In Memoriam

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

The Alpine Club Obituary 1997		Year of Election	
Yevgeniy B Gippenreiter		1984	(Hon 1984)
Walter Hermann Amstutz		1929	(Hon 1975)
Ella Maillart	LAC	1938	(Hon 1938)
Bernard Pierre		1949	(Hon 1981)
James Owen Merion Roberts		1937	
Lyman Spitzer		1984	
Hamish Gordon Nicol		1962	
Harry Leighton Stembridge		1955	
Malcolm R D Duff	ACG	1984	
Brendan Joseph Murphy		1986	
Malcolm Graham Rutherford		1972	
H C Sarin		1983	(Hon 1983)
George Tod		1955	
John Llywelyn Jones		1974	
Denis Percy Pierrepont Brimble		1944	
Ian H Ogilvie		1958	
Hilary St.Vincent Longley-Cook		1946	

Included this year are obituaries for Sybil Washington and Tom Peacocke, who died in 1995 and 1996 respectively.

The In Memoriam list for 1997 again includes many names well-known in the mountaineering world and, in particular, a high number of Honorary Members from abroad.

There are some members listed above for whom no obituaries have been received, and I would be pleased to include any of these in next year's *Alpine Journal*.

Geoffrey Templeman

Yevgeniy B Gippenreiter 1927-1997

British mountaineers who climbed in the Caucasus in 1958 and the Pamirs in 1962 remain grateful to Yevgeniy Gippenreiter for his role as an official in the Soviet Central Sports Council in helping to secure them permission from the authorities of the Bulganin-Khrushchev era. As a fluent English speaker, he was remarkably successful at dealing with Soviet bureaucracy and for maintaining cordial links with British mountaineers during the Cold War. He was elected an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club in 1984.

Gippenreiter accompanied Soviet sporting teams abroad in the 1950s as their interpreter, and in 1956 he visited the Alpine Club with Yevgeniy Beletski to give an account of Russian mountaineering. In 1957 the first chink in the climbing Iron Curtain appeared with the visit of Joyce Dunsheath to Elbrus, accompanied by Gippenreiter, while her husband, an atomic scientist, attended a Moscow conference. The following summer a British group, including John Hunt, George Band and Chris Brasher, was granted permission to climb in the spectacular Ushba and Bezingi regions of the Caucasus, continuing a tradition begun in 1868 by Freshfield, Moore and Tucker. Yevgeniy had been principally responsible for the trip, and by then had become a good friend to the British.

Gippenreiter started climbing in 1951, and went on to organise international mountaineering camps in the Soviet Union. He climbed Mount Communism and Peak Lenin and was made a Master of Sport. His later contributions were as a research worker, with a doctorate in biology, becoming a specialist in the fields of top performance sports, high altitude and space physiology. He was involved in the preparation and results of the Soviet Mount Everest Expedition in 1982 and was co-author of *Acute and Chronic Hypoxia* (1977) and *Physiology of Man at High Altitude* (1987). He was a vice-president of the International Society for Mountain Medicine and a member of the medical commission of the International Union of Alpine Associations.

A lean handsome figure with a Stalinesque moustache and an infectiously good-humoured gleam in his dark eyes, he was a great talker and an outspoken raconteur. Visiting England in 1993, he disclosed that his father had been a doctor at the court of Tsar Nicholas II and had been honoured for his services. This meant that, by the laws of succession, Yevgeniy himself qualified as a member of the reconstituted Russian Nobility Assembly, a connection he would scarcely have mentioned during the Communist era. He was delighted when his membership was confirmed, and overjoyed when he and his wife Lidia were presented to the Queen at the RGS in 1993.

On his last visit to England, in December 1996, he attended the Alpine Club's annual dinner. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

George Band

John Hunt writes:

I first met Yevgeniy ('Eugene' to most of his British friends) in 1954, when I was invited to give a lecture on the first ascent of Everest before an audience of sceptical Soviet mountaineers. Eugene, with his excellent command of English, contributed to their conversion and this led to the establishment of some lasting friendships. That historic encounter opened the door to further exchanges. Charles Evans visited Moscow in 1955 to lecture on his Kangchenjunga expedition; Yevgeniy Beletski came to Britain the following year to tell us about climbing in the Soviet Union. These overtures led to a series of expeditions in the USSR, and meets in Britain in which climbers of both countries took part.

It was a great moment for the Climbers' Club in 1957 when, following an initiative by John Neill, I received a telegram from Eugene inviting a group of British climbers to visit the Caucasus in the following year. The BMC followed up that event by inviting a Russian group to sample climbing in Britain. It was an offer which I had some difficulty in 'selling' to the (then) Minister of Sport in the Kremlin, who did not consider our cliffs and crags worthy of the attention of Soviet mountaineers! The crowning event during that period of developing co-operation occurred in 1962, when another British group, jointly sponsored by the Alpine Club and the Scottish Mountaineering Club, was invited to join a group of Russians to climb in the Western Pamirs. So much for the chronology of events during the Fifties and early Sixties, during which Eugene played a leading part in opening the doors of opportunity for British (and other) mountaineers from Western Europe to meet and climb in the Soviet Union and to entertain Soviet climbers in our country.

But my tribute to Eugene is anecdotal rather than historical. I recall sharing a tent with him and the renowned Georgian climber Josef Kachiani during an ascent of Pik Kavkaz in 1958 when we talked far into the night, munching dried fish from the Caspian Sea and other Russian delicacies emerging from Josef's enormous sack. In a very different setting, I escorted Eugene and Yevgeniy Beletski to Glasgow by the overnight sleeper train in 1960, to meet Scottish climbers. Our fare on that occasion was caviar, eaten with toothbrush handles, and vodka from tooth-mugs.

During their visit in 1960, I recall climbing Main Wall on Cyrn Las with Eugene, Anatoli Ovchhinikov and 'Misha' Khergiani, when 'Misha' surprised us by producing a large stone, which he had secreted in his pocket to facilitate the final crack. That episode was followed by a hair-raising canoe trip in Llyn Mymbyr when Eugene, true to his dare-devil character, persuaded me, against all the rules of the Plas y Brenin Centre, to borrow one of their fleet of canoes which we proceeded to board in our climbing clothes and mountain boots. Some way out from the shore, Eugene, a non-swimmer, succeeded in capsizing the craft, which led to a dramatic rescue operation by the Centre staff.

But the most enduring of all my memories of Eugene were of the expedition to the Pamirs in 1962. There was a moment of supreme joy, when Eugene and I embraced on reaching the summit of a virgin peak: Pik Sodruchestvo ('Concord'). By contrast, when Wilfrid Noyce and Robin Smith lost their lives tragically on Pik Garmo, the accident imposed a severe strain on the relations between the British group and some Soviet mountaineers who were at our base camp at that time. I will never forget the staunch support Eugene gave us during those painful days.

In the following years our friendship continued, albeit that the occasions to meet were less frequent, such as conferences of the UIAA in London and elsewhere and celebratory occasions in Zermatt and Chamonix. In 1993 Eugene came to London and visited North Wales during the events which marked the 40th anniversary of the first ascent of Everest. At the RGS he met the Queen and bemused her with an animated account of Russian achievements in the mountains. He was, in fact, an aristocrat at heart, for his father had served at the Court of Tsar Nicholas II. To his great joy, his title as a Russian Count was restored to him after the collapse of Communism, and the prefix 'von' was added to his name.

As a climber Eugene had a good record of achievements in his own country, which earned him the distinction of a Master of Sport. He was strong, bold and carefree to the point of rashness. I recall watching him with some apprehension when he insisted on taking the lead on the upper buttresses of Dykh-Tau in the Caucasus, choosing a most unpromising line with great vigour. That 'do-or-die' approach may have accounted for the accident he suffered on Cloggy in 1960.

In middle life Eugene studied mountain physiology, obtained a Doctorate and played an important role in preparing the Soviet team which climbed Everest by a new route on the South-West Face in 1982. All who knew this lovable person will remember him for his exuberance, his sense of fun and, above all, for the warmth of his friendship to the privileged few who knew him well.

Dr Walter Amstutz 1902 - 1997

Walter Amstutz, who died on 6 August 1997, was in many ways a unique person. He combined an active and resolute mind with physical skills and great personal charm, qualities which enabled him to achieve notable successes in the wide diversity of activities which filled his life. He was probably the last man alive who had participated in the first European downhill and slalom ski races ever organised. During the 1920s he became a leading Swiss skier, winning over 20 important competitions. He co-founded the Swiss Academic Ski Club in 1924, of which he was later elected Honorary Chairman, and he also inaugurated and edited their yearbook *Der Schneehase*. As a climber he was equally active; he began climbing at the age of 12 and, 70 years later, his tally of ascents, too numerous to detail

here, was over 800 on mountains all over the world, including a number of first ascents. In 1924 he made the first ski descent of the Eiger, and the first ski traverse of the Jungfrau. His life encompassed almost a century in the development of mountaineering and skiing; and in 1990, at the age of 88, he qualified as a ski glider.

Walter Amstutz was born in 1902 in Brienzwiler, but moved a short time later to Mürren where his parents owned the Pension Alpina. He was sent to the village school where 28 pupils, crowded into one room, were instructed by a single teacher. At Lauterbrunnen, 950m below, he attended secondary school; since there was no cable-car then, and the cog railway did not operate in winter, he skied down about 9km to school, and climbed back to Mürren on skins in 1¾ hours. It was the Lunn Travel Agency, founded by Arnold Lunn's father, that popularised ski holidays in Mürren for the British, and someone once remarked that by 1924 'Mürren was practically a British Crown colony'. A close friendship grew between Walter Amstutz and Arnold Lunn who was older by 14 years. The development of slalom and downhill ski racing, pioneered by Arnold Lunn, in which Walter Amstutz began to excel, coincided with Walter's university studies. He undertook undergraduate and graduate courses in Bern, Zürich, Munich, and London in art, law, and geology, and obtained his doctorate in economics at the University of Bern.

In 1929 Walter Amstutz took up an appointment in St Moritz as Public Relations and Sports Director. It was there that he was largely responsible for turning downhill skiing into a popular sport. In 1930 he invented the Amstutz Spring which, attached to the rear of a boot, steadied and provided flexibility to the heel. He sold 10,000 of them. With the profits, he launched into a new entrepreneurial career from which he never looked back. Leaving St Moritz in 1939, his interest in graphic design led him to turn towards publishing. In 1938, with Walter Herdeg, formerly graphic artist for the Kurverein St Moritz, he co-founded an advertising agency in Zürich, which was later turned into a publishing company. During the 1940s, he and his partner started an international journal, *Graphis*, for applied arts; and in 1962 he produced *Who's Who in Graphic Art*, a 900-page reference book in three languages. After selling the firm to his partner, Walter Amstutz founded the small but elite publishing company De Clivo Press, which began to produce some very distinguished publications such as *Turner in Switzerland*, a volume dedicated to J M W Turner's Swiss and Alpine water-colours, and an English translation of Albrecht von Haller's epic poem *Die Alpen*. For an art-lover, volumes superbly produced to such rigid standards as these are a delight to handle. Walter Amstutz was a seeker after perfection. He used to say, 'Appreciating the value of the last few percentage points of perfection is something you are born with. My father was artistic and my grandfather was a renowned wood-carver.' Walter Amstutz's business interests led to various company directorships, amongst which was the chairmanship for over 40 years of Massey-Ferguson Switzerland.

In 1930 Walter Amstutz married the English novelist Eveline Palmer. Success in his business interests enabled him to establish two homes: a large one at Mannedorf by the lake of Zürich, which was filled with books, maps, and paintings, including a magnificent collection of Japanese prints. He had built, in 1935, a chalet for his mother in Mürren, which he enlarged later for himself and his family, covering its walls with Alpine paintings and prints. One of Walter Amstutz's mottos, carved on the exterior of the chalet, was 'Happiness shall always be found by those who dare and persevere. Wanderer, do not turn round, march on and have no fear.'

King Albert I of Belgium, a passionate alpinist, died in 1934 undertaking a solo rock-climb. Walter Amstutz had the privilege of skiing with him in 1929, and during four subsequent seasons he joined the King on his climbs in various parts of the Alps. Much impressed by the King's strength of character, and shocked by his premature death, Walter Amstutz decided to establish a memorial in his honour, adopting as its motto the King's own maxim, 'La Volonté, la Qualité maîtresse de L'Homme.' The King Albert I Memorial Foundation presents periodic awards for outstanding achievements in the general field of mountaineering.

Walter Amstutz was a member of the Founding Council of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research Zürich, which has sponsored expeditions to several of the world's ranges, also publishing annually between 1946-1969 *Berge Der Welt*, which appeared from 1953 in an English version as *The Mountain World*. Walter Amstutz contributed articles to the publication, as he did to *Der Schneehase*, to the *Alpine Journal* and other publications. He was as fluent in English as he was in German.

In 1975 Walter Amstutz was made an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club. He was also an Honorary Member of the Ski Club of Great Britain, and of the Groupe de Haute Montagne. In 1984, he had the rare distinction of receiving an Honorary OBE for 'important contributions to relations between Switzerland and Great Britain'

Walter Amstutz's wife died in 1993. He is survived by his daughter, Yvonne, her husband, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Trevor Braham

Ella Maillart 1903-1997

Ella Maillart was invited to be an Honorary Member of the Ladies Alpine Club in 1938, on the strength of her travels among mountains – Caucasus, Tien Shan, Pamir, Karakoram. Born and brought up in Geneva, the Alps for her were more for skiing than climbing (she was a member of the Swiss skiing and sailing teams). From the time she left school, restless and dissatisfied, she made her own plans and paid her own way – mainly by journalism and the books which she found wearisome to write. In *Cruises and Caravans* (1943), one of a series aimed at the young, she gave her juniors

advice based on her own experience: you must want to travel enough to give up everything to that end, but first – and this may be the hardest part – you have to discover that it's what you really want to do.

She herself had thrashed about for some years, trying her hand at acting, teaching, filming (with intervals of sailing small boats round the English coast and in the Mediterranean), before going to Moscow in 1930 where she studied film and rowed in the Alimentation Workers' eight. There she joined a party to cross the Caucasus, north to south, on foot. Her book on the trip, *Parmi la jeunesse russe*, helped to finance her next venture in 1932 to Kazakhstan and Kyrghystan. Without a proper visa she travelled across the Tien Shan mountains, on to Tashkent and Samarkand, Bokhara and Khiva, noting the effects of Soviet modernisation, herself at ease in a world where 'heat does not come in pipes, ice in boxes, sunshine in bulbs'. She wanted, as far as any passing stranger can, to enter into the lives of those she travelled among. She journeyed as they did – by crammed Turksib trains, lorries that kept breaking down, on the deck of an Oxus paddle-boat, on camel-back with a caravan across the desert of Kizil Kum, usually humping her own baggage. At Khiva she lodged with the Uzbek postmaster; in the desert by the frozen Aral Sea, she slept in Kazakh yurts.

From the last spur of the Tien Shan, at the frontier with China, she had looked longingly into forbidden Sinkiang and determined to travel there some day. Three years later her chance came when she was sent to Manchuria by *Le Petit Parisien* to report the Japanese occupation, and there met Peter Fleming, reporting for *The Times*. Somewhat reluctantly they agreed to join forces for an attempt to travel from Peking to Kashmir. This seven-month journey across the Taklamakan desert and Sinkiang, then closed to foreigners – memorably described in Fleming's *News from Tartary* (1936) and her *Forbidden Journey* (1937) – gave her an international reputation and made her much in demand as a lecturer.

A journey in 1939 through Persia and Afghanistan ended in India, where she spent the war years, mostly in a hut near Madras – a time when she embarked on a different kind of exploration. She talked to holy men, she learnt to meditate, and lost some of her restlessness (the book of tributes by her friends to mark her 80th birthday is titled *Voyage vers le Réel*). On her return to Switzerland she found the right haven for her new serenity in the high village of Chandolin, which looks up the Val d'Anniviers to the Dent Blanche. From there she set out on new ventures to Nepal, Tibet, the South Pacific, supporting herself and her own travels by conducting tours to India, China, Java, Korea, the Yemen, and by her books and lectures.

In 1978 Peter Lloyd, then President, asked me to have Kini – as all her friends called her – to stay for the Alpine Club Annual Dinner. This was the first of many visits, and led to a friendship that meant much to me. I was pleased to be able to introduce her to my neighbour Kate Grimond, Peter Fleming's daughter, who was keen to hear what Kini really thought of her father on their great journey. Had he irritated her? Kini pondered:

'Yes, when he borrowed my toothpaste, and squeezed the *middle* of the tube'.

In 1981 René Fedden and I were in Chandolin and saw much of her. One day at Achala, that chalet always so welcoming to Alpine friends, we all signed a postcard of greetings to another Honorary LAC (later AC) Member, Freya Stark: two great travellers who had early discovered what they wanted to do and, each in her own way, splendidly achieved it.

I last saw Kini in 1994, in Chandolin. We were waiting for the bus that would take me down to St Luc. I started to take her photograph: she, the expert photographer, ordered me to move: 'I must have the Dent Blanche behind me'. When the bus came she bade the driver take care of me and not rush the hairpin bends. Then she asked me to greet Kate Grimond – adding 'I think Peter and I managed very well – you see, we were both very intelligent people'.

Janet Adam Smith

Bernard Pierre 1920-1997

Bernard Pierre, who was elected to membership of the Alpine Club in 1949 on the recommendation of Geoffrey Winthrop Young and who became an Honorary Member in 1981, was a man of many parts. Decorated with the Croix de Guerre for his services in the Second World War, and made an Officer of La Légion d'Honneur and a Doctor at Law, he combined the professions of a banker and a stockbroker. He possessed an expert knowledge of the textile and oil industries and, in all those subjects, his writings were published.

His outstanding literary achievements were as a writer about his climbs and mountaineering expeditions: in the Saharan Hoggar mountains, the Ruwenzori massif, the Caucasus, the Elburz mountains of Iran, the Western Himalaya and the Andes. In the Western Alps he made numerous climbs of a high order of difficulty, his various companions being Lionel Terray, Louis Lachenal, Jean Franco and, most frequently, Gaston Rébuffat. Among some outstanding ascents were the North Ridge of the Aiguille des Deux Aigles and the North Face of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey by the Voie Ratti.

Further afield, Bernard Pierre was a member of a French expedition which made the first ascent of Nun (7135m) in Kashmir. He led a Franco-Iranian expedition which made the first ascent of Demavand (5671m) by its East Arête. He was a member of the Franco-American expedition which first climbed Salkantay (6271m) in the Peruvian Andes. There are other first ascents to his credit in the Hoggar and Ruwenzori ranges.

Early in his climbing career, in 1947, he met John Barford and Michael Ward, who persuaded him to climb in North Wales. He was elected to membership of the Climbers' Club in 1949 and to honorary membership in 1996. He was a member of the Groupe de Haute Montagne.

In his later years Bernard took to travel writing in the *genre* of Jan Morris, placing on record, in very readable fashion, the stories of some of the great rivers: the Nile, the Mississippi, the Danube and the Ganges.

On a personal note, my climbs with Bernard, apart from a short season in the Dauphiné which included the South Face of the Aiguille Dibona by the Voie Boell with Pierre Allain, were of a less prestigious and more relaxed order. Between 1950 and 1952 he was a regular guest at our house in Fontaine-le-Port on the outskirts of Fontainebleau Forest. Almost every weekend, with other French climbing friends (*'bleausards'*) we enjoyed ourselves on the strenuous bouldering climbs in the Forest. He endeared himself to my wife Joy and our French-speaking daughters. That close family relationship, which later embraced his talented and charming wife Roselyne, endured throughout the subsequent years. He was a man of deep affections and marvellous *joie de vivre*.

I shall always be grateful to Bernard for his brilliant translation of *The Ascent of Everest* for the publishers Amiot-Dumont.

John Hunt

Lt Col J O M Roberts, LVO, MBE, MC 1916-1997

Jimmy Roberts, the Himalayan mountaineer and explorer, who had made his home in Pokhara, Nepal, died there in November 1997, aged 81. He was one of the fast-dwindling band of pioneers who not only played a full part in the golden age of Himalayan mountaineering but also made it possible for countless others to experience the joys of trekking in that beautiful range.

Born and brought up in India, he joined the Indian Army in 1937 after education in England. His initiation to the hills was made in the Lake District, Norway and Austria, and he joined the 1st Gurkha Rifles, based at the Punjab hill station Dharamshala, because (in his own words) 'I wanted to climb in the Himalaya – not just one expedition, but a whole lifetime of mountaineering and exploration. It worked.' The Dhaula Dhar range, sweeping to 18,000ft directly above Dharamshala, provided a suitable launching pad. Every weekend or leave would be spent climbing or scrambling on the Mon, Two Gun Peak or the Indrahar Pass, or savouring with his retriever Rumple the solitude and grandeur of the mountains from the hut at Lakha. In 1938 he joined the expedition to Masherbrum (25,660ft) and experienced the dangers of high-altitude mountaineering for the first time. Seeing his companions losing fingers through frostbite strengthened his resolve to temper his own ambitions with necessary caution.

Next year came the war and an end to mountaineering until 1946. Among the first to volunteer for service with the newly-formed 153 Gurkha Parachute Battalion, he commanded the first operational drop into Burma, winning the Military Cross. Later he fought in the desperate hand-to-hand

battle at Sangshak when the Japanese advance into India was halted. Roberts led a counter-attack, forcing the enemy off the perimeter. In their official account, the Japanese said they had been fought 'to a standstill'. Typically, he never mentioned these events, even to his friends.

After the war, long spells of leave were not difficult to get. Roberts made full use of such opportunities. In Kulu, he made the first ascent of White Sail Peak (21,148ft). According to Harish Kapadia, he was the first to enter the Spiti mountains, where he made the first ascent of Dharmsura. Kapadia also records him as being the first to explore Saser Kangri. In 1947 he led an expedition to that peak. Later that year he joined me for two memorable months climbing in the Alps. In glorious weather, we climbed ten major and many lesser peaks, several such as the Weisshorn, Dom-Täschhorn, Piz Palü, and the Matterhorn (via the Zmutt ridge) by traverse.

In 1952 Roberts was considered, among others, for leadership of the 1953 Everest expedition, though I doubt if he ever knew of this. Later, John Hunt asked him to bring up the vital oxygen cylinders, the transportation of which had been delayed. At Base Camp John Hunt invited him to join the expedition, but Roberts declined and instead went alone to explore the area to the east of Lukla, where he made the first ascent of Mera (21,247ft). The following year he achieved another first ascent, that of Hiunchuli (23,782ft) in West Nepal.

By then he was commanding the Western Gurkha Recruiting Depot at Lehra, from which, on a clear day, the spectacular peak of Machapuchare (22,950ft) could be seen. We were both drawn to it; our letters proposing an attempt crossed in the post. While I organised the expedition in the UK, Roberts made a reconnaissance, discovering the large unmapped area to the south of Annapurna, now known as the Annapurna Sanctuary and a popular trek objective. He also saw the lower part of what he hoped would be a feasible route up Machapuchare ('The Fish Tail').

Next year, under his leadership, the expedition forced a route from the north to the foot of the final great precipitous North Face. The lead climbers, Noyce and Cox, made a valiant attempt on the summit, retreating only 150ft below it when hard snow turned to blue ice, making step cutting too slow for the top to be reached before an approaching storm threatened to cut off their descent. Earlier, Roger Chorley had become paralysed with polio. Roberts organised his evacuation and accompanied the party carrying him to the hospital in Pokhara. Roberts returned, but by then had missed much of the climb. It was a typically unselfish gesture.

In 1960 Roberts led the successful British/Indian/Nepalese expedition to the last unclimbed 26,000ft peak, Annapurna II (26,041ft). This was the first of Chris Bonington's many Himalayan first ascents.

After three years (1958-61) as Military Attaché in Kathmandu, Roberts decided to settle in Nepal. He retired from the Army and set up the first trekking agency, Mountain Travel. He believed that the delights of trekking could be enjoyed by a wider public, not just by climbers. He was right.

Mountain Travel prospered and soon became a multi-million dollar business. This was not to Roberts' liking; he preferred dealing personally with individuals, discussing their needs and tailor-making their treks, advising on routes, choosing the sirdar, Sherpas and porters. So he sold the business, but retained a directorship. His initiative started an industry which has become a major source of income for Nepal. There are now no fewer than 350 trekking agencies in the country, but Mountain Travel (now, after a commercial merger with Tiger Tops, called Tiger Mountain) is the most experienced and prestigious.

In 1963 he joined the American Everest expedition as its logistics organiser, and helped that party to make the first traverse of the summit. Later, in 1971, Norman Dyhrenfurth asked Roberts to join his International Everest Expedition, this time as joint leader. The tensions which arose from the multinational composition of the party made for a far-from-happy expedition, and Roberts admitted that his 'childish' belief that all climbers were gentlemen was severely shaken.

Roberts retired from the Army in 1961, after a distinguished military career. He had won the Military Cross and was mentioned in dispatches in the campaign in Burma; he was made MBE for his part in the Emergency campaign in Malaya against the communist terrorists and again mentioned in dispatches. In 1961 he was made MVO (later converted to LVO) for helping to arrange the visit of HM The Queen to Nepal, and he received the Nepalese decoration Gorkha Dakshina Bahu for accompanying HM The King of Nepal on his state visit to Britain.

In retirement in Pokhara, Roberts built a house and started a pheasant farm, breeding rare species for their conservation. He spent his last years with the latest generation of his Rumples* among the people he loved, Gurkhas and Sherpas, in the land he loved, in full view of his much-loved Machapuchare, the Fish Tail. There he was visited by his many friends, from notables such as HRH The Prince of Wales, to the lowliest of Sherpas, all of whom held him in the highest esteem.

Shy, modest, but kindly, charming and courteous, he was at heart a loner and shunned publicity. He had great inner strength and was happy to live by his own judgements and values. Genial and generous, with a keen sense of humour, he held forthright opinions, had no time for humbug, and was not slow to say so. Latterly, he was afflicted by ill-health. After three hip operations, he needed regular painkillers which made it necessary to have blood transfusions, some 'on draught' direct from Sherpa donors. Typically, he made light of these burdens and never complained.

Jimmy Roberts had a profound influence on trekking and mountaineering in Nepal, where he was acknowledged to be the most experienced figure in that area of activity. He was also universally respected for the integrity of his character and achievements. A plane was chartered to bring his many friends from Kathmandu to his funeral in Pokhara. The King of Nepal sent a personal message of condolence. In accordance with his wishes,

* As one dog died, Jimmy's next dog was called by the same name. The latest has been taken in by Bobby, the Gurung boy who looked after Jimmy latterly.

Jimmy Roberts was cremated on the banks of the Seti River which flows from his beloved Machapuchare.

Charles Wylie

Robin Hodgkin writes:

In 1938 Jimmy Roberts and two Gurkhas made a rapid journey across the Deosai Plains to catch up the main Masherbrum party just above the Shyok junction. We had a feast that night – curried chicken, with green Chartreuse from Grenoble. Jimmy's energy, wit and sparkle were very good for us. Though he and I only occasionally met in later years, we remained close friends. With his family connections with General Bruce and Wilfrid Noyce and his early love of mountains, one felt that he was destined for a life in the great mountains and with mountain people.

I remember him, vividly, thirty years later in Pokhara. Talk about expeditions, sweet and sour, about Tiger Tops, the future of trekking, his fancy pheasant farm; all to do with his ideas and hopes for his adopted clan of Sherpas. Four of them gave me a wonderful trip round the southern slopes and valleys of Annapurna. Much of the Sherpa's guts, integrity and fun was reflected in Jimmy's wrinkled glance; something too of the grace and greatness of the hills – Machapuchare rising sublimely above the mists to the north.

John Cleare writes:

Jimmy Roberts was the unassuming genius of the Himalayan Golden Age and for nearly thirty years his name would be mentioned in awed tones by young mountaineers and trekkers in Nepal. It is said in Kathmandu that had he not actually made the first ascent of any particular peak, it was probably he who had first noticed it, first explored the route to it and made the first serious reconnaissance of its slopes. Though he found time for all who cared to consult him and obviously delighted in discussing their plans, he showed little patience for arrogance or those he sensed as glory-seekers. Low-key and comparatively unsung himself, he once complained that the very number of modern Himalayan expeditions and the accompanying publicity and ballyhoo had devalued mountaineering to the status of league football.

Jimmy was interested in everything appertaining to the mountains, from birds and flowers to people and photography, and proved delightful company on the march, taking great pains to explain everything that was new or strange to a young whipper-snapper on his first Himalayan expedition.

My first contact with Jimmy was in the late sixties when, with the Nepalese mountains closed for climbing, he had been invited to lead a future International Expedition to Dhaulagiri, in which I was involved. Thus I knew him on paper – I knew his terse yet humorous writing – before I eventually met him in person in 1971. By this time the expedition had changed its objective to Everest's then-virgin South-West Face. In due course it amalgamated with Norman Dyhrenfurth's American team with the same goal, and by the time it eventually took the field it had become the sort of

enterprise about which Jimmy must have had considerable qualms. The 1971 International Expedition reached Base Camp with 24 members from 13 countries, led jointly by Dyhrenfurth and Jimmy Roberts and followed by huge media interest. It was hardly Jimmy's style.

Despite prolonged bad weather and rampant sickness, the lead climbers, Whillans and Haston, pushed to within 1500ft of the top but unfortunately several of the team proved to be incompatible prima donnas. For my own part, this had been my first taste of a big expedition and I returned home wiser but, like all of us, with incredible respect for Jimmy Roberts. He had been a pillar of calmness, common sense and dispassion when all that had once seemed a noble enterprise was collapsing around us. But it was the end of his active mountaineering for he was already in considerable pain from damaged hips and several times he returned to England for hip replacements.

Always he would share his encyclopaedic knowledge of Nepal. Aware that expensive permits and complex bureaucracy were inhibiting small, frugal, expeditions climbing in his own style, he would advise that a basic permit to *trek to a viewpoint* – rather than to *expedition to a mountain* – might with discretion cover a multitude of sins. 'I've pointed many small trekking parties – who I happen to know are competent climbers – at interesting unclimbed peaks,' he once told me 'and I just happen to know too that there've been ropes and crampons and ice-screws in their porters' baskets. And as long as the peaks aren't big or famous I've not asked embarrassing questions.' He added 'Never be surprised to find a cairn on a supposedly virgin summit.'

But that state of affairs could never last and eventually Jimmy persuaded the Tourist Ministry to release eighteen so-called Trekking Peaks up to 22,000ft in height which could be attempted with a minimum of formality, several of them officially unclimbed at the time and many of them still serious undertakings today. Needless to say it revolutionised the ethos of climbing in Nepal – and indeed in the other Himalayan countries.

Many climbers of my generation owe him much, not least our enjoyment of and our attitude towards Himalayan mountaineering. It was a very special experience to sit with Jimmy into the small hours, sipping a dram or two, talking of a subject dear to us both, until Machapuchare – his mountain – took shape in the approaching dawn. It was a great privilege to have known Jimmy Roberts.

Lyman Spitzer 1914 -1997

Lyman Spitzer, Jr. was born in Toledo, Ohio on June 26, 1914 and died in Princeton, NJ on March 31, 1997. He attended Yale University and earned a Doctorate from Princeton in 1938, spending a formative year at Cambridge along the way. During the Second World War he was the director of a

sonar analysis group for the US Navy. In 1947 he returned to Princeton as Chairman of the Department of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory. During the 32 years he held these positions he built one of the world's leading programs in astrophysics. He received many academic honours, including the rare distinction of foreign membership in the Royal Society of London, the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society, the US National Medal of Science and the prestigious Crafoord Prize of the Swedish Academy of Sciences.

He pioneered the study of the dynamics of stellar systems and the structure of the gas between the stars. He was a leader in developing magnetic confinement for controlled thermonuclear fusion, and founded the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory. In 1946 he published a prescient paper on "Astronomical Advantages of an Extra-Terrestrial Observatory", which developed the concept of space-based telescopes, and for the next forty years carefully shepherded his brainchild to fruition. These efforts culminated with the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope in 1990 (an early version was known as the LST or Large Space Telescope, but many astronomers claimed the initials stood for Lyman Spitzer's Telescope). He continued to conduct research up to the day of his death.

Lyman began climbing on trips to Zermatt and the Tetons. Then around 1964 his climbing entered a more technical phase through association with colleagues on weekends in the Shawangunks, trips to the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico and ice climbing in Huntington Ravine on Mt Washington, in New Hampshire.

In 1965 he participated in an Alpine Club of Canada expedition to Baffin Island. There he climbed Mt Asgard and made the first ascent of Mt Thor, which he did by the north ridge with Don Morton. Afterwards Lyman walked alone some 32 miles down the Weasel Valley and along the fiord to the town of Pangnirtung in order to return home ahead of the rest of the expedition. In 1967 he joined George Wallerstein and other astronomical colleagues in the Canadian Rocky Mountains east of Prince George, BC. There he made first ascents of Mt Walrus, Mt Petrie, and Mt Plaskett, the latter two named by the climbers after two prominent Canadian astronomers. Lyman returned to Canada in 1970 to climb Mt Waddington from the Tiedemann Glacier.

His climbing activity accelerated rapidly after his retirement in 1979. He travelled twice to the Dolomites, where he made guided ascents of the Sella Towers, Cima della Madonna, Rosetta Peak, Vajolet Towers, and many others. He also visited many climbing areas in the United States, including the Flat Irons, Eldorado Canyon, Lumpy Ridge and the Jackson-Johnson route on Hallet's Peak in Colorado, Seneca Rocks in West Virginia, the Needles in South Dakota, White Horse and Cathedral Ledges in New Hampshire, Devil's Tower in Wyoming, the Kor-Ingalls Route on Castleton Tower in Utah and Joshua Tree in California, as well as many routes in the Shawangunks. In 1976 the Princeton University authorities were unsettled

to find him climbing Cleveland Tower, the high point of the campus. He spent hundreds of days climbing at the Shawangunks, where he led climbs up to 5.8 in difficulty. This activity contributed to the case for his election as a member of the Alpine Club at age 70 and he continued to climb until age 80.

He also climbed and hiked extensively with his wife Doreen (née Canaday), their four children, and their grandchildren; two of his grandchildren are enthusiastic climbers and to commemorate this influence his family wore climbing slings at his memorial service. Lyman had a very long reach – both physically and metaphorically – which he used to good advantage. He treated everyone the same, regardless of age, power, or title, with unfailing quiet courtesy, rigid integrity, ruthless intolerance of sloppy thinking, and a touch of humour and rebellion. His lucidity of scientific exposition and enthusiasm for mountaineering – as well as music, good food and many other activities – will be fondly remembered by all who knew him. Many of his friends and colleagues regard him as a role model for both their personal and professional life.

Scott Tremaine & Sverre Aarseth

Hamish Gordon Nicol 1929-1997

Hamish Nicol, outstanding alpinist of the immediate post-war generation, died on 17 May. He was above all an enthusiast, for mountains, for climbing – no weather was ever too foul; for his family; for his work – 'being a GP is the best job in the world'; for singing, with the local choral society; for fishing, writing, mountain biking in the Cotswolds, canoeing in Canada; and for his friends. His forthright and attractive personality, and his care for others, made him very many friends. Seven hundred people, climbers, patients, colleagues, friends and family, attended his funeral in Stratford upon Avon. For most, if not all of us, he is unforgettable.

He was born in Hong Kong, was sent to school in England but evacuated to Canada in 1940 with his mother, while his father returned to Hong Kong in time to be interned by the Japanese. Living in Edinburgh after the war, he attended Fettes (which he disliked) and at the age of 17 went to Edinburgh University to read English, French and Economics. It was here that he was first initiated into mountaineering, but his fascination with mountains and climbing had begun ten years earlier. It was no doubt prompted by the fact that his father was a keen hill walker. While still at Fettes, sent to a summer French course at Grenoble, Hamish had made a start; he climbed the Croix de Belledonne with an equally inexperienced friend. Afterwards, he recorded, 'the only thing I now wanted to be was a first-class mountaineer'.

National Service intervened in 1947 and gave him further opportunities for climbing; he was commissioned in the Royal Artillery. He went up to

Balliol in 1949, flirted briefly with Geology, and then switched to Medicine which was indeed his true *métier*. On arrival in Oxford, with an active Alpine season just past and much varied Scottish experience already behind him, he joined the OUMC and at once made his presence felt. The general standard at that time was not high, the occasional Severe being the limit of many members' ambition. Hamish, with Tom Bourdillon, aimed higher. Their 1950 Alpine season, during which they made first British ascents, guideless of course, of the West Face of the Purtscheller, the Roc-Grépon traverse and the North Face of the Petit Dru, was an inspiration to British alpinists, signalling their ability to tackle the fine rock routes put up by continental climbers between the wars.

At Easter 1951, attempting the unclimbed Zero Gully on Ben Nevis with the primitive equipment of those days, Hamish came off, the ice-piton belays failed, and he and Anthony Rawlinson fell some 600ft. Carried unconscious to Fort William, they were lucky to escape with their lives. Hamish suffered a fractured skull, with consequent deafness in one ear. His enthusiasm was undimmed and that summer, he did the Mer de Glace of the Grépon with John Sims, returning home frustrated at the lack of more challenging opportunities in a poor season. Next year in the Alps he had another mishap, when his companion tripped while they were moving together on an ice slope and pulled him down the Envers des Aiguilles glacier into a crevasse. Hamish was slightly concussed and broke his jaw badly. This was a disaster, as he himself related: 'A successful 1952 season would have strengthened my claims for a place on Everest in 1953. As it was, I could not possibly be considered, having suffered two falls in quick succession ... I was written off as dangerous, and given a place as a reserve.'

Instead of Everest there were several superb Alpine seasons. The list of major routes is impressive: in 1953, the Old Brenva in bad conditions with Mike Cunnington, the West Face of the Pointe Albert (the first ED climbed by a British rope in the Western Alps) with Alan Blackshaw, the South Face of the Aiguille Noire with Pat Vaughan, the NW Ridge of the Grands Charmoz, the South Ridge of the Pointe Gugliermina, the South Face of the Géant, and the Route Major, all with Ted Wrangham. In 1955 he was with Tom Bourdillon again. The weather was variable, but they climbed the North Ridge of the Peigne, the East Ridge of the Crocodile and the West Face of the Noire de Peuterey. It then rained for five days. Having practised the techniques of artificial climbing on an overhanging tree in Tom's Buckinghamshire garden, they were keen to exercise their skills on a suitably taxing climb so, when the rain stopped, they made for the East Face of the Grand Capucin. With deep snow on the ledges, such as they were, it took them a full two days. It was the fifth ascent, but no difficult climb of this type had been done before by British climbers. The West Face of the Petit Dru was also on their list, but icy conditions ruled it out.

The accident in 1956 to Tom Bourdillon and Dick Viney, another close friend, ended Hamish's great period in the Alps. A man of deep feeling,

he was profoundly affected by this tragedy, which stayed with him for the rest of his life. Moreover, he was at this time desperate to establish himself in his profession, his student grants having run out, and for this reason had already declined John Hartog's invitation to join his Muztagh Tower party. He did not climb for four years and never returned to the ambitious routes that had previously been his passion.

In 1958 Hamish married Mary Walker, also a doctor. Two years later they went to live in Stratford, joining Dr Archibald McWhinney's practice in Rother Street where he became senior partner in 1982. He loved doctoring. Earlier, he had held appointments as obstetrician/gynaecologist and anaesthetist. While in general practice he took a course in hypnotism, to enable him to help patients with psychological problems. He was casualty officer at Stratford for many years. He extended his medical experience by an exchange for three months with a GP in Adelaide and by being medical officer, sometimes also leader, of several treks in Nepal.

Nicol family holidays were spent skiing, canoeing down French rivers or through the Canadian wilderness, but Hamish's love of the hills, and his restless spirit, would not let him give up climbing for good. He had a modest Alpine season in 1960, and in 1963 did the Firmin-Hicks route on Mount Kenya with Alan Wedgwood and Robert Chambers, going on to climb a new rock route on Point Peter and to ascend Kilimanjaro. Further Alpine seasons followed, but his most notable achievement was his membership of Alan Blackshaw's trans-Alpine ski traverse in 1972, the first by a British party, for which he acted as medical officer, of course skiing the whole way, in spite of being in his own view a mediocre skier. In the 1970s and later, winter ski mountaineering largely took over from the now crowded summer scene.

One of the achievements of which he was most proud was his work with the ambulance service in South Warwickshire. Hamish was of the opinion, not shared by more conservative members of the NHS, that ambulance crews, first on the scene of an accident, should be trained in advanced life-support skills. Against opposition, he devised and implemented a training programme, awarding green arm-bands to those who passed. This was in 1976, ten years before paramedics were generally recognised. His 'Green Bands' undoubtedly saved lives.

He was always very active in British hills, attending meets of the AC and the Climbers' Club and organising many of them. He was the first to leave the hut in the morning, rain or shine, enthusing one or two others to get a move on. Many of his closest friends were members of the Climbers' Club, of which he became President in 1972. His prime achievement as President was the admission of women to the club. The annual Scottish camping and climbing trip, mostly with CC friends, was a highlight of the last several years for those taking part, and it was Hamish who was the mainspring. He was a keen fisherman. Disclaiming any particular expertise (or any need for a fishing licence away from the road), he often supplied his

companions with trout which, with suitable quantities of whisky, made for memorable evenings in camp.

Hamish was a great companion on the numerous treks in mountain country in which he took part. In 1965 he was a member of John Hunt's Duke of Edinburgh Award party which climbed in the Tatras. He was with the 'Everest Anniversary' treks of 1978 and 1993. Always quickly away after a halt (to the dismay of some of his companions), he was slowed in recent years by painful osteoarthritis of the hip, but pressed on nevertheless. Two years before the inevitable operation, he climbed Mount Tasman on his 59th birthday, with a guide. After the operation in 1990, he continued active climbing and trekking. No artificial hip has ever had such punishment; the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair walk in Tasmania; the Corsican GR20 in 1994 and Nepal again in the autumn; the Tour de Mont Blanc; *via ferrate* in the Dolomites, the Rolwaling in 1996; and of course the usual climbing, walking and mountain biking.

He fell while climbing an old favourite on the Cornish cliffs on Easter Day, and died after a determined fight for life for some weeks. His friends could hardly believe that Hamish had not succeeded in that struggle. We will miss him. He was unique. We will miss the 'dear boy' of his greeting, the stimulus of his company, his beaming face at a party, his strength and encouragement and joy on a climb. Our hearts go out to Mary and her family.

Michael Westmacott

John Hunt writes:

In making the difficult choice of my companions for the 1953 Everest Expedition, I was determined to include a few representatives of the up-and-coming generation of British climbers who, without Himalayan experience, were showing great promise in the Western Alps. Hamish Nicol was on my short-list. He and his companion Tom Bourdillon had earned the respect of leading European mountaineers in the early 1950s by their achievements in the massif of Mont Blanc. I first met them in 1950 at Chamonix, that Mecca of mountaineers, on their return from making the first British ascent of the North Face of the Petit Dru. I vividly recall the impact which that achievement made on the international climbing community.

The competition to join the attempt on Everest was fierce; I finally invited Hamish to be one of the reserves, who would fill unforeseen gaps in the team, and who would join us if, failing in our attempt during the spring of 1953, we decided to launch a second expedition after the monsoon. From that time onwards, Hamish became a member of the Everest 'family' which – alas diminishing – has met to climb and trek and socialise, with our families, ever since. During those reunions, whether in Snowdonia, the Alps, or the Himalaya, I came to appreciate the true qualities of this remarkable man.

There is nothing to compare with the test of facing dangers and difficulties at one end or other of a climbing rope, or of walking across an amphitheatre of high mountains, to appreciate the worth of one's companions. Whether it was during those anniversary meets in North Wales or the Himalaya; or joining Polish or Czech climbers in the High Tatras; or on some cliff or Alpine peak, Hamish always passed that test with flying colours. He possessed dynamic energy and enthusiasm, great physical strength and technical skill, which invigorated his companions. Above all, Hamish was a very human, caring person. I shall remember him, not only for the treks and climbs we shared together, but also for the time we spent in some camp site, where he and his wife Mary would work for hours coping with a surgery of local people, for whose ailments no other medical help was readily available.

I shall recall Hamish grieving when we buried his friend Tom Bourdillon at Visp in Switzerland, after the sad accident which befell Tom and Dick Viney in 1956. I join with all his other friends in grieving for Hamish now.

Thomas Arthur Hardy Peacocke 1907-1996

Tom Peacocke was a member of the Club for 63 years. He had been resident in a nursing home for some time and his death was not unexpected, but with him passed a singular character, a very experienced and devoted mountaineer, and a much loved and respected schoolmaster in the old style.

He was born in India, of a service family. There are photographs of him with his ayah, and already there was the piercing look of purpose and single-mindedness that stayed with him to the end of his life. He was educated at Wellington and University College Oxford, taking his degree in Chemistry, with the intention of teaching. Although subsequently a member of the OUMC and taking part in their meets, he did not go to the Alps until 1928, when he took up a post at a small British-run school at Chateau d'Oex. This gave him his jumping-off point for both climbing and skiing, and he never looked back. He was elected to the Club in 1932, with a long list of routes, mostly guideless, to his credit. His well-known book *Mountaineering*, in the Sportsman's Library series, published in 1941, makes clear the wealth of experience of Alpine and British climbing he had amassed in the previous decade.

During the war he was involved with ski-troop training, principally with the Lovat Scouts in the Cairngorms, then in the Rockies and finally in the Apennine hinterland near Rome. Here he had a narrow escape in a windslab avalanche which killed four men, and in which Tom went over a cliff and said he felt himself very close to death and 'outside his body'.

After the war, he engaged in his main spell of teaching and housemastering at St John's School, Leatherhead. According to a number of his pupils, he was a never-to-be-forgotten teacher of Chemistry (and, one suspects, a very good one). At this time, and later during his last few years teaching, at

Charterhouse, Tom was a regular visitor to South Audley Street. He served on the Committee, and was involved in the organisation of the Centenary celebrations. He continued to climb and ski in the Alps, and took regular parties of boys skiing and climbing, the latter usually in Wales. Richard Owen was invited by a mutual friend to join one of his parties at Helyg in 1960, and records this experience:

'Teatime at the end of our first day was enlivened by the arrival of an avalanche of telegrams for Tom. Some were on the old buff paper, some the new Greetings sort, so whatever it was, it didn't look like an unspeakable disaster. These were being delivered in relays by a breathless youth in a peaked cap on a red Post Office motorbike. Curiosity grew to fever pitch, but well-mannered as we were, nobody had the bottle to ask. So it was Tom who suddenly broke the silence by blurting out 'I suppose I'd better tell you the ghastly truth – I've got engaged to be married.' His exact words, I promise you. The thought lingered all week amongst us that here was one of the great exponents of bachelor schoolmastering who had succumbed graciously and unexpectedly at last, and who had timed the announcement to mischievous perfection.'

In his 60th year Tom had a good season in New Zealand during which he climbed Mt Cook. Later, one of his many contributions to the *Journal* records a circuit in 1977 of the mountains of Andorra, where he and his wife Constance had moved shortly after his retirement. In the last decade of his life, they moved back to this country and settled in South Devon.

Tom was in some ways the quintessential old-fashioned public school master. He had definite ideas as to what was right and what was not, and would express them directly, but with an old-fashioned courtesy. It was predictable that when the Honorary Secretary decided, in 1986, to edge into the modern age and discard the Esq from members' addresses, Tom would be the one to protest. But there was never a trace of stuffiness about him when it came to listening to new ideas, or encouraging younger climbers. He was an enthusiast for what they had done and planned to do. He was truly a gentleman.

Richard Owen & Michael Westmacott

Harry Leighton Stembridge 1902-1997

Harry Stembridge was one of those fortunate men who lived a very full and active life almost to the end. He died peacefully at his home in Crakehall, Bedale, on 12 February 1997 at the age of 94. He was a man of many interests and talents, including water-colour painting, poetry, climbing, skiing, mountaineering, potholing, bird watching, fishing, gardening, cricket, scouting, village life and the activities of his family and friends. But perhaps his outstanding quality was his ability to make friends easily and to encourage young people in whatever was their talent or interest.

Harry joined the family clothing manufacturing business in Leeds, founded by his father, and later became its Managing Director. His first wife died in 1952; they had one son David, who shared his father's interest in the outdoors. Harry married again in 1967; his second wife Betty had three children of her own. The two families soon blended into one very caring unit. Such was the character of the man.

Mountaineering was an abiding interest in Harry's life, which he exploited to the full. Living in Huby, within walking distance of Almscliff Crag, it was not surprising that he and his brother Frank climbed there regularly, particularly as there had been members of Yorkshire Ramblers' Club climbing there since before the turn of the century. In 1949 he published an illustrated guide, *Almscliff, a key to climbs*. Harry also potholed extensively, not only in his native Yorkshire, but also in Northern Ireland where he was involved in the discovery of several new and complex systems. He was also an experienced skier, and his visits to the Alps included ski touring in Austria. He climbed wherever there was rock, be it in England, Scotland or Wales. His ventures abroad included mountaineering in the Lofoten Islands, Pyrenees, Dolomites, Northern Greece and Corsica.

Harry joined the Alpine Club in 1955 after several seasons in the Alps with his brother Frank and other friends. Characteristically he made many friends in the Club and visited a variety of mountain areas with them. On his retirement, in 1960, he took on the role of Liaison Officer for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and then County Commissioner for Scouts in Central Yorkshire. He was also on the Board of the Outward Bound School in Eskdale.

In 1960 Harry skied the High Level Route from Saas Fee to Forclaz with his son David, Dick Cook, Eric Arnison, Tom Price and Joe Renwick. In 1963 he was in Peru with Alf Gregory, when he and Alf climbed three peaks over 18,000ft, one of which was a first ascent. Their highest summit was Nevada Pisco at about 19,000ft. Then came a visit to the Polish Tatras and a trek to Everest Base Camp with Bob Chadwick and Eric Shipton.

In 1933 he joined the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, becoming the President from 1954 to 1956. He was elected an Honorary Member in 1977 by acclaim at the Annual General Meeting, an honour he richly deserved. He maintained a special interest in the YRC to the end of his life. I remember as a new member how welcome he made me feel, encouraging me in all aspects of my life.

At the YRC Annual Dinner in 1955, inspired by Charles Evans, the Chief Guest, the idea of a regional club mounting an expedition to the Himalaya was born. Harry provided the enthusiasm and was the driving force, along with Cliff Downham and Stanley Marsden. Eighteen months later the expedition set out for the Jugal Himal, the objective being the 23,255ft Lonpo Gang ('The Great White Peak').

Until a year before his death Harry kept a diary of day-to-day events, days spent roaming the countryside, climbing, recording the wild flowers

or unusual birds seen in his lovely garden. During a visit weeks before his death he told me of the happy life he had had and how lucky he had been in it and in his family. He will be sadly missed by his wife Betty, children David, Patrick, Madeleine, Katherine and by his grandchildren. He will, I am sure, not be forgotten by his many friends in the climbing world, and in the village of Crakehall.

David Smith

Sybil Washington 1916-1995

Sybil was born into a family of military traditions. Her father, General Cameron, fought at Omdurman, commanded in India and had postings in Northern Ireland and Dover Castle. Sybil was educated at Bath and Edinburgh University. In 1942 she married Peter Washington, a farmer in Berkshire.

Early climbing was in the Dachstein. Later, as part of her degree course, she spent a year in Geneva. There she climbed on the Salève and had weekends in Chamonix. Returning to Edinburgh she discovered Scottish climbing. Holidays were snatched from farm and family and she climbed many classics in Scotland. There were also marathon drives to Wales and the Lakes.

The return to the Alps was in 1946. The weather was not kind but it was a happy visit. As her family became more independent, Alpine holidays became regular events and from 1961 she climbed in the Alps most years. Zermatt was a fine centre and so was Saas Fee. Other areas she visited were the Bernina, Bregaglia, Chamonix and the Dauphiné. The Dom was hard work in 1975 but the next year she found form in the Alpes Maritimes. She also made one visit to the Pyrenees.

Age began to bite but she still enjoyed walks in the Val Ferret, from Almagell and especially from La Grave and Ailefroide. Her last trip was in 1992. The weather was cold but the views of the Meije were wonderful as ever. Walking was helped by the use of two sticks, but the joy was still there.

A H Hendry

Malcolm R D Duff

Mal Duff was a great driver. In the mid-80s the track up to Ben Nevis was used for time trials. Keys had been obtained, not necessarily from the Forestry Commission who were regarded as an objective danger. The record from the dam at the top to the start of the tarmac was 14 minutes. I often put my helmet on before getting into Mal's car. The rush of adrenalin started early when you were climbing with Mal. The fun often carried on late into the night as he was never known to turn down the possibility of a party. He would have loved his funeral. Police sealed off his home village

of Culross in Fife and the church was packed with his friends and family. Meanwhile, at the same time, in Everest Base Camp where Mal died peacefully of a heart attack on 23 April, a group of clients and fellow guides gathered to drink whisky and tell stories about their friend and sing increasingly incoherent renditions of 'Flower of Scotland'.

Mal hated being bored. Underneath the sleepy eyes was a hyperactive brain. An unimaginative guide can make his job tedious both for himself and his clients. If you were a client of Mal's you were likely to find yourself on new ground. He was one of the very best west coast Scottish winter climbers, excelling at all types of climbing. *Un Poco Loco*, with Andy Cave, climbs very steep ground near *Crypt Route* on Bidean Nam Bian in Glencoe, *Postman Pat* on Creag Meagaidh climbed with Andy Perkins involves super-steep icicle climbing. *Point Blank* and *Ring the Alarm* on Ben Nevis climb very thinly-iced slabs. All were well-known problems. Other, easier new routes, including several grade Vs, were climbed with clients. Some clients, such as Andy Cave, Tony Brindle and Sandy Allan, went on to become fine guides themselves.

For Mal, the Scottish winter would always be his first love. However, the Himalaya beckoned, where the resilience, strength and mountain sense gained in Scotland really served him well. Nepal, and especially the Khumbu, was his favourite area, although he did once go to Pakistan and make the second ascent of Mustagh Tower. His climbing CV was notably well-rounded in these days of 8000-metre tickers.

Amongst other achievements he reached the summits of Cho Oyu and Shisha Pangma with clients, climbed a technical new route Alpine style with Ian Tattersall on Mera, reached the summit of Pumori with his wife Liz and climbed a new route on Parchamo with Joe Simpson, after which they were both lucky to survive a 600ft fall.

He also had some excellent failures, the lot of anyone learning the Himalayan game. Attempts on Nuptse, first with Brian Sprunt, then with Sandy Allan, and on Lhotse Shar, again with Sandy Allan, were fine attempts by two men climbing Alpine style. So it was inevitable that he wouldn't try Everest the easy way. The first attempt after the deaths of Joe Tasker and Peter Boardman on the unclimbed North-East Ridge of Everest in 1985 reached 8200m and was regarded, by the fairly inexperienced team, as a relative success, as there had been no accidents and everyone came back friends. Mal went back, to try the Normal Route in the winter of 1993 with a group of regular and territorial army soldiers. The expedition reached the South Col but was literally blown off the mountain, a storm destroying every tent above Base Camp.

That trip led to Mal joining the Territorial SAS. He was over the maximum age for applying but got a special dispensation and had no problem passing selection. After all, he said, walking up hills with a big rucksack was what he did for a living. His chosen speciality was as a medic which involved periods of training at casualty departments of hospitals, work he found fascinating.

Some other things about Mal: he was a fiercely patriotic Scot; it was fun to innocently ask him where he had been born (Kenya). He did not have an ounce of malice in him. He was near the very top of his profession and had the respect of his few peers. He was best man at my wedding, putting in many painstaking hours of preparation to ensure everything went smoothly. He was a fine man and many people will miss him.

Jon Tinker

Brendan Joseph Murphy 1963-1997

Climbers often take on the characteristics of the mountains and cliffs that they love, or vice versa. Nick Dixon's routes are thin, John Dunne's are large in character and stature and Dawes's are quirky, bold and slightly insane. In mountaineering terms, the extraordinary climbs of Brendan Murphy rank alongside the achievements of the leading stars mentioned yet, like the mountains he climbed, they were relatively unknown to the wider population.

Brendan was a legend in his own lifetime amongst the tight-knit group of mountaineers operating away from the 8000m circus, at the very highest levels on steep technical terrain, applying the techniques of Scottish winter and Alpine face to the Himalaya.

Even amongst that small family, Brendan rarely talked of his own achievements. Much of the material for this obituary has come from its other members: Rob Durran (with whom Bren did the first Irish winter ascent of the North Face of the Eiger), Dave Wills (first complete winter ascent of *Divine Providence* and two attempts on the North Ridge of Latok I), Andy Cave (first ascent of the North Face of Changabang) and of course his long-standing partner Kate Phillips (with whom he made the first Irish ascent of Ama Dablam).

If he was reticent to talk about his own achievements or difficulties with his peers, amongst strangers he was modest almost to the point of secrecy. Some climbers met him last winter, reading a book in the café in Fort William. Asking him what he'd done elicited the response 'Oh, you know – had a good day.' Further questioning revealed that this 'good day' had involved driving solo from Cambridge overnight, dossing by the roadside, then soloing *Minus One* and *Astral Highway*. The following day he soloed *Galactic Hitch-hiker* and then drove back to Cambridge where he had a Ph.D in Computer Sciences and was working as a research scientist in high level networking systems.

His steady solid climbing style was ideally suited to the uncertain world of snow and ice climbing, yet he was no slouch as a rock climber either, having incredible strength and stamina 'for a mountaineer'. He was once established just below the crux of *Lord of the Flies* when a party arrived to do the Corner. They duly completed the route and abbed off two hours

later, with Bren still hanging at the crux making absolutely sure the key sideways hex runner was placed to his satisfaction before committing himself (successfully, of course) to the crux in incredibly hot and greasy conditions.

This resistance to poor conditions was a legendary Murphy trait, though it more often applied to extremes of cold and wet than heat. He would simply appear to be unaffected by conditions where the rest of us would be seriously worried about long-term survival. During his first winter ascent of the Eiger, the weather conditions went completely pear-shaped on the third day. He and Rob Durran pressed on, with Brendan producing brews by holding the stove between his knees inside a bivvy bag. On Ama Dablam, it was his apparent lack of concern at the snowfall and poor visibility which gave Kate the confidence to push on to the summit. To this day, I cannot decide whether he felt the same discomfort, pain and fear as the rest of us in those marginal situations that mountaineering so often presents us with. I rather suspect that he did, but his equanimity, calm and positive approach enabled him to stay chilled out in situations that he liked to refer to as 'good sport' or 'character-building'.

Whether on the hill or off it, this strength of character made him a unique person to be with, as his semi-detached (from reality) attitude would result in all sorts of excitement. He was so often late in turning up from down south for rock-climbing weekends that the phrase 'The Late Brendan Murphy' still makes me laugh (when he arrived he would always have a daysack full of lager with him). He frequently ran out of petrol, the last time being on our way back from the Alps at Christmas, yet for Murphy this was just another opportunity to build our characters.

He was always losing things; his wallet and passport falling out of his rucksack strapped to the back of a motorbike on the way to catch a flight to Spain; his watch on the floor of a base camp shelter, every hour it would bleep, followed by a frantic couple of minutes searching in the darkness.

Kate tells a classic Murphy story where, after berating her for leaving her wallet in the Grindleford café, he then left his trousers in Outside, lost his car keys at Froggatt and then locked both his spare key and his pit in the car. Throughout all these minor epics, he remained totally unfazed, as if he knew that, whatever happened, it would all be okay.

This faith in a positive outcome to problems extended to his dealings with people, and earned him respect from a wider community than just the people with whom he climbed. In all the years that I climbed with Brendan, I never heard him utter a bad word about anyone, even Captain Camembert, the liaison officer from hell on our Gasherbrum IV trip in 1993. His rapport with the porters and other locals was obvious, evidence of a deep concern for their welfare. He provided many novice climbers at the Cambridge University MC with heaps of encouragement, enthusing them through his own positive approach. Good looking and charismatic, he attracted lots of attention from women, and people of all ages, genders and walks of life found him easy to talk to. Even London yuppies, focused on the

complexities of financial dealings in the City, found him 'almost human – with very nice teeth'.

Bren's own finances were remarkably uncomplicated. His tastes were simple and unpretentious, his gear was always well-worn and he was happy to live on cheese toasties, coffee and wine. His money went on trips to go climbing, whether by motorbike to the Lakes, by car to Scotland, or by plane to the Himalaya.

It is those very special climbing days which will endure, above all the time we spent together on the North West Face of Cerro Kishtwar in autumn 1991. Lost rucksacks, an approach through Ladakh to avoid the unrest in Kashmir, an encounter with a psychotic American trekker in Zanskar, and 17 days of the most technical mixed climbing imaginable, in capsule style, made this the most enjoyable trip of my life. Throughout the entire expedition, even when we made the desperately difficult decision to turn back on day 15, just 150m from the summit, he retained that perfect blend of determination mixed with calm in the face of adversity.

I am convinced that he retained this inner peace and calm approach even as he was struck by the avalanche that carried him to his death. It is the one comfort that I can take from this appalling loss.

Like artists whose work only becomes valuable after their deaths, Bren's achievements were just starting to be recognised at the time that he left for his second attempt on the North Face of Changabang. Climbed in pure Alpine style, it epitomised his approach to mountaineering and the character traits demanded by such an outrageous route, climbed in weather conditions that could only be described as character-building. It will remain as a monument to one of the finest mountaineers of the last decade.

Andy Perkins

Malcolm Rutherford 1941-1997

Malcolm Rutherford distinguished himself on some long and demanding alpine climbs well before his election to the Alpine Club. But, with some exceptions, his companions had usually been service colleagues so, until his election to the Club committee, this kindly and very accomplished man was not widely known to members.

The son of a former Chief Constable, Malcolm began a life-long love affair with Scottish hills while still at Gordonstoun on a two-year naval scholarship. A school expedition to the Austrian Alps and several successive summers with the RNMC in the Valais and elsewhere were precursors to an outstanding season in 1962. With Nick Estcourt (they had all but started their climbing careers together) he went first to the Atlas and then to the Bernina and Bregaglia for a veritable feast of classic climbs. Moving next to Mont Blanc, and by now supremely fit, they climbed the south ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, bivouacking on the summit, before tackling

the Grandes Jorasses by the Arête des Hirondelles. 'Inclement weather' (sic) denied them this prize but not their next route, Mont Blanc by the Peuterey Ridge, made more memorable by a bivouac in a severe storm, a second night in the Vallot hut and descent via the Dôme du Goûter to Courmayeur. He was still barely 21. As often as not facilitated by service afloat, Malcolm lost no opportunity to widen his experience with visits to Greece, the Chilean Andes, Patagonia and Norway, soon adding skiing and ski mountaineering to his repertoire. Throughout, he was an enthusiastic member of the RNMC, serving as Honorary Secretary, Chairman and, for the last ten years of his naval career, President of what by then had become the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Mountaineering Club. Already a valued committee member of the Alpine Ski Club, he was elected to the committee of the Alpine Club in 1991, chairing the House Sub-Committee from 1992 to 1993 and bearing much of the considerable burden involved in the Club's move to new premises.

Malcolm Rutherford's naval career began conventionally enough at Dartmouth. 35 years later it culminated in his promotion to Vice-Admiral to take charge of the defence systems and equipment programme for all three services, as well as assuming the role of Chief Naval Engineer Officer. As a young lieutenant, his external London degree in electrical engineering had been augmented by a diploma in nuclear reactor engineering, a passport to ten absorbing years, afloat and ashore, in the submarine service. Always the opportunist, he also qualified as a naval diver and, somewhat out of context perhaps but very happily, completed the Italian interpreter's course, part of it in Florence where he met Fleur, his future wife.

Alongside his proven engineering skills lay a developing talent for people, which was to be recognised in subsequent appointments carrying increasingly senior rank. An exceptionally difficult tri-service task during the Gulf War led to his appointment as CBE, yet he and Fleur still found the energy and time to cycle the length of France. Two years previously he had competed in both the London and New York marathons. Uniquely for an engineer, Malcolm's next post was that of Naval Secretary with the rank of Rear Admiral and, two years later, it came as no surprise when he was promoted to Vice-Admiral. In all these jobs Malcolm's outgoing character and clear thinking endeared him to his colleagues, while his exceptional talent with people won the confidence of all three services. His naval climbing chums of all ranks had long held him in similar regard: 'inspirational', 'tremendously supportive', 'you always knew where you stood with him'. His close involvement with the higher management of the Joint Service Everest Expeditions of 1988 and 1992 was a natural consequence. In typical Rutherford style he trekked to the Everest area with Mike Kefford's 1992 party, accompanied by Fleur, and climbed Island Peak for good measure. 1996 brought success to the Services on Gasherbrum I under Malcolm's chairmanship. He, more than anyone, must have been thrilled by the success of the RN & RMMC on Gimmigela in 1997.

Some months after taking up his last appointment he and Fleur joined several of us on holiday in Corsica. But he was not well and a brain tumour was diagnosed soon after his return home. Astonishingly, a bare six weeks after major surgery, Malcolm was back at his desk showing the same determination and courage which were ever his hallmarks. The discomfort and anxiety of the ensuing treatments he bore with cheerful fortitude, continuing to appear regularly at Charlotte Road and at the RGS ... and taking up golf. He retired from the Navy in 1996 and joined GEC-Marconi briefly as director of its defence systems division.

His death, at 56, is a severe loss to the Club for, had he lived, Malcolm would surely have served it well. The loss to his adored family is incalculable. His many friends will remember him, strong, modest, humorous, invariably courteous, always considerate. There was no malice in him. He was, truly, a man for all seasons.

John Peacock
with thanks to Steve Jackson, RN&RMMC

Sir Charles Evans 1918-1995

Tony Trower adds a personal tribute to those in last year's volume:
I would like to make one small addition to the wonderful and justifiable tributes which have been paid to Charles Evans. I count myself among the most fortunate members of the Alpine Club that I climbed with him in the Alps in 1947 and 1949 and in Kulu in 1951 when we failed to get to the top of Deo Tibba. Because of his commitment to this little expedition, he felt unable to accept an invitation to participate in the Everest Reconnaissance – so typical of him.

I spent a delightful hour with him and Denise and Peter within the last three months of his life. It is a joy to my wife and me that the friendship endures into the next generation between Chuck and Caroline and my eldest son and his wife.