Alpine Club Notes

OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 1989

PRESIDENT	G C Band
VICE PRESIDENTS	Sir Alan Pullinger
	P J Nunn
HONORARY SECRETARY	S W Town
HONORARY TREASURER	R A Coatsworth
COMMITTEE: ELECTIVE MEMBERS	Miss M Agrawal
	M E B Banks
	Mrs R Greenwood
	R J S Hoare
	G D Hughes
	A H Jones
	H R Lloyd
	R Payne
	S M W Venables
ACG CO-OPTED MEMBERS	R P Mear
	A V Saunders
HONORARY LIBRARIAN	R Lawford
HONORARY ARCHIVIST	E H J Smyth FRCS
ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST	V S Risoe MBE
HONORARY KEEPER OF THE CLUB'S PICTURES	D J Lovatt
HONORARY EDITOR OF THE CLUB'S JOURNAL	Professor E H Sondheimer
ASSISTANT EDITORS	Mrs J Merz
	A V Saunders
	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 J Merz
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

GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB 1988

12 January	Sheila Cormack, *Shimshal to Skardu – in the steps of Schomberg and Shipton*
9 February	Lt Col Henry Day, *Soldiers and Scientists on Xixabangma*
15 March	Steven Berry, *Climbing in the Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan*
12 April	Roger Mear, *In the Footsteps of Scott*
10 May	Martin Boysen, *From Harrisons to the Himalaya*
20 September	Premises debate
11 October	Stephen Venables, *South Col Direct – the Neverest Buttress*
25 October	Viktor Wyss, film show: *175 Years of Alpinism in Switzerland* (extra meeting, jointly with ABMSAC, to mark the 125th anniversary of the Swiss Alpine Club)
15 November	Roger Everett, *Alpine Climbing in Europe and Asia*
2 December	Annual General Meeting: Julian Freeman-Attwood, *The Three Highest Peaks of Africa*

CLIMBING MEETINGS 1988

20–21 February	ACG Winter Meet, Glencoe.
12–13 March	North Wales. Informal dinner.
17–19 June	Derbyshire. University of London hut, Fallcliffe Cottage, Grindleford.
21 July–5 August	Cornwall. CC hut, Bosigran. Family meet held jointly with Climbers' Club.
25 July–13 August	Zermatt valley. Joint meet with Climbers' Club and ABMSAC.
24–25 September	Lake District. Informal dinner with lecture by Victor Saunders, *Jitchu Drake.*

EXHIBITION

The Club arranged a small exhibition, opened on 25 October 1988, of relevant

historical features, to mark both the 125th anniversary of the foundation of the Swiss Alpine Club and the centenary of the birth of Sir Arnold Lunn.

THE CAUCASUS CENTENARY MEMORIAL SERVICE

100 years ago, and 31 years after the Club's foundation, there occurred an accident to two of its members overshadowed only by that of the Matterhorn in 1865. Harry Fox and William Donkin, then Honorary Secretary, with the Swiss guides Kaspar Streich and Johann Fischer, all disappeared in an attempt on Koshtantau.

Their last bivouac, illustrated in a fine watercolour hanging in the Committee Room of the Club, was discovered by a relief expedition the following year, 1889 (see C A Russell's article, pp219–225 of this volume, for an account of the search). Captain C H Powell, a member of the expedition, made an immediate sketch of the bivouac site and it is from this that the painting, by H G Willink, was taken.

Amongst other effects, including knapsacks and clothing, they found Harry Fox's diary, its last entry dated Sunday, 26 August 1888, an entry concluding: '. . . climb Koshtantau . . . and descend to the Dyksu Glacier.'

On Sunday, 11 September 1988 a special exhibition and memorial service for those lost in 1888 was held in Wellington, Somerset, the home of the Fox family. The Alpine Club was represented by the President and the Honorary Archivist.

Tonedale House, where the exhibition was held and where Mr Richard Fox received the guests, has been the family home for generations, and it was from here that Harry Fox set out for the Caucasus in 1888. Mr Hubert Fox of Buckfastleigh, who played a major part in organizing the centenary celebration, was present, together with many other members of the family. The Foxes, it is worth recalling, were closely related to the Tucketts, and Francis Fox Tuckett, pioneer climber and Vice-President of the Alpine Club, was married to Alice, Harry's sister and herself a mountaineer.

The Donkin family, numbering five distinguished members of the Club elected between 1879 and 1936, was represented by Colonel T P T Donkin, Royal Marines.

The family of Johann Fischer was charmingly represented by two ladies, both now elderly, who gallantly came over from Switzerland especially for the occasion – Frau Doktor Riggenbach-Fischer, daughter of Johann's brother Andreas who took part in the relief expedition of 1889, and Mlle Dora Fischer, a cousin of Johann. These ladies very kindly brought with them a number of letters and manuscripts, formerly belonging to Johann and relating to the accident, which they wished to donate to the Club archives – a valuable addition for which we are most grateful.

After lunch a memorial service for the climbers was held in Wellington church, with an address by Mr J Kendall-Carpenter, headmaster of Wellington School and a former captain of the England Rugby fifteen. This was a fitting tribute to Harry Fox, himself a noted Rugby player in his day.

The exhibition comprised a notable collection of mountain memorabilia, including some remarkable sketch-books and paintings by Edna Fox and other members of the family, old and rare books and some of the famous photographs from the enormous camera of W F Donkin. Special mention must be given to two paintings – a portrait in pastel of Elisabeth Fox-Tuckett (F F Tuckett's sister) by Holman Hunt, and a dramatic picture by H G Willink of the guide Ulrich Almer holding single-handed the remainder of his party, under whom a cornice had collapsed, after having thrown himself backwards over the opposite side of the ridge. Eventually the rope froze into the ice firmly enough for Almer to release his hold, and the party was saved. An ice-axe of mammoth proportions with a beautifully polished shaft, belonging to a lady, Marion Fox, also commanded our respect and admiration for its owner.

We extend our warm thanks to the Fox family and to all contributors to this outstanding memorial of an important chapter of mountain history, and a most enjoyable occasion.

Edward Smyth

ALPINE CLUB SYMPOSIUM 1988: ALPINE AND ARCTIC NORTH AMERICA

This important and regular event on the Club's calendar took place on 19 November 1988 and was held, as previously, at Plas y Brenin. The National Mountaineering Centre provided its usual friendly and informal atmosphere, although the large audience found acoustics and oxygen supply (especially after lunch-time refreshments!) to be somewhat deficient. The proceedings were efficiently chaired by our President George Band, and the speakers included Rob Collister, Simon Richardson, Roger Mear (all speaking on areas and topics in Alaska), Derek Fordham (Arctic Canada and Greenland), Robin Pearce (Cirque of Unclimbables), David Hopkins (Western Canada and Pacific NW USA), and Dr Simon Travis (cold injury specialist). The speakers gave enthusiastic accounts of their experiences which were all very well received. Particularly enjoyed were Simon Richardson's photographs of Mt Hunter's 'happy cowboy' pinnacles, Roger Mear's informative style, Simon Travis's horrifying pictures of frostbitten hands, and Robin Pearce's deadpan humour. Many salient questions came from the audience at the end of the day, and some felt that it might have been better to allow more time for questions after each contribution. The point was also made that general descriptions of climbing areas tended to convey more useful information than accounts of actual climbs.

The symposium happily coincided with an improvement in the strength of sterling against the US dollar; and, judging by the many conversations about routes, areas, peaks, etc during the dinner and social which followed, coming years should see more British parties visiting North America. My final task as organizer of the event is to thank everyone who contributed to the symposium, with special thanks to Sheila Harrison whose thoroughness made my job very straightforward.

Roger Payne

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY

Use of the Library continues to increase steadily; there have been more visitors and a much greater number of postal or telephoned queries to be dealt with by Mrs Johnson. Following the part-time engagement of Mrs Anne Andrews to help with the Himalayan Index, and data contributions from a number of members, we look forward to opening it for use during 1989. This is expected to shorten the time needed for research, but will probably generate a further increase in enquiries.

Arrangements for the move from 74 South Audley Street in 1990 cast their shadows before them. Identification of unwanted duplicate books has mainly been carried out. There is also an accumulation of printed matter, photographs and slides, much of which has little relevance to mountains or mountaineering and which should be sold or otherwise disposed of; surplus items are being identified, with great care not to discard anything relevant to the rest of the collection. At the same time, plans are being drawn up for a 'working library', for use if and when the Club moves to temporary premises while a more permanent home is completed.

An important step towards the production of a new catalogue has been taken, in the machine reading of the existing printed 'Volume 1'. We are greatly indebted to Mike Esten for this. Further solid progress in the cataloguing of the 'tracts' has been made by Sonia Jacobs.

As usual, we owe a great debt to members who give freely of their time and energy to help with the Library. Peter Ledeboer adds numerous tasks to his job as Secretary. Jon Mellor, Honorary Treasurer, is kept very busy by the sales efforts of Bob Lawford, who continues to be the linchpin of the whole effort. Edward Smyth has been greatly helped in his work on the archives by Margaret Darvall – who better than Margaret to ensure that the Ladies' Alpine Club archives are in order? We are grateful to all of them, as well as to many other members who, by their covenants or gifts of books, give us financial and moral support.

Michael Westmacott

ERRATA

The following errors in *AJ93* have been noted:

pviii, lines 10 and 11. For 39 read 40; for 40 read 39.

p216. The temperatures in lines 10, 12 and 13 should be negative.

p227, first paragraph. The northernmost land in the world lies, not in Ellesmere Island, but in Peary Land in North Greenland, at latitude c83°40'N.

p228, line 17. For 'west' read 'east'.

p309, lines 16–17. The longest-surviving member of the 1924 Everest expedition was John Noel who died on 12 March 1989, aged 99.

Plate 1. The Sokha La is out of the picture, to the right. The rock buttress extreme right is part of Sosbun Brakh.

Plate 28. For 'Bodga' read 'Bogda'.