A terrible blizzard has been raging for the last 24 hours over the whole of Switzerland. An icy north wind has been whirling tremendous falls of snow before it. The mountains are already covered with two feet of snow, and all the passes are blocked.

Several Alpine villages are isolated, and it is feared that many lives have been lost. The telegraphic and telephonic services have been interrupted.

The bitter wind and exceptionally low temperatures experienced in many parts of the Alps in January 1905 persisted for several weeks and only the most determined parties were able to take advantage of occasional breaks in the weather. On 6 February Julius Kugy with Anton Oitzinger and Giuseppe Pesamosca completed the first winter ascent of the Jôf del Montasio, or Montasch, the second highest summit in the Julian Alps. Kugy later recalled the moment when he completed the ascent from the southern side of the peak.

As if freed from this earth, I stood over the vast abrupt, in the luminous heaven, on this small white island of my hard-won summit, and enjoyed an hour of such pure happiness as will never return, listening to the music of the heavenly hosts, and dreaming the loveliest mountain dream of all my life.

On 10 February in the Bernina Alps E L Strutt, accompanied by Martin Schocher and Anton Rauch, arrived at the Boval hut which... proved to be in a better state than usual; the door, on arrival, was actually found closed, not more than a foot of snow lay on the floor, which had of course drifted in through the interstices of the roof, and day-light could only be discerned through half a dozen holes in the walls. As usual the party did not suffer from heat, or a surfeit of blankets during the night.

On the following day Strutt and the guides made the first winter ascent of Piz Argient, reaching the summit in a piercing north-east wind.

In the western Alps a notable contribution to the development of ski
mountaineering was made by Dr Michel Payot who organised an expedition to complete the Tour of Mont Blanc on ski. Payot, who had taken part in the first attempt to complete the high-level route – the Haute Route – from Chamonix to Zermatt, was accompanied on this occasion by H E Beaujard, Joseph Couttet, Emile Fontaine and the guides Jean and Joseph Ravanel. Leaving Chamonix on 21 January the party crossed the Col du Bonhomme and the Col de la Seigne to Courmayeur, continued over the Petit Col Ferret to Praz de Fort and Martigny and returned to Chamonix on 27 January by way of Champéry and the Col de Coux.

Later in the year another successful expedition on ski was undertaken by Fritz Otto with Josef Kuster and Martin Schocher. On 28 December, after reaching the Fuorcla Crast’ Agùzza, Otto and his guides completed the first ski ascent of Piz Bernina.

The severe winter was followed by unsettled weather which continued for much of the climbing season. Although conditions on the high peaks were, in the main, unfavourable many parties were in the field and as in previous years a number of new routes was recorded. In the Mont Blanc range several notable expeditions were undertaken in the Chamonix Aiguilles where on 9 July Albert Brun and Count Robert O’Gorman with Joseph Ravanel and Édouard Charlet made the first ascent of the Aiguille des Pèlerins. Another successful climb was completed by V J E Ryan who on 14 July with Franz and Josef Lochmatter opened the first route on the north face of the Aiguille des Grands Charmoz, following a line in the upper section of the face from a point on the north-west ridge. On 15 July H E Beaujard, accompanied by Joseph Simond, reached the north point and the slightly lower south point of the unclimbed Aiguille des Deux Aigles – named after the two eagles which flew near the party during the ascent. A few days later, on 20 July, Emile Fontaine with Jean Ravanel and Léon Tournier completed the first ascent of the Dent du Caïman, reaching the peak by way of the north-north-east ridge of the neighbouring Dent du Crocodile and making the first descent and ascent of that ridge during the expedition.

Later in the season, on 15 August, Fontaine and the same guides completed another fine expedition: the first complete traverse of Les Droites from the Col des Droites to the Col de l’Aiguille Verte. Elsewhere in the range two strong guideless parties were climbing on the Italian side of Mont Blanc: on 21 July Karl Blodig and E T Compton made the first complete descent of the east face of the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey; and five days later E H F Bradby, J H Wicks and Claude Wilson made the first recorded ascent of Mont Rouge de Peuterey, at the lower end of the Peuterey ridge.

In the Arolla district on 20 July A Stuart Jenkins with Jean Bournissen and Jean Gaudin made the first ascent of the steep north-north-east ridge of Mont Blanc de Cheilon. Further along the chain on 28 August V J E Ryan, accompanied on this occasion by Gabriel and Josef Lochmatter, joined forces with Geoffrey Winthrop Young and his guide Josef Knubel
to open a new route on the south-east face of the Weisshorn, completing
the climb less than two metres from the summit.

In the Bernese Alps on 31 July Heinrich Buttmann with R Müller and
P Rieppel made the first ascent of the north-east ridge of the Mittelhorn in
the Wetterhorn group. In the following month, on 18 August, the guideless
party of R P Hope and W T Kirkpatrick descended the Nesthorn by
moonlight after reaching the summit by way of the unclimbed north-north-
west ridge.

The mountain was in very bad condition, all but the very steepest rocks
being covered with 18 inches of new snow, which had to be scraped away
to find the holds, and this made the time abnormally long.

Despite the unfavourable weather several new routes were completed in
other districts. In the Graian Alps in July Helene Kuntze and a companion
with the guide Pierre Dayné scaled the west-north-west ridge of the Roccia
Viva. In the Austrian Alps on 23 August Viktor Pillwax, accompanied by
Johann Unterweger and Andreas Hutter made the first ascent of the
dangerous west face of the Grossglockner, his second notable route on the
peak. In the Dolomites two outstanding expeditions were completed: the
first ascent of the long north ridge of the Crozzon di Brenta by Adolf Schulze
and Fritz Schneider on 20 July; and, on 11 August, the ascent by Georg
Leuchs, solo, of the unclimbed south-west face of Cimone della Pala.

Elsewhere in the Alps further progress in connection with a major
engineering project was announced on 24 February.

The piercing of the Simplon Tunnel was completed at twenty minutes
past seven this morning. ...

The final connection was made by the explosion of charges placed in
holes driven into the roof of the south gallery, which left a gaping hole on
a level with the floor of the north gallery. The water in the latter, the
pressure of which had been diminished by pumping from the northern
side, flowed rapidly away down the southern side, without doing any
damage. An hour later, the water had subsided to its normal level. The
direction and length of the works show no apparent deviation from the
plans. The heat in the galleries is suffocating.

Later in the year ceremonies were held to mark the official opening of the
road on the Italian side of the Great St Bernard Pass.

The first automobile reached the Hospice from Aosta on July 1. There
was then snow on the last part of the ascent. It is reckoned that an
automobile will ordinarily take about 1½ hr. from Aosta to the Hospice
as against the 7 hrs. required by the diligence.
On 10 May T G Longstaff, accompanied by Alexis and Henri Brocherel of Courmayeur, arrived at Almora in northern India to commence his first expedition to the Himalaya. During the following months Longstaff and the guides, supported at intervals by small teams of local men, travelled widely and climbed to a considerable height on several occasions. Starting in the Garhwal region the party established a camp in the Goriganga valley to investigate the eastern approaches to Nanda Devi (7816m). On 8 June, after ascending the Lawan glacier and finding the tracks of a snow leopard, Longstaff and his companions reached the saddle – later known as Longstaff’s Col – at 5910m on the rim of the Nanda Devi basin where they built a platform for a small tent. After passing a very cold night they climbed for some distance up the south ridge of Nanda Devi East (7434m) before descending to the Lawan valley. Longstaff then attempted to reach the summit of the neighbouring Nanda Kot (6861m) and on 11 June had reached a height of some 6450m on the north-east ridge before dangerous snow conditions forced the party to retreat.
After reaching Askot at the end of June Longstaff accompanied C A Sherring, the Deputy Commissioner of the Almora district, on a journey into Tibet during which he investigated the northern approaches to Api (7132m) and Nampa (6755m) in the north-west corner of Nepal. In Tibet Longstaff and the guides made a determined attempt to ascend Gurla Mandhata (7728m) from the west, reaching a height of some 7270m on 25 July after surviving a serious fall in an avalanche below the west ridge.

Before the guides left in October the party spent several days examining the southern and western approaches to Trisul (7120m). After this remarkable journey Longstaff, who had also investigated the Pachhu, Shalang and Poting glaciers, made a number of corrections to the existent map and provided a detailed description of his route. Inspired at an early age by an account of climbing in the Himalaya he now made his own important contribution to the exploration of the region.

In a paper read before the Alpine Club in the following year Longstaff explained that he had hoped to visit Sikkim after the monsoon, one of his aims in that region being to reconnoitre the Yalung glacier with a view to identifying a possible route on the south-west face of Kangchenjunga (8586m). 'This part of my programme I gave up as soon as I heard that another mountaineering expedition was on its way there to try this very route.'

The expedition in question was undertaken by an international party which left Darjeeling on 8 August. Dr Jules Jacot-Guillarmod, Charles Reymond and Alexis Pache, an army officer, all from Switzerland placed themselves under the leadership of Aleister Crowley and the party was completed by A C Rigo de Righi, the Italian manager of an hotel in Darjeeling. On 1 September, after the party had spent several days forcing a route up the Yalung glacier, Pache and Reymond reached a height of some 6500m before returning to the seventh and highest camp which had been established at 6200m. At this point Pache, who had endured three unpleasant nights after his bedding had been mislaid, indicated that he was content to have climbed to such a height and that he wished to descend to a lower camp. Late in the day Guillarmod, de Righi, Pache and three porters formed a single rope and began the descent. As they were traversing a steep slope one of the porters slipped, starting an avalanche in which Pache and the three porters lost their lives. Following this disaster and the loss of another porter who had fallen to his death the expedition was abandoned and the survivors returned to Darjeeling.

Although the expedition ended in tragedy it had not been entirely unsuccessful. By climbing for some distance up the slopes above the Yalung glacier and returning with a number of photographs the party made a useful contribution to the exploration of the approaches to the south-west face of Kangchenjunga.

In October D W Freshfield, accompanied by A L Mumm and the guide Moritz Inderbinen, travelled to Uganda with the aim of exploring the peaks
in the Ruwenzori range. After engaging local porters and a young Englishman named Moggridge to act as interpreter Freshfield and his companions arrived at Fort Portal on 21 October and approached the peaks in very bad weather by way of the Mubuku valley. On 2 November Mumm and Inderbinen reached a height of some 4300m on the Moore glacier at the head of the valley but on the following day, to Freshfield’s disappointment, a further deterioration in the weather forced the party to retreat.

In South Africa members of the Mountain Club explored the Hex River Mountains where several new routes were established. On 31 December a notable climb was completed by G F Travers-Jackson and Hugo Lambrechts who made the first ascent of Buffel’s Dome (1448m), an imposing peak connected with the main range by a narrow ridge. After crossing this sensational knife-edge during the descent Travers-Jackson considered that ‘the bottoms of the gorges on both sides of this ridge are not far off 2,000 feet below.’

In South America the German geologist Fritz Reichert explored a large area of the Puna de Atacama, the elevated plateau containing some of the highest peaks in the Andes. In May Reichert climbed alone for some 1700m from a high bivouac to complete the first recorded ascent of Cerro Socompa (6051m), a volcanic peak on the border between Chile and Argentina.

In Britain experienced parties were active in all the principal regions. In Wales during May G D and A P Abraham opened two notable routes: *Monolith Crack* ‘involving an excursion into the depths of the mountain’ on the Gribin Facet; and, with Andrew Thomson, *Hawk’s Nest Buttress* on the
main cliff of Glyder Fach. The Abraham brothers also investigated Clogwyn Du’r Arddu where in September they established *East Wall Climb* on the West Buttress. Another visitor to this famous cliff was P S Thompson who in July led a party up *Deep Chimney* on the Far West Buttress. In September J M Archer Thomson and Oscar Eckenstein returned to Lliwedd, completing *Horned Crag Route* on the East Buttress. In the Lake District on 17 August G F and A J Woodhouse continued their exploration of Dow Crag, making the first ascent of *Woodhouse’s Route* on ‘B’ Buttress. On the Isle of Skye on 21 April Harold Raeburn and Erik Ullen accompanied by W C Slingsby and G A Solly established the line now known as *Raeburn’s Route* up the slabs of An Caisteal.

A welcome event during the year was the formation of the Akademischer Alpenclub Bern on 27 October following a meeting on 18 October at the Café Merz in Bern. The first President of the Club was Albert Hitz and the names of the original members were recorded in the first issue of the Club’s annual publication – the *Jahresbericht*. Many famous mountaineers have belonged to the ranks of the AACB.

Another event of note was the publication of the first volume of *Kaukasus*, the account by the Hungarian explorer Maurice de Déchy of his seven expeditions to the range. This comprehensive work in three volumes, illustrated with photographs by the author, was reviewed in the *Alpine Journal* where it was noted that as de Déchy had ‘visited every important mountain group from the Tsagerker Pass in the W. to Basardjusi in the E., his book might not inaptly be entitled *The Caucasus from End to End.*’ Other books published during the year included *The Central Tian-Shan Mountains, 1902-1903*, a record by Gottfried Merzbacher of the exploration and scientific observation completed during his expedition to that range.

On 20 October the death occurred of C E Mathews, an original member and a former President of the Alpine Club and the first President of the Climbers’ Club. In a notice which appeared in the *Alpine Journal* it was recalled that Mathews had made twelve ascents of Mont Blanc ‘which exercised over him a singular fascination’ before the publication of his book *The Annals of Mont Blanc.*

In conclusion it is interesting to note the following extracts from the announcement made by Freshfield during his address to the British Association at Durban in September 1905.

Lord Curzon, acting on his own initiative, had expressed his desire that some further endeavours should be made to explore, and, if possible, to climb, either Kangchenjunga or Mount Everest, and with this end in view had proposed to Mr. Freshfield to act as an intermediary in organising such an attempt and obtaining the sympathy and material support of the Alpine Club, the Geographical Society, and any other scientific bodies likely to be interested. On his own part he promised to recommend to the Indian Government to contribute substantially to the
cost of the expedition, and to do his best to get permission from the Nepalese authorities for its sojourn in their territory.

The matter was accordingly brought before the Council of the Royal Geographical Society and our Committee. The Council instructed their President to make further inquiry of the Viceroy as to the exact scope of the proposed expedition before deciding on any action. The Alpine Club Committee promptly requested our President to express their most cordial appreciation of the Viceroy’s suggestion, and their willingness to co-operate as far as was in their power. ...

Meantime the resignation of Lord Curzon has delayed any further steps in the matter. To his personal initiative the proposal was doubtless due. It is not every Viceroy of India who is an enthusiastic geographer, and we know as yet nothing of what his successor’s views may be. We have good grounds, however, for hope. Lord Minto\(^3\) has long been a member of the Alpine Club. There is, moreover, a growing interest among the Survey officers in India in mountaineering work, and we trust that after due deliberation a joint and competent party of surveyors and mountaineers may be organised to explore the environs of the highest mountain of the world, and to climb as far as possible towards its summit.

**References**

2. Colonel Strutt, the second-in-command of the 1922 Mount Everest Expedition, was President of the Alpine Club from 1935 to 1937 and Editor of the *Alpine Journal* from 1927 to 1937.
4. The famous guide Ravanel, *le Rouge*.
5. A ski ascent is defined by Sir Arnold Lunn as ‘an expedition on which ski were used until the foot of the final rock or ice ridges.’
6. Pillwax, accompanied by the guides Sebastian Hutter and Peter Unterberger, had made the first ascent of the south face on 29 June 1891.
7. By W W Graham who had spent several months in the Himalaya in 1883.
8. The bodies of the victims were recovered three days later. Pache’s grave, on the site of the party’s fifth camp at a height of some 5500m, was marked by a large cairn, a wooden cross and a granite plaque engraved with his name and the date of the accident.
9. Named after the naturalist J E S Moore who reached a height of some 4540m on the main, summit ridge of Mount Baker (4843m) in March 1900.
10. *The Alps from End to End* by Sir Martin Conway had been published in 1895.
12. Viceroy of India 1899-1905. Foreign Secretary 1919-1924.