

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES WATSON PATCHELL

1861—1943

C. W. PATCHELL died at Woodhall Spa on August 18, at the age of 82. He will be unknown to many of our members, for though he had belonged to the Club for nearly forty years he had never, I believe, entered the premises. After leaving Oxford, where he was a scholar of Lincoln, he took up a mastership at Manchester Grammar School for a year or two before going to Glenalmond, where he stayed up to his retirement. I cannot speak from personal knowledge of his work as a teacher, but I do know this, that he earned the respect and love of his old boys and that through them his latter years were rendered easy and pleasant.

Except for three years when he came to the Alps in 1897, 1898, and 1902, he spent nearly every summer holiday of his long life in Norway, where he made many new ascents or fresh routes, often accompanied by his old friend Vigdal, the schoolmaster of Solva. In 1896 and 1903, when I was with him there, he made, in addition to three new ascents, a new traverse of Skagastölstind, new routes up Mjöltnir and Trolldtind and a new crossing of the Jostedalsbrae. I think it would be scarcely an exaggeration to say that he possessed a more intimate knowledge of the central group of Norwegian mountains from Bergen to the Romsdal than any member of the Club since Slingsby's death, and he was always ready to help with advice and encouragement all and sundry who came to ask it. He could speak the language fluently, and had countless acquaintances and friends among the Norwegians with whom he was emphatically *persona grata*. Of late years he lived half his time in that country, and was there when the present war broke out, finding considerable difficulty in getting back to England again.

An admirable companion, he was always at his best in Norway, where no discomfort ever ruffled his temper or spoilt his pleasure. We who knew him shall miss his kindly presence and genial wit.

H. C. BOWEN.

JAMES KENYON PARKER

1868—1942

IN July last year the death occurred, at his home in Sheffield, of J. KENYON PARKER in his seventy-fifth year. He was elected a member of the Alpine Club in 1904.

His Alpine climbs up to that time had included the Aiguille du Tacul, Aiguille du Moine, Dent Blanche, Aiguilles Rouges, and the Matterhorn. He climbed with Clemenz Perren as guide or with Josef and Alois Pollinger. The late H. A. Millington was his companion one season in the Alps, and another of his climbing friends was the late Lt.-Col. Clayton, in whose obituary notice for the *ALPINE JOURNAL* he described some of their climbs together. Other ascents up to 1908 included the Jungfrau, Lyskamm, traverse of the Obergabelhorn, Finsteraarhorn, Matterhorn by the Zmutt arête and many others.

His climbing experience began in Derbyshire and the Lake District, where he had much practice in rock climbing. Throughout his life he enjoyed expeditions in the Lake District and was often a member of a climbing party at Wasdale Head.

By profession he was a solicitor, and for 31 years was Coroner of Sheffield and District, a position which he held until within a few months of his death.

To a great sense of humour he added immense sympathy with all in sorrow, and a hatred of cruelty. He was a devoted member of the Church of England and he will be remembered by many as a true and loyal friend.

J. H. DONCASTER.

BERNARD WILLIAM WATSON

1870—1943

BERNARD WILLIAM WATSON of Maple Bank, Broomhall Park, Sheffield, was born in that city in 1870, and died there on March 10, 1943. He was educated at Clifton and Clare College, Cambridge. After this, he became a Chartered Accountant and joined the family firm of John Watson, Sons, and Wheatcroft, in which he followed his grandfather, his father and his uncle, the late Mr. Arnold Watson. He held the post of Sheffield Assay Master from just before 1900 to 1940. Among his interests was the old Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, of which he was at one time President.

He became a member of the Alpine Club in 1910, being proposed by the writer and seconded by J. H. Doncaster. He had a long and energetic career in the Alps from 1899 onwards and his qualification was a very good one. His 1905, 1906 and 1907 seasons were really remarkable for the number of ascents.

Though he was an old and valued friend of the writer, the latter cannot recall having ever climbed with him, though he well remembers the following incident one night in the Bétemps hut, which, though comparatively trivial, seems to illustrate well the quiet firmness of his character. A couple of young Germans had appropriated about three-quarters of the available sleeping space in the crowded hut. 'Chalky' Watson said nothing, but during the night he gradually edged the

Germans over towards the wall, calling it 'peaceful penetration.' Towards morning, one of the Germans finding himself a bit cramped, began to complain. It was thereupon pointed out to him that he and his friend had started by taking far more than their share of *Lebensraum* and that they would do well to 'shut up.' Curiously enough, they gave no more trouble.

Although, as stated above, Bernard Watson and the writer were very old and dear friends, fate had not brought them together for many years, but Watson never failed to send a card at Christmas time, so out of sight was not out of mind.

His death is another instance of the sad truth that one of the great penalties of advancing years is the loss of old friends, one by one, and it is certain that Watson will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and the world the poorer for the passing of a kindly, steadfast and most charming man.

J. E. C. EATON.

JOSEPH CYRIL WALKER

1866—1942

BY the death of JOSEPH CYRIL WALKER, vicar of Averham and Kelham, the diocese of Southwell loses its last hunting parson. For keeping fit, his prescription was hunting for the winter and climbing for the summer. Among his other interests were theatricals and photography. One of a family of eight, from earliest days he would write plays for the nursery party, including songs which were limited to the six tunes of a musical box. Later, he wrote and produced an annual pantomime, which the family performed in the village school. At Eton and Magdalen he met H. B. Irving, Arthur Bouchier and other actors and, with the knowledge thus gained, when he became rector he built a theatre in his garden and formed a company called The Country Bumpkins, which produced a play annually, the rector himself painting most elaborate scenery. As a photographer, he did all his own work of developing and possessed a wonderful collection of slides from his travels in the Alps, California and Hawaii. These would be exhibited at the annual Hunt Dinner which he gave to members of the Rufford Hunt. He hunted regularly with the Rufford from 1898 and was on the Hunt Committee from 1909 until his death.

Though he was related to the family of Horace Walker, it was chance and not this relationship which brought him to love the Alps. In September 1899, while walking from Visp to Zermatt, he fell in with Matthias zum Taugwald, who fired him with the desire to climb the Matterhorn. Hitherto he had done no climbing, but Matthias told him that an Englishman could go up anything. Next morning, having bought an ice-axe and getting his boots nailed, he set out with Matthias, one of the Perrens, and a younger brother. The ascent was successfully accomplished.

After this, few years passed without a visit to the Alps for long walks and some climbing. In 1891 he had the misfortune to lose most of his toes through frostbite on the Schreckhorn. The ascent was the first of the season, and consequently, while the leading guide was busy clearing the snow, the rest of the party were comparatively idle, the final section taking as much as 2½ hours. Not realising that the pain suffered during the descent was due to frostbite, he neglected the right remedies and a fortnight later the operation was performed by the local doctor at the Bear hotel, with the help of Theophil Boss. Fortunately he was not deprived of the joy of climbing, but continued to visit the Alps and Dolomites for the rest of his life.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1918.

J. M. S. WALKER.

EMILE ROBERT BLANCHET

1877—1943

IN February 1943, a telegram in *The Times* reported the death of this famous mountaineer and pianist as having occurred at Lausanne. Beyond this brief announcement, I have received no information of any kind.

BLANCHET was a very remarkable man. As a pianist and composer of international fame, I am not competent to judge of his powers. His friendship and charm of manner are very fresh in my memory, however, and I received a characteristic and excessively 'crowded' post card from him as recently as September 1942. As a mountaineer his accomplishments and gifts were most noteworthy. He was equally skilful on rock or snow, although it was on the former that he specialised chiefly. Some of his descents *en rappel* have become classics in their way, but it is to be hoped that not many persons will seek to be rivals. The power in his fingers must have been prodigious, arising probably from long years of pianoforte practice. In other respects his physique was not imposing, but his slight and wiry frame could travel uphill or downhill with extraordinary grace and speed. He was apparently impervious to weather. In Switzerland, many of his Alpine feats did not meet with the general approval of his compatriots. But the fact remains that with his great companion and friend, Kaspar Mooser of Täsch, Blanchet was able to accomplish safely expeditions impossible to lesser mortals. Every conceivable precaution and all manner of care were displayed at all times. Nevertheless, my friend would be the first to acknowledge that fortune was often in evidence.

Blanchet was elected to the Alpine Club in 1922, proposed by Arnold Munn and seconded by Charles Bruce. His qualification list was imposing, extending from the Graians to the Lepontines, but the Mont Blanc group and all the Pennine ranges were his especial favourites. I do not think that he ever climbed much in Dauphiné or the Bernese Oberland, save for the western end of the latter. His

first ascent seems to have been the Cime de l'Est of the Dents du Midi in 1901, whilst his last, 1942, was the Weissmies accomplished alone on his sixty-fifth birthday. Many of his ascents of well known peaks were accomplished again and again—for instance, he had climbed the Dent de Morcles on at least fourteen occasions, including the solving of its last great problem, not more than a year or so before the war. From 1926 onwards and up to the date of his unlucky disablement, that superbly capable and enterprising guide Mooser was his constant companion. Another was Armand Charlet, while Oskar and various members of the famous Supersaxo family were often with him. Monsieur Chaubert made many ascents with Blanchet in the Mont Blanc Aiguilles.

From 1901 to 1921, his ascents, some of them new, included Matterhorn, Dent Jaune, Grépon, Aiguille sans Nom, Grand Combin, all the peaks of Dents du Midi in one day, Géant, Grands Charmoz, Tour Sallières from Glacier Noir (first ascent), Requin, Gran Paradiso, Grand Clocher de Planeureuse from the north, Tsa, l'Indes (Aiguilles Rouges) *eight* times, Allalinhorn-Alphubel-Täschhorn-Dom in 21 hours, entire Nadelgrat in the day, etc., etc.

1922. Lötschentaler Breithorn-Gredetschhörnli, traverse, *A. J.* 35. 113.

1923. Rimpfischhorn, N.W. face. *A. J.* 36. 155.

1925. L'Isolée (Aiguilles du Diable), first ascent. *A. J.* 37. 361.

Brunegghorn, N.E. face. *ibid.* 370.

Aletschhorn, N. face. *ibid.* 373.

1926. La Médiane (Aiguilles du Diable), first ascent. *A. J.* 38. 309.

Pointe de Zinal, N. face. *ibid.* 312.

Brunegghorn, W. face. *ibid.*

Breithorn, W. face. A most formidable climb. *ibid.*

In this summer Blanchet completed the ascent of all the Swiss summits of 4,000 m.

1927. Lyskamm, W. peak, N.E. face. *A. J.* 39. 314.

Zumsteinspitze, W. face, a low but severe climb. *ibid.* 315.

1928. Zinal Rothorn, S.E. arête and E. face. *A. J.* 40. 379.

Fletschhorn, N. face. *ibid.* 379.

Pointe Beaumont (Sixt district), descent of E. face, a most sensational adventure. *ibid.* 391. *A. J.* 41. 63 *sqq.*

Nadelhorn, N. face. *ibid.* 395.

Weissmies, N. arête from E. in descent. *ibid.*

1929. Aletschhorn, by S.E. face. *A. J.* 41. 403.

Matterhorn, descent by Furggengrat and Hörnli. *ibid.* 415.

Strahlbett (Kienhorn), by S. face. *ibid.*

New climbs in Sixt district. *ibid.* 412.

1930. Alphubel, W. face from N. *A. J.* 42. 326.

Many reconnoitring climbs on Matterhorn by N. face in vicinity of Zmuttgrat to avoid stonefall further E. Blanchet returned later to find face had been climbed by the Schmid brothers, by the route he himself and Mooser had found unjustifiable from stonefall. *A. J.* 42. 345; 43. 360.

1931. Dents du Midi—curious routes. *A. J.* 43. 371.
 1932. Zinal Rothorn. E. face and S.E. arête. 17 hours spent on E. face without a halt, but surprised *en flagrant délit* by a total eclipse of the moon! *A. J.* 44. 313.
 1933. Grand Combin, W. face. *A. J.* 45. 381.
 Dürrenhorn, E. face. *ibid.* 382.
 Egginer, W. face—a very severe ascent. *ibid.* 383.
 1934. Dents du Midi, E. peak, descent of E. arête. *A. J.* 46. 387.
 Täschhorn, W. face, variation. *ibid.*
 1936. Strahlhorn, E. face. *A. J.* 48. 350.
 1938. Alphubel, N.E. face.

Practically all these routes are new, or at any rate, variants.

Blanchet was a valuable contributor to the JOURNAL with many notes and at least three highly interesting papers: 'Spare Rope in Theory and Practice,' *A. J.* 41. 63 *sqq.*; 'Aletschhorn and Furggen-grat,' *A. J.* 42, 16 *sqq.*; 'Zinal Rothorn,' *A. J.* 45. 313 *sqq.*, with the extraordinary story of the eclipse.

He is the author of two well known books, *Hors des Chemins Battus*, *A. J.* 44. 315 *sqq.* and *Au Bout d'un Fil*, *A. J.* 49. 295 *sqq.* His style is literary and interesting but as difficult to translate into English as Kipling into French.

Blanchet's friendship with Henry Montagnier, Claude Wilson and Charles Bruce is well known. Dr. Hug and I too shared in the same. I often lunched with him and his charming (French) wife in their apartment in the Avenue Montaigne, Paris, where they lived for part of the year, alternating with Lausanne. Blanchet was a delightful conversationalist with a highly developed sense of humour. He once told me that the most remarkable incident he had ever seen in the Alps occurred during the Swiss Republic celebrations of August 1, at Saas Fee. Towards 1 A.M. proceedings had become very hilarious and Charlie Bruce who was taking a prominent part practised one of his former Gurkha subaltern tricks. Lying on his back in the ballroom, he invited all and sundry to dance on his stomach. Oskar Supersaxo, with his thirteen stone of brawn, accepted the invitation at once and operations commenced. Suddenly Bruce tautened his gigantic solar plexus muscles with the result that burly Supersaxo was projected into space, described a parabola and landed sitting in a chair many yards distant. Charlie's muscles had stood the strain, not so the chair's. There were no more competitors and Blanchet has recently described the scene in *Die Alpen*.

I accomplished but two climbs in the Alps (1932) with Blanchet, but both were sufficient to inspire me with a great admiration for his powers. One was the traverse of the Grand Pic of the Dents du Midi up to and including the Dent Jaune. Montagnier with that agreeable and highly capable old Salvan guide, François Délez, were of the party, but we never saw the others after the first peak. The second climb with the same party was the ascent of Tour Sallières by the N. face from what, I believe, is called the Glacier Noir. It was an alto-

gether horrid climb, very steep slabs held only together by a veneer of ice. Montagnier was soon making extra heavy weather of it, so much so that we in front discarded the rope because of its danger where everything was so steep and loose. Blanchet led brilliantly, he had made the first ascent many years before (see *ante*), but neither of us felt safe during any portion of the route. He wished, I remember, to descend by another variation and several long *rappels*, but the other three struck violently and Blanchet was too kind-hearted to refuse the ordinary route down.

As may be imagined, Blanchet was a devoted friend to this country in this as in the former European war. I shall miss him much and would convey the Club's sincere sympathy to his widow.

E. L. STRUTT.

VICTOR THOMAS ELLWOOD

1889—1943

THE Alpine Club, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, and both the climbing and medical worlds have suffered a great loss in the sudden death of VICTOR ELLWOOD, at the early age of 54. Ellwood began to climb in 1907, and from then until 1914 he toured various parts of the Alps, climbing a number of good peaks with guides. Turning in 1921 to guideless climbing, he had successful seasons in the Dauphiné, the Carpathians, the Valais, and around Chamonix, returning each year with a bag of first class peaks. From then onwards, his work prevented long holidays abroad, but he found time to snatch frequent weekends in Wales and the Lake District. More recently he became interested in yachting, taking his motor boat, which he navigated himself with amazing skill, as far as Holland and Belgium.

Ellwood's mountaineering was typical of his work and general attitude to life. It was always carefully thought out and extremely efficient, if at times unorthodox. It sparkled with his personal intensity and brilliance. No one could have wished for a better holiday and climbing companion—jolly, considerate, safe and reliable, brilliant as a leader, and a tower of strength in a tight corner. He was equally happy on a long exacting ridge, negotiating a difficult glacier, taking a beginner up an easy rock climb or wandering over the fells. As a mountain photographer he was in the first rank.

A brilliant mathematician, the problems of navigation had always fascinated him. In a few months he taught himself to pilot his motor boat, which was a model of workmanlike efficiency, with the practised and certain skill of an old hand, and quite recently he had spent all of his available spare time in working out a simplified system of astro-navigation tables for aerial training.

I had cherished the hope that after the war I might entice him again

to the Alps—preferably to his old love, the Dauphiné—if only to revisit those grand peaks and deep valleys to which I was first introduced by the finest climbing companion a man could have.

E. FRESHMAN.

LT.-COLONEL PERCY REGINALD PENROSE MIERS

1897—1943

REX MIERS, who died suddenly from heart failure on March 16, 1943, while commanding a regiment of Anti-Tank Artillery, was born on September 13, 1897. He was educated at Wellington and the Royal Military Academy, obtaining a commission in the Royal Field Artillery in April, 1915, at the early age of 17½. He served in France in the last war. Except for a period as an Instructor in Artillery at the R.M.A. from 1925 to 1928, he was always on regimental duty. He went to France in this war as a Major in Anti-Tank Artillery and took part in the retreat to Dunkirk, where he had to swim for it.

His mountaineering career was short, not from lack of keenness but on account of the exigences of Army service, for after his first three seasons in the Alps he went to Singapore and did not see a snow peak for years. He got another season when on leave and some ski-ing when he came back to home service, but a very bad hunting accident put him out of action for a long time, and probably lost him a couple of Alpine holidays. He had a long and tedious time on his back, during which he showed remarkable patience and determination to live. His restoration to fitness was regarded as a modern miracle, for just at the moment when it had been decided that his only hope was a big operation which would have left him a partial cripple, he began a natural recovery, which was so complete that he was fairly soon in the highest medical category.

He first went to the Alps in 1926, frankly as an experiment, as he had never been on a mountain, except for a little ski-ing at St. Cergue in the previous winter. As our party, that year, was not a strong one we kept ourselves busy with what might be called varied instructional mountaineering, including passages of the Col d'Hérens and the Alphubeljoch in very thick mist.

For a complete beginner nothing could have been better, and I well remember the enthusiastic letter of thanks that Rex sent me afterwards, from which it was clear that the Alps had got a very devoted recruit. That season took him to Arolla, Zermatt and Saas. In the next two years he went back to these places and to Pralognan, Argentière, Mont Blanc and the Combin. He climbed mostly in a varied guideless party of mine, but in each of the two latter years ended up busily with Gueterbock and a Saas guide. His first season had left him a very handy man on a rope, and as he was a pretty good performer at many games and a natural athlete it was bad luck to be out of sight of a mountain for so many years. As stated above, he never had much chance

to do much more, as even when on home service a soldier often cannot get away for a holiday in the summer, especially in the Gunners with their practice camps, not to speak of manoeuvres.

Miers was a great lover of the hills, a quick and neat performer on rock, and he had picked up a considerable knowledge of icecraft. He wanted but little more experience to become a capable leader, and our fraternity has lost a good man by his early death. Those of us who climbed with him will miss a good companion, and our sympathy goes out to his widow and his two small children.

W. M. ROBERTS.

I CLIMBED with REX MIERS in 1927 and 1928, both with W. M. Roberts as leader and with Ignaz Zurbriggen of Saas Fee. Rex was a delightful climbing companion, as ready to rejoice in snatching the Schwarzmies out of the jaws of a storm as in traversing Mont Blanc in brilliant weather. He was most unassuming and rated his personal skill low. He would insist on carrying far more than his fair share of load in order to ease the burden of those whom he thought held more responsible positions on the rope. As a matter of fact, he was a competent climber with considerable skill on rock and a deep interest in mountaineering.

Though at times intolerant of incompetence due to folly, he gave unstinted praise to fine achievements by others and was patient with the first clumsy efforts of beginners who really tried. His gratitude to those who introduced him to the mountains and shared with him their rewards and rebuffs, his delight in the simple humours of hut life and his helpful nature endeared him to all who have been fortunate enough to have climbed with him.

E. A. L. GUETERBOCK.

CAMPBELL CRICHTON-MILLER

1915—1943

CAMPBELL CRICHTON-MILLER was educated at Winchester and went up to Balliol in 1933 holding the Frazer Science Scholarship and a Domus Exhibition. He read Natural Science and subsequently gained a First in Physics. But this was not the end of his interest or activities: most of his friends will remember lively discussions with C. C-M. on many and varied subjects, from social reform to step-cutting. His views were always worth hearing and his enthusiasm refreshing. His friendly smile and large figure, often perched on a disproportionately small bicycle, did not belie his nature, which was characterised by a straightforward honesty and loyalty alike to friends and ideals. After going down from Oxford he worked with a Patent Agent's firm, and shortly before war broke out he got married. After the outbreak of war he volunteered for service with the Royal Air Force,

and was commissioned as a specialist officer in one of the scientific branches, in which he rose to the rank of Squadron-Leader. His line of research was to investigate wind speed and visibility as they affect parachute landings. It was while serving in this capacity that, in order that he might himself apply the test of practice to his theories, he volunteered for a bombing raid, from which he was reported missing, presumed killed, in the spring of 1943.

Most of Crichton-Miller's climbing was done with his family and family friends; however, as an undergraduate he was an active member of the Oxford University Mountaineering Club, and was for a time on the committee. As a climber he was strong and safe, well grounded in Alpine tradition. His big frame seemed to belong to the epoch of frontal attack and hours of tireless step-cutting. Probably his best climb was a guideless ascent of the Zmutt ridge in 1938. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1936.

J. C. RYLE.

ALPINE NOTES

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :	Year of Election
Pasteur, W., C.B., C.M.G., M.D., F.R.C.P.	1879
Tupper-Carey, Rev. Canon A. D.	1896
Patchell, C. W.	1897
Parker, J. Kenyon	1904
Watson, B. W.	1910
Crichton-Miller, Squadron Leader C., R.A.F.V.R.	1936

ZERMATT AND SAAS FEE.—We have received the following letter from our member Mr. I. de Bruÿn, dated Zermatt, August 24, 1943, for which we are much indebted.

Switzerland has been craving for rain for weeks, and at last it has come three days ago; it lasted for twenty-four hours. A glacier lake in the Ferpècle Glacier burst, inundating and partly ruining Haudères. But now the weather is fine again and parties are up on the Matterhorn today although there are two feet of fresh snow.

Zermatt suffered exceptionally from the heat wave. The winter brought very little snow, so that the new ski lift, from the Visp behind the Hotel Perren to the ridge above Findelen, was only active for two weeks. Spring and summer brought very little rain, in curious contrast with Arolla, Zinal and Saas Fee, where rain fell frequently, so that at the end of July the mountain sides at Saas Fee were as green as could be desired. But poor Zermatt had no flowers or vegetables, and potatoes are practically ruined, while every walk ended in a mass of dust. Fortunately there was a silver lining. The tourists came in unprecedented numbers, especially after Mussolini's fall, when the idea of a quick peace spread everywhere, and the condition of the