
Alpine Club Notes

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LECTURES	D O Wynne-Jones
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ALPINE CLIMBING GROUP

PRESIDENT	D Wilkinson
HONORARY SECRETARY	R A Ruddle

GENERAL, INFORMAL, AND CLIMBING MEETINGS 1998

13 January	General Meeting: David Hamilton, <i>Pakistan</i>
27 January	Informal Meeting: Roger Smith <i>Arolla Alps</i>
10 February	General Meeting: Steve Bell, <i>The Seven Summits</i>
18 February	Informal Meeting: Rupert Hoare, <i>More Alpine Classics</i>
24 February	Northern Lecture: Andy Benson, <i>Big Walls on the Torssugatog Spires</i>
24 February	Informal Meeting: Derek Fordham, <i>Gunnbjörnsfeld</i>
27-28 February	ACG/AC Aviemore Winter Dinner and Meet
10 March	General Meeting: Steve Razzetti, <i>Kailas Pilgrimage</i>
13-14 March	North Wales Meet, Lecture & Out-of-London Dinner
19 March	Eric Shipton evening, with Peter Steele
24 March	Northern Lecture: Andy Perkins, <i>From Lofoten to Paine</i>
21 April	General Meeting: Royal Robbins, <i>On the Big Stone</i>
23 April	Northern Lecture: Royal Robbins, <i>On the Big Stone</i>
28 April	Informal Meeting: Cynthia Gamble, <i>Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc: Climbers and Painters of the Alps</i>
8-10 May	Derbyshire Meet, Informal Dinner and Lecture
12 May	General Meeting: Malcolm Eldridge, <i>The Alps from End to End</i>
20 May	Informal Meeting: Catherine Destivelle, <i>Caterina of the Rocks</i>
25 July-15 Aug	Informal Alpine Camping Meet (with ABMSAC & CC)
3-13 September	Cornwall Meet (jointly with CC)

- 22 September General Meeting: Audrey Salkeld,
The Rise and Fall of the German Bergfilm Industry
- 25-27 Sept Lakes Meet, Lecture and Out-of-London Dinner
- 7 October Alpine Ski Club buffet and lecture
- 13 October General Meeting: Margaret Body,
Lives and Times in the Book Trade
- 20 October Northern Lecture: Andy Kirkpatrick, *The Troll Wall*
- 10 November Informal Meeting: *Tales from the Alpine Club*
Caucasus Meet
- 14 November Annual Symposium and Meet at Plas y Brenin,
Greater Alaska
- 17 November Northern Lecture: Jim Gregson, *Brushing Back the Fringe*
- 24 November Informal Meeting: Dennis Gray, *Slack: the Fun of Climbing*
- 1 December Val d'Aosta Evening
- 11 December Annual General Meeting
The President's Valedictory Address

The Annual London Dinner was held on 12 December at The Great Hall, St Bartholomew's Hospital. The principal guest was Heinrich Harrer. The toast to the guests was proposed by Jim Curran.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

New Zealand Order of Merit

We offer our warmest congratulations to George Lowe OBE who has been appointed a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

Honorary Membership of the Alpine Club

We also offer our warmest congratulations to two new Honorary Members: Nawang Gombu and Robin Hodgkin.

Nawang Gombu carried twice to the South Col in 1953 and was the first to reach the summit of Everest twice, with the Americans in 1963 and with the Indians in 1965. He had a long tenure as instructor at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling and recently retired as its Director.

Robin Hodgkin took part in the first expedition to Masherbrum, in 1938. From a camp at 7500m above the SE Face he made a bold summit bid, with J B Harrison, which was only defeated by storm and avalanche. As a result both climbers were severely frostbitten while descending in a blizzard. During the years after Masherbrum Robin Hodgkin made many rewarding expeditions, including first ascents in Sudan and East Africa and, with Edward Peck, in the Ala Dagh. Later, as headmaster of Abbotsholme School in Derbyshire, he led school parties on inspirational climbs in the Pyrenees, Julian Alps, Tyrol, Bregaglia and Norway, as well as in Scotland and Wales. From 1982-85 he was Chairman of the Mount Everest Foundation.

THE BOARDMAN TASKER MEMORIAL AWARD FOR MOUNTAIN LITERATURE

The 16th award ceremony was held at the Alpine Club on 11 November 1998. The judges were Dawson Stelfox (Chairman), John Porter and Dave Gregory. The winning book was *Eric Shipton: Everest and Beyond* by Peter Steele (Constable). Shortlisted were *Sacred Mountains of the World* by Edwin Bernbaum (University of California Press), *Postcards from the Ledge* by Greg Child (The Mountaineers, USA), *The Peak: Past and Present* by Gordon Stainforth (Constable) and *A Deathful Ridge: a Novel of Everest* by J A Wainwright (Mosaic Press, Canada).

THE KING ALBERT MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

The third award ceremony of the Foundation was held on 12 September 1998, when the Gold Medal and Diploma of the Foundation were presented to four recipients nominated by the Trustees for their contribution to the principles defined in the statutes of the Foundation. (Details of the Foundation, and of the previous award winners were published in AJ100, 1995, page 348, and in AJ102, 1997, page 367.) The presentations were made at the Intersoc Palace, Maloja (Bregaglia) which was once a magnificent hotel opened in 1884 by a Belgian count, Camille de Renesse. The recipients of the awards were:

Intersoc

This is a Belgian society founded in 1949 for the purpose of organising mountain holiday camps for young persons familiar only with the plains and the sea. During its 49-year existence, its expanding activities have introduced over three million people to the alpine world of Switzerland, providing them with the opportunity of getting acquainted with mountain country and mountain dwellers, of acquiring the confidence and skills needed for mountain travel, and of appreciating all aspects of the mountain environment, whilst respecting their unique grandeur.

Elizabeth Hawley

For over 35 years, with great devotion and skill, Elizabeth Hawley, an American resident in Kathmandu, has recorded details of mountaineering expeditions in Nepal. Her work, which has become a valuable reference source for mountaineers worldwide, is based on personal interviews with mountaineers and has resulted in the production of an authentic, complete, and accurate record of the history of climbing in Nepal. In addition, she is engaged in the affairs of the Himalayan Trust, founded by Sir Edmund Hillary, which supports medical, educational, cultural and reafforestation projects in the Sola Khumbu district south-west of Everest.

Professor Augusto Gansser

Professor Gansser is one of the great pioneers of geological survey, and a leading authority on the geology of the world's mountains. In 1936, upon qualifying at Zürich University, he accompanied Dr A Heim on a six-month journey across several regions of the Himalaya and Tibet, carrying out structural studies and surveys of the mountains. Numerous subsequent visits to those areas resulted in the publication in 1964 of his classic work *Geology of the Himalaya* which earned him the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society. He has carried out a series of exploratory expeditions to Patagonia, the Canadian Arctic, the Northern Urals, Antarctica, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and he has made valuable contributions to knowledge about the mountains of Bhutan.

Land Der Berg

This is a title made famous by a brilliant documentary series produced by a photographic team led by Lutz Maurer of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF). In the course of 109 programmes presented over a period of 16 years, the team has provided increasingly large and appreciative television audiences in Europe with the opportunity to acquire a close acquaintance with a wide range of themes – alpine, social, cultural, and scientific – centred around the world's mountains. Characteristic of its high standards are ethical and objective reporting, comprehensive coverage, and the technical excellence of its productions.

Trevor Braham

**THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY
ANNUAL REPORT 1998**

There have been three Council meetings during the year. The computerisation of the catalogue system has continued. Entries for all the books (including expedition reports) have now been completed, totalling some 15,000 items, and work continues on entries for mountain guides and journals which should be completed early in 1999. Applications to help fund this work were made to several charitable bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, but without success except for a helpful donation of £2000 from the Chris Brasher Trust. We are therefore continuing to finance it from our own resources.

Work continues on the Himalayan Index, which lists 2500 peaks over 6000 metres, 5000 attempts or ascents, 4300 references and 30,000 climbers' names. Consideration is being given to putting it on the Internet so that it can be accessed directly by a far greater number of users, to justify the considerable effort and some £15,000 that has been invested in it.

We are grateful to Peter Berg who this summer assisted our honorary archivist Livia Gollancz in reviewing the status of the Club's archives.

It was felt that the time has come to employ a full-time professional archivist for a year or more to replace the present, mostly hand-written, catalogue with a computerised database which would then become an essential research tool and help to maintain this unique resource for future generations. This would have to be a separately funded project for which we would seek grant or lottery assistance and a proposal is in preparation.

A recent marvellous addition to the archives is a gift from Commander and Mrs Armitage, being a collection of over 200 items from Eric Shipton, including many letters to Pamela Freston, who was Mrs Armitage's mother.

The Library's investment portfolio continues to be handled prudently by Flemings, providing for more than half our annual operating expenses. Renewal of members' expired covenants, donations and gifts of duplicate books and journals which may be sold are more than ever appreciated to help fill the gap.

Ever mindful of possible disaster affecting the Club's valuable collection, the recommendations of a working group to refine our Disaster Plan against fire or flood have been implemented. These included installation of a fire-proof partition between the library and the archives room, and a flood control pump in the basement.

As always, the Council is greatly indebted to its core of volunteer workers and to our professional Librarian Margaret Ecclestone. I thank them all.

George Band

Chairman of the Library Council

THE ALPINE CLUB SYMPOSIUM 1998 MOUNTAINEERING IN GREATER ALASKA

The 1998 Alpine Club Symposium once again provided a timely reminder that a wealth of excellent, high-standard and seriously committing mountaineering can be enjoyed without the increasing costs and bureaucratic issues affecting expeditions to the Himalaya. 'The Call of the Wild' was the theme, Plas y Brenin the venue and the Symposium took place on Saturday 14 November

The event, which was well-organised by Nick Lewis and chaired by our then president Chris Bonington, began with a brief history of climbing in both Alaska and the Yukon. The speaker was special guest and long-time ex-pat Chris Jones, who returned later in the morning to battle up a new route on the spectacular Devil's Thumb, playing 'climbing games' with the legendary Lito Tejada Flores. The programme continued with a polished talk from the evergreen Mike Banks on pioneering rock climbing in Canada's Logan Mountains and his ascent of McKinley in 1962 as leader of the first British expedition to reach the summit of North America's highest peak. Later, Dave Edwards took a light-hearted look at a two-man, non-technical ski mountaineering trip to the Juneau Icefield.

The afternoon upped the ante with Paul Ramsden snatching a break in the dismal weather that accompanied his trip to the South Face of Thunder Mountain, to make an impressive first ascent of the Central Couloir. He was followed by top Yosemite activist Kevin Thaw, a British export with recent US residency, who flew us in to the Kitchatna Spires to revel in some of its big wall climbing. Thaw was delightfully unassuming yet full of enthusiasm. You could immediately tell this guy meant business when he indicated a barely discernible two-inch wide and one-eighth-inch thick smear of ice tenuously attached to 2000ft of vertical granite and said, with all sincerity, that there was 'for sure, plenty of opportunity to grab new ice rows early in the season'. How anyone from Oldham can develop such an appalling accent in so little time is beyond comprehension.

The audience was then allowed a slight breather as Chris Townsend traversed through the Tombstone Mountains in a deliciously gentle, cross-country ski tour. Yet even here it was impossible to ignore the steep virgin granite walls and soaring mixed lines that formed the backdrop.

Staying with Canada and in possibly the most informative talk of the day, Dean James, Britain's most knowledgeable and experienced Yukon activist, took us through a wealth of both established and unclimbed objectives in the vast mountain ranges south-east of Alaska. While noting that most climbers head for the well-known, high altitude targets like Logan, James, on several occasions and with a casual waft of the laser pointer across a screen filled with a myriad of snowy peaks, revealed entire glacier systems surrounded by virgin summits.

We then moved back to the 'Great One' where, in the most understated talk of the day, Jim Hall took an incredulous audience on a monstrous traverse of McKinley. Having ascended the severely lengthy South East Buttress and, largely due to financial reasons, unable to take the easy option of going down the West Buttress and flying out from Kahiltna, Hall and his partner opted to descend the Original 1913 Karstens Ridge and walk out to the highway. That's very nearly a month of two-man, unsupported, total commitment.

While every lecture proved compulsive viewing, for me the highlight of the day was Tony Smythe's memorable account of his first ascents in the vintage years of the '60s of Dan Beard and the Moose's Tooth West Summit. This well-prepared, highly amusing and self-effacing lecture ended with Barry Biven and the late Frank Smythe's son casually deciding to walk out down the unseen Ruth Glacier, build a raft with whatever material they could find and float out to civilisation. The ensuing and inevitable epic, recounted with characteristic British understatement, left them half drowned, fighting for survival and totally out of food for four days. Originally, Smythe had declined an invitation to talk at this symposium, feeling with typical modesty that he had nothing of interest for the audiences of today. Weren't we all glad he changed his mind.

In summary, the overall impressions gleaned from this symposium were

of a region with easy, efficient and generally fast access, often to a glacier base camp beneath the mountain of one's choice within 24 hours of leaving the UK. This would typically be followed by unstable weather, challenging conditions and lonely committing adventure in a vast array of venues that could provide everything from non-technical climbing to the highest standards of today. There was also a disturbingly large number of stories concerning grizzly bears and gnarly river crossings.

The only real problem with the day (apart from occasional irritation caused by the fact that the modern Kodak Carousel is, inevitably, unable to cope with many 30-year-old slide mounts, and that the softer-spoken brethren would have been more effective with a lapel mike) was that the Symposium left around 100 frustrated climbers realising that there was a wealth of undiscovered country they just HAD to visit. Thanks are due to Nick Lewis and all concerned for organising this well-run and most enjoyable Symposium.

The AC Symposium in November 1999 will take a new look at Pakistan.

Lindsay Griffin

THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE

University College of Bretton Hall, Yorkshire, 21 November 1998

The cover of this year's programme featured the keynote speaker, Doug Robinson, in mid-leap, against a backdrop of the High Sierra. This image of potentially dangerous physical activity was juxtaposed with the festival title 'The Climber as Visionary'. It provided the usual capacity audience at Bretton with a tantalising visualisation of Robinson's theory that, as a function of total commitment to and involvement with the mountain environment, it is 'the endorphin effect' which helps 'frame our perception of action in the wilderness'. In other words: get the adrenalin rush first and the vision thing will follow. Other speakers to this challenging title, though less inclined to pin down the nature of visionary experience so precisely or so contentiously, gave us a range of fascinating and complementary perspectives on this elusive concept.

Opening the festival, Peter Steele, winner of the 1998 Boardman Tasker Award for his biography of Eric Shipton (Constable, 1998) related how he had found material for his book by making unlikely linkages and connections and by travelling to obscure parts of the world. Steele followed a trail of ice axes left by Shipton with his lovers and discovered people more than happy to talk at length about that 'genial, modest, apparently somewhat detached mountaineer'. What didn't come across as effectively in this Cook's tour of a talk, but does in the book, is what Michael Westmacott recognises as characteristic of Shipton the ascetic: a 'depth of feeling underneath a calm and diffident exterior' and 'a total commitment to mountain exploration'.

But Steele showed us how the visionary biographer – like the visionary mountaineer – must undertake a journey of sorts into regions still unexplored if he is to bring back a shaman's secret.

Dennis Gray followed with linked readings from his new book, *Slack* (published privately, 1998). Drawing again upon a lifetime's experience of travelling and mountaineering around the world with any number of partners, his dry humour, shrewd observation of character and situation and sharp sense of the absurd entertained us. This sequel to his first book of stories, *Tight Rope*, provided another feast of near-mythical anecdotes (the infamous Wilson/Barry near-fight in an Indian curry house over the future of Plas y Brenin being particularly collectable); but also a type of writing imbued with a romantic mysticism that one feels is Gray's own preferred authentic voice and style. It was a perfect lead-in to the full-bore, total-sensory, in-your-head presentation by master photographer and now essayist, Gordon Stainforth.

In a dramatic presentation that for the first, but not the last time that day, started in darkness, Stainforth, armed with the stunning master images of his new book *The Peak*, committed himself to a bold 'experimental' journey. Courting controversy, Stainforth took us on a journey back to the dawn of historical time in the Peak District. Like Gray, he too was not shy of showing how much further out and further in he had journeyed more than most of us in pursuit of an elusive all-encompassing vision. Much of his presentation was based on two philosophical premises – that the visionary is a rational madman and that a first ascent from impossible to possible is a type of realised vision. Using music and a wide-ranging literary and scientific frame of reference, Stainforth attempted to elicit in us what he had set out to recreate in his text and photos: a childlike wonder at the forms and sights of The Peak. Here, for all to see through history, has resided a visionary community, now capped by climbers. Over lunch, opinion was divided about whether he had managed to take us all the way with him, both in the presentation and the book; but the applause that recognised his efforts was effusive.

Elaine Brook, erstwhile long-time dweller in and seeker after meaning in the world's highest mountains, then took us down labyrinthine corridors of prose in pursuit of her self knowledge. Seeking a sort of Shangri-La of the soul in her new book *In Search of Shambhala* and starting with climbing as a way of life and seeing, she charted for us how her journey took her to new places in her self as well as in the mountains that she loves.

The short debate that followed with Gill Kent, Pam Caswell and Elaine on 'women's writing' (prompted by Jill Lawrence's address to the Festival ten years ago), though interesting enough and topical, seemed out of place. It did not help that the bravura, in-drag 'performance' by *High Deputy* Editor Ian Smith as the winner of the *High/Festival* Writing Competition (programmed after the debate), though intrinsically hilarious and a serious parody, jarred with the theme of visions we had been induced to follow and undercut the theme of taking women's climbing writing seriously.

In fact, as a matter of some urgency, the climbing community needs a whole literature festival devoted solely to women's climbing and women climbing writers. It should be addressed by Jill Lawrence herself, and also by emerging writers like Kay Dowling, whose crafted stories in contrasting styles came second and third in the *High/Festival* competition, making her much more than just a writer of promise. If Bretton was not then quite the time for this, it is still most certainly the place.

Dawson Stelfox then gave us the 1998 Boardman-Tasker adjudication speech. This annual item is always worth listening to, as much for what it reveals about the judges' efforts to justify and rationalise a book's non-inclusion in the list or non-award as for their struggle to find a winner. Given that each year there is an impossibility of comparison between competing books which are the best of their genre, there have still been some monumental errors of judgement – as well as some stupendous speeches in defence of these judgements. Surely the Festival is now of an age and experience to publish a collection of award speeches, so that we punters may compare those judgements which, by literary skill and sleight of hand, gloss over seriousness, reveal a predilection for a style or overpraise mediocrity. How fascinating it would also be to hear a really controversial judgement from that most able if controversial of literary figures in the mountaineering world, Jim Perrin.

After the awards came true grit: Ian Mitchell took us up *Scotland's Mountains before the Mountaineers* (Luarth Press, 1998). Accompanied on guitar and voice by Jack Law, Ian lauded the work of the Gaelic visionary poet, Duncan MacIntire. According to Mitchell, long before Munro was classifying ascents of significant lumps of Scotland, involuntary ascents of Scottish mountains were being made by Spanish and Hanoverian soldiers and voluntarily by impecunious poets, spies, gamekeepers and painters. This was an impassioned, well-structured presentation which had even the least materialist of listeners quite converted to the study of local history as a quest for truth and prepared to challenge an established orthodoxy. A viewing of Peter Osbourne's fine line drawings and bolder, more impressionistic oils displayed as 'Held Heights', closed the afternoon's proceedings.

After tea, we settled for a keynote visionary presentation and were not disappointed: Doug Robinson's disembodied voice came out of darkness accompanied by stunning images of his lifelong exploration of the High Sierra. A man for all and in all seasons, Robinson was drawing on his book *A Night On The Ground A Day In The Open* (Mountain N' Air Books, 1996). This seminal collection of essays, based in part on his years immersed in nature within the High Sierra, has prompted claims that Robinson is the new American interpreter of mountain visions. His spin on the vision thing was frightening: no armchair after-the-event reinvention or romanticising for him; no W H Murray-type fondness for a mountain world recreated in tranquility (in David Craig's words, 'dislimmed, blurred, conjured nearly away with lofty chimeras to take its place').

Robinson has spent months alone above the snowline, skiing the Sierra climbing and exploring in nearly every nook and cranny of that great range. Like Shipton before him, he obviously thrives on true commitment, deprivation and huge physical effort; and knows as the visionary Dag Hammersköld knew that it is not simply the external journey which will provide a vision, for 'the longest journey is the journey inwards'. But what sets Robinson apart from the rest of us would-be visionaries is his search for the biochemical well-springs of insight. Using his own life as the experiment in the laboratory of wilderness, Robinson almost persuaded us there was a causal link between the two – that states of mind and body can be conditioned by this experiment – even though he conceded rather ruefully that the long-awaited book that will prove the link may never be completed. It was heady stuff and, for the second year running, Terry Gifford provided an American big-range, big-name who sent us out into the Yorkshire mists in search of something we might yet aspire to if not yet attain.

Tim Noble

THE ALPINE CLUB COLLECTION OF PICTURES

Currently the 'collection' consists of some 560 pictures (oil paintings, watercolours, coloured engravings, etc) ranging from the valuable (Ruskin, Loppe, Whympster, Compton etc) to the unsigned and unknown, often by an amateur hand and having little value. There are also paintings and engravings with no direct (or otherwise) connection with mountains.

The collection has been accumulated as a result of the generosity of members and friends, usually after they have died. We have a reasonably exact idea (thanks to Bob Lawford's research) of the donations to the Club over the last century or so from records in the Alpine Journals. We know that from time to time pictures have been sold through the salerooms for reasons that are not always clear. It is also true that quite a number of (often valuable) paintings have simply disappeared. Many pictures were, for example, stored by members during the Second World War and, for what may be a variety of reasons, have not reappeared.

The collection is kept, principally, in racks in the basement, from whence they appear on occasion to form part of exhibitions in the lecture room. Several pictures are also on prominent display through the AC rooms. From time to time we receive requests to take part in exhibitions elsewhere, for instance recently at the Abbot Hall Gallery, the Musée de Grenoble and the Palazzo Bricherasio, Turin. Such loans are properly packed, professionally transported and always fully insured.

By and large the collection has survived in reasonable shape considering moves and varying storage conditions. However, the time is fast approaching (and in some cases may well have passed) when some serious conservation is needed. The watercolours, in particular, are in a very delicate state. Many

watercolours are 'foxed' due to moisture in general and inappropriate (ie non acid-free) mounts, in particular. Additionally a number of oil-paintings (often rather valuable) are in urgent need of cleaning, particularly those with oxidised varnish on their surfaces. Some of the paintings are badly framed and mounted, and quite a number are not framed or mounted at all.

It is difficult at this stage to estimate how much money is required to conserve the whole collection. However, it is true to say that the collection will continue to deteriorate, albeit slowly in most cases, if nothing is done. The Committee is currently examining ways of raising money to establish a fund from which the conservation of the collection could stem.

Peter Mallalieu,

Hon Keeper of the Club's Pictures

THE ALPINE CLUB MEET AT LAUTERBRUNNEN

25 July – 16 August 1998

About fifty people attended this joint meet with the Climbers' Club and the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club. The weather for the first ten days was variable, though the rain fell mainly in the evenings and nights and there were several hot sunny days. This meant that climbing depended upon being lucky enough to be at the hut at the right time. The second half of the meet was hot and sunny with temperatures of 30°C. Conditions on the mountains were very 'dry' with a lot of bare rock that 15 years ago would have been snow or mixed ground. Many of the major peaks of the region were climbed including the Wetterhorn, Mönch (by several routes including the Nollen), Eiger (traverse via W Flank and the S Ridge to Obermönchjoch), Gspaltenhorn, Grosshorn, Breithorn, Aletschhorn, Fiescherhorner, Finsteraarhorn and Jungfrau (also by the Inner Rottal). In the valleys and on the lesser peaks, many enjoyable walks and mountain biking expeditions were undertaken. A mildly controversial innovation was the use of helicopters to reach some of the huts, avoiding the seven-hour walk-in, and probably no more expensive than the railway for a party of four.

Jeff Harris

THE RESTORATION OF ST PETER'S CHURCH, ZERMATT

On Wednesday 30 December, while the Christmas decorations still illuminated the ever beautiful winter scene of Zermatt, a service of Thanksgiving and Dedication was held to mark the restoration of the English Church.

Since 1870 St Peter's Church has stood on its site above the Alpine Museum, with a ready welcome for all those who want an English-speaking

Church to attend whilst visiting or working in Zermatt. In the heyday of British alpinism it was regarded as very much the parish church of the British Alpine Club, but now attracts English-speaking people from across Europe and further afield. The church is owned by the Intercontinental Church Society (ICS) and staffed by English clergy throughout the winter and summer seasons, who stay in a nearby apartment. This enables St Peters to be open to visitors daily, and to offer Sunday services, as well as various mid-week events – next time you find yourself in Zermatt it is well worth dropping in.

Over £60,000 has been raised to restore St Peter's to its former dignity, with repairs and redecoration both inside and out. The result is truly splendid, with evidence of skilled craftsmanship and careful attention to detail which has retained the charm and beauty of the building whilst ensuring its use into the next Millennium. The service of Thanksgiving and Dedication was led by the Chaplain at the time, the Rev Alan Purser, and Mr Tim Royle (a Council Member and Trustee of ICS) preached on the theme of Christ as the Light of the World. This was followed by a reception in the Mont Cervin Hotel.

The next day was New Year's Eve and as the congregation gathered to celebrate Holy Communion at 11.15pm we were conscious of the tremendous history of this building, which was established in the aftermath of the Whymper expedition and which still stands today to point people to the One who made the mountains, the Lord of heaven and earth.

May I take this opportunity of thanking all those members who contributed to the appeal.

Alan G Purser

GUIDEBOOKS

The following is a list of the guidebooks in print available from the AC office (each volume plus 75p postage unless collected from the Club House).

	Members	Shops
	£	£
Bernese Oberland	11.00	15.00
Bernina and Bregaglia	13.25	18.50
Dolomites	11.00	15.00
Ecrins Massif	11.00	15.00
Mont Blanc Volume 1	11.00	15.00
Mont Blanc Volume 2	11.00	15.00
Valais Alps East	13.25	18.50
Valais Alps West	14.25	19.50