Alpine Club Notes

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ALPINE CLIMBING GROUP

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AC GENERAL AND INFORMAL MEETINGS 1995

17 January	General Meeting: Steve Razzetti, *Pakistan Zindebad*
21-22 January	Informal Meet - North Wales
24 January	Informal Meeting: Italian evening
4 February	Joint AC/ASC Ski Mountaineering Symposium, Losehill Hall, Derbyshire
14 February	General Meeting: Patrick French, *The Adventures of Younghusband*
21 February	Informal Meeting. Julian Freeman-Attwood, *Climbing on the Antarctic Peninsula*
28 February	Informal Meeting: Crag Jones, *Sea stacking adventures in the Shetlands*
11-12 March	North Wales Meet and General Meeting: Phil Wickens & Oliver Shergold, *Indian Himalaya 1994*
14 March	General Meeting: Paul Pritchard, *Extreme Walls – Paine to Asgard*
17-19 March	ACG/AC Glencoe Winter Meet
28 March	Informal Meeting: Ed Douglas, *Climbing and the Media*
4 April	General Meeting: Simon Richardson, *Adventure Climbing in Scotland and Chamonix*
18 April	Informal Meeting: Livia Gollancz, *Out and About in Bhutan*
25 April	Informal Meeting: Dai Lampard, *K7*
9 May	General Meeting: Rebecca Stephens, *Seven Summits*

16 May	Informal Meeting: George Armstrong, *The British Buesten Glacier Expedition*
19-21 May	Peak District Meet: Tom Prentice, *Thalay Sagar*
23 May	Informal Meeting: Victor Saunders, *Across the World*
13 June	Kangchenjunga Evening
5 September	General Meeting: Jerry Gore, *Young Men on Fire*
19 September	Informal Meeting: Alan Hinkes, *K2*
26 September	Informal Meeting: Sally Westmacott, *Classic Alpine Traverses*
29 Sept - 1 Oct	Lake District Meet: Stephen Reid, *The British Ultar Expedition 1994*
10 October	General Meeting: Celia Bull & Paul Pritchard *Trango Tower*
17 October	Informal Meeting: José Bermúdez, *Caucasus Traverse*
24 October	Informal Meeting: Dennis Davis, *1955 Rolwaling Expedition*
11 November	Annual Symposium and Meet: Plas y Brenin, *Mountaineering in the Polar Regions*
14 November	General Meeting: Nick Lewis, *Bootless on the Hummingbird*
21 November	Informal Meeting: Alpine Summer Meet evening
28 November	Informal Meeting: Dan Mazur and Jonathan Pratt *Makalu and Gasherbrum I*
4 December	Annual General Meeting The President, *Valedictory Address*

The Annual London Dinner was held on 5 December at The Great Hall, St Bartholomew's Hospital. The principal guest was Norman Croucher. The toast to the guests was proposed by Vice-Admiral M G Rutherford CBE.

CLIMBING MEETINGS 1995

11-12 March	North Wales Meet
17 - 19 March	ACG/AC Glencoe Winter Meet
19 -21 May	Peak District Meet
22 July - 5 August	Joint Alpine Meet with the ABMSAC and CC: Bregaglia
31 Aug - 8 Sept	Cornwall Meet - joint meet with CC at Bosigran
29 Sept - 1 Oct	Lake District Meet

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Our President is Knighted
Congratulations to Chris Bonington for receiving a Knighthood in the New Year Honours List for his services to mountaineering.

Honorary Membership
Congratulations to Joe Brown who was made an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club in May 1995. This marked the Fortieth Anniversary of his first ascent, with George Band, of Kangchenjunga in 1955, as well as his great contribution to raising the standard of British mountaineering in the Alps and the Greater Ranges as well as at home.

The Boardman Tasker Memorial Award for Mountain Literature
The 13th award ceremony was held at the Alpine Club on 19 October 1995. The judges were Joss Lynam (Chairman), David Craig and Ed Douglas. The winning book was *Geoffrey Winthrop Young* by Alan Hankinson (Hodder Headline). Shortlisted were *The Burgess Book of Lies* by Adrian & Alan Burgess (Cloud Cap/Cordee), *K2 - The Story of the Savage Mountain* by Jim Curran (Hodder Headline), *Vertical Pleasure* by Mick Fowler (Hodder Headline) and *Everest Calling* by Lorna Siggins (Mainstream).

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY 1995

There have been four Council meetings during the year. Rachel Rowe, the Librarian of the Royal Geographical Society, has joined the Council.

The welcome grant from the Pilgrim Trust in November 1994 enabled us to buy and set up hardware and software to computerise the catalogue system using the special library package INMAGIC. The Librarian is keeping abreast of new acquisitions, but so far we have been unsuccessful in obtaining a further grant for a professional cataloguer to load the 15-year backlog since the last published catalogue. We have therefore gratefully accepted a proposal from the Librarian to work some 50 hours extra per month in order to eliminate this backlog during 1996.

The Himalayan Index has been transferred to a second new computer and is being converted to a more modern database programme, ACCESS, which will make it more attractive to foreign mountaineering organisations. The Americans, Swiss and Spanish now have agreed access to it.

The insurance of our book collection, which currently has a replacement value in excess of £1 million, has been renegotiated to protect the identified rarer books from the worst consequences of 'averaging' in the event of a claim. This required a careful review of the rarer books to be carried out by the Honorary Librarian which, in turn, led to a proposal,

agreed with the Club Committee, to dispose of several surplus copies to create a reserve fund to permit desirable purchases at short notice, and for some badly needed restoration work.

Drawing from the Club's collection of prints and photographs, three exhibitions have been mounted during the year: 'Climbs' by Colin Kirkus; 'Exploration of Kangchenjunga', marking the 40th anniversary of the first ascent; and 'Prints of Switzerland' by Lory, father and son. We have also carried out research and provided historical material for the Guides Museum in St Niklaus.

The Library's investment portfolio, handled by Flemings, continues to provide for half our annual operating expenses. The strategy to raise the balance, primarily through renewal of expired covenants and by approaching new members, has met with an encouraging response.

There have also been two generous gifts: a legacy worth over £23,000 from our late member Tony Husbands; and a unique archive of manuscript diaries and photographs by Col Howard-Bury, the Himalayan explorer and leader of the 1921 Everest expedition, from a member who wishes to remain anonymous.

As always, the Library Council is greatly indebted to the core of volunteers supporting the professional Librarian, Margaret Ecclestone. I thank them all.

George Band
Chairman of the Library Council

THE INDIAN MOUNTAINEERING FOUNDATION

An Address by the President, Dr M S Gill,
at the Alpine Club on 13 June 1995

Dr M S Gill said:

For me it is a great honour to be here today because, in my thoughts, this is the mother of mountaineering clubs and the British are the father and mother of climbing as a sport. I feel I have known many distinguished people through the literature of climbing, which is as fine a part of mountaineering as climbing itself.

I myself am frankly masquerading as a mountaineer – my background is in the civil service – but I thought I should say something today because a lot of what you will hear this evening relates to India. I have just come from a meeting of the UIAA in Germany and what I would say to you (and by 'you' I mean all countries in the West) is that we in the IMF would like to make your visits to India more and more trouble-free. We are conscious of our shortcomings, of things which could be improved, of procedures which could be straightened out, of hassles which could be reduced or eliminated.

Since I became President of the IMF last year I have made every possible effort to reduce and straighten out the system for Western visitors. I have insisted on meetings with my Government colleagues from the past including the Chief Secretaries of all the Himalayan States. I have tried to gain agreement for improvements. For instance, liaison officers are perhaps not needed at all, more 'trekking peaks' should be opened up, the fees should be less, the hassle should not be there.

The question of fees is a very large issue and beyond the scope of what I have to say. But I can tell you that it was decided at those meetings that the fee charged by the IMF should be pushed up by 25% and that 25% of that fee should go to the state concerned to be used for its mountain environment protection work.

It was also decided that permissions should be given from one point only – the national point which is in Delhi. This was all agreed by the various states and the situation currently is that the IMF are determined to try to prevent multiple permissions being charged. One permission in Delhi should be quite enough. It is unacceptable if somebody then has to start all over again negotiating with an individual state. We are trying to argue this and see it through, and if any individual state is unwilling to implement what is settled in Delhi with their participation and acceptance, then the IMF is prepared, if necessary, to hold up applications for that particular state. At the same time, it is not acceptable for visitors to gain permission in Delhi and then be prepared to bargain with an individual state by offering a few dollars more. If one state is allowed to get away with charging an extra fee after the Government of India has made certain decisions, then why should not other states follow suit and also charge an extra fee? I thought I must make it clear to you that this is an issue which we are trying to solve.

On other issues we have made some progress. We do not wish to see liaison officers; they are 'old hat' and not necessary any more. We want to have more peaks open, we want to encourage small expeditions with a maximum of twelve people and we do not want to allow more than twelve people to take part by paying more.

All of us have to abide by the systems and regulations of other countries when we visit them, so please bear with us a little bit and don't doubt our good intentions, particularly those of the IMF, however inefficient we may sometimes appear to be.

So that's why I took the opportunity to come here today in person to explain that we are only too anxious to encourage you to come to India. We want everything to be as simple for you as possible and we are doing our best to achieve that. As I said at the beginning, we at the IMF have the utmost goodwill, regard and affection for the Alpine Club and for your past achievements and your people. Thank you.

THE AC/ASC SKI MOUNTAINEERING SYMPOSIUM

The first joint symposium, held on 4 February, between the Alpine Club and the Alpine Ski Club, on Ski Mountaineering, was virtually guaranteed to be a success before it even started, as the event was considerably oversubscribed. A straw pole of the 110 people who did get places indicated that almost all of them were already ski mountaineers of various degrees of experience and seriousness.

The venue was the splendid Losehill Hall, the Peak National Park Centre at Castleton in Derbyshire. The programme covered many aspects of the sport, from the history of its development, equipment, safety, tours in Scotland, 'classic' Alpine touring, unexpected venues such as Corsica and, finally, some serious Himalayan and Polar trips. There were even a few vignettes of mountain skiing in England and Wales, thanks to the patience of Bill O'Connor and Wil Hurford who had been in the right places at the right time.

A fine display of gear was arranged by Snow & Rock, aided by Martin Burrows-Smith, with a selection of his own and Glenmore Lodge equipment. The choice and selection of gear was ably covered in the opening sessions by Martin and Rob Ferguson, while Bill O'Connor gave us plenty of food for thought with his session on safety aspects, aptly titled 'How to be a lifelong member of the ASC'!

An overriding impression of the day was quality, as the standard of all the presentations, and the venue, was extremely high, though a minor problem was the sheer volume of information on gear, techniques and places which precluded audience participation during the sessions. This was, of course, rectified in the bar afterwards!

John Cleare and his team are to be congratulated on a very positive and worthwhile step in organising the day. Members who failed to get a place at this event will be pleased to know that there was overwhelming approval from the audience for further symposiums on this fascinating subject.

ALPINE CLUB SYMPOSIUM 1995: MOUNTAINEERING IN THE POLAR REGIONS

The Symposium, held at Plas y Brenin on 11 November, proved to be a popular occasion with around 100 people attending, of whom ten were invited speakers. The President, Michael Westmacott, introduced proceedings and chaired the morning session, and Charles Clarke chaired for the afternoon. Derek Fordham started the talks by giving a comprehensive overview of Polar mountaineering, followed by a glimpse of ski touring in Svalbard. Discussion of Antarctic mountaineering then followed, with Julian Freeman-Attwood and Crag Jones describing mountaineering on South Georgia. Our Norwegian guest speaker, Robert Caspersen, then

rounded the morning off with his spectacular slides of climbing in Dronning Maud Land.

After lunch, Doug Scott continued the Antarctic theme with a talk on his ascent of Mt Vinson, the highest peak on the continent, followed by a selection of slides from the big walls of Baffin and South Greenland. The subject then changed to the Antarctic Peninsula, which Julian Freeman-Attwood visited on the yacht *Pelagic*, and Rob Collister explored by dog-sled. Mike Banks then moved the subject firmly to the northern hemisphere with his comprehensive introduction to mountaineering in Greenland. This theme continued after tea, with John Peacock describing a Joint Services expedition to the little-known mountains of Peary Land in the far north of Greenland. Phil Bartlett and Rob Collister then talked about expeditions to two different areas of East Greenland. Jerry Gore ended the day with a fast-moving and light-hearted description of a modern big wall expedition to Baffin Island.

Displays were set up around the lecture theatre by the following organisations: Scott Polar Research Institute, Adventure Network International, Snowsled, Frontier and Cotswold the Outdoor People. A raffle was held to support the running costs of the Symposium. The main prize of a Snowsled Ventile jacket was won by Charles Clarke, and five consolation prizes were provided by Cotswold.

The Symposium was organised by Anne-Marie Nuttall with considerable support from Mike Fletcher and Sheila Harrison. We were very grateful for the hospitality of Bryn Roberts and his staff at Plas y Brenin, and for the assistance provided by the sponsors. [*All who attended the Symposium are most grateful to Anne-Marie and her two helpers, Ed.*]

Anne-Marie Nuttall

THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE

Bretton Hall, Yorkshire, 18 November 1995

Disraeli's injunction to ignore history and read 'nothing but biography, for that is life without theory' could not now be considered seriously after the ninth, and perhaps the most successful, International Festival of Mountaineering Literature. For though the theme for 1995 was biography, and the major contributors – Mirella Tenderini, Alan Hankinson, Pete Sinclair and Tom Weir – were speaking about, or as a result of, their contributions to this genre, both 'history' and 'theory' had a day out too.

Mirella Tenderini's main topic was her biography of the outrageously talented and disturbed mystic climber Gary Hemming; but first she gave the sizeable and attentive audience an overview of the history of Italian mountaineering and its literature. This was an impressive offering that delineated – in a way perhaps never formally attempted before – how the

climbing lives, achievements and writing of some of the greatest Italian alpinists of this century can be fully understood only within the cultural, political and aesthetic framework of German Romanticism. Comici's 'drop of water' theory of the *direttissima*, together with Bonatti's awesome solos and solipsisms, immediately came to mind as Mirella spoke of the influence of Nietzsche and other philosophers on Italian mountaineers. Her subsequent acknowledgement that what attracted her to the shooting-star Hemming was the essential poignancy of his life when properly viewed within the hothouse climbing culture of the 1960s, recalled Jim Perrin's opinion that the plainest virtue of the biographer is the 'desire to vindicate his subject, [which is] an essential part of the compassionate affection which underpins good biography'.

Alan Hankinson, deservedly the 1995 Boardman Tasker winner for his biography of Geoffrey Winthrop Young, surprised his audience into private thought and feeling by prefacing his revelations about Young's private and public lives with details about his own personal history and life. It was a deliberate and warmly-received act of 'compassionate affection' which helped his audience to understand how he related to the anguish felt by his subject. Going on to share with Mirella a lively 'Question and Answer' session on the peculiar ethical and aesthetic problems arising during the writing of biographies, he (and she) gave marvellously clear insights into how these problems *have* to be faced and overcome. With two long-awaited biographies of major British mountaineers still unpublished, these were significant answers. At midday the books by Hankinson and Tenderini were selling faster than the infamous Bretton Hall fish and chips.

Pete Sinclair, much praised in Britain two years ago for his autobiographical account of life as a guide in the Tetons, read from work in progress. The challenge to his audience was plain: if we want wilderness to survive, we must simply stop enacting personal and public history within it. Unfortunately, this iconoclasm came too soon after lunch to be taken as seriously as it deserved; but if Sinclair's theory is correct, we shall be paying stiff entry fees to 'Mountain and Wilderness Zones' well before the millennium.

After the usual delightful interlude of prose and poetry, a viewing of new painting and a reading of the winner in the *High* magazine writing competition, the day concluded with the autobiographical musings of Tom Weir. For years, a popular and indefatigable champion of mountain freedoms and delights, and with a committed readership, Tom gave us professionally practised anecdotes culled from a long life. He sent us all home merrier, wiser and much more prepared to accept that mountaineering history is meaningless if it cannot find a place for the fully-documented accounts of individual lives which are inspired not only by the sight and sound of the hills, but also by theories of truth, natural beauty and social justice.

Tim Noble

(For details of future Festivals write to Terry Gifford, Bretton Hall College, West Bretton, Wakefield, W Yorks, WF4 4LG.)

GEORGE MALLORY CLIMBS EVEREST

The 1995 American Mount Everest Expedition
and Commemorative Climb

The aim of the 1995 American Mount Everest Expedition and Commemorative Climb was to honour the team spirit shown by the British expeditions to Mount Everest in 1921, 1922 and 1924, by attempting the North Face/Ridge route that they pioneered. Following two years of preparation, our team was composed of 38 members, including 22 climbers and 16 support personnel.

On 25 March, after an initial conditioning trek in Nepal, our team arrived at the 17,200ft Base Camp site of the 1920's British expeditions where we began a two-month stay. Initial poor weather and snow conditions higher on the route prevented any significant upward progress until the end of the first week in April. However, by mid-April we had established camps at 18,000ft (C1), 19,000ft (C2) and 20,000ft (C3) *en route* to our Advanced Base Camp at nearly 20,500ft. Marginally better weather and a deliberately slow acclimatisation process resulted in the establishment of C4 at the North Col at 23,500ft, C5 at 25,500ft and C6 at 26,800ft. Approximately 180 loads were required to supply all the camps above Advanced Base. On 10 May our first summit team left ABC to position themselves at C6 for a 14 May attempt.

Chirring Sherpa, George Mallory and Jeff Hall were the first to summit at 5.30am following a 1am departure. They were later joined by Kaji Sherpa, Jim Litch, Dan Aguilar and Wongchu Sherpa. A second team, comprising Phinjo Sherpa, Colin Lynch, Jangbu Sherpa, Jay Budnick, Steve Reneker and Kurt Wedberg, summited on 16 May. For George Mallory, it was a closing of the family circle tragically begun when his grandfather disappeared with Andrew Irvine above their Everest high camp on 8 May 1924.

On a brightly sunlit morning just nine days earlier, John Mallory, now 74, and just three at the time of his father's death, visited our Everest Base Camp, with his wife Jennifer and his close friend David Breashears, to commemorate a plaque made of Welsh slate in honour of the early British and native pioneers. This was done at the site of the original memorial on the southern knoll rimming Base Camp. It was John's first visit to Everest and a moment made memorable in the company of his son George.

Of his ascent, George commented: 'From my pack I retrieved a small laminated photograph of my grandparents, George and Ruth, and knelt down to plant it in the snow. This was a profoundly moving moment, one which symbolised the completion of a family project. No more did my grandfather's name weigh me down. The love George and Ruth had for each other has always inspired me and I feel it is appropriate that their photo is on the summit of George Mallory's dreams.'

Paul Pfau
Expedition Leader

A NEW EDITOR FOR THE AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNAL

At the end of January 1996 a press release was circulated by Jed Williamson, Secretary of the American Alpine Club, announcing the appointment of a new Editor for the *American Alpine Journal.*

Christian Beckwith graduated in English Literature from the University of Vermont in 1991. He was a Buckham Overseas Scholar, which took him to the University of Kent, and he studied in northern Italy for a year as an exchange student. He has travelled throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States and is fluent in Italian. He began climbing in 1990 in Wales. In 1994, in Jackson, WY, he founded a community-based climbing organisation called 'The Wayward Mountaineers' and a publication called *The Mountain Yodel.*

Mr Beckwith will be working from the offices of the American Alpine Club at Golden, Colorado, where he will have the benefit of technical backup, contact with day to day operations and access to some of the key people able to give him help and advice. For the coming edition he will be supervised by Jed Williamson. The Editorial Board of the AAJ will be reconstituted with appropriate changes and some of its members will approve lead stories and any layout changes.

I asked Jed Williamson to convey the congratulations of the Alpine Club and the *Alpine Journal* to Christian Beckwith and recalled that Ad Carter had always been generous to me with information and advice. Occasionally I was able to help him too, and I very much hoped that this exchange process would continue.

Johanna Merz

MOUNTAINWATCH '97

Mountain environments and their peoples have, until recently, received little focused attention. Our view of mountains as eternal, remote, and unchangeable is gradually being balanced by a different view: that they and their populations are fragile, endangered directly and indirectly by human activities. Our increasing knowledge of mountain regions, though this is still quite fragmentary, reveals that they occupy about one-fifth of the Earth's land surface and are home to perhaps one-tenth of humankind. If one considers those who live downstream from mountains, or visit them, at least half of the world's population depends in some way on the resources they provide.

In 1992, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, or 'Earth Summit', in Rio de Janeiro, mountain people and their environments finally emerged onto the global environmental stage. By endorsing Chapter 13 – 'Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development' – of Agenda 21, the plan for action developed in Rio gave mountains a

priority for global attention comparable to that given to the depletion of tropical rainforests, desertification, ozone depletion, and climate change.

The main activity deriving from Chapter 13 has been the organisation of a series of inter-governmental and non-governmental consultations around the world, under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The first European inter-governmental consultation will take place in Scotland in April 1996. A world conference on sustainable mountain development will probably take place in 1998. All of these activities are directed at encouraging governments to give a higher priority to their mountain environments and people, and to work more closely with international and non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and local communities towards sustainable development in mountain areas.

The implementation of policies towards sustainable development requires reliable and, preferably, long-term scientific information and its effective provision to the relevant users. Towards this goal, the Mountain Regions Programme of the University of Oxford's Environmental Change Unit and the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers propose to hold three linked one-day meetings in September 1997.

1. A scientific seminar focusing on research in the Himalaya, linked to the development of the mountain component of the RGS Geographical Observatories Programme (GOP). The participants would include European and Asian scientists working in the Himalaya. The seminar would begin by placing the GOP within the context of global research and monitoring initiatives.
2. A scientific conference to evaluate priorities for mountain research involving European scientists. The participants would include European scientists and representatives of the European Commission and funding agencies. A survey of ongoing mountain research by European scientists would be prepared in advance of the conference.
3. An open meeting – involving mountaineers, NGOs, the tourism industry, and scientists – to discuss the major forces of change in mountains around the world. The meeting would be aimed at a wide audience interested in the future of mountain people and their environments, and could end with a major public evening event.

The first two meetings would take place in Oxford, and the third in London. For more information, contact: Martin Price, Programme Leader, Mountain Regions Programme, Environmental Change Unit, University of Oxford, 1a Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TB.

Martin Price
Mountain Regions Programme

THE FIRST ASCENT OF THE WETTERHORN FROM GRINDELWALD

In my article entitled 'The Eagle's Nest: A Victorian Mountaineer and his Summer Home in the Alps' (*AJ100*, 208, 1995), I described Sir Alfred Wills's 1854 ascent of the Wetterhorn, mentioning that the mountain had been climbed three times before, though never from the Grindelwald side, an assertion which often appears in mountain literature. Wills himself thought that his ascent was the first from any direction, though in a footnote in *Wanderings among the High Alps* (2nd edition, p264) he discusses other expeditions, referring to possible confusion between the three peaks which make up the group: the Rosenhorn, the Mittelhorn and the Wetterhorn itself. He goes on to say that:

> I should not have thought it likely that the fact would have been altogether forgotten, if the actual Wetterhorn *had* been reached before our attempt. One of my guides was a Grindelwald, and another a Lauterbrunnen man, the former being one of a very numerous family, most of whom were mountaineers and hunters, and neither of them had heard of any previous successful ascent. They both spent the morning of the day on which we started, at Grindelwald, where our preparations excited a vast deal of attention, but certainly did not hear such a fact mentioned by any of the Grindelwald people, though several cases of failure were related.

We now know that the mountain was first conquered, from the other side, in 1844, but our Honorary Member Albert Eggler has written from Switzerland to draw our attention to an ascent from the Grindelwald side, a year later, regarded in Swiss mountaineering circles as having priority for this route. This was by Franz Fankhauser and Dr Gottfried Roth, accompanied by three local guides, Christian Michel, Johann Bohren and Peter Bohren – this last, the selfsame Grindelwald man, referred to above, who was on the Wetterhorn with Wills later on.

This ascent was the subject of confusion from the very outset, as recounted in an article last summer in the *Oberländisches Volksblatt*, sent to us by Herr Eggler, marking the centenary of the event. In July 1845 several Swiss newspapers carried accounts of an ascent, on the 9th of that month, of the 'highest peak of the Wetterhorn' by a Scottish climber S T Speer. This subsequently proved to be the Mittelhorn – actually higher than the true Wetterhorn by a mere three metres – but the reports provoked a contradictory statement from Roth and Fankhauser, saying that *they* had been the first to reach the highest point, in their case of the Wetterhorn proper, two days earlier. We know that they were wrong in their height assertion – by a tiny margin – but otherwise the statement is now believed to be correct. Gottlieb Stüder, however, writing in the 1850s, refers to this expedition as an 'attempt', and this view may have been widely held at the time Wills came to the area.

Indeed, the opinion persisted for the best part of a century, and it was in the 1940s that it was finally discounted by Swiss mountaineering historians.

So why did Peter Bohren – with the apparent connivance of most of the inhabitants of Grindelwald – mislead Wills into believing that he was making a first ascent? Albert Eggler writes that Bohren probably expected higher remuneration for a first ascent. 'It is known that some guides have not always been very honest. This, for example, can be demonstrated by the "certificate" which was given to Dora d'Istria, certifying that she had climbed the Mönch as the first one – which was not at all true. This document was signed by Peter Bohren and Ulrich Lauener, who had guided Wills, as well as three other guides!' Herr Eggler concludes his letter by saying that 'Alfred Wills has the merit of having reached the summit of the Wetterhorn by the Chrinnen glacier and the virgin ridge, since called the Willsgrätli, now the most popular route. Parties before Wills must have passed by the rocks of the Beesbärgli, the Hochfirn and the couloir south of the Wettersattel.'

Further information is given in the article by Rudolf Rubi in the *Oberländisches Volksblatt/Echo von Grindelwald* dated 7 July 1995 under the title 'Duell um den Grindelwalder Hausberg', a copy of which is in the Alpine Club Library.

Peter Berg

MOUNT WILLIAMS

In *AJ100*, 75-81, 1995, Mt Williams (*c*4970ft) on Anvers Island, Antarctic Peninsula, was reported to have received its first ascent. Actually it was a third ascent, since a party of Chilean mountaineers climbed Mt Williams by the NE ridge on 15 February 1982 (see *AJ88*, 210, 1983). Members of the same group made the second ascent two days later, via the steep SW ridge. Information about these ascents appeared in *Revista Andina 100*, 69, 1983, and in *AAJ25*, 213, 1983.

Evelio Echevarría