Alpine Club Notes

Plate 94

Office Bearers and Committee for 1987

President	G C Band
Vice Presidents	Dr H G Nicol
	Lt Col M W H Day
Honorary Secretary	S W Town
Honorary Treasurer	R A Coatsworth
Committee: Elective Members	Mrs R Greenwood
	R J S Hoare
	A H Jones
	Mrs H Larsen
	J P O'B Ledeboer
	W G Lowe OBE
	Major D V Nicholls
	G W Templeman
	S M W Venables
ACG Co-opted Members	A V Saunders
	C Watts
Honorary Librarian	R Lawford
Honorary Archivist	E H J Smyth FRCS
Assistant Archivist	V S Risoe MBE
Honorary Keeper of the Club's Pictures	Dr C B M Warren FRCP
Honorary Editor of the Club's Journal	Professor E H Sondheimer
Assistant Editors	P M R Bartlett
	G W Templeman
Honorary Guidebooks Editor	G L Swindin
Chairman of the House Committee	G W Templeman
Chairman of the Library Council	M H Westmacott
Assistant Honorary Secretaries	
Annual Winter Dinner	Mrs H Larsen
Candidates	A N Husbands
Lectures	S M W Venables
Meets	M Pinney
Trustees	M Bennett
	A Blackshaw
	J G R Harding
Honorary Solicitor	S N Beare
Auditors	A M Dowler
	Davey & Co

(*Note*. Because of the death of Sir Anthony Rawlinson, Lady Evans was, in effect, President of the Alpine Club for the year 1986. All members of the Club

will wish to pay tribute to the charm, modesty and efficiency with which the first Lady President of the Alpine Club carried out her unforeseen task.)

General Meetings of the Alpine Club 1986

14 January	Tony Howard, *The Mountains of Wadi Rum.*
4 February	John Beatty, *Touch the Earth.*
11 March	Doug Scott, *Recent Adventures in Iceland, Canada and on Makalu.*
15 April	John Jackson, *From Snowdonia to the Ultimate Mountain.*
20 May	Jerry Gore, *Mules and Nightmares in the High Andes.*
16 September	Bill Brooker, *The History of Scottish Mountaineering.*
14 October	Kev Reynolds, *Climbs and Walks in the Pyrenees.*
11 November	Nik Kekus, *Annual Leave – A Holiday on Ganesh II.*
5 December	Annual General Meeting: Dr Charles Houston, *Operation Everest II.*

Climbing Meetings 1986

25–26 January	Lake District. FRCC hut, Brackenclose, Wasdale.
8–9 February	ACG Winter Meet. Glencoe.
15–16 March	North Wales. Informal dinner with lecture by Les Swindin, *The Four-Thousanders.*
17–18 May	Derbyshire. University of London hut, Fallcliffe Cottage, Grindleford.
23 July–6 August	Cornwall. CC hut, Bosigran. Family meet held jointly with Climbers' Club.
26 July–9 August	Dauphiné. Joint meet with Climbers' Club and ABMSAC based at La Bérarde.
27–28 September	Lake District. Informal dinner with lecture by John Noble, *Wilderness Ski-ing.*
September–October	Himalayan meet: Gangotri.

The Mont Blanc Bicentenary

A delegation from the Alpine Club attended the first round of the Mont Blanc Bicentenary in July. Roger and Ann Chorley, Henry Day, Denise Evans, John Hunt, Douglas Milner and Stephen Venables enjoyed the lavish hospitality of the CAF and Commune of Chamonix. The celebrations coincided with the world meet of *Femmes Alpinistes*, and *alpinisme feminin* was a strong theme throughout the weekend. Another dominant theme was *arts folkloriques*, with costumed dancers and musicians providing constant entertainment on and off the streets. The opening reception on Friday was followed by a four-hour dinner. Saturday brought a procession through the streets, on Sunday there was a service outside the church, and in the afternoon Denise Evans made a splendid speech at the closing ceremony. A historical Alpine book was presented to the French as a gift from the Alpine Club.

Meanwhile, Henry Day had left that Sunday afternoon with Mark Upton, for a 'quick dash' up the Innominata. They returned the following Friday. Caught



Photo: C. Douglas Milner

94 *AC contingent to Chamonix for the Mont Blanc Bicentenary. L to R: Roger Chorley, Ann Chorley, Denise Evans, John Hunt, Henry Day, Stephen Venables, Douglas Milner.*

in a ferocious storm on the top of Mont Blanc, the pair had a good opportunity to brush up on their snow-holing technique. When the storm eventually abated, they made an orderly retreat to the Miage Glacier.

On the Italian side the celebrations were organized on 6–8 August by the Aosta Regional Government. Aosta was conscious of the role played by British pioneers—Kennedy, Hudson, Whymper and others—'you showed us the way'. There was an interesting Guido Rey photographic exhibition, and an outstanding historical exhibition of early maps, prints and books of the region. The formal opening in a restored Roman tower was attended by the Alpine Club representative, Peter Ledeboer, who presented a gift of a historical Alpine book on the Club's behalf.

Friday was the great day. As well as a loop-the-loop display by 'Red Arrows' and a huge *Monte Bianco* hot air balloon, there were colourful processions with music, in costume. In the evening there was a move through the tunnel to Chamonix, which had swollen to some 150,000 people. As darkness fell the original route up the Bossons Glacier to the summit of Mont Blanc was lit with flares, and a most spectacular firework display appeared, to the accompaniment of Tchaikovsky's '1812'. A final *coup de theatre*: the summit of Mont Blanc was then floodlit by lasers.

As the British contribution to the international celebrations of the Mont Blanc Bicentenary, an exhibition of more than 200 photographs, books and other items was assembled under the direction of Jerry Lovatt and mounted in the Alpine Gallery from 2 to 13 December 1986. The material included contributions from other public and private collections but was largely from the Club's own rich archives, and such items as Dr Paccard's diary and de Saussure's pocket compass aroused the envy and amazement of many visitors from abroad. The exhibition was arranged in the form of a developing story so as to constitute, with the catalogue, an illustrated history of the mountain. It was divided into four sections, each covering roughly 50 years. The whole represented a collection of considerable historic importance, illustrating a story of achievement spanning 200 years and the fascination of Mont Blanc as reflected in the wider context of art and literature over this period.

Tuckett Hut (Ailefroide Group, Dauphiné)

John Brailsford writes: As an honorary guide of Ailefroide and AC member, I was invited to the opening ceremony of the rebuilt 'Tuckett Hut' in August 1986. My client and I were the only British climbers present and we were made most welcome, invited to say a few words on French TV and partake of the generous wine and food supplies. The hut itself was opened in the form of a museum, but there is considerable opinion in the valley that it should be put to practical use by youth groups—a proposal which I personally welcome as in the spirit of the pioneers, and because it might do a little to relieve the pressure at the Glacier Blanc refuge.

Alpine Club Symposium 1986: Karakoram

This year's Symposium, following tradition, was a one-day event, Plas-y-Brenin hosting us from 11am on Saturday, 22 November. We had exceptionally

fine contributions from the speakers. In the evening we ran a couple of films; the ancient 'Ascent of Rakaposhi' had to be run twice. I hope Mike Banks will not take offence if I say that I am still chuckling about it now. We were hoping to show the Polish Kunyang Kish film made in 1971. Andrzej Zawada had brought two reels, which turned out to be one magnetic sound track and one optical track. None of the available projectors could run this combination. In retrospect I think they must have been recorded for television, but Andrzej said that this was the normal system used 15 years ago: we only had to find a 15-year old projector, and all would be well. To his utter amazement we failed in this. In order to restore Andrzej's faith in us, we took him off the next day to climb the waterfall at the back of the Devil's Kitchen. It was freezing cold, and the trainers were pumping iced water round the toes during the climb and on the walk back to the car. The plenary session proved both useful and popular, and should be developed along slightly more structured lines next year.

The Symposium was chaired by Dave Wilkinson, and the speakers were Paul Nunn, Professor Keith Miller, Colonel Tony Streather, Colonel N Kumar, Doug Scott, Andrzej Zawada, Stephen Venables, Lindsay Griffin and Dai Lampard. It was organized by the AC (special thanks are due to Sheila Harrison) and the ACG, with help from Plas-y-Brenin.

A V Saunders

The Alpine Club Library

Sir Douglas Busk's is a hard act to follow. During the 14 years of his chairmanship the hard work of a few members and others, supported by his untiring fund-raising efforts and stimulated by his leadership, has transformed the state of the Library. We are all most grateful to him and to the others, past and present, for this great achievement. Happily Bob Lawford, who has already done so much, continues to make great contributions in many fields, notably in the cataloguing of photographs and in the disposal of surplus books, in addition to his efforts in support of the Club's exhibition to mark the Mont Blanc Bicentenary. Bill Risoe as Archivist, Peter Ledeboer as Secretary, Michael Dowler as Treasurer and Jon Mellor, who has now taken over from him, all put in a great deal of unpaid hard work. Mrs Pat Johnson continues to run the Library effectively and to deal with the numerous visitors and post and telephone enquiries. Use of the Library by non-members has risen by about ten percent this year, a welcome development.

A major project in progress is the Himalayan Index. Its purpose is to provide an information service to climbers and researchers, enabling them to locate information on peaks and climbs in the Himalaya and Karakoram. Such information is now very extensive, but the sources are many and various and much time can be spent in fruitless research. The Club's microcomputer will be used to hold a database, which members and others will be able to consult. The system has been designed and is now being tested; the next major step is to engage a suitable person, for a year or so, to abstract the literature and enter the information.

Funds have been raised separately for the Index, so as not to prejudice the more traditional work of the Library. We are most grateful to the American

Alpine Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, the Mount Everest Foundation, the Rayne Foundation and many others for their financial support. The recent appeal to members raised about £5700, of which some £2500 is designated for the Index. Another notable gift this year has been £2500 from the Wolfson Foundation funds available to the British Library, specifically for filling gaps in our collection of older books.

The Library continues to benefit greatly from gifts in kind, both for gap-filling and for sale. This is one of the ways in which many members have helped us. Perhaps others would like to follow their example?

It would be tedious to list all the tasks on which progress has been made in the past year, but one achievement should be mentioned. The first comprehensive shelf check for many years has been carried out; this has enabled us to identify losses which, though a cause of concern, luckily do not appear to be as extensive as those suffered by many libraries. To reduce the risk of loss, as many as possible of the most valuable books have been removed from the open shelves and may now only be consulted by appointment.

Michael Westmacott

Errata

The following errors in *AJ91* have been noted:

p67, line 1. '3 hectares' should read '30,000 hectares'.

p69, lines 32–33. '3.5 hectares' should read '350,000 hectares'.

p151, lines 3–4. Mark Beaufoy's was the fourth ascent of Mont Blanc.

p163, line 13. '1780s' should read '1750s'.

p170, note 9. 'no. 8' should read 'no. 5'.

p170, note 11. 'no. 8' should read 'no. 12'.

Plate 48. The peak portrayed is not Mount Wilson, but is in the Tombstone range.

Acknowledgements

My chief helpers are listed on the title page, and many others have also contributed. Assistance has taken the form of willing labour (writing reports, checking references, proof-reading, map-sketching, photographic work, etc), and much encouragement, interest and advice (which I have not always taken). I thank all helpers—without them the job would not have been possible. I must mention in particular John Fairley and Livia Gollancz, who patiently instructed me in the craft of editorship (John's act is also a hard one to follow), and Johanna Merz, who came to the rescue at a critical time with her talent for converting scruffy manuscript into beautiful copy. I also thank Douglas Milner for his mountain sketches, and the Mount Everest Foundation for the list of grant-aided expeditions. For all errors of commission or omission I am, of course, alone responsible. Finally, I thank the contributors, whose dedication to literary composition (many more good manuscripts were received than could be accommodated) rivals their enthusiasm for climbing. Fortunately, the penalty for mistakes is usually not so severe.

Ernst Sondheimer