Alpine Club Notes

(Plates 89, 90)

OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 1991

PRESIDENT	Lt Col H R A Streather OBE
VICE PRESIDENTS	The Rt Hon the Earl of Limerick
	Dr C R A Clarke
HONORARY SECRETARY	Dr M J Esten
HONORARY TREASURER	(to be appointed)
COMMITTEE: ELECTIVE MEMBERS	Ms M A Clennett
	C M Gravina
	G D Hughes
	L A Hughes
	H R Lloyd
	J R Mellor
	Mrs J Merz
	R Payne
	Cmdre M G Rutherford
ACG CO-OPTED MEMBERS	J L Bamber
	M A Fowler
HONORARY LIBRARIAN	D J Lovatt
HONORARY ARCHIVIST	E H J Smyth
ASSISTANT ARCHIVISTS	Miss M Darvall
	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 (until 31.8.91)
	Mrs J Merz (from 1.9.91)
ASSISTANT EDITORS	Mrs J Merz (until 31.8.91)
	A V Saunders
	G W Templeman

HONORARY GUIDEBOOKS EDITOR	G L Swindin
CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE	The Rt Hon the Earl of Limerick
CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE	A Blackshaw
CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE	R Lawford
CHAIRMAN OF THE LIBRARY COUNCIL	M H Westmacott
ASSISTANT HONORARY SECRETARIES	
ANNUAL WINTER DINNER	Mrs G D Bull
MEMBERSHIP	A N Husbands
LECTURES	S M W Venables
MEETS	M Pinney
TRUSTEES	M F Baker
	J G R Harding
	P J Nunn
HONORARY SOLICITOR	S N Beare
AUDITORS	A M Dowler
	Russell Ohly & Co

GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB 1990

9 January	Victor Saunders, *Makalu 1989*
13 February	Mick Fowler, *Peak Bagging round the British coast*
13 March	Andy Cave, *Karakoram Alpine Style*
20 March	Professor G Allder, *William Moorcroft: Himalayan Explorer, Veterinarian and Surgeon* (extra meeting)
3 April	General Meeting (premises discussion)
10 April	George Band, *Kangchenjunga First Ascent*
8 May	Julian Freeman-Attwood, *South Georgia*
11 September	Jim Milledge, *Matelots, Medicine and Mountains*
9 October	Mike Banks, *Changing Greenland*
13 November	Lindsay Griffin, *The European Alps*
20 November	Italian Evening, *The Italian Side of Monte Rosa* (extra meeting)
24 November	General Meeting (premises discussion), Plas y Brenin
30 November	Annual General Meeting

CLIMBING MEETINGS 1990

17–18 February	ACG Winter Meet, Glencoe
17–18 March	North Wales. Informal dinner with lecture by Paul Nunn, *On the Edge of the World*

21 July-11 August	Bernina. Joint Meet with Climbers' Club and ABMSAC
21–29 July	Cornwall. CC hut, Bosigran. Family meet held jointly with Climbers' Club
29–30 September	Lake District. Informal dinner with lecture by Dave Wilkinson, *New Climbs in the Bernese Oberland*

A VISIT TO THE USSR, APRIL 1990

Our trip to Moscow and Leningrad was very interesting. The symposium in Moscow on early ascents of Ushba went well. Eugene Gippenreiter gave a full early history with generous emphasis on the 19th-century British pioneers. He also acted as interpreter for my account of our new route (and first British ascent) of the South Peak. Then followed a splendidly illustrated and lucid account (even to non-Russian speakers) by Vladimir Kiezel of the first Soviet mountaineers' ascent of the North Peak: not following Cockin's classic saddle route but the now more frequently climbed N ridge.

Later Gippenreiter and I had a long interview with Valery Sungerov of the official organization Alptour (5 Bol Rzhevskiy per, Moscow 121069) who offer a wide range of adventurous mountain tours in the Caucasus, Pamir, etc. They are trying to improve their marketing in Britain and the West. Present exchange rates could make such trips very good value.

In Leningrad we were looked after by Leonid Troshchinenko and his family. As a part-time job they do a lot of climbing on the onion domes etc of many old churches which are now under restoration and rehabilitation. I nearly managed to secure a huge bronze 'A' (for atheism) which they had just taken down from the Kazan Cathedral. Leonid T was chief cameraman on the successful Kangchenjunga expedition (see *AJ95*, 24–28, 1990/91). [Sadly, he died in the avalanche accident in the Pamir in summer 1990. *Editor.*]

We spent a very interesting two hours in the Moscow Museum of Mountaineering. We met there a partly French doctor who has lived in and around the N Caucasus for 50 years. She is soberly certain that there is a Caucasian yeti. She mentioned many witnesses and much interesting evidence but left us, still, at least agnostic.

Robin Hodgkin

ANNAPURNA PREMIER 8000M, CHAMONIX, 14–17 JUNE 1990

A high proportion of the French team which made the first ascent of Annapurna (8075m) on 3 June 1950 were mountain guides from the town of Chamonix below Mont Blanc. It was therefore fitting that a grand reunion to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the ascent should be arranged by the town under the auspices of its present Mayor, Michel Charlet. Sadly, only three of the original Annapurna team remained to participate: Maurice Herzog, the leader (who

with Louis Lachenal reached the summit), Marcel Ichac, the cameraman, and Francis de Noyelle, the liaison officer and diplomat in India at the time. We later paid tribute to the memory of Louis Lachenal, Gaston Rébuffat and Lionel Terray who were all buried in the local cemetery.

It was therefore a happy and most generous gesture when the town decided to extend its invitation to a large number of prominent mountaineers, including all those who had first trodden the summits of the world's fourteen 8000m peaks. As Nick Clinch (Hidden Peak 1958) wrote when confirming his acceptance: 'The organization of such a celebration is far more difficult than organizing an expedition to 8000m-plus mountains.' The pert, obliging and inexhaustible Secretary General, Nadine Pachta, must have made hundreds of phone calls and written as many letters to gather us all together.

The British contingent consisted of John Hunt, Tony Streather, George Band, Norman Hardie (specially from New Zealand) and the omnipresent Chris Bonington, as usual efficiently combining pleasure with business in the form of a TV series on the history of mountaineering which involved him with two guides repeating Mummery's Crack on the Grépon, wearing ancient breeches and clinker-nailed boots. Even Ed Hillary had his arm twisted to break off his business in Toronto and fly for a day and a night to Chamonix; in compensation, on a brilliant Saturday morning, he was whisked by helicopter to the summit of Mont Blanc.

The highlight of the few days was planned to be a human chain from the top of the Aiguille du Midi *téléphérique* to the summit of Mont Blanc. Perhaps fortunately, the snow conditions did not permit this, and instead a few of us plodded partway up Mont Blanc du Tacul until lethargy overcame us. At one rest-point, in a group of half a dozen, Norman Hardie and I chanced upon three other Kangchenjunga climbers: the Poles Wojciech Bronski and Kazimierz Olech who made the South and Central Peaks and the Japanese Yutaka Ageta who climbed Yalung Kang. The week was full of encounters of this kind.

One morning we all met for photographs on the steps of the parish church; never before can such an august gathering of mountaineers have been assembled. I even resorted to autograph-hunting and within 20 minutes had collected over 50 signatures from participants of 34 major expeditions.

On other days time was filled with conference meetings, films and discussions: Expeditions and the Environment; the Role of the Sherpas; Culture, Religions and Traditions in Nepal; Expeditions and Sponsorship; High-Altitude Medicine. John Hunt had put together a charming account of the Sherpas with whom he had climbed over 50 years; unfortunately his slides had been inadvertently sent to Paris! Particularly memorable as an introduction to Charles Houston's talk on high-altitude medicine was the showing of his now classic film taken on the first 1950 foray up through Namche Bazar to the Everest icefall, with his father, Oscar Houston, Bill Tilman, a priest Anderson Bakewell and Betsy Cowles. (As Tilman relates in his *Nepal Himalaya*: 'Hitherto I had not regarded a woman as an indispensable part of the equipage of a Himalayan journey but one lives and learns. Anyhow, with a doctor to heal us, a woman to feed us, and a priest to pray for us, I felt we could face the future with some confidence.')

All this seemed but a prelude to the Gala Dinner on the Saturday night. *Moët et Chandon* flowed freely. Four of the best chefs in Chamonix had each contributed a course to the banquet. Then came the climax the media had been waiting for: presentation of eight Match d'Or Awards instigated by Paris Match and the Town Council for a variety of Himalayan achievements: the hardest routes, the greatest performance, the best man, woman, Sherpa, cameraman and, finally, the most likely Himalayan hero of tomorrow. We had been asked to send in our votes in advance for this bizarre series of Himalayan 'Oscars'. The mere concept had been enough to keep Joe Brown away. I almost expected to find Terry Wogan breathing down the microphone.

In the event, it was all handled surprisingly tastefully with impressive impromptu speeches by the recipients. By the end, the stage was crowded with a galaxy of talent, past and present: Maurice Herzog, Ed Hillary, Chris Bonington, Pierre Beghin, Reinhold Messner, someone on behalf of Wanda Rutkiewicz, Nimi Sherpa, Kurt Diemberger, Tomo Cesen, and relatives of the sadly departed Jerzy Kukuczka and Jean-Marc Boivin. We marvelled at the latest incredible solo achievements: Makalu S face Direct by Boivin; Jannu N face in under 48 hours and Lhotse S face in 62 hours by Cesen.

After we had said all our farewells at this unique happening, we strolled back well after midnight along the cobbled alleyway towards our hotel, wondering how on earth we could possibly cap all this for Everest in 1993!

George Band

AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB, NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

In July 1990 Michael Ward visited Boston, Mass to help Bradford Washburn, former Director of the Museum of Science, with the second edition of the National Geographic's Everest Map, 1:50,000 (see *AJ95*, 246–247, 1990/91), and to give a seminar at the US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine at Natick. Over the weekend of 8 July he was a guest at Ad Carter's house at the foot of Mount Washington (which was ascended).

The party included Ad Carter (Editor of the *American Alpine Journal*, Hon AC), Professor Charles Houston (AAC, Hon AC), Bob Bates (AAC, AC), Bradford Washburn (AAC, Hon AC) and their wives. (See Plate 90.) Whilst the peaks, glaciers, weather and fauna of Alaska dominated the conversation, Everest and K2 were mentioned *en passant*.

Michael Ward

THE ALPS: POETS, PAINTERS AND TRAVELLERS, 16–18 NOVEMBER 1990

The Wordsworth Trust's special centenary exhibition was concerned with writers and artists inspired by the Alps in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and included some of the Alpine Club's unrivalled set of platebooks. During the final weekend of this exhibition a well-attended Study Weekend was held at the

Prince of Wales Hotel, Grasmere. This was a most enjoyable and instructive event. The distinguished lecturers included our members George Band on 'Classic Alpine Climbs' and Jerry Lovatt on 'The First Ascent of Mont Blanc'. In connection with the exhibits, Janet Adam Smith spoke about depictions of the Mer de Glace, Charles Warren about editions of the poem 'The Passage of S Gotthard' by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and Peter Bicknell about other treasures of the AC Library.

ALPINE CLUB SYMPOSIUM 1990: NEW CHALLENGES IN NEPAL

This symposium was organized, in the spirit of its predecessors, to instruct younger climbers about a specific region of the Great Ranges. We concentrated largely on the lesser peaks of Nepal and strayed only occasionally on to 8000m summits. Around 120 people attended at Plas y Brenin, on Saturday, 24 November 1990.

Dr Charles Clarke introduced the meeting with a brief history of the Alpine Club and followed this with a talk on the geography of Nepal and its mountain groups along the main Himalayan ridge.

Bill O'Connor, author of *Trekking Peaks of Nepal*, reviewed the lower summits currently open to trekkers with a galaxy of photographs. Several of these peaks would provide major objectives for anyone.

A wealth of expedition, climbing and travel experience followed: Audrey Salkeld's journey through southern Mustang, Alan Hinkes's climbs on Makalu and Manaslu and Tommy Curtis's epic ascent of Kusum Kanguru N face in the Khumbu.

On environmental, social and political issues, Rob Collister and Doug Scott made us all realize some of the desecration of Nepal which has taken place during the last 30 years and the problems we shall all face in the future to preserve this mountain kingdom, dear to so many of us.

The Alpine Club's Himalayan Index, run by Michael Westmacott, was on display and was used during the meeting.

Bill Ruthven, Honorary Secretary of the Mount Everest Foundation, outlined the policies of the principal grant-giving body in Britain – and encouraged us all to provide prompt expedition reports.

The President, Lt Col Tony Streather, brought the meeting to a close and thanked both the speakers and our hosts.

The symposium proceedings, *New Challenges in Nepal*, edited by Roy Ruddle, will be published by the Alpine Club with financial assistance from the Mount Everest Foundation during 1991.

The event was organized by Victor Saunders, Sheila Harrison and Charles Clarke, with the assistance of the staff at Plas y Brenin. [They deserve warm thanks for their efforts. *Ed.*]

Charles Clarke

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY

The bulk of the library is now in storage, where it will remain until new premises are available. Meanwhile a working library is in operation at 118 Eaton Square. The premises are cramped, but a good service is provided to expedition planners and others. The number of visitors has naturally fallen, but appears to be picking up again. We get rather more requests by letter or phone than before the move.

With the trauma of the move behind us, at least temporarily, work has been resumed on the archives and on cataloguing. A notable achievement has been increased income from reproduction of our photographs, with the help of Frank Solari, following reorganization and cataloguing of the collection. Sales of surplus books continue, and we are grateful for continuing gifts from members to augment the collection and to generate revenue.

Bob Lawford retired as Honorary Librarian at the end of 1990, having held the post for 21 years. The current good state of the library is due more to him than to anyone else. His contributions have gone far beyond the call of duty. While we were at South Audley Street, he brought order into the chaos of our store-rooms by building the necessary book-stacks with his own hands. He has re-bound books for us, made trolleys for stacking chairs, made show-cases for exhibitions which he has also helped to mount. He has catalogued the map collection and our many photographs. He has supervised the Librarian's work and solved so many of the day-to-day working problems that it is difficult to see how the AC office could function without him. Luckily for the rest of us, he will still be around after his retirement. He hands over to Jerry Lovatt, in time for the move to new permanent premises; it will be a very hard act to follow.

Michael Westmacott

THE HIMALAYAN INDEX

The computerized Index, available as part of the Library's information service to members and the general public, now comprises records of over 3500 ascents of or attempts on peaks over 6000m in the Himalaya and Karakoram, and a few in other parts of China. There are over 3000 references to the literature; almost all of these are in English so far, but we reckon that the great majority of expeditions from 1817 to 1989, and virtually all important ones, are covered. 1750 peaks have been identified and logged; in due course this number may be doubled after further exploration and research.

There is still a lot of work to do, on China, on journals in other languages, and on the numerous queries put on one side while the bulk of the data was being abstracted and entered. Meanwhile, there is a steady trickle of enquiries that can be satisfied from the Index, and more are anticipated when suitable publicity has been given to it.

Michael Westmacott

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF WILFRID NOYCE

Potential biographers of Wilfrid Noyce and students of climbing history will be interested to learn that a collection of his letters, covering the period from the early 1940s until his death, has been lodged in the archives of Balliol College, Oxford. Further information is available from: Ian Grimble, 14 Seaforth Lodge, Barnes High Street, London SW13 9LE.

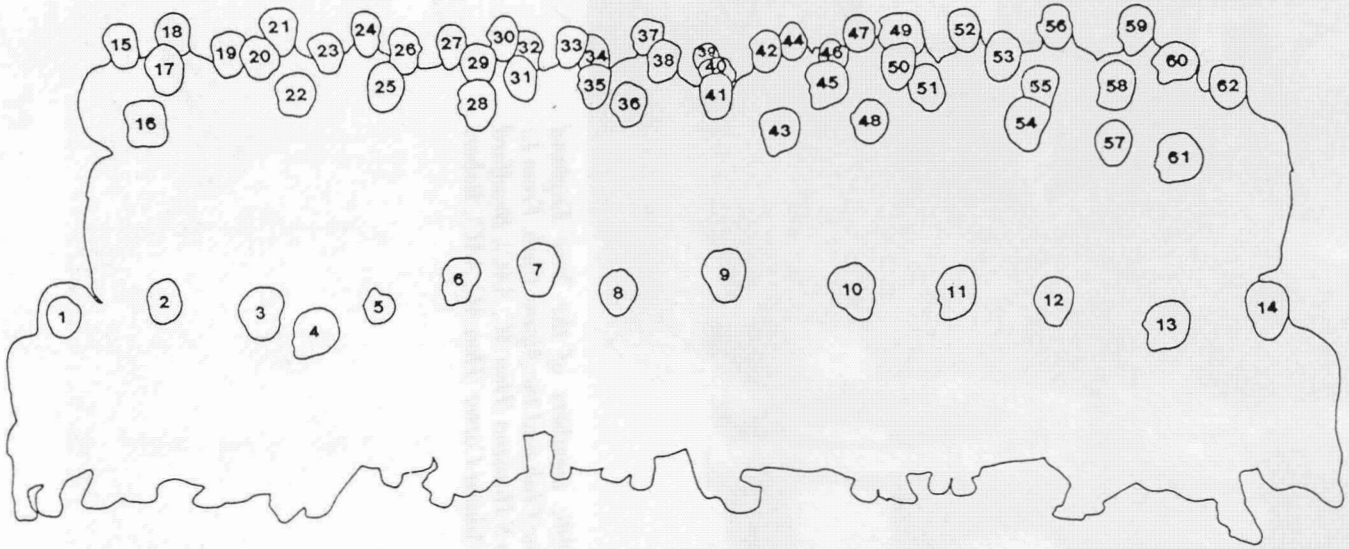
FAREWELL AND HAIL

The present volume of the *Alpine Journal* is the last for which I am responsible. Editing five volumes of the *AJ* has been an exciting and rewarding experience which has taught me much about mountains and mountaineers and has brought me many new friends all over the world. I thank the Alpine Club for entrusting me with a post that has been occupied by so many illustrious predecessors, and all the people, too numerous to mention individually, who have given me their support with practical help, advice, encouragement and friendly criticism. I am very happy that Johanna Merz, who has been such an able Assistant Editor for the past four years, is to succeed to the editorship. I wish her every possible success, and I hope and believe that she will enjoy as much help and encouragement as I have received; an editor needs it.

Ernst Sondheimer



89. Annapurna Reunion, 14-17 June 1990. (p 311)



ANNAPURNA REUNION, 14-17 JUNE 1990

1	.....	12	.....	23	André Roch	33	.....	43	.....	53	Nick Clinch
2	Nimi Sherpa	13	.....	24	Ernst Reiss	34	.....	44	Tony Streather	54	Fritz Wintersteller
3	Jeanne Franco	14	.....	25	Mohan Kholi	35	.....	45	.....	55	Wojciech Branski
4	.....	15	.....	26	.....	36	.....	46	.....	56	Pete Schoening
5	Junko Tabei	16	Tomo Cesen	27	.....	37	Robert Paragot	47	Bernard Pierre	57	.....
6	Maurice Herzog	17	.....	28	.....	38	Francis de Noyelle	48	Marcus Schmuck	58	Kazimierz Olech
7	Marcel Ichac	18	.....	29	.....	39	.....	49	George Band	59	Kurt Diemberger
8	Reinhold Messner	19	.....	30	.....	40	.....	50	.....	60	Andrzej Zawada
9	Edmund Hillary	20	Yutaka Ageta	31	.....	41	.....	51	.....	61	.....
10	John Hunt	21	.....	32	.....	42	.....	52	Norman Hardie	62	.....
11	.....	22	John Boyle								

NB Can you help to complete the above list? Please send names to the Editor.



90. Mount Washington, July 1990: members of the New England Chapter of the American Alpine Club and the Alpine Club. From L: Michael P Ward (AC), Charles S Houston (Hon AC, AAC), Bradford Washburn (Hon AC, AAC), H Adams Carter (Hon AC, AAC), Robert H Bates (AC, AAC). (p 311)