Obituary
We regret to record the deaths of our members M. Burke, Dr Backer Grondahl, Count Aldo Bonacossa, J. G. Broadbent, Sir James Butler, Armand Charlet, Prof G. O. Dyhrenfurth, F. P. Farquhar, R. Grossman, D. Marsh, C. F. Meade, Major G. Owens, E. C. Pollitt, E. B. Robertson, Prof Sir Robert Robinson, M. H. Slater, T. H. Somervell, Sir William Strath, Capt R. Summerton. See also p 267.¹

Merger
At the Annual General Meeting in 1974 a resolution was proposed and passed, without dissent, the effect of which was to merge the Club with the Ladies' Alpine Club. It was agreed that the merger should take place on 31 March 1975 at which date all full members of the Ladies' Alpine Club became full members of the Alpine Club and all their Aspirant Members became Aspirant Members of the Alpine Club. By this means the Alpine Club acquired 138 new members and the Ladies' Alpine Club underwent a final demise. The merger followed naturally from the decision to admit women to membership. It is gratifying to record that it took place without fuss or difficulty, the event being finalised on the above date.

Membership
New members are welcome at all times. Correspondence on membership should be addressed to: Frank Solari, Oakside, Duffield Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks.

Miscellanea and Editor's Notes
Mountain medicine and physiology
The Alpine Club organised a two-day symposium 'Mountain Medicine and Physiology' held, with the ready cooperation of the Sports Council, at Plas y Brenin, the National Mountaineering Centre, Capel Curig, North Wales, on 27 and 28 February 1975. The programme was divided into parts dealing respectively, with Cold, Nutrition, Hypoxia, Fitness and Fatigue, and Miscellaneous Diseases. The aim of each contributor was to present a basic treatment of his subject, to proceed to recent work and then to summarise in terms of the conclusions to be drawn by those potentially exposed to an adverse environment and by doctors called upon to deal with casualties affected by such adverse conditions.

The result was a highly stimulating and satisfactory conference, this being reflected by virtually a full attendance of the 70–80 delegates at each session of the symposium. Both formal and informal discussion was extensive, relevant, and well-informed, experts being present not only from the United Kingdom but also from Europe and the USA. The Club has published the Proceedings (£3.00; £2.50 to members of the AC) and it is hoped that this volume will act as a reference guide for some years to come for those to whom the symposium was directed.

¹ Where no obituary notice is included, the notice will, wherever possible, appear in the next Journal.
The contents of the Proceedings are as set out:

**Foreword**

**Everest without Oxygen?**

**COLD**
- Physiology of the Response to Low Temperature
- The Deep Domestic Bath Treatment for advanced cases of Hypothermia
- Airway Warming in Accidental Hypothermia
- Frostbite
- Avoidance of Cold Injury: Outline of Basic Principles
- Demonstration
- Medical and Physiological Investigations on Mountaineers. A Field Study during a Winter Climb in the Bernese Oberland

**ENDOCRINE**
- Mountaineering and the Endocrine System
- Adrenocortical Activity in High Altitude Climbing

**NUTRITION**
- Nutrition: A General Review for the Mountaineer
- Practical Problems of Nutrition

**HYPOXIA**
- Hypoxia: Some Experiences on Everest and Elsewhere
- Physiological Effects of Hypoxia
- High Altitude Oedema—Cerebral and Pulmonary
- Hypoxia and the Heart

**FITNESS AND FATIGUE**
- Physiology of Fitness and Fatigue
- Fitness and the Relation of Terrain and Weather to Fatigue and Accidental Hypothermia in Hill Walkers

**MEDICAL NOTES**
- Expedition Travel and Your Health

The Chairmen at the meeting were John Jackson, Ron James, E. S. Williams, Dr Charles Warren and Sir Jack Longland.

**Dogs**

Now that rabies is spreading like a damp stain across the map of Europe, promising to reach the Channel shore within the next few years, it is worth while to take a closer and more critical look at 'man's best friend'. A forcible reminder came recently in a Provençal village, where two extremely fierce-looking bull-mastiffs escorted me between the houses, only held at bay by growling on my part as fierce as theirs, punctuated by shouts for help which eventually came. At one time we had perhaps to endure the odd bite, encouraged by the dog lover's plaintive plea that the animal is really harmless, really frightened of you and not to be feared. Now that the consequences may be death from one of the most dreadful diseases known to man, it is time for attitudes to harden. The traveller may soon need to provide himself with a defensive weapon better than a stone taken from the nearest wall, while toleration of the fatuous point of view of the dog lover should be abandoned forthwith.

There are other views of 'man's best friend'—a useless, noisy, food-consuming creature having no advantage to the community to outweigh his manifest disadvantages.

Peter Hillman
Mountain guide festival
The 14th of these was held in Zermatt on 14–15 June 1975. The proceedings included the unveiling in the cemetery of a memorial to guides from the village killed at various times in the mountains. At present there are 17 names as follows: Alois Graven (1890), Johann Biner (1893), Jos-Marie Biner (1894), Alfons Furrer (1900), Josef Graven (1907), Thomas Biner (1922), Franziskus Taugwalder (1929), Hermann Perren (1930), Edmund Perren (1930), Isidor Perren (1936), Othmar Aufdenblatten (1937), Adelrich Julen (1949), Otto Furrer (1951), Alexander Taugwalder (1952), Jos-Marie Biner (1953), Max Julen (1957) and Josef Petrig (1960).

Soviet records
Novosti Press Agency informs us (4-8-1975) that Soviet-made motor vehicles have climbed along a glacier in the Caucasus to an altitude of 4000 m. A record is also claimed for a local guide who took oxen laden with scientific apparatus to the E summit of Elbrus (5620 m).

Metric conversions
Fallacious reasoning, or no reason at all, is so often demonstrated in the conversion of heights to the metric system that some comment is urgently necessary. The important thing to realise is that the implied accuracy of the converted figure must not differ substantially from that of the original. Some examples are given below.

(1) If a height is given as 4406 feet (Ben Nevis) the accuracy may be assumed to be to the nearest foot, or about 1 part in 4000; the metric conversion should only be quoted to the same order of accuracy. To write 1342.06 (see ‘The Story of Scottish Hills’) quite unjustifiably imputes an accuracy of 1 part in 100,000; in fact the highest accuracy that
can be justified is to the nearest $\frac{1}{3}$ of a metre. ‘To the nearest metre’ would amply fulfil most requirements and is quite appropriate to the quantity being measured and the precision of the measurement method.

(2) When a figure in feet is quoted in approximate terms, such as ‘some 200 feet up’ (See Jackdaw on ‘Mount Everest’, p 266), it is ridiculous to give an equivalent of 61 metres with an implied accuracy of 1 part in 60. ‘Some 200 feet’ cannot be rendered any more sensibly than by ‘some 60 metres’.

(3) An approximate height of a pass, say, or a camp, estimated and not measured, is given as around 19,500 feet, a statement indicating an accuracy, let us say, of ±250 feet (±75 metres). The exact conversion of 5943.6 metres is rubbish therefore in this context. One should write a new rounded figure in the range 5943.6 ± 75 ie 5900 metres, or 5950 metres, or even 6000 metres.

(4) The Jackdaw above writes ‘the crack was about 6 feet (183 cm) deep’. The error limits of the 6 feet in this context are obviously at least 1 foot, therefore one could sensibly write 2 metres as the conversion, not the figures in cms which imply an accuracy of 1 part in 200.

105 An ancient walkers’ route in Switzerland. This and next three photos: Swiss National Tourist Office

Long distance walkers’ routes in Switzerland
Forty-fifty thousand km of footpaths are now waymarked to form long distance routes for walkers on the lines of the work of the Countryside Commission here and the CNSGR in France. There are 5 major E to W routes—the Jura ridge from Zürich to Geneva, the Central Lowlands route from Romanshorn on the Boden See to Geneva, the Alpine foothills route from Rorschach on the Boden See to Vevey, the Alpine Pass route from Sargans to Montreux and the Rhine—Rhône itinerary from Chur to Lausanne. One N to S route from Basle to Lugano completes the present network. An interesting booklet ‘On foot through Switzerland’ is available from the Swiss National Tourist Office in London. Guide-books, accommodation lists and maps can be obtained covering the above routes. One would hope to see alternatives, taking a closer look at the mountains, being developed in due course on the lines of the CAF’s parallel high level route in the Pyrenees (AJ 80 291). In the meantime the present network opens up a tremendous area of hill and low mountain country to the connoisseur.

Mystery letter (26-3-1975)
The most incomprehensible letter received in 5 years of Editorship, from a well-known firm of booksellers, reads as follows—‘Dear Sir, Please could you inform us whether you
have published a book called "The Adventures of Jungle Ted and the Lacybutton-poppers". Priced at 40p. Who is sending up whom?

**Everest syndrome**

In a book 'Buzzwords' by Robert K. Mueller (Van Nostrand, 1974) this is defined as follows: 'A tendency to study or research something simply "Because it is there". Scholars' study of organisations, researchers' exhaustive work on obscure phenomena or obvious situations simply "because they are there", tend to lose perspective in real life. The term, Everest Syndrome, is used to identify those activities which are given over-emphasis, often with esoteric methodology which becomes an objective in itself.'

**Thunder**

Simultaneous with our article 'Alpine Thunderstorms' (AJ 80 173) a comprehensive paper on 'Thunder' by A. A. Few was published in the 'Scientific American' (July 1975). It reports a lengthy programme of research at an American University, the details of which are beyond the scope of this journal. Nevertheless the results are of some interest.

Thunder is now firmly established as the acoustic signal generated by a rapidly expanding channel of air heated by the passage of the lightning discharge current. The noise comes from the whole of what may be a considerable path length, so that observers some distance apart hear different thunder patterns. An array of microphones enables a three-dimensional diagram of the discharge to be plotted and this has provided much new information on atmospheric electricity and the lightning process.

**Descent into the crater of Mount Etna**

The 'Daily Telegraph Magazine' (24-1-1975) describes this exploit by Antonio Nicoloso, described as a Mount Etna guide, some time late in 1974. Wearing an asbestos suit and safeguarded by ropes from above, he climbed down wooden ladders for 'several hundred feet' towards the molten heart of the crater. A television camera-man followed some distance behind, thus enabling expenses to be covered, or perhaps even more than covered. Finally 'overcome by heat and fumes' Nicoloso climbed safely out again.

**Human pendulum**

The 'Daily Telegraph' (17-2-1975) reported a helicopter rescue from a crag in North Wales, in which the rescuer being lowered on a wire was swung backwards and forwards until he could be seized and hauled on to a ledge. The swinging technique was later repeated so that the hook could be seized in turn and attached to the stretcher for pick-up. To achieve this the machine had to be flown in backwards towards the crag.

**Climbing walls**

The 'Evening Standard' (19-2-1975) reported the construction of a 33-ft high climbing practice tower by the RAOC in Surrey. Called Cannonball Cliff, this can be dismantled and will go on tour with a mobile display team. There are 3 faces—D, S, and VS—the fourth side is open with an access ladder. The surfaces are a mixture of ground rock, resin and glass fibre, made in moulds based on photographs of limestone outcrops in Derbyshire.

**Hannibal once again**

The 'Daily Telegraph' (24-11-75) reports that 6 Thai elephants are to be used in October 1976 in an expedition which will cross the Alps by Hannibal's route. They will have to be winched down an 800 ft cliff and floated across a river on rafts. We shall hope to print more of this next year.

In the same issue, a climber was reported as hanging for 9 hours in his harness before being rescued in North Wales.

**Preservation of the Calanques**

This is a subject which has been discussed previously in these pages (AJ 79 272), when a projected corniche road threatened to destroy this unique climbing ground. At the time our President wrote a letter to the CAF, Section Provence, aligning the AC behind their outright opposition to the scheme. We now learn (Section Bulletin 4/1975) that on 29 August, 1975, the whole area was designated as a 'site pittoresque' of the Department of Bouches-du-Rhône. It is emphasised that, while this is a major advance, those who have struggled so long for this moment must still not relax their vigilance.
Resort building in the Alps
Zermatt, says its leaflet, can offer 5000 beds in hotels and 8000 more in apartments. Judging from the amount of building work in progress at the present time these numbers are likely to increase substantially in the near future. As the metropolis continues to spread down the valley will visitors still find what they go there to seek? The answer is 'yes'; only a few older people are disappointed or disconcerted—generations which never knew better accept each place as they find it.

The road which once stopped at St Niklaus has reached Täsch; carbon monoxide and lead additives creep ever closer. By-pass roads, constructed in connection with the Grande Dixence hydroelectric scheme, appear to lead to the upper part of the valley—to the dam and huge hotel above Zmutt, and elsewhere. Even 'traffic-free' Zermatt suffers from a certain irresponsibility on the part of drivers of electric trucks, horse carriages and innumerable bicycles.

Our pictures illustrate more than a century of 'progress'.

Editor's acknowledgements
I am impressed by the great vitality of the mountaineering monthlies. It is partly a question of professional editorial staff, but they seem also to secure a high degree of involvement on the part of both contributors and readers. The 'AJ' on the other hand has a spare-time Editor whose role must necessarily be almost entirely organisational; he needs the widest possible cooperation from both contributors and readers before he can operate at all. Can we hope to build up the degree of involvement which makes the monthlies so refreshing? I like to hope so; yet it seems that I may have to attack sacred institutions like dogs, or cricket, or the Establishment before anyone can be persuaded to join in.

Once again I have to thank a very small and enthusiastic band of helpers whose efforts make the Journal possible each year. The names of some are recorded alongside their contributions; others working entirely anonymously are equally appreciated.

Once again the continuing struggle against rising costs have enforced alterations in layout in an attempt to minimise the reduction in content. It is vitally necessary that we conduct these experiments; should any of them produce too great a reduction in standard we shall revert to our former practice in the following issue.

Other Books Reviewed
Edward Pyatt and Tom Connor

Ice with Everything  H. W. Tilman (Nautical Publishing Co, 1974, pp 142, illustrations and maps, £2.75) Bill Tilman voyages on inexorably and then tells us of his travels with his usual wit and understatement. This book describes small-boat trips to Greenland in 1971, 72 and 73—what a pity there is not much more of it!

Peuterey Fantastique Intégrale Louis Audoubert (Marrimpouey jeune, Pau, 1974, pp 96, 24Fr) This French paperback, with numerous illustrations—some in colour and a map, describes at length the first winter traverse of this long and arduous route by a Franco-Italian party in 1972. There are notes also on a summer ascent, technical details and an equipment list.

We learned to ski  H. Evans, B. Jackman and M. Ottoway (Collins, 1974, pp 255, numerous photographs and sketches, £3.50) This is a manual of technique produced by 3 members of the 'Sunday Times' staff who are journalists as well as expert skiers. There are supplementary notes on where and when, foreign vocabulary, training exercises and so on. The 10 inch square format, while giving full scope for reproduction of illustrations, makes it a library rather than a field companion.