known as Gyala Peri.

p31. The most accurate elevation for Changtze is 7553m.

p32. The Chinese-Japanese attempt on Gurla Mandhata was successful. The Chinese leader was Shi Zhonchun. Kailas is sacred to both Bhuddhists and Hindus.

p74. This was not the second ascent of the Mustagh Tower. McNaught-Davis and Brown reached the W summit on 7 July '56. Next day, Patey and Hartog traversed the W summit to the E summit. Guido Magnone climbed the E summit from the SE on 17 July '56.

p157. The highest peak entirely within British Columbia is Mt Waddington, not Mt Robson. Mt Fairweather on the Alaskan border is higher.

p282. Tom Brocklebank was a schoolmaster, not a journalist. He was a housemaster at Eton for 15 years.

Plate 63. This actually represents Nevado del Muerto, 6476m. Ojos del Salado is to the right of the picture. Ojos del Salado means 'Sources of the Salty River'.

Acknowledgements

Once again I am grateful to several people without whose help the production of this issue would have been impossible. Maurice Bennett, Margaret Clennett, Ashley Greenwood and Robin Robinson have all faithfully read and corrected manuscripts and proofs — a major task. (Errors and undesirable alterations, however, are all my fault.) Frank Solari has carefully converted endless colour pictures to black and white. My two Assistant Editors, Phil Bartlett and Geoffrey Templeman, have patiently gathered in a tremendous quantity of material. Peter Ledebor has quietly carried out the unglamorous but necessary task of shepherding in the advertising which helps keep costs within bounds. And last but not least the friends who have dragged me out climbing despite the pressures of deadlines and my family who have put up with me through the last months.

This is the last issue of the *Alpine Journal* which I shall be editing. It has been an intensely satisfying and enjoyable four years and I am especially grateful to all who have encouraged me throughout this time.

Ernst Sondheimer, who has helped me on previous issues, kindly offered to take over the task. Please give him the support and encouragement that I have enjoyed — it makes all the difference.

John Fairley