The Boardman Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature

Space constraints in this two-year volume of the *AJ* prevent us following recent practice and reproducing the speeches of jury chairmen for 2009 or 2010, however most of the books shortlisted have been reviewed in either this volume or 2009. The prize of £3000 commemorates the lives of Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker and is given to the author or co-authors of an original work that has made an outstanding contribution to mountain literature. On 17 May 1982 Boardman and Tasker were last seen on Mount Everest attempting to traverse The Pinnacles on the unclimbed north-east ridge at around 8250m. Their deaths marked the end of a remarkable era in British mountaineering.
The winners, shortlists and judges for 2009 and 2010 were as follows:

2009

Winner: **Beyond the Mountain** by Steve House, *Patagonia Books, USA* (*Vertebrate Publishing in UK*)

Others shortlisted:
Cairngorm John by John Allen, *Sandstone Press*
Hooker & Brown by Jerry Auld, *Brindle & Glass, Canada*
The Longest Climb by Dominic Faulkner, *Virgin Books*
Revelations by Jerry Moffatt, *Vertebrate Publishing*
Deep Powder and Steep Rock by Chic Scott, *Assiniboine Publishing, Canada*

Judges: Phil Bartlett, Kym Martindale and Ian Smith

2010

Winner: **Ron Fawcett: Rock Athlete** by Ron Fawcett with Ed Douglas, *Vertebrate Publishing*

Others shortlisted:
No Way Down by Graham Bowley, *Viking Penguin*
The Hut Builder by Laurence Fearnley, *Penguin Books, New Zealand*
Climbing Philosophy for Everyone by Stephen E Schmid, ed, *Wiley-Blackwell*
Unjustifiable Risk? by Simon Thompson, *Cicerone Press*

Judges: Ian Smith, Kym Martindale and Barry Imeson

In Memoriam

The Alpine Club Obituary	**Year of Election** (including to ACG)
Chris Astill	1985
Patrick (Paddy) Boulter	1972
Roger Childs	1997
Robert (Bob) Creswell	2007
Robin Day	1968
John Edwards	1982
Nawang Gombu	Hon 1998
Alistair Gordon	1993
Alfred Gregory	1952 (Hon 2004)
Eileen Healey	LAC 1947
Mike Hewson	1994
Frederick Hill	1975
Peter Hodgkiss	1988
John Kempe	1952
Erhard Loretan	Hon 2010
James (Joss) Lynam	1970
John Moss	1972
Margaret Munro	LAC 1956
Mary Noake	LAC 1965
Charles (Hamish) Pelham-Burn	1950
Frederick Robert (Bob) Robinson	1968
Balwant Singh Sandhu	2001
Peter Stone	1970
Pat Vaughan	1954
Chris Walker	2006
Alan Wright	1962

As usual, the Editor will be pleased to receive tributes for any of those not included in the following pages.



Chris Astill. *(Smiler Cuthbertson)*

Chris Astill 1956 - 2009

'Chris Astill was the one on Liathach.'

Avalanches in Scotland on 30 December 2009 claimed the lives of three climbers; the news that Chris was one of them slowly entered my brain, cutting like a chainsaw through my feelings. Since Jimmy Jewel had died so many years ago now, I'd promised myself I would not allow myself ever to get hurt again. Some hope!

Chris and his partner Jo had been in the Highlands, over on his favourite north-west coast, as usual over the Christmas period. He had called me to say 'hello' and to ask where he could get snowshoes. He was obviously aware of the great depth of new snow that had come down and it was still falling. I pointed to Martin Moran for the snowshoe advice and asked Chris and Jo to call in again, like last year, on their way back to Derbyshire.

It wouldn't happen. Nearing the top of a gully on Liathach, the avalanche took him down some considerable way. His pal Oliver climbed down and got to him. Although Chris was talking, things were serious and the helicopter rescue was probably minutes, hours, too late, who knows, as he died later that night in Inverness hospital.

I was, and still am, devastated.

'Eyeeup kid, ow's it goin' youth?' The standard Nottingham welcome was always truly meant with real friendship. Chris was that kind of guy, one of the nicest blokes I've known for nearly 40 years. Intellectually always very smart, a neat and determined man and without question a great all-round climber. To me he had no faults, except maybe even for me, being a touch too keen, ready for any escapade: a Scottish winter adventure, that wet rock climb, our South American odyssey to Aconcagua with my clients, Bill, David and Sandra, an Alpine adventure in Chamonix or even a Himalayan sojourn. He was the true all-rounder; one of my best climbing friends.

I first met him when I was a 19 or 20-year-old. When we were both coming through the ranks, grabbing those elite north faces, I would bump into him everywhere: in the UK, mostly in Llanberis but often in Stoney cafe; in the Alps, on the Bioley, then Snell's Field; and later, Pierre D'Ortaz, legendary campsites used by the best alpinists of the times, as mere breaks between great climbs. Lately he would join fellow AC members and venture up bigger peaks in the Himalaya. (He had joined the club in 1985.)

We soon became good friends. Sadly, as I grew older and slowed down, with my last 14 years being spent up north, and with that golden era of British alpinism long gone, it would be a less regular meeting, with those famous words ringing out across the Llanberis high street, or in Pete's Eats, or as I would unload the sacks at Ynys for the weekend. I was grateful for the climbing clubs we were both in – the AC, Climbers Club and the Fell & Rock. These kept us more in contact over recent years and I hoped would do so for a few more to come.

I was looking forward to some more great times together. Mid December 2009 brought one more such event. I'd intended to fly down to Manchester to avoid the eight-hour drive. Chris assured me he would be waiting at the arrivals for me, and was intent on whisking me to Tideswell and the local pub, to join the boys and of course, Jo, his beautiful lady, would as always be by his side. The plan was thwarted by heavy snow in the Highlands. I tried twice more to fly but on both occasions the runway was out of action. Eventually I had to drive, or I would miss my final CC committee meeting as president. It was dark by the time my sat nav got me to within shouting distance of Chris and Jo's lovely house in their neat little village. Chris stood proudly outside his house, and directed me to a parking spot alongside his brand new garage. He had restricted his free time for quite a while to build it, and a super building it had turned out to be. 'I've only got the loft insulation to put in and that's that,' he announced proudly. So sad to know he wouldn't see the finishing line.

I spent a great weekend with Chris, Jo, and Rachel, one of his two daughters from his first marriage. On the Sunday, Chris and I had a special day together on Kinder Scout. It would be my first visit to this wild place, and not only would we ascend to the bleak plateau, we'd walk through the mire to the Downfall, which I really wanted see, and Chris announced we'd do a rock climb on one of the high crags there. Ok, it would only be a Severe, but in that damp and gloomy atmosphere, you could argue about my keenness. Chris, however, was on fire, and I would not dowse him.

We had a great day, the Downfall was in full flow and I pondered the sight when frozen. Later, on the rock route, I was watching carefully for sandbags. On a convenient ledge I craftily avoided finishing the top pitch with an, 'I'll bring you up. It's not clear where it goes from here?' Chris came up, took the rack and proceeded to show me why I held him in such esteem, as he smoothly climbed the slimy, green groove, which I had been convinced wasn't the normal way forward.

Recently we'd been doing some talking. Our future alpine plans, given some breaks in my annual summer guiding programme, and Chris's ability to break off his 'pole counting' for BT, were for the Frêney, even the Innominata and the Pueterey Integral. How I could put back the clock now. His new day job, recently acquired after a successful and rewarding career in the mining industry, always amused us all, but it secured the finances along with Jo's outdoor centre instructor role, and he was happy strolling along the fells in many different locations in the country, and in all weathers. I'm sure there was much more to it than counting poles, but I never got the chance to find out more. He told me he felt so alive.

Smiler Cuthbertson


Paddy Boulter, Kuala Lumpur, 1993.

Patrick 'Paddy' Boulter
1927 - 2009

Professor 'Paddy' Boulter, who died in November 2009, aged 82, played a key role in establishing the first breast cancer screening centre in Britain. Away from the operating theatre or lecture hall, Paddy was never happier than when he was heading up a hill – be it in Nepal, the Alps or simply Penrith Beacon near his Cumbrian home.

Paddy was born in Annan, Dumfriesshire, in 1927 and always took pride in his Scottish ancestry. The family moved to Wimbledon then back north to Carlisle where Paddy attended Carlisle Grammar School and developed his love of hill-walking and climbing in the Lake District. On one occasion he cajoled friends to cycle from Carlisle to Coniston, where they climbed the 'Old Man', then pedalled home.

After training at Guy's and a spell at the Middlesex, Paddy returned to Guy's as Senior Registrar, before going on to become a consultant surgeon at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, Guildford. It was here, together with a consultant radiologist, that he made his name by developing the use of mammography to detect early cancers; he set up a pioneering unit in Surrey in 1978 with his wife Mary (they had married in 1946) running a team of 100 volunteers who guided people in outlying clinics in the area.

Meanwhile in Edinburgh, Professor Patrick Forrest was working along similar lines. After 10 years their joint study showed that early diagnosis had reduced breast cancer death rates by 25%, an achievement that persuaded the government to adopt such screening nationally.

When Paddy retired from Guildford he and Mary moved back to Cumbria. However Paddy's medical career continued; he became president of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh from 1991 to 1994 and was made an honorary fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons. He travelled the world lecturing and teaching and was greatly respected by his students, although their enthusiasm dimmed occasionally when they were dragged up mountains in his wake. He never travelled without his boots.

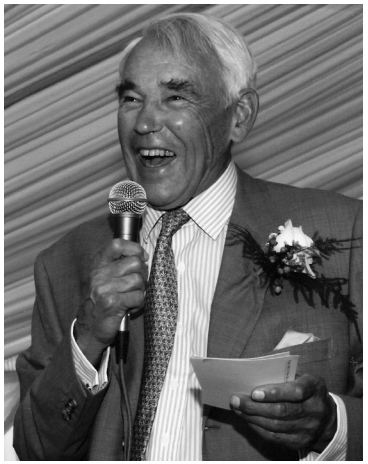
Paddy joined the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club (ABMSAC) in 1968 and advanced rapidly, becoming a committee member in 1971, vice-president in 1973 and president in 1978. A man of great charm and humour, he was also recognised as a shrewd chairman of meetings and wise counsellor. He became a member of the Alpine Club in 1972.

A past ABMSAC Journal shows that 1971, perhaps a typical year, included two weeks in the Lakes, skiing at Obergurgl, climbing in Chamonix, St Luc and Zermatt, a family holiday in Corsica, and finally an ascent of the Puig de Teix above Valdemosa in Majorca – all this on top of his medical duties. Later he and Mary developed a special affection for Bivio near the Julier Pass in Switzerland. Other shared passions were fly-fishing – their Cumbrian cottage is close by the River Eden – and alpine plants.

Among Paddy's other claims to fame were to have played cricket on the Plain de la Morte, a 22-hour day in Colorado, 200 miles of walking and 56 tops in Galloway and a visit to the Khyber Pass. He climbed with John Hunt in Nepal and he and Mary went ski mountaineering with Harry Archer in the Engadine on many occasions. The meticulousness observed in his medical research was evident also in a record he kept of every hill and mountain climbed from 1961; in 30 years he ascended nearly 4000 named tops.

Paddy is survived by Mary, his two daughters Jenny and Anne, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Wendell Jones


Roger Childs

Roger Childs 1933 - 2010

Roger Childs, who died in Spain on 8 June 2010 after some years of debilitating illness, was a dynamic man of many parts who combined athleticism with artistic sensibility. Coming relatively late to serious mountaineering, he then embraced it with the same enthusiasm as had characterised his already action-packed life.

Educated at Cranbrook School, Kent, Roger qualified as a chartered accountant and, after gaining his professional experience with an accountancy firm in Rochester, joined UNRWA in Beirut in 1959 when the scars of the 1956 Suez debacle were still manifest. His experiences in this troubled part of the world left him with an abiding interest in Middle Eastern affairs. Apart from skiing at the Cedars of Lebanon, waterskiing in the Mediterranean, and crewing in Beirut Yacht Club races, it was here that he met his wife Belita. They worked together as part of an amalgam of nationalities that comprised UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) and in 1961 were married in Tehran. That same year they moved to Jerusalem where Roger was appointed head of UNRWA operations for Jordan, with particular responsibility for running refugee camps.

After returning to London in 1963, the couple bought an elegant house

in Greenwich, and in 1965 Roger joined Rank Xerox where he worked for the next 14 years, at first London based, but with overall responsibility for the firm's Scandinavian operations, and later as second in command of the Paris office. As befitted a proper Englishman, he habitually walked to work through the streets of Paris with a furled umbrella. After Xerox, Roger's independent bent took him into management with several British industrial companies. In 1983 he and his cousin bought MEDC, a tiny electrical design and manufacturing company in Pinxton, Nottinghamshire. This turning point in his career coincided with his first serious essay into ski mountaineering, a High Level Route traverse as a member of a Downhill Only club party. Roger's drive, enthusiasm and management skills were eventually to turn MEDC into a highly successful business venture with an annual turnover of £13m.

For many years, Roger played a pivotal role in the artistic life of Greenwich and Blackheath. He helped revive, and for many years served as Chairman of, the Blackheath Conservatoire which was originally founded to train and encourage young musicians, dancers and artists. He himself had taken up drawing and painting in the 1980s and this remained a solace to the end.

Apart from a life-long love of sailing, especially in the Aegean which he explored with family and friends as part-owner of a 41ft ketch, he was active in many sports including fell running with the annual Trevelyan Hunt in the Lakes, squash, and tennis (with which he persevered even after serious illness). But most particularly, in the years before working in the Middle East, his passion was rugby. He represented his county, Kent, and played regularly for Blackheath, oldest of Rugby Union clubs. In the Club's centenary match against Newport, he scored the winning try.

After his 1983 High Level Route, Roger turned his mind to exploratory ski mountaineering and, in the following year, joined my party with the object of completing a ski traverse of the Cairngorms. Aborted when I dislocated my shoulder, Roger's companionship provided balm when we were holed up for nine hours in the Avon bothy, while David and Anna Williams undertook a hazardous night-time ski to raise a helicopter rescue. Thereafter, Roger became a regular member of the team, completing the three testing final sections of the Pyrenean High Route, the ascent of half a dozen peaks, and a final settling of scores with Aneto and Posets.

We went on to make a skein of Scottish ski ascents together, mixed with the occasional alpine foray, but it was in Spain that Roger's mountaineering penchant found truest expression. One of his many projects had been to rehabilitate Prado Lobero (Wolf Meadow) a wildly beautiful *finca* that he and Belita had bought near Candeleda beneath Spain's Sierra de Gredos. Here, they set about converting derelict farmhouses into dwellings of delight, excavating fresh springs, and transforming unkempt fields into fruitful orchards. Prada Lobero became the launch-pad for many pioneer ski mountaineering expeditions and ascents in Spain's less frequented ranges such as the Gredos, Picos de Europa, Montes Carrionas, and the Cordillera Cantabrica. Roger's enthusiasm, savoir faire, and his intimate knowledge of the country, its language and people, its paradors and hostels, wines and gastronomy made these unforgettable experiences.

In April 1994 he was a valued member of Derek Fordham's Svalbard expedition which, after long, cold days of pulk slogging, climbed the archipelago's highest peak, Newtontoppen. In 1996, he made a solo ascent of Cotopaxi (5600m), and in 1999 joined a pioneer ski tour to lesser-known parts of Greece including Falakro. We returned the following year to the Pindus and climbed the country's second summit Smolikas (2637m). By now the ill-health that was to blight the last decade of Roger's life had already taken hold, and to have completed that exhausting day in his condition, demanded the exceptional qualities that characterised the man. Fittingly, his last ski mountaineering expedition was to the Lebanon in 2001 but, game to the end, he subsequently attended two ASC meets in Andermatt and Briançon.

Roger became a member of the Alpine Ski Club in 1987, and for several years served as the Eagle Ski Club's honorary treasurer. Already an FRGS, he was elected to the Geographical Club in 1997, and in that same year, with over a dozen unguided ski mountaineering tours, several of them pioneer, and well over 30 ascents to his credit, he was elected an aspirant member of the Alpine Club.

Although Roger's last few years were a struggle against illness, he never lost his zest for living, love of nature, humour, or skills as a raconteur. Ever lovingly supported and sustained throughout those difficult times by his wife Belita, his daughters Sophie, Alexa, Julia and Anya, he confronted every setback with an abiding Christian faith, and with the same courage and determination that had made him such a stalwart mountain *companero*. Roger Childs was a most hospitable, devoted, life-enhancing family man of many gifts. He will be greatly missed by all who shared the numerous fields of activity that he had graced but most of all by his wife, daughters and grandchildren.

John Harding

Robert (Bob) Alexander Creswell 1948 - 2010

The public often assume a head for heights is the first requirement of a mountaineer. But, as Bob Creswell proved, curiosity and enthusiasm will take you a lot further. As a child, his family liked to remind him, he was so frightened of heights that he insisted on being carried down stairs. Yet as an adult, and despite a later than usual start in the hills and a demanding career, he climbed mountains on every continent, often in the company of Jagged Globe guides, who counted him a good friend as well as a capable client.

From early forays in the Welsh and Scottish hills, he went on to explore the Altai in central Asia, climb hills in Antarctica, make an attempt on Denali in Alaska, and have a string of successes in South America,

including an ascent of the stunning Alpamayo, the most attractive peak in Peru's Cordillera Blanca. Expeditions to Africa included the *Ice Window* route on Mount Kenya, now a victim of climate change, and to the Atlas and the Rwenzori.

Bob also climbed Carstensz Pyramid, locally known as Puncak Jaua, in the western central highlands of Papua, Aconcagua in Argentina and Elbruz in the Caucasus, all the highest peaks in their respective continents. He thought about completing the list of the seven highest peaks on the seven continents but reached a personal limit attempting Denali. Having sprained his ankle training in Scotland, he wasn't, he explained, enjoying himself, and wouldn't slow down the other expedition members. Being in mountains was about much more than simply reaching a summit. For Bob, it was a glorious chance to fulfil his lifelong passion for learning.

Born in London in February 1948, Bob Creswell grew up in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, and went to school in High Wycombe. He read Chemical Physics at Reading University and graduated with a first in 1970. Bob stayed on to do his PhD under the supervision of Prof Ian Mills, who described him as one of the best research students of his career.

Using microwave spectroscopy to study molecules in the gas phase, Bob then analysed their spectra with quantum mechanics to deduce their structure. His supervisor made two further critical interventions in Bob's life, taking him up Tryfan while they attended a conference at Bangor, an experience that took some time to percolate. The other was an introduction to his secretary Lee, whom Bob married in December 1973.

By then Bob was doing post-doctoral work at Michigan State University, where Lee joined him for a year. Awarded an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship – appropriately enough for someone who later climbed his own share of South American volcanoes – he worked with Prof Gisbert Winnewisser, a dominant figure in spectroscopy and astrophysics, then attached to the Max Planck Institute, based at the Justus Liebig Institute University in Giessen.

From there Bob went to Cambridge, working for Prof Brian Thrush, whose field was the study of the rates of chemical reactions in gases. Lee worked for the head of department in Clinical Biochemistry, where she became friends with Ken Siddle, who shared the young couple's passion for the theatre but also organised laboratory hill-walking trips.

It was on one of these in 1981 that Bob renewed his brief acquaintance with the Welsh hills, climbing Tryfan once more and then moving on to Glyder Fach's Bristly Ridge. Except that in the intervening years his boots had rather decayed and, finding himself with a sole flopping free of its upper, he was forced to descend. From this rather unpromising start, Bob's passion for the mountains blossomed.

Despite changing careers, leaving academia for the Inland Revenue, he became a regular on Siddle's trips, whose personnel numbered anywhere from 10 to 30 souls. They travelled all over the British Isles. A summer camping trip to Torridon revealed an antipathy to camping, which Bob retained, but his stamina for hill walking was prodigious and would think little of driving up on a Friday night to Scotland to pick off a few more Munros. He completed the list at the turn of the millennium. 'They were fantastic times,' Siddle recalled. 'Some of my best days were shared with him.'

In 1990, Ken took a sabbatical, and during his absence Bob decided with a small splinter group to rebel from the programme of damp Scottish hills in favour of a walking tour in the Alps. The experience was electrifying, and Bob found himself in his early forties embarking on a new career as an alpinist. An early attempt on the mighty Finsteraarhorn was curtailed on the advice of his guide, who suggested its more approachable neighbour the Agassizhorn instead. He went back a few years later and finished the job.

Without a network of climbing friends built up through a usual youthful apprenticeship, and rising steadily through the ranks at the Inland Revenue, Bob was understandably short of both time and experienced companions. Nor was he, by his own admission, a natural athlete. But he trained hard for the mountains, running the London marathon in 1997. His relationship with Jagged Globe allowed him to fulfil his growing ambition in the mountains, including his first trip to the Himalaya – Mera Peak in Nepal, with its up-close views of Everest and Lhotse.

His usual gang of friends were roped in, including Ken Siddle. It was typical of Creswell's generous nature that he waited behind the main group on summit day as Siddle caught up, so his friend would have the best chance of reaching the top. 'He said: "Come on, we'll do this together." I wouldn't have got up without him,' Siddle said.

After Mera, Bob embarked on his 15 years of world mountaineering, cramming in an incredible number of adventures. Having transferred to London, but still living in Cambridge, Bob was finally posted to Washington as part of the Anti-Avoidance Group, also becoming a delegate to the Joint International Tax Shelter Information Centre (JITSIC), a co-operation between the tax authorities of the USA, Australia and Canada.

Despite his glittering intellectual credentials, his successful career and passion for the mountains, Bob wore his learning lightly and could seem quietly reserved. He was not the kind to put his head down and push on for the summit: Bob had his camera out, or else was examining flowers or creatures. Constantly learning, he took a pre-degree course in Fine Art, and when climbing in Ecuador didn't miss the chance to visit the Galapagos, knowing intimately the impact the islands had had on Charles Darwin.

In Mongolia, Bonny Masson recalled, Bob was always relaxed and excellent company. 'He obviously enjoyed all aspects of the trip,' she said, recalling jeep rides across the steppes, dairy feasts in herders' homes and throat-singing concerts. With no sherpas to call on, the team had to carry their own loads to high camp. Bob proved himself a strong and competent climber, Masson said, as happy singing Beatles' songs with the kitchen crew as reaching a summit.

Bob could be a perfectionist, without being pedantic, pursuing woodwork to a near-professional standard. He joined an evening woodwork class in Cambridge to have access to tools, working quietly on his own, but impressing his tutor, who persuaded him to sit for a City and Guilds Certificate, earning a distinction. (The same dedication was applied to his deep love for making puddings.) He was also thoughtfully generous. Although a determined atheist, he agreed to be godfather for Ken Siddle's younger son. Knowing the boy's passion for elephants, he made him a jigsaw of one by hand, which remained a treasured toy.

By 2008, Bob had decided that his various passions needed more time than work allowed, so he went part-time as a prelude to retirement. Wanting to get fit for another expedition to South America, he went rock climbing in North Wales with Dave Walsh, who had guided his ascent of Mount Kenya. That evening he experienced inexplicable numbness in his right hand. This was caused by a glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. He bore his treatment with great courage and humour, but succumbed to the disease on 21 July.

Ed Douglas

Robin Day OBE 1915 - 2010

Robin Day has been a household name in Britain since the 1950-60s when he had a leading role as a designer in introducing the 'New Look', with its graceful, 'modern' lines to a war-weary Britain; and aimed to bring contemporary design to a mass market at a reasonable price. I first met him, climbing and skiing, in the late 1950s and enjoyed a life-long friendship with him thereafter.

Robin specialised in designing furniture, especially chairs or seating, and produced with the furniture company Hille the first polypropylene stacking chair, reputed to have sold over 60 million world-wide, a brilliant use of the new injection moulding technology which he had mastered. Subsequently he had many significant responsibilities including designing the interior of the Super VC10 aircraft; the seating for the Barbican Concert Hall; and (with his wife Lucienne who was a leading textile designer) as design consultant for the John Lewis Partnership, developing the house-style for some of its department stores and for the Waitrose supermarkets. He and Lucienne were seen as cult figures in typifying the modern style of living at one time, even appearing together in an advert for Smirnoff vodka, as some football star might do nowadays.

In 1959 he was named a Royal Designer for Industry, though he preferred working on design issues to being on committees.

Robin's life as an eminent designer, for which he was awarded an OBE, is recorded in the book *Robin and Lucienne Day, Pioneers of Contemporary Design*, by Lesley Jackson (Mitchell Beazley, 2001).



Robin Day

Robin seems to have developed his interest in the outdoors, the hills and mountains, in his 30s or 40s onwards and joined the AC in 1968, when he was over 50. In addition to climbing and hillwalking in Scotland and elsewhere in Britain, he made a number of trips to the Alps, Greece, Turkey, Africa, Garhwal and Nepal.

From the 1960s onwards he became increasingly interested in ski touring and ski mountaineering, especially long-distance Nordic ski touring. His journeys included Scandinavia End to End, with a series of four linked journeys of about 500 miles each, in the 1970s (*AJ* 83, 90-97, 1978). Robin was not on the original first stage (Banak-Abisko) of this series of journeys in 1973, but made up for it with a journey Sulitjelma-Alta in 1978.

Robin told me a year or two ago that he thought his ski journeys in Scandinavia were some of the most important times of his life. I was interested – even surprised – by this comment at the time, but thinking over it, I can see that long-distance Scandinavian ski touring was something which Robin might find exceptionally fulfilling. This was mainly as a demanding and difficult sport requiring high levels of fitness, stamina and the technical ability to ski easily over varied mountain terrain. But it was also because of his understanding of, and personal commitment to, the Scandinavian way of life and culture, and especially the Norwegian tradition of love of nature. This was linked with a sympathy for the 'small is beautiful' approach, very much on the lines put forward by EF Schumacher in the 1970s.

He was completely at home in any remote Norwegian or Swedish hut; and anywhere in the Scandinavian mountains or huge forests, or on one of the great Norwegian lakes, frozen in winter. He loved the 'simple' but effective approach to making buildings in wood, as the Norwegians had done over the centuries, heated by a wood-stove; and would be delighted to find the occasional old farm-building with its wooden doors and windows as a link with the past. He was in fact very much a Nordic person, not only in appearance, fitness and fleetness of foot, but also deep in his culture, philosophy and approach to life.

An honorary member of the Alpine Ski Club and one-time vice-president, Robin succeeded in remaining very fit into later life and climbed

Mount Kenya (with Rob Collister) at the age of 76. He died in November 2010, less than a year after Lucienne.

Robin is a wonderful example to follow and I feel there is much to learn from what he did, how he did it, and what he stood for.

Alan Blackshaw

Patrick Fagan adds: I first met Robin in Norway in 1972, and shared many ski tours with him over the next 20 years, in the Alps, High Atlas, Jura and Sweden, but most of all in Norway, a country we both loved. (Indeed, with Alan Blackshaw and others, he completed a complete ski traverse of some 3000 km through the length of Norway over four seasons in the mid 1970s). I never climbed with him, but he was sufficiently capable and experienced to climb Mt Kenya (Batian) at the age of 76, at the time at least thought to be the oldest person to achieve this.

Robin was the easiest and most delightful of companions on these ski tours, quietly unassuming and most modest, and always liable to break out in one of his very personal chuckles. He had an enviable ability to connect with people, as I noticed with admiration in a village in the High Atlas when he was able to take photographs of local Muslim women in their homes, a degree of intimacy denied to the rest of us. He was a huge asset, too, when any equipment failed, turning his professional skills and very personal repair kit to the support of those less skilled or prepared for such emergencies.

I had the great privilege of enjoying the company of Robin and his wife, Lucienne, many times at their home in Chelsea, and later in Chichester where they moved some years ago. They rented a cottage near Midhurst for many years from where Robin would invite friends for long walks, another of his pleasures, but one had to be fit and strong to keep up with him.

WG CDR John Richard Wilson Edwards 1933 - 2010

John Edwards was born in Shrewsbury but spent most of his early life in Welshpool. He was a Welshman and a fervent supporter of all things Welsh, in particular Welsh rugby. He took great pride in the fact that he went to Shrewsbury School and at every opportunity would point out to certain friends that Shrewsbury School was older than Repton (Shrewsbury was opened in 1556 and Repton in 1557).

From his earliest days he had a love of the great outdoors and he spent much of the rest of his life in the mountains. At the age of 15 or 16 he and a group of other young men formed the Shrewsbury Rock and Ice Club and climbed in North Wales and the Alps.

He joined the Royal Air Force as a pilot in 1957 but, after earning his 'wings' at flying training school he was not able to continue to advanced flying training. In 1961, whilst he was thinking about the future direction of his career, he was posted to RAF Eastleigh in East Africa. John appre-



John Edwards, and pipe, on the summit of the Ortler – a sponsored climb to raise funds for a church roof. *(Ron Hextall)*

ciated the opportunities presented by this posting where he would have access to the tremendous array of mountains previously visited by his great hero Eric Shipton. Moreover, he would also be in striking range of the many uncharted mountains in the Ruwenzori and the notable peaks in and around Mount Kenya. Whilst he was in East Africa he became a member of the mountain rescue team and in that capacity undertook a number of ascents of Kilimanjaro, both as a member of a rescue party and as a guide for RAF visitors to Eastleigh.

He lost no time before taking advantage of his situation, and together with Harry Archer and others made expeditions into the Ruwenzoris. Some of peaks they climbed in the area were believed to be first ascents. On one particular climb, John recorded finding a very old ice-axe embedded in the snow on the summit ridge of Mount Stanley (5109m). This axe had a note on it dated 1906 and was said to have been left behind by the Duke of Abruzzi.

However, John would say that his major achievement in East Africa was in October 1964 when he and Tommy Thompson made the first ascent of the 1200m sheer east face of Mawenzi – the Eiger of Africa. John described this epic in *AJ 112*, 229-242, 2007. It is believed that that ascent has never been repeated. During the recce in 1963 they found the remains of a DC3 aircraft on a high ledge, complete with dead passengers and crew, that had mysteriously disappeared 20 years earlier. John's photographs of the scene appeared in the national press and he was particularly pleased to receive congratulations from the aircraft tyre manufacturer as the photos showed the tyres still to be in excellent condition even after all those years exposed to the high level elements.

John decided to continue his career in the RAF as a supply officer and subsequently served at RAF Stafford, where he was officer in charge of mountain rescue, RAF Hereford, the Middle East, RAF Old Sarum, MOD London and MOD Harrogate. During this time he set his eyes on the Himalaya and in 1979 went with a small team organised by John Whyte to climb Kwande (6011m) and Mera (6476m). The team received some

support from the RGS in return for capturing and returning some leaping spiders, but whilst they were there they took photos of footprints believed to be those of a Yeti, and collected some 'Yeti droppings' for analysis by the sponsors. As far as I can remember, the droppings were identified as being similar to those of apes. Later, in 1983 John returned to the Himalaya with a party that included his son Simon, and together they climbed the unnamed Peak 42.

By now a squadron leader, John lead teams to the Zagros mountains of the then Persia and to the Atlas mountains of Morocco. He was extremely proud to be elected a member of the AC in 1982. After a number of years attending ABMSAC meets as a guest of Harry Archer, with whom he shared many of his previous climbing expeditions in the RAF, he was encouraged to become an honest man and join the ABMSAC. In the years that followed, John was a regular attendee on the annual alpine meets, and became a popular and well-respected member of the club.

He retired from the RAF in 1984 as a wing commander and joined his cousin in a new venture to build and operate nursing homes throughout the UK. The company expanded rapidly, largely due to John's negotiations with health authorities to take care of their elderly patients in new and much better surroundings. John left the company in 1996 and spent more time at his home and with his family in Shrewsbury.

Undeterred by his advancing years, John continued serious climbing in the Alps. He had already climbed all the 4000 metre peaks but had failed, due to bad weather, on two attempts on the north face of the Eiger in the 1960s. This he corrected by completing the ascent with his son Simon as recently as 2008. In 2009, he led a group of students up Mont Blanc and, afterwards, made a successful attempt at the Frêney Pillar, a climb that had previously eluded him.

During these latter years, he gave much of his time to charity work, including a number of lectures on mountaineering to the Women's Institute and other organisations, and worked with the Shropshire Wild Life Trust. One of his major contributions was to his local church, where he was a member of a group attempting to find the money to replace the church roof. As part of that work, John and I made a sponsored climb in the Alps, and carried a small cross, made by his church, to the summit of the Ortler (3905m), placing it by the much larger cross already in-situ. This effort succeeded in raising more than £3500 towards the church roof.

Whilst still in apparent good health, he was planning more ambitious climbs for 2010 but, tragically, he collapsed and died on 19 January due to a pulmonary embolism. John leaves a wife, Enid, whom he married on 3 March 1956, a daughter and two sons, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He will be sadly missed by all who came into contact with him. He loved to talk about mountains and would do so with anyone who showed some interest – providing, of course, that he could smoke his pipe. The world is a poorer place without John Edwards.

Ron Hextall

Nawang Gombu Sherpa 1936 - 2011

Nawang Gombu Sherpa was the youngest member of the successful 1953 Everest expedition. He later reached the summit himself and subsequently became the first person to climb Everest twice. His entrée to the comparatively lucrative world of high-altitude mountaineering was made possible by his uncle, Tenzing Norgay, who reached the summit in 1953 with Edmund Hillary.

Gombu's family came originally from the Karta valley, a few miles to the east of Everest, in Tibet, where his grandfather owned a substantial herd of yaks. In the early thirties the yaks were lost, reducing the family to serfdom. Tenzing's elder sister, Lhamu Kipa, was working as a servant girl in the village of Tsawa when she fell in love with her employer's son, a young monk called Nawang. The couple married and in 1936 Lhamu Kipa gave birth to Nawang Gombu. It may have been the disgrace of a landowner's son marrying a serf which prompted the family to migrate in 1939 across the Nepalese border to Solu Khumbu, the homeland of the Sherpas. However, during the forties they returned to Tibet and enrolled Gombu to study at Rongbuk, the world's highest monastery, at the foot of Everest's north face. Tenzing later recalled meeting the family here in 1947. From the abbot, Trulshik Rinpoche (also a distant relative) young Gombu heard about the English climber George Mallory who had disappeared high on Everest in 1924; he was also told by some of his fellow monks that there was a golden calf on the summit – the only reasonable motivation they could find to explain the Englishmen's incomprehensible attempts to climb the mountain.



Gombu with Ed Hillary at the 1988 Everest reunion, Pen y Gwryd. *(Bernard Newman)*

In the absence of lay schools, Rongbuk gave Gombu an education; but he was a reluctant novitiate who decided that the Buddhist monastic life was not for him. He ran away and recrossed the frontier to Solu Khumbu and it was here, in the market village of Namche Bazaar, in the autumn of 1952, that he again met his uncle, Tenzing Norgay, returning from the second unsuccessful Swiss attempt that year to climb Everest. By now Tenzing's mountaineering experience and international contacts had made

him a prestigious figure in the Sherpa community. He had already been asked to act as sirdar for the British attempt on Everest planned for the next spring and he would be deciding who got which jobs. Gombu begged to be included and was promised a place on the team, with the warning that it would be very hard work.

So, at the age of 17, Gombu became the youngest employee of the 1953 British Everest Expedition. Even by Sherpa standards he was short. He was also quite plump. One of the British team members, Wilfrid Noyce, commented that Gombu was the only Sherpa he had ever met who asked a sahib to go more slowly. It should be pointed out that Noyce was phenomenally fit, and that Gombu soon got into his high altitude stride, endearing himself to the team. The leader, John Hunt, noted how 'little Gombu was smiling and cherubic, like an overgrown schoolboy … always seeking helpful jobs to perform.' And when the big day came to lift 17 loads of food, fuel, tents and oxygen to the South Col for the final summit attempt, Gombu was one of the Sherpas chosen for this vital job.

A few days later his uncle reached the summit with Edmund Hillary, earning international fame not only for himself, but to some extent for his whole Sherpa people, whose traditional trading activities had been curtailed by the recent Chinese invasion of Tibet. For a young Sherpa like Nawang Gombu, who had now proved himself at high altitude, a career in expeditions was a potentially lucrative, if dangerous, alternative to subsistence farming. In 1954 he was one of four Sherpas chosen to accompany Tenzing to Switzerland for alpine training with Arnold Glatthard at Rosenlaui, in the Bernese Oberland. That year he also attempted the world's fifth highest mountain, Makalu, with an American expedition. Then in 1955 he had his first big success, making the first ascent, with an Indian expedition, of Saser Kangri (7518m), in northern Ladakh.

In 1960 he returned to Everest on the first Indian attempt, getting to within 100 tantalising metres of the summit. Then in 1963 Uncle Tenzing wrote to James Ramsay Ullman, the author commissioned to cover the first American Everest expedition, recommending Gombu as sirdar. Gombu got the job and 30 April that year found the five foot tall Sherpa back on the summit ridge, above the South Col, this time sharing a tent with the six foot four American climber Jim Whittaker. The following day, at 1pm, the two men planted the Stars and Stripes on the summit.

Success with the Americans widened Gombu's horizons. He was welcomed with the rest of the team at the White House by President Kennedy and received the Hubbard Medal of the National Geographic Society, to wear alongside his earlier Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal. Later, from 1973 to 1993, Jim Whittaker invited Gombu to spend summers working with his guiding company on Mount Rainier, Washington. Meanwhile, back in Asia, he had made his permanent home in Darjeeling and become Director of Field Training at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, operating in Sikkim, on the flanks of Kangchenjunga.

In 1964 he reached the summit of Nanda Devi, the highest mountain wholly in India, and holy source of the Ganges. The following year he returned to Everest, with the first Indian expedition to climb the mountain. This time the top camp was placed astonishingly high, just 350m below the summit, enabling Gombu and Capt A S Cheema to reach the top at 9.30 am. Gombu had become the first person ever to climb Everest twice.

His first wife, Dawa Phuti, died in 1957, giving birth to his eldest daughter, Rita. He later married Sita Gombu, with whom he had a son and two daughters; one of them, Yangdu, now runs her own mountain trekking business based in Delhi. Gombu continued to climb well beyond middle age, making his last big expedition, in 1989, to Kangchenjunga. The following year, when I met him for the first time, leading a party of schoolgirls through the foothills of Sikkim, his laughter rang through the rhododendron forest. His sheer good nature and beaming smile endeared him to a wide international circle of friends and he remained particularly close to his American companions. Tom Hornbein, a fellow member of the 1963 Everest Expedition, recalls 'a kind of inner glow: just being in his presence, both in '63 and more recently on a visit to his home in Darjeeling, was a bit like standing by a stove and warming your soul; the heat being emitted was a vitality and joy and unabashed caring and kindness.'

Stephen Venables

Harish Kapadia adds this postscript on Nawang Gombu's cremation at Darjeeling on 28 April 2011:

For three days after his death, Gombu's body was kept in the house and prayers were recited by lamas, according to Sherpa custom. The prayers on the second day were conducted by a large group of Lamas who played drums. Next day morning a group of 21 ladies from Ghoom recited very sonorous and moving prayers. The day of the funeral started early and dignitaries came to pay tributes, beginning with the military establishment at Darjeeling. Wreaths were laid on behalf of many organisations and individuals. The funeral procession started at 1 pm and after a brief circle reached the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute. The body was carried to a specially prepared funeral pyre. The ladies followed it with a slow chant of the Buddhist mantra *om mane padme hum*.

It was a farewell to a great mountaineer, a grand family man and a wonderful soul. Gombu's entire family – his son, daughters and grand children – was present. So too was Col N Kumar, who participated on several major expeditions with Gombu, and many of the two generations of Indian mountaineers who had been taught by Gombu. To me he was always Gombu 'daju' ('brother' as Sherpas call him, also as a mark of respect) and I can recall many happy hours spent together. As the flames leaped skywards and lamas chanted prayers, a heavy downpour blessed Gombu – the heavens were welcoming him.

Alfred Gregory 1913 - 2010

Alfred Gregory, or 'Greg' as he was universally known, died in Emerald, near Melbourne, Australia, on 9 February 2010 just three days before his 96th birthday. As one of the few survivors from the successful 1953 Everest team, of which he was a worthy member, it falls to me to compose this obituary tribute. I am most grateful to Stephen Venables for allowing me to use much of the carefully researched material he incorporated in his excellent obituary published in *The Independent* on 10 February 2010.

I think I first met Greg around a boardroom-size table at the Royal Geographical Society on 17 November 1952 when the newly appointed leader, John Hunt, assembled his UK team members for the first time. He had chosen all of us primarily for our climbing ability and experience as potential summit candidates, but we were also now rather arbitrarily allocated essential subsidiary tasks. Hunt looked around and said, 'Now who knows a bit about photography? Ah – Greg seems to take good pictures.' Greg was already a keen amateur photographer with his own Contax 35mm camera. Promoted suddenly to 'official expedition photographer', he never looked back and it changed his life. In the years that followed, people tended to forget that he had carried a load to Hillary and Tenzing's top camp at 27,900ft (8504m), higher than anyone had camped before, and was remembered instead for capturing some of the 20th century's most evocative images.

Greg occasionally liked to point out the differences between the predominantly upper middle class, public school, milieu of the 1953 team and what he described as his working class background. In fact, his father owned a successful grocery business in Blackpool. Nevertheless, Greg's childhood was quite tough, as his father was killed in the First World War, when Greg was only three, leaving his mother to bring up the children alone whilst struggling to keep the grocery business afloat through the Depression. On leaving Blackpool Grammar School, Greg was apprenticed into the printing trade but he managed, with the help of the new Youth Hostel Association, to escape regularly to the hills, first bicycling, then taking up hill-walking and climbing. By the outbreak of World War Two, when he was 26, he had managed to travel abroad for three alpine seasons.

During the War he served with the Black Watch in North Africa and Italy, recruited as a private and rising to the rank of major. He was delighted to see his war end early with the successful conclusion of the Italian campaign. Free to roam in 1945, he spent a happy summer climbing amongst the deserted summits of the Alps; in 1946, after demobilisation, he set up his own travel business, specialising in guided alpine climbing. He got to know many local alpine guides, including Louis Lachenal, but it was only in 1952 that he was invited by R L G Irving, the Winchester schoolmaster who had introduced George Mallory to mountaineering, to join the Alpine Club. Greg's qualifications included classic routes on more than 30 alpine peaks, mostly climbed guideless and as leader of the party. In those days, there were a few club members who felt perhaps he was 'not the right type' and might use his club membership to further his commercial activities, which he readily refuted. Guide or not, his experience was valued by the establishment and that summer he was asked to join Eric Shipton's expedition to Cho Oyu which was really a training exercise for Everest. The 1951 Everest reconnaissance, initiated by Michael Ward, had confirmed a possible new southern route up from Nepal, but the Swiss meanwhile had smartly booked the mountain for 1952. By way of consolation, the British were given the sixth highest peak, Cho Oyu. They made little impression on this objective, as the only feasible route lay in Chinese-occupied Tibet; instead they enjoyed a feast of exploration, roaming wide over the then untrodden wilds of the Nepalese frontier, crossing passes and climbing numerous smaller peaks. Griffith Pugh, supported by the Medical Research Council, also carried out invaluable physiological research. Fortunately, the Swiss narrowly failed on Everest, despite a second attempt in the autumn, giving the British perhaps the last chance in 1953 to be first up the mountain.



Alf Gregory at work on the 1953 Everest expedition *(George Lowe/Royal Geographical Society)*

In a surprise decision, the Joint Himalayan Committee of the AC and RGS replaced Eric Shipton as leader with John Hunt who chose a fresh team, but Greg who had performed well was still a natural choice. In his extra role as expedition photographer, he went to see Karl Maydens, one of the leading photojournalists of the day, at *Life* magazine. Maydens gave him another Contax and asked Greg what lenses he would like. 'I said I'd have a 50mm and a 125mm lens. No wideangle! I just didn't appreciate how big these mountains really were. Still, I think I managed okay.' In addition to that modest equipment, he took a medium format Rolleiflex and two lightweight fixed lens Kodak Retina 2 cameras for use above 8000 metres. And that was it. None of these cameras had a built-in exposure meter, so at first all his exposures were calculated with a separate Weston Master meter. However, he quickly learned to judge the dazzling high altitude light and soon found that he could predict exposure perfectly without the meter. He also didn't bother with bracketing – hedging bets with varied exposures – so

shot a fraction of the film that would be used on a modern expedition. He later recalled, 'When I photographed Hillary and Tenzing approaching the highest camp, I only took one picture of them. I pointed the camera, clicked and said to myself, "Got that". That was how you did it in those days. I gave myself no second chance, even though Kodachrome had a speed of only 10 ASA.' The rest of us all carried cameras and took many pictures, but Greg ensured that the important shots got taken. As already mentioned, the results of this crash course in professional photography resulted in some outstanding images: goggled Sherpas balancing heavily laden across ladders spanning immense crevasses; baggy-trousered Charterhouse schoolmaster Wilfrid Noyce leading another heavily-laden team up the silent white valley of the Western Cwm; Hillary and Tenzing smiling triumphantly, safely down after their triumphant climb; and, three days earlier, the classic shot of the two men, on their way up, heading for that ledge where they would sleep higher than any man had slept before. Small and wiry, and sporting a purple bobble hat, James Morris, the *Times* correspondent, remembered him 'moving always with a sharp eagerness, always on the move, rather like a Lancashire terrier in the pink of condition'.

On the final leg to that top camp at 27,900ft (8424m), when they came across the depot left by John Hunt and Da Namgyal at 27,350ft (8336m), they had to pick up essential extra items – a Meade tent and a large black oxygen cylinder weighing 20lbs. Hillary took the tent making his load 62lbs; George had over 50lbs. They both looked at Greg. He was small, lean and very fit but had shown little enthusiasm for load-carrying in the past. Now there was no alternative. Hillary handed him the black oxygen bottle. So all of them now had over 50lbs each. With the heavier weight of equipment in 1953, the summit pair could never have established the camp without additional help from Ang Nyima, George Lowe and Alfred Gregory. However, on the day when it really mattered, 28 May 1953, Greg carried his vital load and took his photos. For the only member of the team other than Hunt to have passed his 40th birthday, it was a fine effort.

Everest consolidated Greg's photographic talent: as he put it later, 'I went to Everest an amateur and came back a pro.' Kodak took him on as a freelance lecturer and he packed halls for 20 years. He broadened his photographic horizons, taking on new projects such as photographing, with one of the first Nikon single lens reflex cameras, the life of his old home town, Blackpool – beehive hairdos, Teddy boys and kiss-me-quick hats – before its latter day decline. 'The whole place smelt of sea, chips, beer and candyfloss,' he told an interviewer, 'but there was still the decorum of the old.' His pictures eventually appeared in book form in 1994 as *Alfred Gregory's Blackpool* – a companion volume to *Alfred Gregory's Everest*. The printing was impeccable, the composition classically balanced, and the observation as sharp and kindly as that of any of the great photographic masters. He also consolidated his travel business, now called Alfred Gregory Holidays, leading clients year after year on treks through Nepal and other mountainous areas. He also led two serious mountaineering expeditions. The first, the



199. Perhaps 'Greg's' most iconic photograph: Hillary and Tenzing at 27,300ft on the south-east ridge of Everest on their way to the final camp at 28,000ft. (*Alfred Gregory/ Royal Geographical Society*)

1955 Merseyside Himalayan Expedition, continued where Eric Shipton had left off in 1952, mapping the Rolwaling region to the west of Everest, and climbing a total of 19 summits including Parchamo (6187m), nowadays a popular objective for commercial trekking organisations. The other expedition, in 1958, was an attempt on Distaghil Sar, one of the highest mountains in the Karakoram, which was unsuccessful due to excessive avalanche risk.

Greg never retired. He separated from his first wife, Ninette, a French war widow, in the 1960s. Travel, adventure and photography remained lifelong passions, which he was able to share with his second, Australian wife Suzanne who he insisted was the better photographer. For many years their base was the Derbyshire village of Elton, where guests were always welcomed with an 'Eltonian' – a generously strong gin cocktail of Greg's devising. Then in 1993 they emigrated to Australia to explore a whole new continent, developing a particular passion for the aboriginal rock art of Western Australia. They lived in the small town of Emerald, an hour's drive from Melbourne in the forested Dandenong hills, the haunt of the lyre bird. Whenever my wife and I stayed with our daughter in Melbourne, we made a point of visiting Greg and Sue, enjoying their hospitality and discussing his latest photographic projects. He was dragged reluctantly into the age of the digital image, while insisting on the superiority of film. But it was a losing battle as digital cameras yielded increasingly excellent results. Thousands of his slides were eventually digitised. As he gained recognition in Australia, his pedigree again came to the fore, with exhibitions and the publishing of *Alfred Gregory: Photographs from Everest to Africa* in 2007. He became an Australian citizen in May 2009.

Although Greg never rested on his laurels, and was always seeking new inspiration, he remained proud of the part he played on Everest. He is survived by his wife Suzanne, daughter Yolande, son-in-law John, three grandchildren and four great grand-children.

George Band

Eileen Healey 1920 - 2010

In the late summer of 1959, Eileen Healey trained her husband's new cine camera on two figures setting out for the summit of Cho Oyu, the world's sixth-highest peak. The climbers were the French swimwear designer and accomplished alpinist Claude Kogan and the Belgian star Claudine van der Straten-Ponthoz, members of the first all-female expedition to one of the 8000m giants of the Himalaya.

The footage of dazzling snows and deep blue skies, which lay for years half-forgotten in Healey's attic, captured the two women unwittingly setting out on what proved to be their last climb. An avalanche destroyed their tent at Camp IV, killing them and their Sherpa Ang Norbu. Another Sherpa who attempted to come to their aid was also killed.

It was a bitterly tragic end to an expedition that was very much Kogan's creation. She had almost succeeded in climbing Cho Oyu five years earlier, alongside the Swiss guide Raymond Lambert. Cold conditions and strong winds had driven them back, but Kogan felt they hadn't tried hard enough and was left 'with a boiling, impotent rage'. She wanted to show that far from being weaker in the mountains, women could prove more resilient than men to the trials of high altitude.

To that end, she set about organising not just an all-female expedition but one that was international too. Kogan was invited to lecture to the Alpine Club in London, and Eileen Healey, by then an experienced member of the Ladies Alpine Club, went to hear her speak. Kogan was, she recalled, 'a remarkable person, tiny, attractive, and great fun'.

Healey wasn't a professional filmmaker – she said she only got the job because no-one was more qualified than she was – but a pharmacologist from Kent, who worked as a bacteriologist. She found work at Boots in Nottingham, where she joined the Polaris club, and then moved to Manchester. Born in Brighton, both her parents were keen hill walkers and spent childhood holidays in North Wales and the Lake District. She took up climbing during the Second World War.

Her first alpine season was in 1947. She developed a love for granite climbing and particularly enjoyed hard rock climbs in the Mont Blanc range. She climbed with some of the biggest names from that era, such as Nat Allen and Don Cowan. Healey was a stylish, well-balanced climber whose success was built on skill rather than raw strength. She kept a 13-volume diary of her climbing career, from 1943 onwards, which will become a valuable archive of post-war women's climbing.

Eileen was 38 at the time of the expedition, and had already climbed in the Himalaya, joining a group of women led by Joyce Dunsheath on an exploratory trip to Kulu in India in 1956. They suffered terrible weather but managed to complete a survey of the Bara Shigri glacier. After her companions left for home, Eileen stayed on for another fortnight, making a couple of first ascents, including the first ascent of Cathedral Peak and a new route on the attractive peak of Deo Tibba, a shade over 6000m, with just two Ladakhi porters for company.

Inspired by Kogan's determination, Healey and two other women from the LAC signed up for Cho Oyu: the well-known adventurer Countess Dorothea Gravina and Margaret Darvall, who took on a lot of the pre-expedition organisation. Later recruits included the Swiss climber Loulou Boulaz, famous for her attempt on the Eiger in 1937 and ascent of the Croz, and the two teenage daughters and a niece of Tenzing Norgay. Twelve women embarked for Cho Oyu, with the journalist Stephen Harper from the *Express* following at an appropriate distance.

For Gravina, the expedition was overtly political, to show what women from around the world working as a team could achieve. For Healey, 'climbing was my great hobby'. As she put it herself, 'I didn't care who helped us.' She didn't mind whose rope she tied onto, as long as they were enjoying themselves. In this way she met her husband, Tim, as an experienced expert leading him up a climb in North Wales.

They were married in 1958, and Eileen left for Cho Oyu on the day of their first anniversary. 'She tried to use it as an excuse not to go,' he joked later, but on arriving in the Sherpa village of Namche Bazaar she was enthralled. 'It was beautiful. We were obsessed by mountains so the difficulties didn't put us off.'

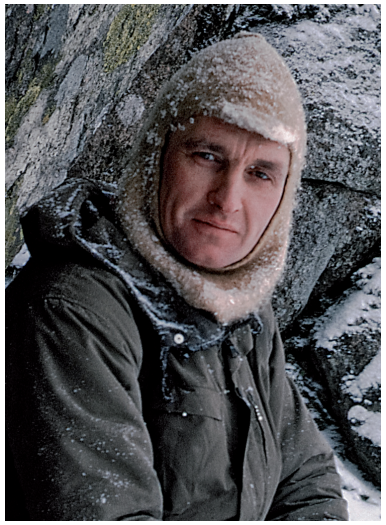
Nor did she have any doubts about the wisdom of the enterprise. 'I had every faith in Claude,' she said. It was certainly nothing to do with her gender that caught the expedition leader out, rather her impatience at getting the climb done. Heavy monsoon snow still coated the upper part of the mountain, adding to the avalanche risk.

Base camp was also located at around 5700m, much too high for climbers to recover from the rigours of the mountain. 'It needed to be lower,' Healey reflected. Like Loulou Boulaz, she suffered from the altitude. After the accident, Dorothea Gravina took command, saying she wanted to try for the summit as a 'crowning memorial' for the dead women, but as she admitted herself: 'I was alone.'

In 2003, Healey had an emotional reunion with Tenzing's daughter Pem Pem at the 50th anniversary reunion of surviving Everest members. They had not seen each other since 1959.

A member of the all-female Pinnacle Club as well as the LAC and the Alpine Climbing Group, her adventurous life continued deep into old age, as she followed her passions for climbing and sailing. After living in Uganda for two years, she and Tim brought their family home after Idi Amin came to power, and settled near Chester. Last year, her film work was given the recognition it deserved, presented at the Kendal Mountain Film Festival by the historian and writer Audrey Salkeld. Her husband and her two sons, John and Jamie, survive her.

Ed Douglas



Peter Hodgkiss in the Black Spout of Lochnagar, February 1973, having 'abandoned an intention to climb *Raeburn's Gully* in the face of deep soft snow, high winds, and waves of spindrift'. *(Bob Aitken)*

Peter Hodgkiss 1936 - 2010

Heaven forbid, but if my library of mountain books were to catch fire right now with just a few minutes to rescue treasured volumes, I'd rifle the shelves for those with the image of a Gutenberg-era screw press on the spine – the distinctive logo of The Ernest Press. There would be none of mountaineering's best sellers among them, no *Into Thin Air* or Eiger epics, rather a collection telling climbing's story via *The Ordinary Route*, to employ the title of one of The Ernest Press's real gems.

Of course proprietor Peter Hodgkiss must always have hoped to make money from his titles, and to an extent he did, with a successful run of mountain biking guides providing the company's bread and butter. But look at the chances he took with new authors, even an extraordinary prose-poem imagining the final hours of George Mallory, and it is clear that profit was not his guiding star. Peter was a romantic who published out of a love of mountains and the climbing game, and a belief that if the writing was of quality then that book deserved to be in print. The result was that The Ernest Press enjoyed critical acclaim, its authors picking up a disproportionate number of mountain literature prizes without anyone getting rich.

However Peter's presence in the background of British climbing went way beyond the output of The Ernest Press. Ask about him in the senior clubs – that is the Alpine Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Club, the Climbers' Club, and the Fell & Rock Climbing Club – and many will know the name without knowing precisely what this modest man did. 'I think he helped with the guidebooks,' would be a likely reply.

But to say Peter 'helped' would be to understate his important role as a print broker. For decades he provided the link between club guidebook editors and printing firms; advising editors on what was practical in terms of format, paper quality, reproduction of diagrams and photos and so forth, meanwhile negotiating an acceptable price with printers, usually these days in the Far East.

The happy conjunction of two strands of Peter's life made him ideally suited to this task – a long career in the print business and a passion for climbing. Born in Leeds, Peter Hodgkiss was one of three brothers. The family moved to Nottingham where Peter attended the Becket School in West Bridgford. Hodgkiss senior was a printer and Peter followed his father into the craft, serving a six-year apprenticeship with Thomas Foreman & Son.

Tall and lean, at school he was an enthusiastic rower, West Bridgford being hard by the river Trent. His introduction to climbing came at age 17 when he went on an Outward Bound course in the Lake District. In addition to climbing and strenuous hillwalking, he also became a keen cyclist and in later years Peter and his wife Joy would go on cycling holidays, Scottish islands being a favourite destination. He and Joy Pycock married in 1959. Both came from Catholic families and the romance began at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Woodthorpe. Peter was certainly blessed in the partnership; they had four children, Joy supported Peter when the vicissitudes of the printing trade brought unemployment, her computer expertise was a boon to The Ernest Press, and she endured his frequent absences in the Alps or Highlands.

The couple moved to Glasgow in 1961, Peter working for the Clyde Paper Co and later for other firms. Apart from an unhappy 12 months' exile in Blackburn in the early 1970s, the family have remained on the South Side of the city, first in Netherlee and then in Giffnock.

Prior to the founding of The Ernest Press, Peter's work, or lack of it, followed the fortunes of his troubled industry. But climbing and the hills were a constant. Joining the Glasgow section of the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland in the mid 1960s, he found partners for long days on Highland crags, summer or winter. His determination to get out whatever the weather could cause exasperation. If the rock were too wet for climbing he would urge companions over a clutch of Munros. Rain was dismissed as 'just condensation'. He joined the SMC in 1975 and was president of the Glasgow JMCS in 1977.

Peter wasn't interested in pushing the grades or self-advertisement. He rock climbed up to Very Severe and operated on snow and ice at around grade V. A Hodgkiss day on the hills would usually start and end in the dark, plus two or three hours' driving from Glasgow and back. He loved the classic lines. On one long day, recalled by Mike Thornley, they linked the great trad' routes of Ben Nevis – first climbing North-East Buttress, descending Tower Ridge, ascending Observatory Ridge and down Castle Ridge. Any one of those routes would constitute a 'good day on the Ben' let alone all four. 'Actually that day was a bit untypical for Pete,' added Thornley. 'It was a bit showy.'

While Joy was at mass on a Sunday, Peter would be on the hill, excusing himself to the children as an agnostic. So regular was this weekend routine that one daughter told friends that her father didn't go to church 'because he's an agnostic – that means he goes climbing on Sundays'.

In truth, the hills had become akin to a religion to Peter; he loved their remoteness, a place to lose and stretch himself. It's no surprise that while unemployed around 1980 he became actively involved in the successful

(so far) campaign to prevent the expansion of the Cairngorm ski area into Lurchers Gully – a wild coire west of the current piste network. In the only book that actually bears his name as author, the SMC's district guide to *The Central Highlands* (1984) Peter bid all those who enjoy a sense of wilderness 'to be both vigilant and active in protection of that value'.

Peter's alpine seasons were also a reflection of this mountain wanderer approach rather than bagger of trophy routes or busy 4000m summits. He shunned the resorts of Chamonix and Zermatt, preferring the relatively quiet side valleys off the Val d'Aosta in north-west Italy. His alpine partner in the 1970s was Ted Maden. They would camp with their families at or near Cogne in the Gran Paradiso national park and take off into the mountains every few days. One notable ascent was the north ridge of La Grivola (3969m). The Italian poet Giosuè Carducci called it *l'ardua Grivola bella* – the arduous beautiful Grivola, which seems to make it a natural Hodgkiss mountain. Later, he had seasons with Richard Gibbens, who had contributed photographs to *The Central Highlands*. Gibbens remember little of technical merit, but long days off the beaten track, Peter 'gliding with absolute poise' on snow and ice, and long conversations about classical music, photography and English grammar. Leafing through Central Highlands as we spoke, Gibbens came across a note from Hodgkiss – handwritten in fountain pen in his fastidious style – thanking Richard 'for good company in the Alps, good conversation when required, peaceful quiet at other times'.

Peter's entry into publishing grew out of his enthusiasm for mountain literature and the discovery at the bottom of a box of books bought at auction of some volumes on Antarctica that he didn't want. He was advised to contact Jack Baines, an antiquarian book dealer in Anglesey. The two met in the back room of Peter's house and sat drinking tea and talking about old classics they would like to see back in print. Each wrote out a cheque for £1000 and The Ernest Press was born. First off the press was a facsimile copy of *Twenty Years on Ben Nevis* by W T Kilgour. It had been out of print for 80 years. Baines, who had also been a mountaineer, died in 1996.

By 2010 The Ernest Press had some 50 books in its catalogue – a good many of them of an esoteric nature that few, if any, other publishers would touch. Top of that list must be Charles Lind's *An Afterclap of Fate: Mallory on Everest*, a haunting prose-poem in the imagined voice of George Mallory. It has not sold 1000 copies but it won the prestigious Boardman Tasker Award for Mountain Literature in 2006. Peter has also championed the novelist Roger Hubank. Climbing novels are a gamble to say the least, but Hubank's *Hazard's Way* won both the BT and the Grand Prize at the Banff Mountain Literature Festival in 2001.

In all, four Ernest Press titles have won the BT and others have been shortlisted. Arguably it should have been five, with Harold Drasdo's *The Ordinary Route* the one overlooked. It was the epitome of an Ernest Press book, well-written, reflective, philosophical in an unflowery way, and set in a landscape comfortable to most climbers. As was noted on the cover: 'even the Ordinary Route is not to be despised.'

I first spoke to Peter Hodgkiss in January 1997 prior to interviewing the critic Janet Adam Smith, literary editor of the *New Statesman* from 1949 to 1960. Peter had enjoyed a long correspondence with Adam Smith and had just republished her engaging *Mountain Holidays* (1946). He warned me to keep my wits about me. Although in her early nineties, this grande dame of the AC had an incisive mind and was a stickler for facts and grammar. And so was Peter, as I was to discover five years later when I was persuaded to become editor of the *Alpine Journal*.

Peter had been elected to the Alpine Club in 1988 and in 1993 the Ernest Press became joint publisher with the club of the *AJ*. He was pleased to have that screw press logo on its spine and gave freely of his time to ensure that the *AJ* looked its best. We spent countless hours on the phone, digressing from production headaches to recent climbs or books old and new. Had I read René Daumal's novel *Mount Analogue*? (A metaphysical adventure.) 'Oh you must.' And two days later it arrived in the post. Sometimes our headaches were novel too. One year the *AJ* was delayed in China after a censorious printer spotted a tiny image of the Dalai Lama within a photograph. It cost us a fortnight but the photo remained unchanged.

Our last meeting was at his Glasgow home six days before he died. Despite the cancer that had racked him for six months, he remained erect and dignified, insisting that we should talk in his office, business as usual rather than retiring to the sitting room. 'Growing old isn't for softies,' he would say when asked how he felt. But Peter Hodgkiss was never a softie and he was concerned to be involved with production of the *Alpine Journal* until his final days.

Stephen Goodwin

John William Rolfe Kempe CVO 1917 - 2010

John Kempe who died on 10 May, aged 92, was born on 29 October 1917 so had outlasted most of his contemporaries. He was elected to the Alpine Club on 8 December 1952, being proposed by Harry Tilley and seconded by A E Gunther. He also became a Life Member of the Himalayan Club in the same year. In the Alps he climbed over three seasons: 1949 in the Dauphine; 1950 in the Silvretta and Dauphine; and 1951 in the Zermatt area. These were mostly guideless climbs in partnership with Gunther. Then in spring 1952, he joined Tilley, David Bryson, a BBC producer, and John Jackson for trekking and climbing in the Garhwal Himalaya which included an attempt on Nilkanta (21,640ft) with bivouacs at 16,000' and 17,000', but they were defeated by heavy snow.

His most notable role in the Himalaya was in setting the scene for the first ascent of Kangchenjunga in 1955, approached from the south-west up the Yalung valley. In April and May 1953 he accompanied Gilmour



John Kempe photo-theodolite surveying during the British Huagaruncho Expedition, Peru 1956 *(George Band)*

Lewis, attempting Boktoh on the west side of the valley and ascending the northern shoulders of Koktang and north Kabru. Both summits were missed because of misgivings as to the state of the snow on the way down, but from Kabru the south-west face of Kangchenjunga was examined and after reconnoitring the lower defences of the mountain they considered that, in spite of Smythe's opinion to the contrary, a possible route up might be found.

This led to a further reconnaissance of the mountain in April and May 1954 by Kempe, Lewis, Ron Jackson, Jack Tucker, Trevor Braham and Dr Donald Matthews. The expedition had the limited objective of finding a route that would appear to lead to the summit. Three routes were examined: Pache's Grave route, one below the Talung Saddle, and the last by the main ice-face, all with a view to reaching the large ice-shelf which runs across the mountain at about 24,000ft. Kempe's official report of the expedition (*AJ 59*, 428-31, November 1954) together with the photographs and reports of individual members were considered by a sub-committee appointed in April 1954 under the chairmanship of Sir John Hunt. Their recommendation that an expedition to the mountain in 1955 should be sponsored by the Alpine Club was accepted. Charles Evans agreed to lead the expedition with the limited objective of reaching this Great Shelf. (So far no expedition had been above 20,000ft on this face.) At the same time, just in case things proved easier than expected, Evans was planning to take oxygen and sufficient equipment to launch an attack on the summit. This was to be 'a reconnaissance in force'.

The 1954 party climbed a rock buttress on the east side of the Lower Icefall, which became known as Kempe's Buttress, and thought that from there one might climb the remaining 600ft of the Lower Icefall, and continue up the Upper Icefall to the Great Shelf, and thence by way of the snow gangway, reach the west ridge and so to the top. It was a complicated route, and at the time the 1955 team had no great faith in it, for the avalanche dangers, let alone the technical difficulties, might make it totally unsafe or impossible. Kempe's party had considered the top of the Rock Buttress – the highest point they had reached – to be about 21,000ft. But a detailed survey in 1955 by the civil engineer and deputy leader Norman Hardie judged it to be only 19,000ft. This gave another 2,000ft of virgin ground to be covered. But the main achievement was that it got the 1955 expedition launched on the mountain, and it was successfully climbed by two pairs, Joe Brown and myself on 25 May and Norman Hardie and Tony Streather the following day. The ascent was not repeated for 22 years.

John Kempe was born in Nairobi, the son of a Colonial Service officer who sadly died of a fever when John was only four, so his mother took her young son and daughter to live at her family's home in Norfolk. He was educated at Stowe and won an Exhibition to Clare College, Cambridge, where he read Economics and Mathematics. He also joined the University Air Squadron – of the 22 undergraduates who trained with him at Duxford, only two others were to survive the Second World War.

Kempe was about to enter the Indian civil service when war was declared in September 1939, and he volunteered for the RAF. As he was already an experienced pilot, he was kept back from operations in order to train the new intake, so many of whom, to his deep regret, were to die during the Battle of Britain. In December 1940 he therefore asked to move to operations but this was not effected until July 1941, by which time the allies had achieved air supremacy, flying on the front line was a bit safer and he was lucky to survive. He was posted to No 602 Squadron, flying Spitfires, and in May 1942 promoted to squadron leader, and the next year mentioned in dispatches. In June 1944 he was posted to No 125 Squadron, flying Mosquitoes. From a base in North Africa he escorted convoys making for Malta. He commanded Nos 153 and 255 Night Fighter Squadrons, and in 1945 was posted to Algiers as chief test pilot (Middle East). Shortly before being demobilised in 1946 he was again mentioned in dispatches.

After the war Kempe worked briefly at the Board of Trade and in private business, but found himself dissatisfied and restless. Discovering that his former housemaster at Stowe was now teaching at Gordonstoun, he asked whether there was a vacancy for a mathematics teacher. There was, and he got the job. After only three years in Scotland, in 1951 he was appointed the founding principal of the Hyderabad Public School in India with the motto 'Be Vigilant'. He chose the Shaheen (literally 'Royal White Falcon') as the School Emblem, for its sharpness of vision and its innate ability to soar to great heights. He served from September 1952 to August 1954. Among his first acts was to ensure that the dates of the school holidays coincided with the Himalayan climbing season.

In 1956 (by which time he was headmaster of Corby Grammar School, in the Northamptonshire steel town where he remained until 1967) Kempe was the leader of an expedition to the Peruvian Andes which climbed the virgin 18,797ft peak Huagaruncho. Legend had it that the Incas had climbed it previously leaving a cross of gold on the summit, but no such

thing was found. Three of the party were from the 1954 Kangchenjunga venture: Kempe, Tucker and Matthews, augmented by Michael Westmacott and John Streetly, the successful summit team, and myself. This was the first time I had really had the opportunity to meet and climb with John and found him a delightful, kindly and modest companion and we became good friends. This was to be his final expedition. He gave up climbing in 1957 after marrying his wife, Barbara Huxtable, the daughter of an Australian doctor who had won an MC and Bar at the Battle of the Somme.

In 1968 Kempe returned to Gordonstoun, but this time as headmaster, a post he held for 10 years. The school was already famous as the alma mater of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales; under Kempe, it also educated Prince Andrew and then Prince Edward, who arrived just before Kempe retired. The school's other claim to fame was its Spartan regime: boys were required to go for a dawn run, whatever the weather, and to take two cold showers a day. But while Kempe retained these traditions, he was also an innovator, in 1972 admitting girls who, within three years, made up nearly a quarter of the pupils. He also introduced individual tutors for sixth form pupils. He himself taught classes in English, logic and philosophy, and would invite groups of pupils to his house for tea, sherry or his own home-brewed beer.

John Kempe was a member of the Mount Everest Foundation Management Committee 1956-62 and chairman of the Round Square International Committee 1979-87 through which young people undertake voluntary work in developing countries. He was also vice-chairman of the European Atlantic Movement committee 1982-92 (and its vice-president thereafter), and a trustee of the University of Cambridge Kurt Hahn Trust 1986-89. In addition to articles in the *Alpine*, *Geographical*, and other journals, he published *A Family History of the Kempes* (1991). He was appointed CVO (Commander of the Royal Victorian Order) in 1980, and is survived by his wife Barbara and their two sons and one daughter.

The last time we met was at his very special 90th birthday celebration at the RAF Club on 27 October 2007. He was by then quite frail but afterwards sent me a photograph of three of us standing together, John, Mike Westmacott and myself, which was a lovely souvenir of the occasion. At the memorial service to celebrate his life, Barbara asked that any donations should go to the Himalayan Trust UK to benefit schools in the very remote valleys below Kangchenjunga. This would have pleased John.

George Band

Robert Lawford 1916 - 2009

With the death of Bob Lawford on 11 October 2009 the Alpine Club has lost one of the most devoted and capable members in its long history.

An engineer by profession, Bob's talents were applied to aircraft production with Handley Page until 1942 when he moved into the oil industry, working for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company at Abadan. In 1946 Bob joined the Metal Box Company where as a director he played a leading role in that company's affairs while based in Bombay (Mumbai), Madras and Calcutta.

As a young man Bob had acquired the techniques of rock climbing and general mountaineering in the English Lake District which he visited with regular companions on numerous occasions. Like many active enthusiasts of his generation, the Second World War and a heavy workload interrupted the prospect of a natural progression to climbing and exploration in the Alps and greater ranges. However, on his arrival in Calcutta where the Himalayan Club was based at that time, Bob was able to re-establish his links with the climbing scene by making a significant contribution to that club, filling various official posts and being elected as president prior to his return to this country in 1970.

As a former president of the HC, Bob was welcomed at the Alpine Club, to which he had been elected in 1967 and where he soon became equally indispensable. Although any appreciation of Bob's role in the AC, which covered so many aspects of the club's activities over a period of almost forty years, must inevitably be somewhat incomplete and inadequate certain areas of his work call for particular comment.

Bob is perhaps remembered best for his long association with the Alpine Club Library where as honorary librarian for more than 20 years and subsequently as librarian emeritus he dealt quietly and efficiently with all matters in his domain. The library, which had expanded continuously from the early days of the club – a catalogue of books published in 1888 ran to more than 50 pages – and which had been stored for safe-keeping in various locations outside the capital during the war, had become too large to be maintained on a voluntary basis. Understandably in such circumstances, earlier cataloguing systems had not been maintained and by the time of Bob's arrival at the club, in spite of heroic efforts by previous honorary Librarians assisted by a small group of volunteers, several thousand books remained to be sorted, cleaned and reclassified. To this major challenge, including the ongoing need to deal with considerable numbers of journals received from other climbing clubs, and to numerous other problems in the following years, Bob gave countless hours of his time. In addition he took on the daunting task of sorting and cataloguing thousands of photographic prints, negatives and glass lantern slides, when his profound knowledge of the Himalaya enabled him to identify many untitled peaks. Bob also advocated and implemented the sale to members of duplicated books and journals, many of which he himself first repaired or rebound to a profes-

sional standard – a scheme which over the years has generated substantial funds for the Library and enabled members to add to their own collections at reasonable cost.

Only brief reference can be made here to further examples of Bob's immense contribution to the Alpine Club over many years. Others have recalled his catalogues of the club's maps and pictures; his card index covering more than 500 Himalayan peaks; his major role during the moves from South Audley Street, first into temporary accommodation and then to the present premises; and his guidance to many members on Himalayan matters.

Bob has been aptly described in the *Alpine Journal* as 'the linchpin of the whole effort'. In recognition of his services to the club he was elected to honorary membership in 1979 and as a further tribute to his work a series of pictures produced by contemporary artistic members and donated to the club to mark its 150th anniversary is now known as 'The Bob Lawford Collection'.

Essentially a practical man of action with an innate love of the mountain world, Bob's work to catalogue and preserve our treasured possessions – work which to a great extent forms the basis of the club's computerised facilities today – is an enduring reminder of his achievements. In offering our condolences to Bob's family the club wishes to express its gratitude for his outstanding contribution over so many years. We were fortunate indeed to have Bob on our side.

Christopher Russell

Michael Baker writes: In the 1970s when I was hon secretary I used to visit the club at lunchtime on most week days in order to attend to correspondence and see to the club's affairs. Almost always there were two people in the South Audley Street premises that we then occupied – Mrs Lewis the formidable, not to say fearsome caretaker, concierge and manager – and Bob Lawford. Mrs Lewis was very sparing with her friendship but in her eyes Bob could do no wrong. This was only partly because of the countless hours he spent in the basement trying to put some order into the club's library, archives and records. There was also about him, as she I think saw very clearly, the deepest sense of loyalty to the club which she appreciated because she shared it.

Bob's involvement with the club at that time was not entirely subterranean, though he rarely contributed to the lively and informed discussion which followed the lectures. To this there was one remarkable exception. In 1974 Dr Terris Moore had come over from the United States to talk on the 1932 expedition to Minya Konka in Eastern Tibet. According to the expedition report (*AJ 45*, 302, 1933) they 'exposed thirty negatives' on the 24,906ft summit in good clear weather. At the end of his lecture Dr Moore showed a panoramic view compiled from some of these negatives and invited the audience to identify any of the numerous peaks it depicted. Given that the area was remote and the ascent had not been repeated this was quite



Bob Lawford in the Lake District c1946.
(Joan Coad-Pryor)

a challenge. However, a rather tentative voice came from the back of the hall – to this day I believe it to have been Bob: 'I say Terris, I think you have the slide in the wrong way round!' When the necessary adjustment had been made he and a number of other members named almost all of the peaks from one side of the slide to the other.

Robert Pettigrew writes: Bob Lawford merits a special mention in the Himalayan context for creating over many years the unique resource of the Himalayan Index, painstakingly compiled as a card index before the age of computerisation. Bob will forever be remembered as the leading member of a trio of British expatriate mountaineers, the others being Charles Crawford and Bill Risoe, who 'stayed on' in post-partition India in 1947 and who resolved, individually and collectively, to try and ensure the future viability of the Himalayan Club, almost fatally weakened by the inevitable loss of its core executive membership. All successively held office as presidents of the HC.

Bob and Ann Lawford epitomised the perseverance and dedication of those few of the British community who 'stayed on' and by their encouragement and support of young Indian embryonic mountaineers ensured the succession of capable future office holders of the Himalayan Club. A keen rock climber and hill walker in his youth, Bob had no choice but to forgo the call of higher mountaineering and to channel his love of mountaineering into research and administration. His original research of the Himalayan peaks whilst he was in Calcutta, which he recorded on handwritten index cards for each of 500 mountains, was to become the basis for the Alpine Club's Himalayan Index. Of the research he wrote: 'I've been working on a list of all the Himalayan peaks for a chap who is publishing it in book form with photos. What a job! I have recorded about 500 over the years, having checked on over 800 expeditions.'

It was Bob, as honorary secretary of the HC, who invited me to Calcutta

to present an illustrated lecture to the club on our first ascent of Kulu Pumori (21,500ft) above the Bara Shigri glacier on the Kulu/Lahul/Spiti watershed of the Great Himalayan Divide in 1964[1]. The young members he has assembled epitomised the fellowship engendered by a love of mountains, where hospitality was of the legendary sort experienced by all the mountaineers who travelled through Calcutta en route to the Himalaya. It was also memorable for a scholarly vote of thanks by Dr K Biswas, then editor of the *Himalayan Journal*. Later Bob, then vice-president in 1966, encouraged my further explorations of Kulu by offering strong support to Jagdish Nanavati and me as we planned and carried through our Indo-British expedition's successful second ascent of Bruce's Solang Weisshorn (19,450ft)[2], since this was his own philosophy translated into practice. Our association resumed on my own repatriation from India when I succeeded Bill Risoe as honorary local secretary of the HC. Bob continued to assist me in that role to the end of his life, a 40-year epilogue to round off a lifetime of service to the greater mountaineering fraternity from Calcutta to London and thence worldwide.

Bob is survived by his wife Ann, his daughters Anna (a member of the HC and AC) and Diana, and three grandchildren.

1 *AJ* 70, 70

2 *AJ* 72, 201

Erhard Loretan 1959 - 2011

When Erhard Loretan and his fellow Swiss climber Jean Troillet reached their advance base camp at 5850m on the Rongbuk glacier late on 30 August 1986 they had set a new standard in extreme alpinism – to the summit of Everest (8850m) and back in less than two days, no sherpas, no rope, no bottled oxygen; for the last 1000m they did not even take a rucksack.

The pair climbed mainly at night, so as not to overheat in their down suits, and rested during the warmth of the day. Meticulous in its planning and beautifully stylish in its execution, their ascent of the mountain's North Face via the Japanese and Hornbein couloirs was described by Voytek Kurtyka as 'night-naked climbing'.

With his ascent of Kangchenjunga (8586m), Nepal, in 1995, Loretan became only the third person to climb all fourteen of the world's 8000-metre peaks, following on from Reinhold Messner and Jerzy Kukuczka. By April 2011, twenty-five climbers had achieved this feat, but few with the verve of Loretan.

Born in Bulle, in the canton of Fribourg, Loretan began climbing at the age of 11 and four years later climbed the east face of the Doldenhorn (3643m) in the Bernese Alps – the same Swiss range where he fell to his death on 28 April – his 52nd birthday – while guiding on the Gross Grünhorn (4043m). He found his true métier as a mountain guide after first working as a cabinet maker, and seemed to derive as much pleasure from sharing trade routes and peaks with clients as he did from expressing his 'fast and light' philosophy in extreme places.

At the time of writing, the precise circumstances of Loretan's accident were unknown. Reportedly, he and a client, a 38-year old Swiss woman resident in Geneva, had left the Finsteraarhorn hut (3048m) at 6am, ascended to a col where they deposited their skis, and had reached about 3800m on the south-west ridge, the Normal Route, when they fell 200m down its north-west face. When rescuers arrived, Loretan was found to be dead; the client was still alive, though with multiple fractures and internal bleeding. She was airlifted to hospital.

The Gross Grünhorn is a fairly standard peak for ski mountaineers in the Bernese Alps; once again it appears that an alpine guide who on his own private account operated at the highest level has died in a manner that on the face of it seems prosaic.

In 1980 Loretan made his first trip to the greater ranges, climbing new routes in the Peruvian Andes, and two years later ticked the first of his 8000ers with an ascent of Nanga Parbat (8126m). The blueprint to his reputation-making Everest climb came in 1985 when he and Triollet made a super-lightweight ascent of Dhaulaghiri (8167m), climbing fast, mainly at night, and carrying no ropes or bivouac gear.

The audacity of the pair's Everest ascent was matched by the literal cheek of their descent – a four-hour sitting glissade of the entire North Face, or to put it in less technical terms, perhaps the longest and highest bum slide in the world. Triollet described it thus: 'It was crazy… we were sitting side by side, looking at each other, laughing, digging our ice-axes into the snow, flying along.' And in their oxygen-starved hallucinations they were accompanied by marching bands.

Reflecting years later, Loretan insisted the feat wasn't incredible at all: 'We just set off and we were fortunate to do it in two days. We were young and in love with climbing. When you're in love, you'll do anything. It wasn't sacrifice, it was normal.'

In 1987 Loretan had his first serious accident in the Alps but returned to climbing with an appetite as voracious as ever: a new route with Kurtyka on the Nameless Tower (6239m), Trango Towers, Pakistan, in 1988; a haul of 13 north faces in the Swiss Alps and an attempt on K2 (8611m) in 1989; then in 1990 came Denali (6194m), Cho Oyu (8201m) by its difficult south-west face in 27 hours, and up and down the south face of Shisha Pangma (8046) in 22 hours – a remarkable year. In 1994, as well as climbing Lhotse (8501m), his penultimate 8000er, he made a fine solo first ascent of Mt Epperly (4508m) in Antarctica's Sentinel Range.

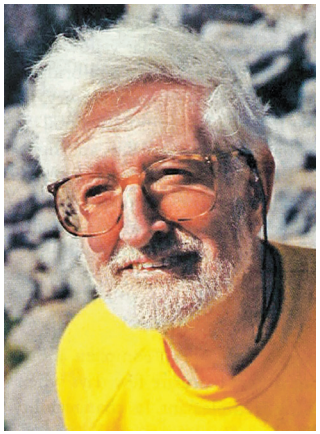
Climbing for Loretan meant fulfilment. 'I have taken the decision to live intensely, flirting with risk,' he said. But his recent years were clouded by tragedy. In 2003 Loretan received a four-month suspended prison sentence after pleading guilty to the negligent manslaughter of his seven-month old son in 2001. Loretan admitted to the police that he had shaken the baby boy 'for a couple of seconds' to stop him crying and that when he put him

back to bed the crying stopped. He had later summoned an ambulance. The case led to fresh research showing many parents were unaware that infants, because of weak neck muscles, could die from being shaken for only a few seconds.

Even in his storm years, Loretan did not court publicity – the race for the 8000ers was more a figment of the media than of the climbers, he contended – and after the tragedy he avoided any limelight, focusing on his guiding.

But among mountaineers, Loretan's achievements were never likely to be forgotten and last year he accepted honorary membership of the Alpine Club. He also came to London to take part in 'First on Everest' at the Royal Geographical Society, a charity event organised by Doug Scott. With Everest today more associated with stunts and ego-burnishing, it was a chance to celebrate the boldest and best of climbing on the world's highest peak. Erhard Loretan, unassuming as ever, was back in the fold – albeit all too briefly.

Stephen Goodwin



Joss Lynam

Joss Lynam 1924 - 2011

James Perry O'Flaherty (Joss) Lynam was Ireland's best-known mountaineer. His achievements included many expeditions to the greater ranges and an outstanding voluntary contribution to adventure sports in Ireland. Joss is known to many Irish and international walking enthusiasts for his many hillwalking guidebooks and was the editor of *Irish Mountain Log* (IML) for more than 20 years. He continued as the literary editor of *IML* up to his death.

Laoch ar lár was how the former minister for community, rural and Gaeltacht affairs Éamon Ó Cuív described him, paying tribute to his 'pivotal role' in Comhairle na Tuaithe, the countryside council initiated by the minister to deal with access and development strategies for recreational activity in rural areas. He made an outstanding voluntary contribution to the development of adventure sports in Ireland, and played a key mediating role in disputes over access to the countryside.

Joss was born in London on 29 June 1924, son of Edward Lynam and Martha (nee Perry), both of whom were natives of Galway. Edward was curator of maps at the British Museum, and was author of a number of books about maps and mapmaking. During his childhood the family spent a number of holidays in a cottage at Renvyle, County Galway. It was on one of those trips that he climbed his first mountain – Knocknarea, Co Sligo – with an aunt. His ashes were scattered there in February 2011.

In 1942, at the age of 18, Joss was sent with the Royal Engineers on military service to India, where he learned to speak Hindi and spent time in the Himalayan foothills north of Delhi. He recalled later that he had a 'quiet' war, being demobbed before Indian partition. However, he lost a close friend who had remained behind and was caught in the ensuing bloodshed.

He subsequently studied engineering at Trinity College Dublin. While a student, he and Bill Perrott founded the Irish Mountaineering Club (1948), initiating an appeal through *The Irish Times* letters page. They were out in Luggala in Wicklow on the day the appeal was published and returned to a sheaf of telephone messages. The first meeting was held in Dublin's Central Hotel and Robert Lloyd Praeger, naturalist and author of *The Way That I Went*, was elected as first president. Joss's aim was to ensure it was mixed sex – at a time when many British and international clubs were male only – and cross-Border.

One of those first IMC members was his future wife, Nora Gorevan, whom he married on his graduation in 1951. Fortunately, Joss's career as a civil engineer brought the couple to work in a number of mountainous regions including Wales, the English Lake District and India. At this stage, he had been to the Alps, and had already undertaken his first international mountaineering expedition – to Kolahoi in Kashmir at the end of the war. He described many years afterwards how much of his technique was self-taught and how he slipped away from base camp with a book to learn how to cut steps on ice. 'How we survived, I don't know... It was the first real mountain that any of us had ever seen.'

He was leader or deputy leader of expeditions to Greenland, the Andes, Kashmir, Tien Shan, Garhwal and Tibet, including the 1987 expedition to Chang-tse (7543m), which was the forerunner to the successful first Irish ascent of Everest in 1993. He was joint leader with Mike Banks of a veteran mountaineering trip to the 6632m-high Jaonli peak in India in 1991 when an earthquake struck less than 15 miles away. His sound mountaineering judgment, knowledge of different ranges, route-finding and navigation ability, perseverance and understanding of the mountain environment all contributed to his considerable leadership skills.

He brought this experience to bear in his role as president of the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme's expeditions commission in the 1990s, and was instrumental in making the case for greater involvement of the 'host' countries, such as India and Pakistan.

Arguably, one of his finest legacies was the formation with others of a number of organisations supporting adventure sports, including the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs in Ireland, the Association for Adventure Sports, the Irish Orienteers, Bord Oiliúint Sléibhte, Tiglin – the National Outdoor Training Centre in Co Wicklow – and Outdoor Education Ireland.

He was a driving force in developing a national network of waymarked trails, as chair of the National Waymarked Ways Advisory Committee from 1984 to 2007. His vision of a representative body for hillwalking

and mountaineering was realised in Mountaineering Ireland, which has grown from very small roots to an organisation of 10,500 members. He also created a 'Celtic fringe' of alliances among Irish and British mountain training organisations in his role as chair of a joint consultative committee.

The early 1980s were a difficult time for him and his family; he was made redundant in 1983, but said afterwards that it was the 'best thing that could have happened', as he undertook consultancy work, lectured and produced a number of walking guides for Gill and Macmillan while also editing Irish Mountain Log, which he had founded in 1979. In 1986, he had a coronary bypass operation, and his son Nicholas died the following year. However, there was some good news also with the arrival of his first grandchild, Christopher.

He served on Cospóir, the national sports council, from 1974 to 1984, and advised on curriculums for outdoor pursuits courses and organisation of outdoor education centres run by Vocational Education committees. Dissatisfied with Ordnance Survey maps of Connacht at the time, he re-surveyed the region's mountains in 1988 and published *Mountains of Connemara* under Robinson's Folding Landscapes imprint. He was also a contributor to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and continued his civil engineering work – such as with the Office of Public Works at the Skellig Michael world heritage site off Co Kerry, and on a number of pier and harbour schemes.

His natural style was one of 'benign persuasion', but he could be a tough and determined negotiator when required, though always willing to see the other's perspective. In recognition of his extraordinary voluntary work and achievements, an honorary doctorate from Trinity College Dublin (2001) was conferred on him and he received the Irish Sports Council's inaugural Sport Volunteer of the Year Award (2005).

He celebrated his 80th birthday climbing *Paradise Lost* and abseiling *Winder's Slab* at Dalkey Quarry on his 82nd birthday. Both were to raise money for cancer research, as he had had treatment himself. Joss is survived by his wife Nora, his daughters Ruth and Clodagh, and his three grandchildren.

The editor is grateful to Frank Nugent, Mountaineering Ireland and The Irish Times for their contributions to this obituary.

John Moss 1943 - 2010

Professor Emeritus John Moss took us all by surprise when he contracted cancer in October 2009. After an eight-month battle he died at home in Cape Town on 30 May in the arms of his family.

John's passing created a void that is unlikely to be filled any time soon. He was a rock solid fixture and focal point for visiting climbers to South Africa. His popular *ad hoc* 'slide shows' at home were not to be missed. He delighted us with his deadpan humour in descriptions of his travels, and


John Moss

it was a given, no matter what the travel circumstances, that there would always be a mountain climbed or attempted. These Moss 'soirées' always had an added attraction – you were as likely to meet a Nobel Laureate as a big wall speed merchant from California or a distinguished mountain lecturer from Europe. Charismatic as they come, John had a gift for hosting and entertaining a wide variety of people from academia, mountaineering and sailing (I sailed into his life 22 years ago) all thrown together on the same couch.

British born and educated, with a PhD in inorganic chemistry from Leeds University, he was regular of the British rock-climbing scene in the 60s making many first ascents on Yorkshire limestone, in the Avon Gorge, Cheddar Gorge and in Derbyshire. He was president of the Leeds University Union Climbing Club from 1966 to 1968.

With his PhD in hand, and several summers in the Alps under his belt, John struck out for the Canadian Rockies, finding time to fit in a position as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Alberta. Partnered by Brian Greenwood, between 1969 and 1970 the pair made first ascents of Mt. Colin (winter), *Balrog* at Yamnuska, and the north-east face of Mt Babel, which some consider was a decade ahead of its time. Joined by Oliver Woolcock and Chris Jones, he also made the first ascent of the north face of Hungabee in addition to many early ascents of other peaks in the range. In 1971, following in the wake of Chouinard and Tompkins, John and friends drove a wreck from Edmonton to Patagonia and failed on the North Tower of Paine due to bad weather.

With an academic career always on the boil, in 1973 John changed hemispheres and took a position in the chemistry department at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, becoming the head of inorganic chemistry from 1977 to 1979. Later in 1979 he 'tied himself in' at the base of Table Mountain in the chemistry department at the University of Cape Town. This suited his mountain passions admirably, allowing him to climb actively for the next three decades at weekends and during school holidays on the warm 'Table Mountain sandstone' that the Western Cape Province is famous for.

In 1995 John was named the Jamison Professor of Inorganic Chemistry at UCT and in 1997 he was made head of the chemistry department. Throughout his academic career he published more than 300 scientific papers and maintained active collaborations with colleagues from Cambridge, the California Institute of Technology, Colorado State University in Fort Collins and Lund University in Sweden. As a visiting research associate with long periods away from base, always joined by his

wife Lynn and daughters Tara and Miranda, John was a master of the art of combining the university sabbatical with mountain travel. To wit, you could not imagine him entering into a collaboration with an institution in the flatlands of Midwestern America.

Like many 'university climbers', before a family entered the picture he ranged far and wide during the longer breaks with expeditions to Mt Kenya in the mid '70s, including the north face of Batian, the *Ice Window*, and the fourth ascent (first in a single day) of the north-east pillar of Nelion. In 1976 with Paul Fatti, his partner on many adventures, he climbed a new route on Kilimanjaro's Kersten glacier. Expeditions to Baffin Island, Patagonia and Nepal followed.

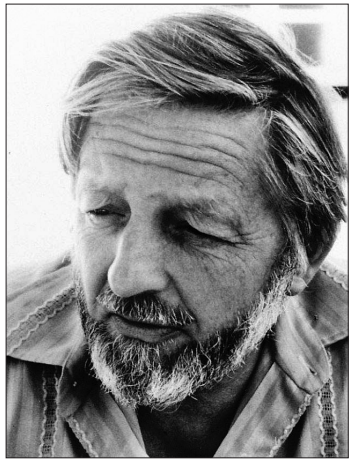
A keen offshore sailor, he crewed in many ocean races including the Cape to Uruguay Race in 1982 and the Diaz Race, Lisbon to Cape Town, in 1987. When I sailed in on *Pelagic* in 1988 after my first Antarctic climbing expedition, John found me at the yacht club bar. The next day (with a hangover) we roped up and climbed the airy Africa Crag – the visiting guest's intro to Table Mountain. Thus began two decades of non-academic collaboration between us, climbing far and wide in the Western Cape, and also a memorable junket in 2006 to Namibia to climb Spitzkope. As recently as 2008, with Paul Fatti and other friends, John sailed on *Pelagic Australis* in Tierra del Fuego and attempted and failed on Mt. Frances in the Beagle Channel. Bad weather and possibly age (so the story goes) both played their part.

In 1990, John instigated an ambitious project to sail from South Africa to South Georgia and then to the Antarctic Peninsula to celebrate the centenary of the Mountain Club of South Africa. My team on *Pelagic* was scheduled to meet them on the Peninsula in January 1991 for a united effort on some virgin summits, but as it happened technical problems with their boat *Diel* pushed the schedule back and then an engine failure on the way to South Georgia unfortunately made the Peninsula rendezvous impossible. While on the island, attempts on Mt Paget and Mt Spaaman failed due to the usual ferocious weather, but the team did manage the first ascent of Mt Senderens at the southern end of the island.

During my many sailing visits to Cape Town and since becoming resident in 2002, almost without exception John would be on the phone during the week planning a day out on rock for the next weekend. We were a group of friends straddling the right and wrong side of 60 who were John's followers and we all took it for granted that his unfailing enthusiasm would somehow keep us all fit and moving through the vertical. In scientific jargon he was a constant in a society of variables. No less enigmatic, he was the chemistry professor who struggled with the idea of a cell phone, and we all loved him for it.

Skip Novak

Frederick Robert (Bob) Robinson
1922 - 2010



Bob Robinson

My first meeting with Bob was memorable. Lacking a guidebook and lost on one of the steeper routes in West Virginia, a partner and I debated, overcommitted leader calling to distant second, how and where the route might, or might not, progress. Our conversation carried, for detailed instructions emerged from an invisible presence below the tree canopy. The accent was English, the tone gravelly. After our ascent and descent we found Bob and his wife Joan comfortably seated at their camping van. Bob and I started a friendship that lasted until his death on 17 May 2010, but it was at Seneca on that warm summer evening in 1969 that I first experienced Bob and Joan's welcome and natural inclusiveness.

Bob was born on 9 July 1922, the son of an engineer and one of four brothers, all of whom, in varying degrees, shared his zest for outdoor activities. A thoroughly practical and pragmatic man, Bob made consistent contributions to mountaineering and climbing throughout his life where his engineering, inventive, administrative and legal skills could be put to good use. He lived virtually all his life on the Surrey-Hampshire borders, apart from an adventurous four years attached to the British embassy in Washington.

Displaying a natural mechanical aptitude, Bob qualified as a Chartered Engineer at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough. His early outdoor experiences were with the Scouts where he was first exposed to camping, mountain walking, caving and canoeing, all of which he continued in later life. His first alpine experience, in 1947, was with the Mountaineering Section of the Camping Club. However it was with AC and Midland Association of Mountaineers members that he completed most of his alpine ascents between 1952 and 1976.

Bob's mountain skills and judgement were exemplary. Rarely flustered, his judgment in extreme situations was impeccable. Many of his climbing companions thank Bob for extricating them from difficult situations. Bob did not climb at the extreme limits but was at his best on mixed ground. Caught in bad weather on the summit plateau following an ascent of Old Brenva with a party that included the AC's Norman Cochran, Bob persuaded his companions that the safest retreat was to reverse their ascent route. He had taken the precaution of recording bearings from the exit couloirs through the séracs. The party was able to retreat, narrowly avoiding a catastrophe when one slipped, pulling four from their steps who were only held by the

fifth man. Many years later Bob and I were members of a large club party traversing the Olan when we were caught in a severe electric storm close to the summit. An epic abseil descent in appalling weather followed; Bob in his element, a totally trustworthy and reliable companion.

His alpine routes included many of the classics. Bob's own favourites included the Monte Rosa routes *Topham Arête* and *Cresta Rey*. He knew the ground well and had completed the traverse from Zermatt to Gressoney in a thick cloud, including many of the summits. These were typical of his aspirations towards classic, now perhaps less fashionable, routes with a sense of adventure. Together we climbed the Bumillergrat on the Palu, finally traversing a slushy Palu ridge in the late afternoon sun. This was one of the few occasions when Bob expressed concern at conditions and I was thankful it was him on the other end of the rope. Over a two-week period we climbed many of the classic Bernina routes.

Within the South-east, Bob was a member of an active core of climbers exploring then relatively unknown crags in the Wye Valley. Sadly they failed to retain records of first ascents. He always maintained that many routes attributed to others had first been climbed by his group.

Bob qualified as Chartered Patent Agent and in this capacity he was seconded from the RAE to the Washington embassy between 1967 and 1972. Bob eagerly grasped the opportunity, rapidly establishing contact with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Mountaineering Section, of which he subsequently became chair. Over five years, often accompanied by Joan, he undertook regular forays into many of the climbing and wilderness areas in the US with American friends, expatriate British climbers including Roger Wallis of the AC, and visitors from the UK. His own account of the period includes trips and expeditions to the Selkirks, Texas, Bugaboos, Wind Rivers, Wyoming, Yosemite and Mt Rainier as well as the Eastern crags and outcrops. Bob wrote two inspirational articles for the *MAM Journal* describing the North American climbing scene covering not only the climbs and mountains but commenting on the different social and class structure.

He noted that American climbers tended to come from mainly highly educated professional classes. With evident approval, Bob recorded that a climbing newsletter known as *The Eastern Trade* was in circulation. The 'Trade' connotation was a deliberate reference by the editor to Victorian England and the 'lesser business classes'. He thoroughly approved of the emancipation of climbing. While at Washington, Bob wrote the first comprehensive guide to Seneca Rocks and became chair of the climbing group within the local section of the Appalachian Trail Club. Never afraid to voice an opinion, one may imagine his none too gentle cajoling to utilise natural protection rather than the pitons that were spattered liberally across many Eastern US crags in the '60s.

As an engineer and lawyer, Bob made an extended contribution to the BMC, serving on the Equipment sub-committee, South-west committee and the Management committee. Sceptical about unproven theoretical assertions, Bob consistently advocated empirical testing of equipment and techniques. He contributed to the development of glass fibre reinforced wood ice-axes. While significantly improving the strength and despite handling characteristics superior to early metal axes, Stubai turned down the opportunity to manufacture them for the mass market for 'aesthetic reasons'. Bob was a strong advocate of dynamic leader belaying during the late '60s – the practice of allowing controlled slippage of the rope in a leader fall. Arnold Wexler and Bob conducted practice sessions for novices with 'Oscar', an 80-kilo dummy. Bob was elected President of the MAM in 1975, a post he retained for two years.

Naturally inventive, in retirement Bob became an active member of Remap the charity devoted to producing customised technical aids for disabled persons. He took a particular pride in his own designs, all of which involved innovative one-off engineering solutions. When loss of mobility prevented active participation, Bob maintained a strong interest in mountaineering and the exploits of succeeding generations. Bob made his mark in mountaineering. He put back more than he had taken and we are grateful.

Bill Thurston

Balwant Singh Sandhu
1934 - 2010


Balwant Sandhu. *(Doug Scott)*

Balwant Sandhu was not as one would imagine a Sikh colonel in the Indian Army to be. On the Indo-British Changabang Expedition of 1974 most of his resting time was spent reading Arthur Miller or chatting away, in his deep baritone voice, interspersed with infectious chuckles of laughter, on every subject under the sun with the odd line or two from Browning or W B Yeats thrown in for good measure.

Balwant was co-leader of the expedition, along with Chris Bonington, although it was Balwant who had overseen its organisation right up to base camp. He had tremendous respect from the Army members of the Indian contingent who helped progress the expedition, as far as the British knew, with very little fuss or bother. Subsequently, Balwant, Chris, Martin Boysen, Dougal Haston, Sherpa Tashi and myself all made the first ascent of Changabang (6864m). We came back with mutual respect for each other enhanced

and looked forward to further climbs together, especially with Balwant.

Santokh Singh Sandhu, a Sikh farmer living near Lahore, in what is now Pakistan, had five sons and the eldest was Balwant Singh Sandhu, born 1 October 1934. Since Sikhs are traditionally warriors it was not unusual for at least one member of the family to enter the Army. In 1957 Balwant was commissioned into the Mahar Machine Gun Regiment. Five years later he volunteered for the Parachute Regiment. He later taught at the Army College of Combat for three years and then went on to command the Sixth Parachute Battalion with distinction from 1971 to 1976. In 1980 he became Principal of the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering at Uttarkashi for five years. By this time Balwant had become one of the most experienced Indian mountaineers, a fact recognised by his peers who invited him to become an honorary member of the Alpine Club. He was later elected on to the governing council of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation for six years. He was also an honorary secretary of the Central Himalayan Environment Association, represented India on the UIAA for four years, and was president of the Himalayan Club from 1983-1985.

In 1981 he was given the Arjuna award for excellence in mountaineering in recognition of a lifetime of walking and climbing in remote and little-known regions of the Himalaya. There is only space to mention the highlights of his climbing career, the first being the first ascent of the North Peak of Bancha Dhura solo (c6000m) in 1962. Other first ascents included Shinkun (6065m in Lahaul, 1968), Changabang (6864m, 1974), Phawararang (6349m, 1979), Mamostong Kangri (7516m) in the East Karakoram (1984), Kabru Dome (6600m) via a new route (1985), the difficult west face and west ridge of Kamet (7756m, 1985), Manirang II (6100m) climbed together with his German wife, Helga, whom he had married in 1976 and Chombu East Peak, NE Sikkim (5745m, 1996). In 2001 Rudugaira (5816m) and in 2002 Jogin III (6116m) were climbed during Doon School Expeditions to the Garhwal Himalaya.

This list represents only part of his lifetime love of climbing. He could not, however, as he said, put himself 'through so much torture as to go to Everest' but he did help others to go through organising various training camps for young Indian climbers. He also took part in a variety of expeditions as leader or co-leader with foreign climbers, schools, colleges, the IMF and with his beloved 'Paras'.

In 1973 he led the Indo-British Expedition that put Chris Bonington and Nick Escourt on the summit of Brammah (6416m) in the Kishtwar. In 1975 he was deputy leader of an Indo-French Nanda Devi Traverse expedition. Balwant, with French climbers and also with his great Indian friends Prem Chand and Dorje Lhatoo, climbed Nanda Devi main peak (7816m). The expedition also climbed Nanda Devi East (7434m) but bad weather thwarted achievement of its main objective which was to link the two summits by a high level traverse. Balwant broke a leg, making the descent something of an epic, but then not for the first time. He had injured himself on several occasions previously, from rockfall in 1961 and again in 1964, surviving a 1000m avalanche but breaking a leg. Later on the Indo-New Zealand expedition to Rataban (6166m) he was again injured by rockfall. It seemed there might be some truth in the saying 'old soldiers never die'.

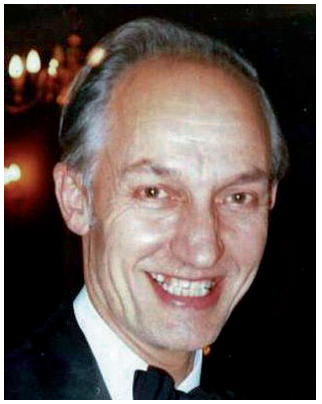
Balwant was physically as well as mentally tough and could move easily and naturally through the mountains, acclimatising well and able to cope with all the usual frustrations without irritation. If ever a man lived his life to the full it was he. Apart from his love of mountaineering and Army life, and the thrill of making over 150 parachute drops, he enjoyed shooting, fishing, horse-riding and riding his Bullet motorbike, usually at considerable speed, not always successfully but he did survive several accidents.

My appreciation of Balwant increased with every meeting – after Changabang, on Shivling (6543m) in 1981 then north-east Sikkim with Suman Dubey and other English and American friends in 1986. None of us on that expedition will ever forget the journey from Delhi on the Raj Dani Express enthralled with Balwant's stories of the partition of India and the more recent history of the Subcontinent. I again joined Balwant on the Raj Dani Express, this time to Guwahati for our attempt to reach Takpasiri on the Indo-Tibetan border with Greg Child and Akhil Sapru in 1999. Balwant had already agreed to and succeeded in reconnoitring the route through the jungles of Arunachal Pradesh the year before. This was a considerable achievement for a 65 year old, alone but for the local Nishi people. Our expedition, after an 18-day 'rumble in the jungle', arrived below our mountain but unable to climb it; only Akhil was fit since I had torn a tendon in my knee, Greg had blood poisoning and Balwant was struck down with malaria. We retreated to recover happily in Balwant's genial company at the Dibrugarh Military Hospital. We never found time to climb together again.

Balwant stayed at my home in 2004 with his wife Helga, where I was able to reciprocate the whole-hearted hospitality laid on four years before at their home in the Shimla Hills of Himachal Pradesh. We made plans to visit Arunachal Pradesh again and also Nepal, but too late.

On 3 December Balwant Sandhu was struck by a speeding car near the Indian Mountaineering Foundation building in New Delhi. He was immediately taken to the Army Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi where he failed to regain consciousness. On 10 December Balwant passed away leaving Helga and their son Cornelius (Muki) grieving at his bedside and for all of us who knew him everywhere to grieve for a courageous climber and loyal friend.

Doug Scott



David Smith

Francis David Smith 1928 - 2008

David Smith died on 5 April 2008, just over a month after reaching his 80th birthday. He was born in Burnley on St David's Day 1928 and lived all his life in that locality. He attended local schools and completed his education at Burnley College and Accrington College, becoming a chartered engineer, member of the Institution of Production Engineers and of the Institution of Electrical Engineers. He served his engineering apprenticeship with Burco Ltd followed by 43 years with Morley Products Ltd and its various successor firms, in the production of domestic gas and electric appliances, finishing as works manager, with additional roles in graduate and apprentice training in the district.

David's outdoor life started with his family on the local hills, first climbing Pendle at the age of four. He joined Burnley YHA Group in 1944, and the Lancashire Caving & Climbing Club in 1947, the year of his first mountaineering holiday on Skye with Harold Wiseman when he climbed Sgurr Alasdair and the Inaccessible Pinnacle. In 1948 he climbed on Arran and cycled to Cape Wrath, and in 1949 had his first sight of the Alps, cycling from Lyon to Monte Carlo over the Alps and returning via Avignon. In 1952 he climbed almost every weekend in the Lakes with Douglas Spray, and with him completed the Cuillin Main Ridge for the first time, in 10 hours from top to top.

In 1955 David joined the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, of which he remained an active and devoted member for the rest of his life, with 40 years' continuous membership of the committee in one role or another – the length of his list of offices remains a club record. He gave much time and energy to the two club huts, at Low Hall Garth in Little Langdale and Lowstern, Clapham, where he was renowned for his catering, especially at Christmas meets. He served as president from 1976 to 1978 and was elected an honorary member in 1990.

David climbed in the Alps every year from 1953 to 1966, his first season being at Zermatt when he climbed the Rimpfischhorn, Weisshorn and Dom but was beaten off the Matterhorn by bad weather. From 1955 onwards his alpine climbing was entirely with YRC members, and from 1986 he organised regular alpine meets, attending all from then until 2003, apart from 1997 when he was recovering from a hernia operation. His ascent of the Grépon was amusingly described by the late Roger Allen in *YRC Journal* Vol IX as part of a composite article, 'Shambles in the Alps', the tongue-in-cheek British humour of which was not appreciated by the reviewer in a certain overseas alpine journal who concluded that the YRC were a right 'shower'. In his later years he climbed a number of trekking peaks in Nepal, Bolivia and Peru on YRC expeditions.

David was elected to the Alpine Club in 1961, proposed by Harry Stembridge. Although he was not particularly active with the club as such, he was well known as a YRC representative at club functions. In 1965 he booked to attend the AC Matterhorn Centenary dinner in Zermatt with Roger Allen and others, but their traverse of the Rothorn from Zinal took so long that they only reached Zermatt after the dinner was over.

My own friendship with David began in 1957 at a meet on Hadrian's Wall when we climbed together on High Shield Crag above Crag Lough. From then into the late 1960s we had many times together on the hill and underground, as well as working on the club huts to which he devoted much time and effort. Underground, with his climbing skills, he was always the last in the party to get his feet wet. On the annual YRC Long Walks, I soon found that if I could keep up with him at the outset his steady pace would see me through the walk. Two events in Scotland stand out: the Cuillin Main Ridge in 1961 in mist with him and Roger Allen, David's second traverse, 13hrs 50mins peak to peak, 18hrs 30mins Scavaig to Scavaig, followed two days later by a fine day on the Blaven – Clach Glas traverse, and a rapid descent on Good Friday 1963 from Ben Lui in an avalanche, as a party of six of whom four were actual or prospective members of the AC, memorably described by Louis Baume in *YRCJ* IX. I had just two alpine holidays with David. In 1963 we went with Roger Allen to the Dauphiné. Our first climb was the Aiguille Dibona by the *Boell Route*, where David's insistence that we be prepared for any eventuality resulted in our being so heavily laden that we nearly did have to bivouac, coupled with his mistaking the crux pitch and leading, quite competently I must say, the nearby grade V+ pitch on a much harder route.

After that we had a great trip, traversing the Ecrins by its south face. Difficulty in following the complex route meant that we reached the summit ridge too late to go to the Barre, and satisfied ourselves with the lesser 4000m top Pic Lory, before descending the voie normale to the glacier below the hut, where we tried out our new homemade lightweight bivouac tents rather than face the climb up to the hut. The ensuing glacier tour past the splendid Pelvoux, Coup de Sabre and Pic Sans Nom took us back to the Temple Ecrins hut, where we were greeted by the warden and a reporter from the regional paper, who credited us with the first traverse of the season.

David was a fine writer, with numerous articles in the *YRC Journal*, as well as obituaries in the *AJ*. One useful innovation he made was to invite YRC members to lodge their life stories with him to ease the task of obituary writers for the club journal, and a significant part of this notice comes from his contribution to that file.

In 1966 David married Elspeth, an active member of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club, and throughout their 41 years of marriage they spent many happy days on the hill together and with their two children, while

encouraging each other to be active with their respective clubs. He had a strong Catholic faith, which he followed in harmony with Elspeth who is a United Reformed Church lay preacher, and would quietly slip away from a meet on a Sunday morning to attend mass. He actively supported his local church in Nelson which the Catholics and Methodists share, and it was there that his funeral took place, conducted by his Catholic priest with assistance from the Methodist and URC ministers. The church was filled with a congregation of about 250 drawn from family, church, former colleagues and YRC members and their wives, the AC being represented by then president, Paul Braithwaite.

Richard Gowing



Pat Vaughan winter climbing on Snowdon. *(Neville Drasdo)*

Pat Vaughan 1931 - 2009

At Pat's funeral last year, Stephen Andrews, vice-president of the Climbers' Club, recalled that Pat had joined the CC in 1962, but had begun climbing in London with the 'Bar-Room Mountaineers'. Our friendship dates from that earlier era, in the late forties when the Bar Roomers were active at Harrison's Rocks. Apart from the climbing, many of their escapades involved the vehicles used to get to and from the rocks.

I well remember returning from Groombridge one Sunday night, driving up the hill into Sevenoaks on our ex-WD Norton 500 combination, when a retarded ignition caused the exhaust to overheat and become red-hot, with sparks flying and the engine threatening to explode. As I pulled on to the verge, Pat, just behind on his Rudge, had the presence of mind to draw alongside and reach for the petrol tap, below the fuel tank, to switch it off, as we scrambled to abandon ship. Cool, calm, intelligent, and ever ready to meet a challenge, these were the qualities that distinguished him, in life generally and in his climbing.

He was an ideal leader, careful, strong and in control. I remember him on *Great Slab* on Cloggy, leading Jean, to whom he was engaged, and the delicate way he moved across the upper traverse, whilst we contented ourselves with the *voie normale*. Well capable of the sandstone test pieces at Harrison's, Pat, with Dave Thomas and Johnnie Lees, climbed at a notch higher than most of us in North Wales, the Lakes and Scotland. At Tremadog he was involved in the early exploration of the crag, and was responsible for first ascents of *Valerie's Rib*, *Belshazzar* and *Creag Dhu Wall*. He was unfazed by the early Brown routes; Ken Wilson wrote in *The Black Cliff* 'the only repetitions outside the Rock and Ice Group were Pat Vaughan's ascent of *Hangover* in 1952 and Bob Downes of *Octo* in 1955'. In the Lakes in 1951 he got one of the great plums with the ascent of *Fools in Paradise* in Borrowdale.

He had three seasons of guideless climbing in the Alps in 1951/2/3, during the last of which Gwen and I joined up with him in Courmayeur, where he arrived unexpectedly with Geoff Millwood and Dick Tombs from the Bregaglia. We all went up to the Noire hut and encountered Hamish Nicol and Alan Blackshaw. Alan was unwell and decided not to climb, which was fortuitous for us, as it meant that Pat and Hamish could climb together, making three ropes of two. They decided to attempt the south ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey without a bivouac, which they achieved magnificently, and after a dawn start were back at the hut by 9pm. This was the second British ascent of the route (the first in one day) and marked the apex of Pat's alpine climbing. He was subsequently elected to the ACG and joined the Alpine Club in 1967.

Pat's background had been something of a mystery to us. We knew he was a student, lived alone, and seemed unusually self-sufficient and mature. He rarely mentioned his family, but his daughter has filled in some of the history. He was brought up in London and Sussex by his mother and maternal grandmother, his father having left the family during his infancy. Aged eight he was sent to Kingham Hill as a boarder. He showed an early self-determination by running away twice and pleading to go to day school. He transferred to Steyning Grammar School where he was very happy. Whilst there he set up an enterprise selling eggs and chickens to the villagers. He experimented with crossing the birds to get better layers, showing, at this early stage, both talent as a natural scientist and a good head for business. It was an exciting time for a schoolboy to be living in south-east England. Holidays and weekends were often spent in London where he could see the bomb damage from the Blitz, and he had a grandstand view of the aerial dog fights over the Sussex countryside.

In 1944, when his grandmother died, his mother and stepfamily moved into her cottage, where for a few years they lived a normal family life. In 1948, when Pat finished school, they emigrated to Australia, but he chose to stay in London to study science at university and do his National Service. It was at this stage, after hitchhiking to Skye, that he discovered rockclimbing. He was captivated and it became a lifelong passion, even more consuming than his enthusiasm for motor-sport and driving fast cars.

He was called up in autumn 1953 and began aircrew training at RAF Ternhill as an acting Pilot Officer. Surprisingly, for Pat was exactly the 'right stuff' for a fighter pilot (he even looked like one), he was axed along with 50 percent of the intake, before the end of the course. He transferred to RAF Hendon and was attached to a medical research unit, as assistant to Danny Abse, a consultant radiologist and poet. He developed an interest in ultrasonic physics which led, much later, to a PhD and research into the medical applications of this speciality.

After demob, married to Jean and expecting their first child, Pat began to

think seriously about career and family. His first job was as works chemist with a small company in the emerging industry of synthetic polymers. At the same time he became a part-time student of the Plastics Institute to study for their diploma, successfully completing the two-year course in one year to become an Associate.

Their second daughter was born in 1960, and in the same year he went into partnership with an economist colleague. The next 20 years were ones of happy family life and developing the business. Climbing was put on the 'back burner', but he still managed to get away for the odd weekend in Wales with the Drasdo brothers, Eric Herbert and Hugh Banner, maintaining his technical ability in the E1 grades. This busy and productive time ended tragically with Jean's death in 1981, following a long depressive illness.

At this point we began to see more of Pat; our own children were leaving the nest, and like him we had just discovered downhill skiing. For the next decade we worked our way through the major alpine resorts with Pat, enjoying his entertaining and ever good-humoured companionship. Our best week was at Davos in January 1987, when the temperature never rose above zero, the sun shone continuously and we skied till we dropped. During this time Pat sold his business, which had been highly successful and ensured him a comfortable retirement. He bought a converted windmill in Essex, a cottage in Snowdonia and, with a V sign to the RAF, acquired a personal pilot's licence.

Harold Drasdo introduced him to Audrey Jones, who had recently divorced, and the two of them discovered a mutually supportive relationship, marrying in 1989. They retired to a beautiful house on the Menai Straits and spent the summers in Portugal. When Pat became ill with Alzheimer's, Audrey nursed him devotedly, visiting him daily when he entered the nursing home at Menai Bridge for his last two years. It was a very sad time for the family, distressing to see the slow decline of this fine mind and physique. We will remember him as he was: a great character who added a touch of glamour to the climbing scene, a perfect companion, intelligent and sensitive to the needs of others, but with a steely determination within.

Denis Greenald

Neville Drasdo writes: With the demise of Pat Vaughan, climbing has lost one of its most entertaining and charismatic personalities. I climbed with Pat at regular intervals for many years and found it a rewarding experience. A special bonus was the interesting conversations we had on the long drive to Wales, though this was occasionally punctuated by some tense moments due to his preoccupation with the performance of his car. Among my most memorable experiences were several weekends when we climbed Snowdon gullies and ridges on the Saturday in extreme winter conditions – once falling through a cornice above Cwm Glas, and by contrast, spent the following day on the Anglesey sea cliffs in brilliant sunshine.

It never failed to amaze me how Pat, at about fifty years of age, having little or no practice in between our well-spaced visits, could launch himself into the lead on routes such as *Central Park*, *Fifth Avenue* and *Gogarth*, where I often felt we were climbing near to the limit of our performance. But it was the same adventurous spirit and willingness to meet formidable difficulties head-on that pervaded his life from his earliest alpine experiences and allowed him while struggling to establish a successful business in the competitive field of acrylic chemistry, to take a part time PhD in ultrasonic physics and then to work in his spare time in a voluntary capacity on its medical applications. After one of these days on Anglesey I remember vividly, one moment as we sped homewards across the island, accompanied by suitable music, with the whole Snowdon range spread out before us, snow covered and illuminated by the late afternoon sun. I remarked that though life has a limited span we had really had had some fantastic days. Pat agreed contentedly, and that is how I like to remember him.

Chris Walker 1980 - 2010

Chris Walker was born on 16 March 1980 and died on the descent from Buchaille Etive Mor along with his client Robert Pritchard on the 24th February 2010. The accident robbed the mountaineering community and the Alpine Club of a larger than life character, who shared his passion for the mountains easily and willingly with anybody who joined him out on the hill.

I first met Chris whilst he was working on the 'Night Watch' at Glenmore Lodge. We had both topped out of routes on the Mess of Pottage, Coire an 't Sneachda, into a full Cairngorm gale; as I covered my eyes to shield them from the elements Chris looked across and announced 'this is bloody amazing'. The descent into Coire Cas was quickly conducted to the accompaniment of much staggering, struggling against the wind with hoods cinched tightly down – yet the eyes of one member of these parties burned brighter than the rest, despite the wind driven snow. It took a few years to recognise what being in the mountains was about for Chris; yes, it was about climbing, but it was also about sharing an experience with other people, a zest for life and for adventure. It was this humble approach to the mountains that ensured that the last route completed was always the best, regardless of whether it was a small Scottish snow gully or a major Himalayan expedition peak. Of course, being Chris it was always 'the best' followed or proceeded by a string of highly descriptive expletives, which if delivered by anybody else would be most offensive.

A little while later I saw Chris again, this time camped at Les Chosalets campsite in Argentiére. As well as chain-smoking roll-ups and drinking excessive quantities of cheap lager, Chris had also managed to amass a significant collection of mountaineering successes in France and



Chris Walker, Pakistan, 2007
(James Thacker)

Switzerland with Paul Dickson, Neil Pickstock and Neil Johnson. A fraction of these achievements would please any aspiring British alpinist.

Here on Les Chosalets, Chris explained how he had always wanted to be a cowboy. At 16 he had started his adventures by securing some work on a cattle ranch in Wyoming, presumably where he developed his passion for burgers and his loathing of vegetables. He recounted that not long after the ranching he had busked his way around Australia, before returning to work in the UK and making a chance decision to go climbing with his shop manager.

The town of Bury was, in his own words, the scene of perhaps one of Chris's 'greatest achievements' when not only did he witness an armed raid while working at Halfords, but spent the vast majority of the time with a gun held to his head. The ensuing well practised tale took on epic proportions which entertained many folk in warm bars, cold bivouacs, chilly base camps, smoke filled teahouses and finally at a packed funeral in Cumbria, where Chris' favourite line was used again: 'Empty the till or I'll blow your f***ing brains out!!!'

After surviving this episode Chris moved to Llanberis, starting an instructor training scheme based in the mountains of Snowdonia and climbing for himself at every available opportunity. He was taken under the wing of British Mountain Guides Phil and Al George, spending a particularly memorable day at Gogarth where he quietly decided he wanted to become a guide himself. Chris was eternally grateful to the George brothers for taking him climbing on that day, never for a moment considering that they, like many of his climbing partners since, had recognised his zest for life and adventure.

This period in North Wales paved the way for Chris's acceptance onto the Night Watch Scheme at Glenmore Lodge, Chris's strategy at the interviews, to be the last one standing at the bar, seemingly meeting with some success.

Following his time at the Lodge Chris travelled and climbed in many mountain areas including the Himalaya, making many friends who drew him back for numerous visits. Successful trips were made to Aconcagua (6962m), Island Peak (6189m), Lobuche East (6090m), Mera Peak (6476m), Elbrus (5642m) and Baruntse (7220m). One of Chris's proudest moments was summiting Ama Dablam (6856m) in 2005 whilst working for Tim Mosedale. As well as being an accomplished climber, Chris recognised that being abroad for long periods was challenging for family and friends, and it was whilst on Ama Dablam that Chris set to work filming his ascent to show those at home what he had been up to. The resulting DVD not only proved popular with his family but was also used in Sheffield schools as a resource in leisure and tourism classes – Chris's film being a particular hit with teenage girls.

After one such Himalayan trip five years ago Chris, influenced by one of his best friends Ian Boorman, decided to make a new base in Keswick. Within a short space of time he was part of the community, initially working as a freelance instructor for local outdoor centres but soon establishing Chris Walker Mountaineering, rapidly building up an extensive and loyal clientele who provided a basis for his new company Mountain Approach.

While based in the Lakes, Chris also frequently worked in Scotland, living in Fort William over the winter. It was here that he often worked for local mountain guide Alan Kimber, somebody whom he frequently referred to as 'a hero'. Despite having known Alan for only a short while, Chris's superior people skills were evident again as he devoured Sue Kimber's legendary flapjack, did his washing in her machine and linked in to Alan's wi-fi connection, all within a couple of weeks of arriving in Fort William. Of course, this was all well received and Chris became a regular visitor, alongside many guides and instructors, sitting down around the kitchen table to discuss the latest conditions on the hill.

It was this good grounding in the Scottish winter and its sometimes infernal conditions which helped Chris to pass his assessment for the Mountain Instructor Certificate (MIC) with flying colours in the winter of 2009. Shortly afterwards he described how he was feeling relaxed and confident and was looking forward to working in Scotland with all his assessments behind him.

Chris's life ended tragically whilst descending the west spur of Coire na Tulaich when a small section of windslab released, knocking him and Robert Pritchard off their feet. Both were taken down steep ground with tragic results. The last pictures downloaded from Chris's camera were taken that day on *Curved Ridge* and show a friend, climber, instructor and guide climbing the 'latest best route' with the same passion I had witnessed in the Cairngorms years before.

Chris Walker joined the Alpine Club in 2005. He is survived by his parents Gill and Geoff Walker.

James Thacker