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CLIMBING FUND	Toto Gronlund, Paul Knott, Martin Scott, Chris Watts, Vacancy

Alpine Club Notes



241. Chris Bonington and Doug Scott, honorary members of the Alpine Club.
(Chris Bonington Picture Library)

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

Chris Bonington and Doug Scott were appointed honorary members of the Alpine Club in 2011. Both entered the AC via the Alpine Climbing Group, Chris joining the ACG in 1959 and Doug in 1962. Both served as the group's president – 1968 and 1975 respectively – and subsequently as AC president, Chris from 1996 with Doug succeeding him from 1999 to 2001. The pioneering records of these two giants of mountaineering in the second half of the 20th century need no further elaboration for AC members.

ALPINE CLUB CLIMBING FUND

The following grants were made to expeditions that took place in 2011:

British Mugu Expedition 2011 Western Nepal, 1-31 October. Mick Fowler (leader), Graham Desroy, Dave Turnbull and Jonny Ratcliffe. Climbing as pairs the teams completed two separate objectives. Mick Fowler and Dave Turnbull succeeded in making the first ascent of Mugu Chuli (Gojung, 6310m) via a stunning line on the west face while Graham

Desroy and Jonny Ratcliffe were forced by bad rock to retreat on their primary objective of an unclimbed 5400m rock peak before making the first ascent of a non-technical 5800m peak on the Tibetan border west of Kojichuwa Chuli. (see report pages 3 to 15)

British Cordillera Carabaya Expedition Cordillera Carabaya, Southern Peru, 12 August - 14 September. Tom Ripley and Hamish Dunn. Climbing in alpine-style Tom Ripley and Hamish Dunn successfully made the first ascent of the south face of Chichicapac (5614m), which they graded at Alpine TD.

British Eren Habirga Expedition Tien Shan, Xinjiang, China, 13 August - 11 September. John Town (leader), Jerry Lovatt, Iwonna Hudowska, Tadeusz Hudowski and Richard Wojtaszewski.

Plagued by bad weather and poor snow conditions the team were thwarted in their plans to make first ascents of various 4800 to 5200m peaks in the Ak-Tash valley, although Tadeusz and Iwonna successfully climbed a rocky 4300m peak near to their base camp in between spells of inclement weather.

FIDS Cordillera Oriental Expedition Peru, June 2011. Matt Balmer (leader), Dan Fitzgerald and James Wake.

The team successfully made the first ascent of a new route on the south face of Huarancayo Sur (c5200m) taking a prominent icy gully on the face but were forced to make an unplanned bivvi high on the face before descending safely the following day. A later attempt on Huaguruncho Chico failed on account of poor snow conditions.

British Mount Hayes Expedition Alaska, 25 April - May. Guy Wilson (leader), Neil Warren and Chris Johnson.

After making a successful ski-assisted ascent of Mount Skarland (3145m) via the south-east ridge the team climbed a new mixed line on the NE Face of Mount Geist (3268m) graded at Alpine TD+.

British Far West Nepal Expedition 2011 Changla/Gorakh Himal, Nepal, Mid April - end May 2011. Julian Freeman-Attwood (leader), Nick Colton and Ed Douglas.

After a long walk-in, an early arrival of the monsoon resulted in the party aborting their attempt on Gave Ding (6571m) at around 5900m when it became evident that it was prudent to retreat. They did, however, manage to get good views of the Gorakh Himal in which none of the mountains have yet been climbed.



242. L-R: John Cleare (mountain photographer), Peter Rowland (new Hon Keeper of the Photographs), Anna Lawford (retiring Hon Keeper), Hywel Lloyd, Harry Melville (conservation and scanning). (ACL)

ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Hywel Lloyd, Chairman of the Council of Trustees of the Alpine Club Library writes: Established in 1858, the Alpine Club Library cares for the Alpine Club's collections, now comprising: 40,000 books; 25,000 sets of archives (diaries, letters, newspaper cuttings); 300 artefacts (ice-axes, oxygen sets).

Following a visit and guidance from the British Library's National Preservation experts, the storage of books, archives and photographs has been extensively re-arranged and improved. Damp problems have been greatly reduced, air circulation optimised, and humidity is now continuously monitored. Many items have been inserted into acid-free sleeves and stored in conservation boxes. Jerry Lovatt, Glyn Hughes, Barbara Grigor-Taylor and Tadeusz Hudowski have worked hard to do this.

Interesting library acquisitions this year include the diary of Peter Oliver on the 1936 Everest Expedition, which is well illustrated with his own drawings and maps, and a set of diaries 1943-1957 by Eileen Healey, telling her story of climbing in the UK, the Alps and then on Cho Oyu. Of more intrigue is the log of Bill Crace who was lost in an avalanche on Nanga Parbat in 1950. His diary came to us having been frozen solid. With funds from his family we used a specialist to separate the pages and we have now successfully scanned the diary to reveal the story up until the fatal day.

Since 1858, shortly after the invention of photography, the library has received many photographs from members. We now have 40,000 – from glass plates and prints to transparencies. We need a complete catalogue; digitisation has to be the route. A sub-committee under Roger James is working hard to gain a grant to enable this. We also aim to show-case 5000 selected images on the website. Meanwhile, the photograph team has been enlarged and is testing various methods.

From the left: John Cleare (mountain photographer), Peter Rowland (new Hon Keeper of the Photographs), Anna Lawford (retiring Hon Keeper), Hywel Lloyd, Harry Melville (conservation and scanning). Not

shown are Sue Hare (reproduction sales) and Martin Hewson (scanning and cataloguing).

Meanwhile, working with the Royal Geographical Society to produce a book, *Mountaineers – Great Tales of Bravery and Conquest* for Dorling Kindersley, the team provided 280 photo images each with a detailed caption; this was quite a task with very tight deadlines. One review compliments ‘... a wealth of striking photographs’.

The Himalayan Index has been compiled holding 8,000 details of ascents and attempts (it is also on the website). New entries continue apace as Sally Russell fills gaps, adds latest detail, and is extending it into new areas in China.

Your donations of surplus second-hand books continue to arrive; some are retained to augment the collections; all spares find new owners via our published lists; none are thrown away. One member’s surplus is another member’s marvellous find so please keep donating surplus books.

Just to remind everyone, the library is open for certain (as certain as we can make it) 10am to 5pm every Tuesday and Wednesday. On a Tuesday with a lecture it stays open until 7pm. It is closed during August and the week Christmas to New Year. On Thursdays it is open by appointment – call 0207 613 0745. Catalogues of books and archives are via the AC website.

Of course, none of all this would happen without many tireless volunteers. The Trustees made ‘Exceptional Service’ awards to three volunteers who have retired, after many years of dedicated work. The engraved glass mementoes went to Richard Coatsworth, Hon Treasurer for more than 10 years, Anna Lawford, Hon Keeper of the Photographs for more than 10 years and Michael Westmacott for service over 25 years including as Chairman (1984-92) and as Curator of the Himalayan Index. Their efforts, and those of all our other library volunteers, will be appreciated by everyone in the Club.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Awards and Recognition

Sir,

I read with interest Doug Scott’s article ‘Awards and Recognition in Climbing’ in the 2010/11 *Alpine Journal*.

In 1972, at the time of The Olympic Games in Munich, the German Alpine Club (DAV) organized a meet attended by climbers from many countries, including the then USSR. The Soviet delegation was made up mostly of members of its team for climbing competitions, which took the form at that time of speed climbing on top ropes.

Four British climbers attended this gathering; Ed Cross, Malcolm Howells, Mike Butler and myself.

One day during this event we were all taken by bus to a crag near to Munich where the Russians demonstrated their style of competition climbing. This made little impression on our group and after watching for

a while we wandered off, preferring to climb at this well-situated limestone cliff.

Before the end of the meet, during which we managed to climb in the Wetterstein and the Karwendel, and watch some of the Olympic events, the DAV organised a debate on ‘Competition and Climbing’. This was a major event held in the Löwenbrau Beer Hall in Munich. (No, it was not a beer hall putsch!) Because of the great interest in Germany in mountain activities, this debate was televised live by German television.

The Hall was full to overflowing with hundreds of climbers present from many countries. I spoke last in this debate and shortly afterwards a vote was taken on whether climbing should embrace competitions. There was no support for competitions except from the USSR delegation.

I think before the debate all of the speakers knew the history of climbing and the Olympics: the fact that Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, had envisaged mountaineering being an Olympic Sport, and the award previously of Olympic medals to the 1922 British Everest Expedition, the Schmid brothers (Matterhorn north face) in 1932 and later to the Dyhrenfurths for their explorations in the Karakoram. Several members of the Olympic Committee of that time were present at the debate.

When I returned to the UK I wrote up these events in the BMC’s publication of that era *Mountain Life*. Both Alan Blackshaw and Roger Payne who subsequently investigated the background and history of the Olympic movement for the UIAA were aware of these facts.

In the 1980s attempts were made to hold climbing competitions in Britain on outdoor cliffs. There was strenuous objection by the BMC, and on one occasion we had to take a strong line to stop a competition being held at Malham Cove in Yorkshire. Our objection was on the grounds of ecological damage and safety. Eventually it was seen that such competitions were best held on artificial walls, where the problems of crowd control, safety and fairness to all the competitors could be better ensured. The BMC then agreed to support such developments.

With regards to the Piolet d’Or, I was confused by Doug’s article: does he really think it a good or a bad thing for the future of mountaineering? I am with Voytek Kurtyka, who declined the Piolet’s career award. I think it is an unnecessary bauble, bringing values into mountaineering that the sport just does not need.

Olé Conquistador, you’re a winner of a Piolet d’Or,
Olé Conquistador, what can you use a gold axe for?
Maybe social climbing?

Yours sincerely
Dennis Gray
Ruskin College, Oxford.