

In Memoriam

Introduction

G. W. Templeman

During 1977 the Club has been saddened by the loss of 13 of its members. The full list, including both Honorary and Aspirant Members and set down purely in order of notification, is as follows: Francis Carbutt Mayo; Henry Robin Romilly Fedden; Eric Earle Shipton; William Robert Caesar; Edward Cecil William Rudge; Sir A. Landsborough Thomson; Gwladys Mona Odell; Claudio Barbier; John Thorpe Holloway; Lord Adrian, Marshal Neville Clarke; Michael Pettifer; Sir Ralph Ismay Metcalfe.

The sudden deaths of Eric Shipton and Robin Fedden, coming within such a short space of time early in 1977, cast a shadow over the proceedings of the Club. As Charles Warren says in the following pages, one thought of Eric Shipton as the grand old man of mountain exploration who went on for ever, and the suddenness of the end was therefore all the greater shock. Robin Fedden had many friends within the Club, but his interests were widespread, and his work with the National Trust and his writings made him known and loved by a great many people.

Of these, and of the majority of those listed above, obituaries follow in the next few pages. For a few, however, it has not proved possible to obtain an adequate notice, and the following brief notes must suffice for the time being.

With the death of William Caesar at 101 the Club has lost its oldest member and it is understandable that no friends are now alive to write of his early years. His application form in 1904 shows that every summer holiday for the preceding few years was spent in bagging a good selection of Alpine peaks with the enthusiastic energy so typical of that age.

Edward Rudge, who died this year aged 74 and was associated for many years with Wellingborough School, joined the Club in 1946 with an impressive list of alpine climbs and ski tours to his credit in the immediate pre-war years. He was a well-known member of the Fell and Rock, as well as other clubs, and his activities in the many areas of Britain in which he walked and climbed are well set down in his privately-printed book *Mountain Days Near Home*.

Of Lord Adrian's mountain activities or interests I can, regrettably, say little, as, being an Honorary Member, there is not even a membership form to lean on for assistance. Hopefully, someone will rectify this for the next journal.

Sir Ralph Metcalfe's death is so recent that it has not been possible to arrange for a notice in time for publication.

Of those names mentioned in last year's journal, I am very pleased to be able to include notices for Tom Blakeney and for Stephan Kuffner. Dougal Haston's tragic death is covered by an article in the main body of the Journal. Finally, from the previous year, one omission and one error. In April 1976 Capt Terry Thompson was killed at Camp 2 during the AMA Everest Expedition. His death, from a fall into a crevasse only a few yards from his tent, cast a shadow over an otherwise very successful expedition. As far as the error goes, Audrey Salkeld has pointed out that the statement that Kenneth Mason 'was never invited to join any of the early Everest Expeditions' is incorrect, as he was in fact considered for both the 1921 and 1922 Expeditions, the details being contained in the obituary in *Mountain*.

When Kevin Fitzgerald wrote to me on handing over the responsibility for collecting obituaries, he said that, 'as a bonus', I would quite often receive 'interesting or enraged letters from distinguished Alpinists'. Fortunately, the latter has not happened yet. Unfortunately the former also happens far too infrequently, and I would like to reiterate the plea made in former years for friends or relatives to write a notice, no matter how short, as soon as they feel able after the death of a member. If they will send it to me, G. W. Templeman, 75 Arundel Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 3RY, it will ensure that adequate tribute is made in the next number of the Journal.

Claude Barbier (1938-77)

It was in 1959, whilst camping at the Tre Cime de Lavaredo, I met for the first time a young Belgian, Claude Barbier, who rapidly was acquiring a reputation as a daring and enterprising 'soloist'. This was a revelation to us then, a Belgian with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Dolomite mountains and their climbing history, and who had an immaculate conception of 'Good Style'. We had not guessed that Belgium produced such rock-climbers. Subsequently I have paid many visits to the Ardennes and the appearance of such a gifted leader from such a nursery is now easily understandable but in the 1950s we believed that modern alpine experts needed to have their roots nearer to the Alps.

Claude had climbed in many of the alpine areas before 1959 and during the ensuing years he visited many more, but it was always towards the Dolomites he was attracted and it is for his bold feats in that range he will be remembered. His most outstanding single effort must have been in 1961 when he soloed the 5 N faces of the Lavaredo group in only 15 hours climbing time, including the descents. A feat of almost unbelievable stamina, speed and fitness. Many other outstanding climbs followed at that period including several first solo ascents on Monte Civetta and a rapid solitary climb of the NE face of the Piz Badile. Indeed Barbier's record of solo climbs stamp him out as one of the acknowledged masters of the art, equal in stature to the other giants in the field, Buhl, Bonatti, Messner, etc. During the period of the sixties, Claude became a legend and wherever you climbed in the Dolomites he had been there before you and essayed some outstanding feat; whether it was Lavaredo or Brenta, Falzarego or Pala he was known and the Italians had taken him to their hearts. Though he was inclined to be a shy and reticent person, Claude showed his affection for his adopted mountains by using the Italian 'Claudio' form of address in place of the French, and softer in pronunciation, 'Claude'.

Over the years our paths were to cross on several occasions, including several days in November 1969 when I stayed with him at his home in Rue de Linthout in Brussels, from where each day we journeyed to the climbing grounds of the Ardennes, to race up and down a galaxy of superb rock-climbs impeccably led by Claude. However, it is not simply the climber that I recall from those days, but a man with much wider horizons than one suspected. He spoke and wrote fluently six languages and besides an impressive knowledge of world mountaineering, he was steeped in modern literature particularly Sartre, Genet, Miller etc and took a keen interest in contemporary matters such as youth and the 'pop' field, particularly the French rock star Johnny Halliday, for in the work of the latter there is sensitivity, deep felt emotion but also a streak of nihilism and perhaps Claude as an intellectual could see a parallel in this with climbing as a means of expression but also a supremely and sublimely pointless thing to do?

British climbers however, will I am sure, remember Claude as a bridge builder, as an interpreter of continental attitudes and as a provider of much information for non-linguistic Anglo-Saxons in foreign places. How he admired our free rock-climbing ethics but he could not refrain from chiding our cultural insularism, a riposte usually delivered with an enigmatic but questioning chuckle. He was however, an Anglophile at heart and he related to British climbers and their attitudes with some affinity. His work in helping our alpinists with information, translations, etc was recognized when the Alpine Climbing Group made him an Honorary Member. An honour I know he cherished the more so since the Group had only seen fit to honour one other such person, Andre Contamine, also for similar reasons.

Claude Barbier left no record of his hundreds of climbs and expeditions made during the past 20 years. Others will have to piece together his amazing catalogue of ascents and this will need ideally someone who knew him closer than I ever did. However, he was without doubt one of the archetypal climbers of the last two decades, and his unexpected death at the age of 39, occasioned by a fall in the Meuse Valley of the Ardennes, whilst gardening a new route he was solo pioneering, robs the climbing world of one of its most outstanding figures.

Dennis Gray

Thomas Sydney Blakeney (1903-76)

Tom Blakeney was born at Great Marlow on 17 August 1903. He was educated at the King's School, Ely, which he left in 1920. He did not have the opportunity of going to University but went into business in the City, working with a firm of timber importers for some years.

He first visited the Alps in 1922 and was elected to the AC in December 1930, proposed by C. G. Bruce and seconded by F. S. Smythe. His application form shows that his holidays at that time were of but short duration, never more than a fortnight and sometimes less. Many of his climbs were guideless, including the Matterhorn in 1924 with a German climber he 'picked up by chance (name unknown)' and he made a number of easier climbs by himself. In June 1927 he had 10 days with Frank Smythe in conditions that Smythe described as 'the most continuously foul weather I have ever experienced'; they made 4 unsuccessful attempts on various Chamonix aiguilles. Later that season Smythe and Graham Brown made the first ascent of the Red Sentinel route on Mont Blanc and Smythe wrote in *Climbs and Ski Runs* that to Tom was due the credit for this ascent 'he was the first to suggest to me the possibility of ascending Mont Blanc by this side and he had actually indicated on a photograph the charms of the two ridges on either side of the great couloir.' In 1928 Tom joined Smythe and Graham

Brown in their first attempt to ascend Mont Blanc de Courmayeur direct from the Brenva glacier. They spent the night at the old Brenva bivouac where a violent thunderstorm, which lasted most of the night, burst upon them and the expedition was perforce abandoned. Not feeling at all fit Tom had then to return home and so missed taking part in the successful first ascent some days later.

Tom was made redundant in the great slump of 1932 and for about a year held temporary jobs, then in 1933 he decided to emigrate. He cycled across Europe to Constantinople, being occasionally arrested in the Balkans for carrying a camera. He made his way via Egypt to Ceylon where he obtained a post as assistant manager on a tea estate but after a time he moved on to India and became manager of another tea estate, in Madras.

Blakeney joined the Army on the outbreak of war and saw service with the RASC in Burma, being demobilized with the rank of Major. He had been elected to a fellowship of the RGS in 1942 and in the late summer made a reconnaissance of Kailas, the sacred mountain of Tibet.

After demobilization he returned to his tea estate but decided that there was no future for him there and returned to England. In 1948 he became assistant secretary to the Alpine Club. He was admirably suited for this position, being a good organizer and having an extensive knowledge of Alpine history, as the pages of the *Alpine Journal* show. The first ascent of Everest and the Centenary of the AC both occurred during his term of office. He was for some years one of 2 assistant editors of the *Alpine Journal* and in 1969 was elected an honorary member of the Club. He did valuable work as secretary of the Mount Everest Foundation, which had been established in 1953 after the first ascent.

Tom was a man of many interests and from 1956 to 1976 was honorary secretary of the Friends of the National Libraries and did much for that society by his able handling of the funds in acquiring rare books and manuscripts that might otherwise have left the country.

He was an enthusiastic reader of detective fiction and was an ardent devotee of Sherlock Holmes. He published a book in 1932 (*Sherlock Holmes—Fact or Fiction?*) and at his death was doyen of the Sherlock Holmes Society and was also a member of the Dickens Fellowship and of the Johnson Society.

Tom never married and was a rather reserved and reticent character so that even after a friendship of many years one knew little of him and seemed never quite to have penetrated his reserve. He got on well with young children and always seemed happy in their company. He rendered great services to mountaineering and his loss will be felt by his many friends in the AC and the RGS. He died at Chichester on 8 December 1976.

D. F. O. Dangar

Marshal Neville Clarke (1897–1977)

Marshal Clarke, who died in October 1977 at the age of 80, was elected a member of the Club in 1928, his proposer and seconder being A. N. Andrews and Brig Gen The Hon C. G. Bruce. He was probably one of the last survivors of a generation of members who did most of their climbing with guides and, according to their individual abilities, achieved a variety of ascents in the Alps. He was happier on snow and ice than on rock and only occasionally took part in rock-climbing in this country.

Clarke had a great love of the British hills as well as of the Alps and he walked extensively in Wales, the Lake District and Scotland. It was with Switzerland, however, that he felt the closest ties and he was a member of the Swiss Alpine Club and of the ABMSAC for 52 years. He was an Hon. Secretary of the ABMSAC for 20 years and gave great service to that Club, of which he was elected an Honorary Member.

Marshal Clarke was a barrister by profession but he had not practised for many years. He was something of a 'character' who managed to combine conventionality with at times an impish sense of humour. He was proud of his Irish origin and very independent in his views. He was a kindly and courteous man who had spent many of his years doing for the ABMSAC the unspectacular chores without which no Club can run.

Maurice Bennett

Henry Robin Romilly Fedden (1908–77)

Robin Fedden came to mountaineering in his late thirties having learnt to love the mountains as a skier and walker, first on family holidays in Europe, then in the course of travels in the Near East before the war. Almost all his climbing was done with his wife Renée; other companions included Basil Goodfellow, Carl Nater and Peter McColl. He had all the

enthusiasm and ambition of the late convert and in the end had done serious climbs in 4 continents and many different ranges. He drove himself hard and climbed with great nervous energy; I shall not easily forget the single-minded determination with which he climbed, in spite of illness, in what was to prove his final venture in Kulu in 1976.

But to write of Robin in terms of conventional mountaineering experience and achievement would be to miss the point. For he was no specialist craftsman or iceman, indeed he had come to climbing too late to satisfy his ambitions on the traditional routes of the Alps. Rather he was the supreme all-rounder enjoying mountain travel equally well on horse-back or on ski as on crampons; in the last few years he was also experimenting with light canoes as a means of travel in hill country and had organized in 1970 a successful canoe trip down the Kizilirmak River from the Pontine Alps to the Black Sea. And his interests were catholic. Wherever he went he delighted in observing and taking note of the peasant community, the buildings and traditions of the country, the trees and the bird life.

His greatest achievement as a mountain traveller was undoubtedly the series of expeditions he organized, in 2 of which I was fortunate to be included, to the remote places of this overcrowded world: ski-ing the length of the Pyrenees in spring, climbing in the Kurdish provinces of Turkey, in the Pindos range of Greece, in the Cordillera Vilcabamba of Peru and lastly in Kulu and Lahoul.

He was an accomplished and polished writer, his best known book being *Crusader Castles* (1950) a product of the time he spent in the Near East before and during the war. But his real memorial is in the marvellous work he did for the National Trust which he joined shortly after the war, first as Curator of Polesden Lacey, then as secretary of the Historic Buildings Committee and from 1968 to 1973 as Deputy Director General. On his retirement, when he was made CBE, he remained with the Trust as consultant. He served the Club in a number of ways, most notably in the leading part he played in the recent redecorations and in the rehanging of our pictures.

But above and beyond all his other qualities Robin had a rare genius for friendship, indefinable but compelling. He had an extra-ordinarily wide circle of friends drawn from many different walks of life and was the most stimulating and sympathetic of companions, always contributing something worthwhile to whatever was in hand. How we shall miss him!

Peter Lloyd

John Thorpe Holloway (1914–77)

The following has been extracted from a letter received from Dr Holloway's son. A full obituary appears in the current issue of the *N. Z. Alpine Journal*.

'My father's active period of mountaineering was c 1934–8 during which he explored a considerable part of the mountains of Western Otago; it was on the basis of this work, which really constituted the last phase of the "Golden Age" of mountaineering exploration in New Zealand, that he was elected to membership of the Alpine Club, the N. Z. Alpine Club, and the Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society. Full records of his expeditions were published in the *N. Z. Alpine Journal* c. 1935–8. He was unfortunately deafened by a bomb in Bristol during the last war, which also affected his balance, and his climbing was prematurely ended. His interest in mountains was maintained through his professional involvement as a scientific research worker and administrator, dealing with problems of erosion and revegetation in mountain lands, especially acute in N. Z. on account of the extreme youthfulness (in geological terms) of the mountains and their constituent rocks, and the abuses to which European man has subjected the vegetation since settlement ca. 1840. For this work he was awarded a number of distinctions, including an Hon. Doctorate of Science, and Fellowship of the Royal Society of N. Z.'

J. S. Holloway

Stephan Kuffner (1894–1976)

Stephan Kuffner was the son of Moritz von Kuffner who in 1885 made the first descent of the Mittellegi arête of the Eiger. At the time of his death Stephan must have been one of the very few surviving members of the Club—perhaps the last—to have climbed with Alexander Burgener; as a lad of 15 he went up the Valluga with him, the year before Burgener lost his life in an avalanche on the Bergli rocks. Burgener was a great friend of the Kuffners and often stayed with them in Vienna and elsewhere.

Kuffner was elected to the AC in 1939, proposed by H. K. Corning and seconded by A. E. Field. His first recorded visit to the Alps was in 1908 and from 1921 to 1937 he was climbing every year except 1931. His qualification list mentioned many climbs in the Austrian Alps, in the Pontresina district and around Zermatt and also no less than 101 ascents of the Rexalpe between 1918 and 1937. An article in the *Alpine Journal* in 1951 first brought me in touch with him; he was gratified at the mention of his family's friendship with Burgener and expressed his thanks by sending more than one food parcel from America where he was then living; a typical act of kindness and a most welcome addition to the rather meagre larder of the average Briton in those days.

In the post-war years he usually spent the summer in Europe, most of it at Pontresina and it was here that we first met in 1956. He was a well-known figure in the village and whether one wanted a guide, or to search hotel registers for details of early ascents, the mere mention of his name ensured that one received every possible help and assistance.

His climbing days were nearly over by then but he was still a great walker, going frequently to all the huts round Pontresina; his favourite excursion was to the Segantini hut and in 1961 he visited it 20 times! That same year he climbed Piz Palù. Eventually he left New York and settled in Zurich. He was at Zermatt for the Matterhorn Centenary celebrations in 1965 and a happy memory remains of a little dinner party he gave there for a few of his friends in the AC. He was of a most kind and generous nature, his kindness being demonstrated in many ways. He died at Zurich in November 1976 and will be much missed in Pontresina and by those who were fortunate enough to have been his friends.

D. F. O. Dangar

Francis Carbutt Mayo (1905–76)

Francis Mayo was born on 21 April 1905. In 1919 he went to Rugby where he won the Junior Athletic Cup in 1921 and was in the school XV for 3 years, 1920–2. From Rugby he went up to Pembroke College, Cambridge, taking his degree in 1926. He was a member of the CUMC and at the Club meet at Entre-deux-Eaux in 1924 he joined with P. Wyn Harris and L. R. Wager in ascents of the Roc Noir, Pointe de Vallonet and Dôme de Chasseforêt. Next year he was again in the Tarentaise and climbed the Grande Casse and Aiguille de la Vanoise.

He qualified as a doctor from King's College Hospital in the late 'twenties and after his marriage in 1932 was assistant to 2 doctors at Penzance for a few months. He and his wife moved to Malton in October that year and, apart from the war years, he spent the rest of his professional life in Yorkshire. He had several more seasons in the Alps before the war and in the course of his career had also climbed in the Lake District, Wales and Scotland and had skiing holidays in Switzerland, Austria, Norway and the Lebanon. He was a member of the F & RCC and was elected to the AC in 1952, proposed by Michael Wilson and seconded by Ian Charleson.

Francis became MO to the Yorkshire Hussars and was on active service throughout the war, serving in Palestine, North Africa, Italy and Holland. He was mentioned in despatches for his services in North Africa. As an ADMS he was in charge of British medical arrangements for the Potsdam conference.

After demobilization he returned to his practice in Malton and was later appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for the East Riding.

Francis retired in May 1968 and worked with the York Samaritans. He became highly skilled at repairing and restoring old furniture and was commissioned to design and make a pair of oak chairs for the chapel of St Peter-ad-Vincula in the Tower of London and these were consecrated in 1975.

He died on 21 December 1976 after a slowly developing illness which only immobilized him a few weeks before the end. He was liked by all who knew him and our sympathy goes to his widow, and to his 2 daughters and their families.

His only son, a brilliant young climber, disappeared in the Alps in 1959 during a traverse of the Dom and Täschhorn.

D. F. O. Dangar

Gwladys Mona Odell (1891–1977)

An early member, since 1921, of the Ladies' Alpine Club, Mona died, after a long painful illness in Hospital in Derbyshire on 29 March 1977. Daughter of the Rector of Beaumaris, she early developed a close love of the hills and began her rock-climbing experience on her neighbour mountains with Prof Noel Odell when he was courting her and stationed at

Deganwy. Those were the golden days when even The Foxglove Gully on Tryfan or the Trinity Gullies on wintry Snowdon were things to dream of. This was the start of an uncommonly wide-ranging series of visits by the pair to mountains in almost all parts of the world. They include Chamonix 1919; Zermatt 1925; Canadian Rockies 1927; Norway, Jotunheim 1929; Northern Labrador 1931; NE Greenland 1933; Skye 1935; Highlands 1937; British Columbia and Washington 1948; Alaska, St Elias Range 1949; New Zealand: Southern Alps 1950–56; Australia: Mt Kosciusko 1955; Hawaii: rambles amongst volcanoes 1956; Pakistan, Swat and Kashmir (Kolahoi Glacier) 1961. A light and sound rock-climber, steady on ice, she and her husband achieved many first ascents and a fascinatingly varied collection of expeditions through a period during which travel was not packaged as it is now. She also made her independent treks—along the Singalila Ridge, (1938) for example. As a companion she was blythe, buoyant and enduring. Her quickness and presence of mind could save the party from a serious accident as with an early episode in the Ivy Chimney, Tryfan. On her tombstone in Harlech is inscribed in Welsh; ‘She loved and climbed her native hills as well as the high mountains of many other lands.’

Dorothy Pilley Richards

Michael Pettifer (1953–77)

Mike Pettifer will not be known to many members of the Club, as he was an aspirant member. He started climbing whilst at school, but serious climbing did not begin until he went to Cambridge as an engineering student, in 1971. In the competitive atmosphere of the CUMC he quickly became competent on both British rock and Scottish ice. In 1973 he visited Saas Fee and Chamonix, and each year after that he went to the Alps for as long as he was able. Sometimes this was only a fortnight, but always he climbed whenever possible, on one occasion snatching an ascent of the Dru N face when camp-site opinion pronounced it impossibly out of condition.

His preference was always for the more esoteric crags, and for loose and serious climbs which stirred his sense of adventure. He never let himself become a regular habituée of any one area, and his British achievements include routes as diverse as Carnivore, Vector and the Old Man of Hoy.

Mike's last alpine season had started well with a fast ascent of the Schmid route on the Matterhorn. He then came across to Chamonix, where he was killed in a fall whilst climbing unroped on the N face of the Aiguille du Plan. To those who knew him and climbed with him his early death leaves a scar that time will not quickly heal and memories of his dynamism that are a continuing inspiration.

Nick Tritton

Eric Earle Shipton (1907–77)

The appearance of an obituary notice on Eric Shipton in *The Times* at the end of March 1977 must have come as a shock to many of his friends. One had got into the habit of thinking of Eric as the grand old man of mountain exploration who went on for ever whilst, as the years passed by, he became ever more distinguished-looking in personal appearance and bearing.

I remember attending a committee meeting of the Club at which, in the absence of the President, Shipton was in the chair. An item under discussion was nominations for the next Presidency. Suggestions were being made but then, suddenly, we all saw the light and realized that the obvious heir to the throne was in our midst. His protestations that he might be in Patagonia were brushed aside and we convinced him that we wanted a President who was still active in the field and that any defections from club functions while he was *on active service*, so to speak, could be looked after by the V.P's.

I suppose that with Howard Somervell, that great man, Eric Shipton must have been one of our most distinguished Presidents of recent years. Certainly he was deeply respected by young and old alike, both for his great achievements, continued activities and, above all, for the integrity of his outlook on mountaineering matters. A speech that he made at an annual dinner during his Presidency was one of the finest Elder Statesman pronouncements on a mountaineering philosophy that the Club has ever been given and the Editor of the *AJ* at the time, realizing its significance, wisely captured it for the pages of the Journal.

One of the splendid things about Eric Shipton was that, although he ended up by being a highly professional explorer, he always managed to retain the emotional integrity of the old

master amateurs towards mountaineering as a sport. Never, at any time, was he willing to sell his soul for a mess of mass-media pottage. Talking of a small expedition he took to Patagonia he says: 'My own motive for launching it was to satisfy a desire, of many years standing, to make the acquaintance of this strange region: for, like Tilman, I had long been intrigued by its remarkable geography.' This kind of statement explains a great deal about Eric. It tells us why he became our greatest mountaineer explorer instead of just the 'conqueror' of Everest; a title that would have made him feel acutely embarrassed. And although many of us would have liked him to have been the leader of the expedition that made the first ascent of Mount Everest, I for one, can understand why he was not, eventually, chosen to do so—the truth of the matter is that, by that time, his heart was not truly in it. Having discovered the route to the top by way of the South Col he had really played his part, as the great explorer he was. For him it was the discovery that counted, not the conquest.

Shipton was undoubtedly one of the greatest mountaineer explorers there has ever been. One could enumerate his exploits indefinitely, but fortunately for us he has placed them on record, for our delectation, in the admirable books he wrote; and in his numerous articles in journals. Two of his books have become mountaineering classics. His first, *Nanda Devi*, was pronounced by Winthrop Young—'among the best books of adventure known to me'. But the one that has always appealed to me most of all is: *Upon That Mountain*. On a front end-paper of my copy I find that I have pencilled: 'Possibly Eric's best book; and certainly the one that states his mountaineering philosophy in his most forthright manner. This is what we heard so often from his lips during the Tibetan Everest expeditions.'

But now, to become more personal, what kind of a person was Eric? The first time I heard of him was when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge in the great days of the CUMC. He was then active in the Alps and stories of his extrication from a 'moulin' on the Mer de Glace and of an entangled adventure on the Aiguille Ravanel were then legendary. But it was not until 1935 that I first became personally acquainted with him, when he invited me to join his now famous and at the time little publicized, but most successful, Reconnaissance expedition to Mount Everest.

This must surely have been one of the most enjoyable, as well as the most scientifically productive, of all Mount Everest expeditions. We were instructed to examine post-monsoon snow conditions on the mountain, which we did up to a height of 7000m. And then, having established that they became impossible above that altitude, and highly dangerous on the slopes below the North Col, the expedition retreated and proceeded to explore and map the environs of Mount Everest in a systematic manner.

Not the least enjoyable aspect of this expedition was the part played by its members in helping Michael Spender, our professional surveyor, with his photogrammetric survey. We all took part in this; which inevitably involved exploration of new country and ended up with first ascents of 24 mountains of over 6000m in height. Shipton was in his element in all of this, and it was in the course of these explorations that he and Dan Bryant, the New Zealander, climbed a peak on the watershed to the W of Mount Everest which gave them the glimpse of the Western Cwm which led to Eric's epoch-making suggestion that an approach to the mountain up the Khumbu glacier might turn out to be the best way to the summit.

In the course of 3 expeditions through Tibet to the mountain I spent much time talking to, and arguing with, Eric and this was most stimulating. He always delighted in taking up the opposite point of view in any discussion, arguing that black was white just for the Devil of it. His reasoning was often wrong; but in the course of these arguments something stimulating always came out of them so that the journeys across Tibet and the long hours sitting about in tents on the mountain were never dull when one was with him. In the course of such conversations I learnt that his great regret was that he had never had the opportunity of a formal training in anything once he left school. He would have liked to have been trained as a surveyor, a geologist, a zoologist, or what-you-will in the line of his general interests of exploration, and at the time I knew him closely I gathered that this worried him and made him feel insecure. But the marvel is that through sheer integrity of outlook he trained himself to become the World's greatest mountain-explorer. Perhaps it was just because of his lack of formal training in one narrow field that Eric, who was a dreamer of dreams, became the great man he was. At heart he was a poet and, although he did not actually write poetry, his books were full of the stuff that poets' dreams are made of. Despite his lament over his lack of a specific professional training he managed to establish a reputation as a natural philosopher on mountain exploration. His many published statements on the subject have left us in no

doubt about his thinking on the matter. And it is interesting that some recent exploits on very big mountains have tended to endorse his constantly expressed contention that small expeditions, even to the World's greatest mountains, are potentially capable of being as successful as large and expensive ones.

For those of us who have had the pleasure of travelling and arguing with Eric Shipton in some remote mountain ranges, the news of his unexpected death brought sorrow, and feelings of sadness at our loss. One is consoled however by the certain knowledge that he has joined the ranks of the immortals amongst our brethren of the Mountain World.

Charles Warren

Sir Landsborough Thomson Kt, CB, OBE, DSc, LLD (1890–1977)

Late in life Landsborough Thomson wrote that, had the opportunity come his way, it would have particularly appealed to him to be a zoologist on an expedition of mountain exploration. No such opportunity came but throughout a long and distinguished life mountains were a constant source of enjoyment. I met him first in 1937 at the Schönbühl Hut with his niece. They were following the high level route from Saas to Arolla while we had just returned from my first climb in the Alps.

The memory of that brief encounter—the charm and enthusiasm for hills of a man unknown by name and over twice my age—revived with surprising vividness when we met in London after 10 years. Later our paths crossed many times and I realized that he had made his first Alpine climbs—Rimpfischhorn, Wellenkuppe and Monte Rosa—the year before I was born, that he was an ornithologist and zoologist of world-wide reputation and that as a scientific administrator he had played a unique role in the development of the Medical Research Council. Involvement in that Council's assistance to the Everest Expedition in 1953 gave him particular pleasure.

He married soon after the first World War, in which he served with distinction. Mountain walking with his wife then became a major enthusiasm—from Bourg-St-Maurice to the Mediterranean coast on foot was one of many expeditions—but later he returned several times to the glacier passes and minor peaks of the Valais and also found opportunities to enjoy more remote mountains in Norway, Sweden, Kenya, Iceland, British Columbia and Nepal. When nearly 85 an extensive motor-car journey in the Southern Alps of New Zealand enabled him to see the Landsborough River which had been named after his great uncle, a Victorian explorer.

Landsborough Thomson's gift for friendship and his wide interests made it fitting that Wilfrid Noyce and Sir Gavin de Beer proposed his election to the Alpine Club in 1960.

Scott Russell