
In Memoriam

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

The Alpine Club Obituary		Year of Election
Robert (Robin) Allason Hodgkin	Hon 1999	1937
Alex Fraser Webster		1968
Jane Cabot Reid	LAC	1966
Andrew Philipson	ACG	1964
Squadron Leader Lester Walter Davies		1958
Alfred Tissières		1950
Ashley Martin Greenwood		1936
Arthur Wallace Evans		1960
Brian Kempster Harris		1935
John King		1969
Arne Ludwig R Næss		1960
John A Sumner	ACG	1972
Sonya Macmillan	LAC	1953
Prof Sir Henry William Rawson Wade		1965
John Stewart, The Lord Hobhouse of Woodborough		1955

The In Memoriam list this year includes the names of 15 members who have died since last year's Journal went to press. Whilst it has not proved possible to find obituary writers for all of these, I will, of course, be happy to include any next year if members will contact me. I am pleased to include here an obituary for Hunter Johnston, who died in 2002.

Robin Allason Hodgkin, 1916 - 2003

Robin Hodgkin was born in Banbury in 1916 into an established Quaker family. His father died when Robin was only two years old whilst undertaking relief work as a conscientious objector in Armenia at the end of the First World War. His elder brother, Alan, received the Nobel Prize (Medicine) in 1963 as did his cousin by marriage, Dorothy Hodgkin (Chemistry) in 1964. Robin was educated at the Dragon School, Leighton Park, and Queen's College, Oxford. This traditional upbringing might, under different circumstances, have moulded a more conventional character, but the strong nonconformist, Quaker family background nurtured a man who defied conventional labels and who lived a varied, interesting and generous life.

Those who knew him will remember an energetic, thoughtful, very direct man, with a presence compounded of enthusiasm and the ability to include all those around him. Photographs of him as a student show dashing good looks that seem to contradict the more serious, quizzical, almost simian features of later years, though there was always a ready smile for those who needed encouragement. Hovering just beneath the surface lay a finely tuned ability to detect and expose the phony and mock the pompous. Even at the end of his life, the mischievous twinkle that had been in his eyes before the tragic, stroke-induced blindness that marred his last year, continued to be present in his voice.

At the time of his death, Robin Hodgkin was among the last of a generation of great pre-war mountaineers. There is a temptation in writing for these pages, to emphasise Robin's considerable reputation as a climber, which his natural and very real modesty would have deprecated. To put his achievements in context, Robin Hodgkin was a committed, lifelong climber whose most important contributions were compressed into the two years ending with the accident on Masherbrum in 1938. When he went up to Oxford to read Geography in 1934, John Hoyland, a talented young climber, had just been killed on the Innominata Ridge of Mont Blanc. Hoyland had been the second climber to lead *Longland's Climb* on Clogwyn D'ur Arddu. Jack Longland said of Hodgkin and Hoyland, that they would have made the strongest British alpine team at that time. His friend David Cox observed that Robin was the best technical rock climber of his generation.

Hoyland's death had devastated the members of the influential Oxford University Mountaineering Club, leaving a void that Hodgkin and Cox helped fill. Their contribution to Clogwyn D'ur Arddu was made during a camping trip in the summer of 1937 with Clare and Beridge Mallory, the daughters of George Mallory (in a separate tent). Hodgkin's *Wall Finish* to *Piggott's Climb* was bold and ahead of its time, and his *Top Traverse* on *Great Slab* particularly thin. Cox led the appropriately named *Sunset Crack* one evening after a day spent on Lliwedd. These routes, and many others, were accomplished in a four-day period while camping beside Llyn D'ur Arddu. The four shared the cooking and an innocent reading aloud of *Emma*

between the tents. Later that summer, with John Jenkins, Bob Beaumont and Michael Taylor, Robin travelled to Russia, to the Caucasus, where, on a shoestring budget and with minimal equipment, they made a number of successful ascents. Most notable was the first British ascent of the South Peak of Ushba (4710m) by a bold and technical new route, for which Robin's recent experience on 'Cloggy' would have gone some way to prepare him. In Robin's words, it was 'Like the Matterhorn, but higher, more dramatic, more ... difficult!' (Beaumont was killed the following year, and Jenkins nine years later, both in climbing accidents.) 1938 saw an even bolder objective, an attempt to make the first ascent of Masherbrum (7821m) in the Karakoram. Hodgkin and a Sherpa were caught in a devastating avalanche at a high camp at 24,000 feet. During a desperate descent, both men suffered severe frostbite, with the result that Hodgkin lost all his toes, his little fingers and parts of his other fingers – but importantly, managed to keep most of his index fingers and his thumbs. John Hunt helped and encouraged him back into climbing – he continued to lead rock climbs up to Severe well into his fifties and followed *Longland's Climb* with his sixth form students in 1963. There is a short film of him made by Hamish MacInnes in 1959, leading *D Gully Buttress* (Severe) in Glencoe, with Nick Longland and myself and a total lack of any protection. He had a pair of specially made Vibram/tricouni mountain boots and developed a technique for climbing gritstone cracks in a pair of kletterschue, using the empty end, where his toes should have been, to jam into thin cracks.

Robin would not have approved of our focusing on his climbing prowess. As an educationalist he continually emphasised the need for balance – in all aspects of life. He was a gifted and inspirational teacher, with a particular ability to make newcomers feel at home, the less confident to shine, while bringing out the talents of more able students. He taught by example, and as though he was one's friend. (He took me on my first alpine climb – the Rothorngrat – and later, when I was working in India, he sent me a much treasured copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*.) After graduating, Robin spent a term teaching at his old (Quaker) school, Leighton Park, before joining the Sudan Civil Service in January 1939, teaching at Gordon College, Khartoum, where he became the principal of Bakht-er-Ruda teachers' training institute. In 1947 he married Elizabeth Hodgson, another teacher working in the Sudan Education Service. Whilst resident in the Sudan, Robin made trips to the Ruwenzori and Mt Kenya, a climbing visit to the Taurus mountains of Turkey in 1943 with his friend Ted Peck, by way of Egypt and Syria (see below) and, in 1944, a very exciting five-day river trip through the Sabalika Gorge of the Nile. When, in 1954, he left the Sudan, he declined the substantial gratuity due to him, insisting that the money be spent on badly needed books – an act of practical charity that typified the nature of his religious pragmatism.

At the suggestion of Jack Longland, he applied for, and became, the headmaster of Abbotsholme, an unconventional public school on the banks

of the River Dove in Derbyshire. Abbotsholme had played an important part in applying an holistic approach to education – the development of the whole person – especially the inclusion of outdoor education in the curriculum. (Kurt Hahn had received and developed his educational philosophy there during the 1930s before going on to found the Outward Bound movement and Gordonstoun). The lack of convention suited Robin, and though conservative prospective parents might have been disconcerted, his open-minded outlook appealed to others seeking a diverse educational approach. I particularly enjoyed his ‘O’ level geology classes, which had a strong element of serious, hands-on, practical work at a variety of climbing locations.

After his success at Abbotsholme, Robin ‘retired’ to Barrepa House, his beautiful home near Falmouth – like a Quaker retreat. However, he also lectured at the Department of Educational Studies at Oxford and started work on what was to become a series of books on educational theory, drawing from his wide experience and influenced by the Hungarian philosopher Michael Polanyi. *Reconnaissance on an Educational Frontier* (1970) and *Born Curious* (1976) were followed by *Playing and Exploring: Education through the Discovery of Order* in 1983.

Robin was a Quaker by inclination as well as upbringing. He was deeply involved with the work of the Society of Friends, especially on international projects. He was open-minded, undogmatic, but not always ‘moderate in all things’, as his climbing demonstrates. I never heard him raise his voice, and as a pacifist he would not countenance violence in any form. Any misdemeanours of his students were regarded as ‘anti-social behaviour’, to be paid for by meaningful, beneficial work in which the perpetrator would acknowledge and redeem the debt.

Robin attended Alpine Club meetings when he could until his mid-eighties and in 1999 he was made an Honorary Member of the Club. In 2002 he suffered a severe stroke which left him handicapped and blind. Elizabeth died a few months before him and they leave two sons and a daughter. He lived a singular, full and interesting life in which charity and simplicity were his guiding principles. Robin Hodgkin was, above all else, a good man.

Mark Vallance

Sir Edward Peck writes:

Robin Hodgkin was a fellow-undergraduate with me at The Queen’s College, Oxford, where his exploits with the Oxford University Mountaineering Club were legendary. One unrecorded climb may be the first ascent of the Radcliffe Camera, when he placed on the summit what was then delicately termed an ‘article’. Robin was rather bashful about this but David Cox, to whom as a junior Proctor the climb was sometimes embarrassingly attributed, always insisted that it was done by Robin. The crux of the climb – surmounting the overhang below the dome – was achieved by using the lightning conductor, subsequently removed by the authorities.

Others will write of his accomplishments in North Wales, on Ushba and in the Karakoram, but I can recall that when Robin disembarked on his return from Masherbrum, minus all his toes and with only the thumb and forefinger of his right hand, all his friends, including myself, were dismayed – all, that is, except Robin, the only cheerful one among us!

In 1943 I was in Ankara and Robin in Khartoum. Having climbed Jebel Kassala and not finding much else to climb in the Sudan, Robin came to join me in what he later generously called an ‘expedition’ to the Ala Dag range, which I had reconnoitred the previous year. I had then spotted the long couloir on the west face of the highest peak Demirkazik (3756m) as the key to the climb, and with Robin taking much of the lead we reached the summit by this route, hoping it was a first ascent. To our dismay, we found a swastika pennant left by the German expedition of 1938. This we removed, to indicate to the Turks below that the Nazis had designs on their mountains. It now rests in the archives of the Alpine Club. The current guidebook to this now popular range records the route as the ‘Hodgkin-Peck Couloir’. This route was better in snow than later in the year, but the mountain is now more often climbed by the exposed SE ridge.

We went on to climb other lesser peaks, which we hoped might be first ascents, and peered down into the attractive basin of the Yedi Göl (‘Seven Tarns’, which I visited the following year). We rounded off our ‘expedition’ with the second ascent of the second highest peak in the range – Kaldi Dag at 3734m.

Despite being ‘digitally challenged’, Robin climbed more skilfully than I could aspire to, but the long walks in and out were trying for his poor ‘pobble’ feet. He was the most generous and kindly of men. I often felt humble in his presence, for though sharing his great love of mountains, I could not hope to match his digitless skill in climbing, and was out of my depth in education and religion.

Jane Reid d. 2003

Janey Reid was elected a member of the Ladies’ Alpine Club in 1966, and also of the Eagle Ski Club, of which she was President from 1976 to 1979. It was Neil Hogg and Janey who founded the ESC’s ski-mountaineering training meets in the Alps. These meets still continue and have helped many young ski-mountaineers to learn their craft. I am privileged to have made many ascents and traverses with Janey, mostly in the Alps, but also in other mountain ranges, High Atlas, Pyrenees and Norway. She lived in Switzerland and spent most winters at her beautiful chalet at Saanenmoser. Many mountaineers benefited from an invitation to stay there, and her parties were memorable. In later years, Janey retired to Zurich, where she did many good works. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Terry Hartley

Arne Næss 1937-2004

Arne Næss died as he lived, living life to the full and revelling in adventure. He was staying with friends near Franschoek some 50 miles from Cape Town when on 13 January he set out to solo up the steep but broken face of a peak in the nearby Groot Drackenstein hills. Cloud rolled in and he decided to retreat. Abseiling down a steep section, the 'Friend' camming device he had used as an anchor, came out, and he fell to his death.

Leader of the successful Norwegian Everest Expedition, Næss had an extraordinary career as a mountaineer, millionaire shipowner, and former husband of the pop diva, Diana Ross. But equally important, he was warm-hearted, charismatic and generous, loved by his family and friends.

It hadn't all come easily. Born in Germany on 8 December 1937, son of a Norwegian mother, Kiki Næss, and German father Raab, a physician and later a major in the Wehrmacht during the war, Arne was sent off to a tough German boarding school at a very young age. Then at the end of the war, after his parents divorced, he returned with his mother to Norway, unable to speak a word of Norwegian, to attend a Norwegian school. It must have been particularly hard in the aftermath of the German occupation. Young Arne was quite small and slight in build but earned respect by his daredevil ability on skis and capacity for adventure.

His mother came from a rich shipping family and her brother, Arne Næss is the world famous philosopher, ecologist and mountaineer, who led the expedition that made the first ascent of Tirich Mir (7700m) in Pakistan in 1950. Tony Streater was transport officer to the expedition, and reached the summit in his first ever experience of climbing. Arne senior took young Arne under his wing, introducing him to climbing. By the age of 19, he had made 20 first ascents of rock climbs around Oslo and in the Norwegian mountains. However, he had to start earning a living and moved to New York to work for his uncle, the ship-owner Erling Næss. Later he began his own very successful shipping broking business.

Arne moved to London in the early eighties and it was during this time that he got back into climbing, organising an expedition to Numbur in Nepal, 1980, as a training expedition for Everest, for which he had permission for 1985. On the Numbur expedition, he appointed Nils Forlund as climbing leader. Nils is a well-known climbing guru and educationalist who believes in only using traditional natural materials in climbing equipment. This was not a success. They failed to climb the mountain and had a lot of arguments but he learnt a great deal, perhaps most important of all, that he was capable of leading an expedition himself and did not need to appoint a climbing leader for his Everest expedition.

It was around this time Arne came to ask my advice about Numbur and Everest. We quickly struck up a friendship and went climbing together. What impressed me was his natural technical ability. He moved effortlessly on rock, tended to be happy to climb second but could certainly follow up

anything I was capable of leading. We had one great day on Sgurr an Fhidhleir, in the North-west Highlands when we set out to climb the *Magic Bow* and ended up doing a series of new variations, as I suspect many others do. He was also a steady alpinist and climbed the North Face of the Matterhorn with his guide and friend Daniel Brouchier.



106. Arne Næss (second from right) in Everest's Western Cwm, 1985.
(Chris Bonington Picture Library)

Arne invited me to join the Norwegian Everest Expedition, giving me my chance to reach the earth's highest point. It was the first attempt by Norwegians on any 8000m peak and proved a successful and very happy expedition, largely due to Arne's personality and leadership. From the very start he not only involved our Sherpas in the decision-making process, but also assured them that they had as much right as us European climbers to go to the summit. It ended up with 17 of us, including Arne, reaching the summit, the most from a single expedition at that time.

He went on to complete the Seven Summits with several of the Everest team. After climbing Mount Vinson, he finished off the remaining five in a breathtaking, and no doubt jet-lagged, five weeks. In 1995 he organised a 10th Anniversary expedition to Drang Nag Ri (6800m), a beautiful and very steep unclimbed peak on the eastern edge of the Rolwaling. He was an enthusiastic climber throughout this period, climbing in the Alps from his chalet in Verbier and also in Norway. He was also a superb and very

bold skier. I shall always remember following him over a particularly unpleasant and steep moraine slope after doing a route on the Aiguille Rouge. He ran across whilst I crawled, muttering curses in a state of terror.

In his personal life, he married Filippa Kumlin d'Orey of Sweden in 1966, having a son, Christopher and two daughters, Katinka and Leona, who is a successful pop singer. This marriage came to an end in the early eighties. He met Diana Ross at an exclusive beach club in the West Indies while on holiday with his children after the '85 expedition. They married in 1986 and had two sons, though they always lived in separate homes, Diana in Connecticut and Arne in London. When the marriage came to an end in 1999, he moved back to Oslo, to live with Camilla Astrup, with whom he had two young sons.

The women in his life and all his children attended his funeral, and what came across was the love they all had for him, as indeed did we his friends. He was a very special person with an impish sense of humour and was a delight to climb with and go adventuring.

Chris Bonington

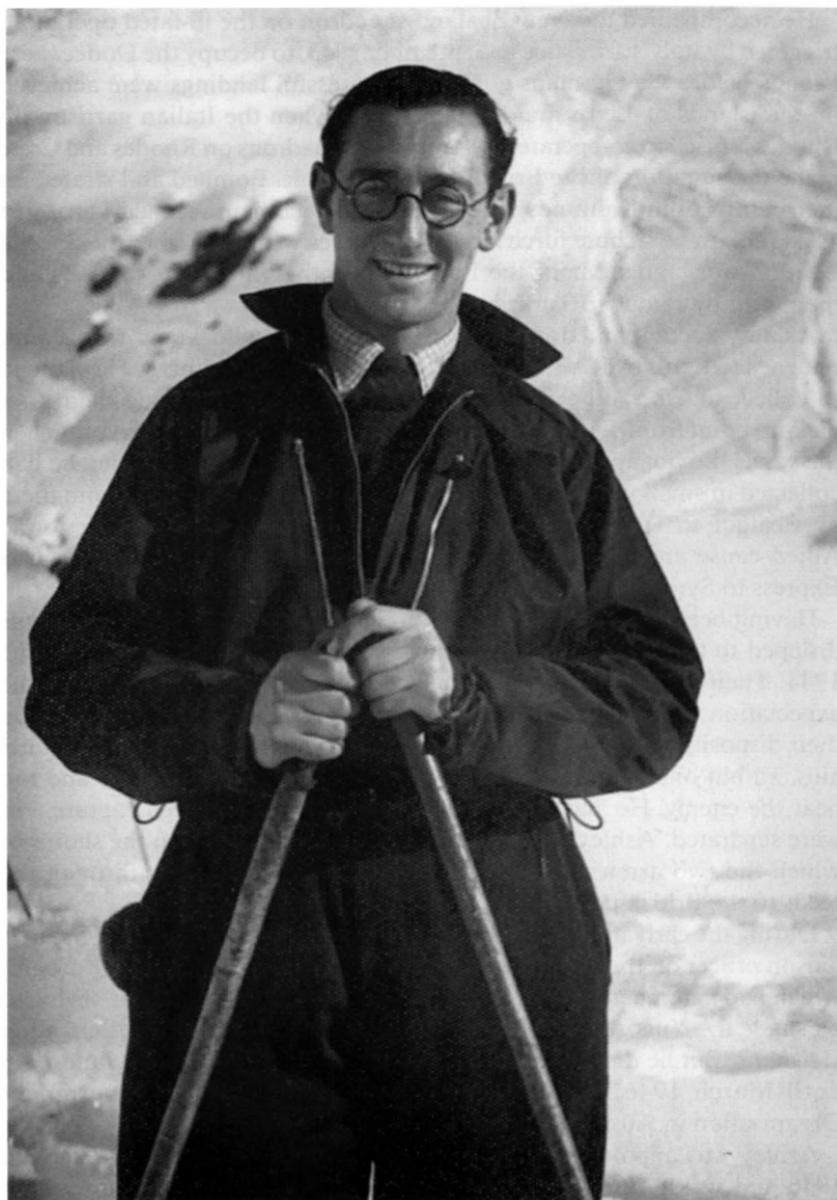
Ashley Greenwood OBE, MC, QC 1912 - 2003

Elected a member of the Alpine Club at the age of 24, Ashley Greenwood had a taste for adventure that led him to volunteer for commando training during the early years of the war. After joining the Long-Range Desert Group, he was awarded the MC and mentioned in dispatches for his service in the Mediterranean theatre. After the cessation of hostilities, Ashley joined the Colonial Office and served in various legal capacities in Uganda, Fiji and Gibraltar. He later calculated that his climbing, military and legal careers had taken him to 103 countries.

Ashley Martin Greenwood was born in 1912. From Haileybury he went on to Clare College, Cambridge, and having taken a double first in classics, he decided to become a lawyer and qualified as a solicitor. He climbed his first mountain as a teenager. His passion for the sport took him to the Alps, Dolomites and Tyrol, as well as Norway, Scotland and Wales.

In 1936 he was elected to the AC after being proposed by Noel Odell. His climbing skills would stand him in good stead during the war. Commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1940, he volunteered for Commando training in the hope of seeing action. He inveigled his way into the Long-Range Desert Group at a time when the force was turning its attention from North Africa to the Aegean, Italy and the Balkans.

Sent from the Commando Training Centre at Lochailort, Scotland, to attend a mountain warfare conference at Tripoli, in April 1943, he heard that the group's New Zealand squadron needed a climbing instructor for its mountain warfare training at the Cedars of Lebanon ski resort. He volunteered for the job and, on finding himself warmly welcomed,



107. Ashley Greenwood at Obergurgl in 1938.

persuaded Lieutenant-Colonel Guy Prendergast, commanding the group, to say that his retention with the LRDG was operationally vital. He spent the rest of the war with the group on a wide variety of operations.

He accompanied the New Zealand squadron on the ill-fated operation, triggered by Italy's armistice in September 1943, to occupy the Dodecanese Islands before the Germans got there. Successful landings were achieved on the islands of Leros and Kalimnos but, when the Italian garrison on Rhodes refused to co-operate, the Luftwaffe squadrons on Rhodes and Crete made the situation of the British force untenable. Bombed and strafed on their return from Kalimnos, Greenwood's detachment reached Leros just as a German parachute force landed. Together with men from the Special Boat Section under Major the Earl Jellicoe, they made for the hills and then went by caique to Turkey.

Ashley, accompanied only by a Greek agent who knew the island, returned to Leros by RAF sea-rescue launch and rubber dinghy. He planned to collect together other British troops left behind and guide them to a pick-up point from where a similar vessel could take them to Egypt. When the vessel did not appear after several nights' wait, he sent the men he had collected in small parties by rowing boat to a nearby island and from there by a caique to Turkey. Although neutral, Turkey was sympathetic to the Allied cause and the rescued men travelled with Ashley on the Taurus Express to Syria.

Having been trained as a parachutist, he led one of four small patrols dropped to the north of the German defensive positions in Italy in June 1944. Their task was to reconnoitre the state of roads and bridges in the expectation of an Allied advance, identify German units and report on their dispositions. As was often the case using contemporary navigational aids, all but one of the patrols were dropped in the wrong place and too near the enemy. He and one other man of his patrol evaded capture, but were separated. Ashley walked south to Lake Trasimene, on the shores of which the two armies faced each other, and made his way through the reeds to the British positions.

During the early months of 1945 he was the Long-Range Desert Group's liaison officer on the staff of the British brigade operating in Montenegro, which had a number of desert group patrols working in that area, trying to persuade the Yugoslav partisans to attack or at least harass the retreating Germans. But he did not find the partisans co-operative. From June 1945 until March 1946, he served with the Allied Military Government Organisation in Austria.

Ashley was appointed deputy registrar of the Ugandan High Court in 1946 and was promoted to registrar the next year. He became resident magistrate in 1950 and Crown counsel four years later. He was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1952. Four years later, he was appointed Solicitor-General and then Attorney-General of Fiji, where he took silk. He served as Attorney-General of Gibraltar for three years from 1963.

After his retirement from the Colonial Office, he was appointed OBE and took on various assignments, including a year in Washington on the

Telstar conference and a short spell as temporary Attorney-General of Montserrat. He also spent some months in Hong Kong, dealing with implications relating to the colony's return to China.

Ashley married Rosemary Howard in April 1956. The couple, who had climbed together in the Alps for two seasons before the war, returned to mountaineering afterwards and were also active in the Eagle Ski Club. In the 20-year period up to 1978, they climbed, skied and trekked together in New Zealand, Austria, Italy, Greece, Nepal, India and Peru. Ashley marked turning 80 by climbing Stok Kangri (6121m) in Ladakh.

Ashley, with Rosemary, was a true stalwart of the AC, taking part in gatherings from meets in the Himalaya to regular Club evenings in London. Members who rushed straight from work to Club lectures owe them a particular debt, for it was Rosemary and Ashley who used to provide the buffet. This was the sort of thankless task that few members could be persuaded to undertake on a regular basis, yet the Greenwoods, in their eighties, continued to perform it for many years.

Ronnie Faux

(based on an obituary in *The Times*, 8 October 2003)

Alfred Tissières 1917-2003

Alfred Tissières was one of a small group of distinguished Swiss climbers who became members of the Club; in his case largely because as a young research scientist he had arrived at Cambridge University in the late 1940s. Proposed by Michael Vyvyan and seconded by A M Binnie, he was elected to the Club in 1950. By that date he had a formidable alpine record which included the third ascent of the South Face of the Täschhorn and the second ascent of the North Ridge of the Dent Blanche. No doubt as a result of his close connections with British climbers, he was invited to join the 1951 Everest reconnaissance expedition. In the event he felt, with considerable reluctance, that he must give priority to his scientific research career, and so he refused and went on to become an internationally distinguished molecular biologist. It is perhaps one of the interesting 'ifs' of mountaineering history to reflect that, had he accepted, he would undoubtedly have joined the 1952 Swiss expedition whose members were all his close friends, and the successful 1953 expedition might have been Anglo-Swiss.

Alfred came of an old Valais family. There was a family bank based in Sion, although he always described himself as a citizen of Orsières. His father died in 1917 when Alfred was only six months old and his earliest climbing was therefore with his elder brother Rodolph, who became a distinguished member of the Swiss parliament. From 1940 onwards he climbed regularly with Georges de Rham, almost entirely in the Valais,

but including numerous first ascents on l'Argentine, a cliff near Villars he was especially attached to. Alfred regarded de Rham, who was a good deal older, as the best rock climber he had climbed with. His other principal companions in those days were Gabriel Chevalley, René Dittert and André Roch. What a formidable party they must have been, and their routes – many of the great and serious rock routes of the Valais – reflect this.



108. Alfred Tissières 1917-2003 (*George Band*)

With one exception, none of his magnificent collection of routes done in the 1940s seems to have been written up. Alfred himself did not write any account of his first ascents, which included the south face of the Gredetschhörkli (1943), the south-face rib of the Bietschhorn (1947) and the south ridge of the Stockhorn (1945); and his routes with André Roch were done after Roch wrote *Les Conquêtes de ma Jeunesse*. The exception is the short but gripping account by de Rham of their third ascent of the Täschorhorn south face which was published in the *Alpine Journal* for 1943-44, and was written, one suspects, at the instigation of Geoffrey Young. Reading de Rham's account brings back memories of Franz Lochmatter's epic lead without protection in 1906, so graphically recorded by Young in *On High Hills*. It is clearly a difficult, nasty and dangerous route, now rarely climbed, a loose vertical slag heap of rock sloping the wrong way.

During these years Alfred was qualifying as a doctor and then transferring to research, first in Marseilles, where he climbed in the Calanques, and

then, from 1947, at Cambridge. While there he climbed in Wales with Kim Smith and John Cook and with the latter in the Lake District. In 1950 he was a member of the Anglo-Swiss expedition which climbed Abi Gamin, Kenneth Berrill being in the event the sole 'Anglo'. Although at the time Abi Gamin was the highest unclimbed peak in the Garhwal, I have the impression that Alfred thought it really a rather boring mountain.

George Band, writing in *Road to Rakaposhi*, paints an engaging picture of him at this time. 'He had the slight, characteristic stoop of all tall men used to banging their heads in houses made for lesser people. His features were spare with a straight pointed nose, angular chin and a large, intelligent forehead He was a lover of good food and wine and of his 1939 4¼ litre Bentley, but capable of living with great austerity as well. When he first came to Cambridge he lived in a tiny cottage. When he opened the front door to receive you, the head and shoulders of his vast frame were hidden by the top of the doorway.'

By the time of our expedition to Rakaposhi in 1954, Alfred was the natural person to be our leader – a post he resolutely refused to acknowledge as being necessary. Be that as it may, he clearly added immeasurably to our credibility and also, it should be said, to our enjoyment. It was then that I first got to know him, and later we climbed together in the Valais in the summer of 1956.

By the mid 1950s mountaineering was being fitted in around his research career in the exciting new field of molecular biology. For example, when he was at Caltech he managed to get to the Brooks range in Alaska, and on another occasion when returning home to Switzerland he was whipped off almost from the plane by René Dittert to climb the Route Major on Mont Blanc. He was one of those infuriating people who seemed never to need to get fit. Also at this time at Caltech he met Virginia Wachob, from Denver and of Scottish descent. They both had strong, highly individual personalities, and the same interest in art and travel. They married in 1958.

At that time Jim Watson, who had been a Cambridge colleague in the 1950s, was setting up a new lab at Harvard and asked Alfred to join him. I do not pretend to understand the science, but I think the following quotation sums up the opinion of this distinguished Nobel laureate and one of the discoverers of the structure of DNA: 'For almost 50 years, my life was enriched and ennobled by my friendship with Alfred. We first came into intellectual partnership at Harvard in the spring of 1957 when he came to work on ribosomes, the RNA-containing particles then already hypothesized to play a vital role in protein synthesis. From the moment of his arrival, Alfred was a tower of strength – both biochemical and emotional. A person of the highest integrity, Alfred never let anyone down.'

In 1963 the Swiss Federal Government and the Canton of Geneva put together funding and asked Alfred to found an institute within the University. It was not long before his institute had its own international reputation and Alfred remained its head until he retired in 1988. Under his

leadership it attracted brilliant young scientists from all over the world. His student and subsequently his successor, Pierre Spierer, to whom I am indebted for an account of this period in Alfred's career, paints an engaging picture of how he formed young scientists. 'You would bring to him your problem – he was always available – and quiet but attentive he would ask you to explain it. When I had come to the end I would at last have the comment of the master: "and so?" And somehow the problem had become untangled and the solution had become obvious.'

Alfred's own work in this period was to open up a completely new field, the phenomenon of 'heat-shock', in collaboration with an old Caltech friend Herschel Mitchell, work which today has implications for the fundamental biology of medicine. As with his mountaineering, his list of publications is relatively short. But 'the list of those he nourished,' to quote Pierre Spierer, 'is very long'. Alfred and Virginia had settled in the village of Vandœuvres, close to Annemasse. No visit to Chamonix or the Valais from the 1960s onwards was complete without visiting them in Geneva or at the family chalet at Chemin, an eagle's nest above Martigny. Both had strong personalities, as do their two children, Helène and John, so the conversation was usually vigorous, wide ranging and often argumentative; for Alfred had a penetrating mind and was a sharp challenger of conventional wisdom, but also entertaining, because he had a delightful but rather wicked sense of humour and a capacity, often camouflaged, for gentle teasing. Pompousness, prejudice and loose thinking would be swiftly exposed. Alfred has been described by a colleague as having the mien of an eagle, but he had blue eyes and they always had a twinkle.

Roger Chorley

Squadron Leader Lester W Davies MBE 1919-2003

For Lester Davies the challenge and adventure of mountaineering were an allegory for the challenge and tribulations of life. As warden of the Outward Bound School on Ullswater in Cumbria this conviction helped him introduce more than 28,000 young people to the rugged outdoors and towards a belief that 'to serve, to strive and not to yield' – which remains the school's motto – was an admirable goal. Davies ran the school for more than 20 years from 1957, believing that adventure among the mountains was a powerful tool in a wider education. At the same time, he helped forge the volunteer mountain rescue service that now extends to 16 teams throughout the Lake District.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1958, after some minor dissent, not that he was regarded as being other than a thoroughly excellent individual. The trouble was that despite his appointment as head of a mountain school, he had not actually climbed many mountains. Born at Wye in Kent and educated at Dover College, Davies joined the Royal Air Force in 1937. His first posting as a pilot officer was to the North-West Frontier of India and

on the outbreak of war he moved to the Far East with 27 Squadron in Malaya, arriving in Singapore as the Japanese invaded. With a group of other officers, Davies evaded capture by escaping in a sampan to a coaster offshore that carried them to Batavia (now Jakarta). There followed a three-week trek across Java where they boarded an old tramp steamer which they stoked themselves all the way to Freemantle in Australia.

His disappearance in the turmoil of war in the Far East had been of great concern to trainee nurse Anne Pilbeam, his fiancée, who feared the worst until an enigmatic telegram arrived from Freemantle saying: 'Met Squib yesterday.' This was marvellous news. Squib was Davies's Ford car and the coded message said that he was safe and well and returning to India. Reunited with his service, Davies was posted to support operations on the Burma front. Crated aircraft would arrive at Karachi for reassembly at his airfield and it was his task to test-fly and prepare them for active service. In this way he flew 65 different types of aircraft, from fighters to multi-engined bombers. Davies completed 20 years' service in the Royal Air Force as a Squadron Leader, working in Whitehall in combined operations, but his interest in mountain exploration had long since been sparked on seven expeditions to the Himalaya. In 1940 he ventured into the Gyantse area of Tibet, ascended virgin summits in Kulu and Lahoul in 1941, and in 1942, with Anne and their two-month-old son, trekked from Kashmir to Ladakh. A notable adventure in 1955 was on the RAF Mountaineering Association exploration of the Spiti-Lahoul watershed. Davies acted as transport officer, photographer and interpreter. The expedition made seven first ascents but Davies remembered it for more mythic reasons.

Early one morning he was summoned from his sleeping-bag to photograph a line of large footprints that had been spotted in the snow. They measured 11 inches by 8 inches and specialists from the British Museum, asked to examine the hundreds of prints he produced, were unable positively to identify them. The possibility was left open that here indeed was the mark of the elusive big-footed 'abominable snowman' in which, at the time, many people were prepared to believe. Davies thought such a creature might one day be found. 'When it is, I hope that it will be well treated,' he wrote.

In 1957 Davies joined the Outward Bound School at Ullswater where he remained for the next 23 years as the movement expanded and developed. An admirer of Kurt Hahn, the co-founder of Outward Bound, and an absolute believer in the ethos and principles that were the bedrock of the movement, Davies worked with great dedication and enthusiasm. He was appointed MBE for services to Outward Bound and to the volunteer mountain rescue service the school provided and developed.

He was one of the first Winston Churchill Fellows, spending the time studying the development of adventure training in America and subsequently helping to establish an Outward Bound school in Canada. He visited five schools in the United States with his wife Anne, who was president of the British Girls' Exploring Society.

Davies ran the Ullswater school with an air of brisk efficiency and saw the courses there as the civilian equivalent of military service with an emphasis on self-discipline. Each day would begin with a ceremonial raising of the Union Jack and he would always insist on using his former Squadron Leader's rank as an honorific. The Ullswater timetable balanced risk and adventure with considerations of safety to benefit the youngsters and though Davies delegated technical mountaineering matters to his instructors he nevertheless earned the respect of those who worked for him. The school ran courses for eight and nine-year-old children, for teenagers about to start their working lives and also for business executives who could benefit from the Outward Bound brand of teamwork and initiative training.

Well known as an ingenious amateur inventor with a fervent interest in gadgets and model railways, Davies designed and developed aids to mountain rescue. Among them, and certainly the most eccentric, was the Ullswater 'Fellbounder', a wheeled stretcher driven by a small two-stroke engine that could ease and speed the transport of a casualty across rough terrain.

An early version of the device was used to carry a robustly built policeman with an injured ankle from a mountainside above the school. The man was strapped to the Fellbounder but fumes from the engine became so overwhelming that the casualty complained he was being asphyxiated. He demanded to be unstrapped and opted to hobble down the mountain under his own steam. The Fellbounder went back to the drawing board for a redesign. A later model proved more successful and Anne Davies was its first test-victim on a steady chug up Helvellyn. Davies also introduced a jet-powered rescue boat on Ullswater, and the 'deep bath' treatment he adopted for mountaineering casualties suffering from hypothermia became widely recognised. He had a masterly ability to organise and co-ordinate the search and rescue operations that regularly occurred in the Lake District hills, often involving many scores of volunteers whose own safety had to be monitored and ensured.

After retiring from Ullswater, Davies accepted a five-year contract as warden-director of the Kinarut Outward Bound School in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. Newly opened at a cost of \$3 million, the school was on a site he helped to choose as being ideal for water-related courses and jungle exercises. The Ullswater formula of adventure with a whiff of well-controlled risk was successfully repeated. Lester and Anne Davies remained at Kinarut until 1990 when they retired to the Lake District. For Davies the choice of a home in Eskdale Green was made when he saw that the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, 'La'al Ralty', with its pint-sized steam engines, ran past the bottom of the garden.

Ronnie Faux

Michael Hunter Johnston 1951-2002

When on 7 July 2002 Hunter Johnston fell to his death on the north-east face of Les Courtes, the Alpine Club lost one of its most loyal and active members of recent years. Hunter joined the Club in 1990 and had done his time on the Committee for three years from 1994. After that he took on other responsibilities, notably as Chairman of the House Committee. In that capacity, he busied himself with a range of activities and was often to be found around the clubhouse in Charlotte Road. He was an architect by profession and designed and supervised the construction of the new bar in the lecture room. He was also responsible for installing the new audio-visual system; he devoted a lot of time to the Club.

For a number of years Hunter organised the AC winter dinner. I took over this role, and when I met the administrator at Barts she was visibly upset to hear of Hunter's death. He was a big man, not only tall but also big in character and personality. She described him as a 'gentle giant'. He was a leader of men and left good impressions on everyone he met.

Hunter was born in 1951 and was brought up in Armagh in Northern Ireland. He studied at the School of Architecture at Oxford Brookes University. In the summer of 2003, they awarded a prize, in his memory, to the student who had contributed most to the life of the school.

In the early 1980s Hunter lived across the road from me in Clapham, and following my first Alpine season in 1983, he and I discovered a common interest in the mountains. I introduced him to Hugh Nettleton and Hunter joined our trip to the Pennine Alps in 1984. He had been climbing in the Alps since the 1970s but had lost his regular climbing partner when the latter took up a teaching post in Nepal.

Having joined our climbing group in 1984 Hunter soon established a position of respect. He became, as one Frenchman put it, our *chef de corde*, which included Tony Robinson, Ian Thompson, Danny Clark-Lowes, Jane Gamble, Peter Payne, myself and, of course, Robin Cooper with whom he was climbing when he died and whose obituary appeared in the 2003 volume. Hunter's climbing, like my own, was confined to the European Alps, and we were both working our way through the 4000ers. He had done over 50 out of a likely total of 55, and of course had climbed many other peaks as well. Since 1984 he had, I believe, missed only two Alpine seasons, the first in 1989 when he was bidding for a big architectural job. His firm lost and Hunter said 'Never again' – trips to the mountains were too important to be sacrificed for business. His only other missed season was in 2001 when he attended the Rugby World Cup in Australia with his wife Amanda.

Hunter's death was all the more cruel because in May 2002 he had announced his resignation from Tripe and Wakeham, the architectural practice in which he had been a partner for many years. He was going to

set up his own practice, and when I last spent an evening with him in early June 2002 he spent much of it telling me excitedly about his plans for the future. He had acquired offices, had prospective clients and the scene was set for a whole new chapter in his professional life.

In the mountains Hunter was a commanding and safe companion. For months ahead he would study maps and guidebooks and, on arrival, would check weather reports and snow conditions. In February 2002 he sent me a fax outlining two proposed weeks of classic routes in the Mont Blanc Massif, starting with the north-east face of Les Courtes. He and Robin died on their first day out. I had been unable to join the trip that year.

Hunter's style was epitomised for me by Chris Bonington in his 1998 Valedictory when he referred to Hunter as 'urbane'. I have to confess that I reached for my dictionary to check the word, and it said 'suave, courteous and refined in manner'. How perfect – that was Hunter; a big, big loss to the Club, to his friends and climbing companions and, above all, to Amanda and his family.

William Newsom