

IN MEMORIAM

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY	Year of Election
Rickmers, W. R. (resigned 1916; re-elected 1929; resigned 1939; Honorary Member 1958)	1899
James, J. E.	1908
James, W. W.	1909
Sloman, H. N. P.	1922
Hadfield, C. F.	1926
Montgomrey, J. E.	1928
Aitchison, I. G.	1933
Pryce, H. L.	1936
Greg, R. L.	1954
Aitken, J. R.	1962

GEORGE DIXON ABRAHAM

1872-1965

G. D. ABRAHAM, who died last March, was born at Keswick on October 7, 1872. All visitors to Keswick will know the photographic shop, G. P. Abraham Ltd., and as a mountain photographer Abraham held a high place in his day.

He was elected an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club in 1954.

Dr. T. H. SOMERVELL writes of him:

George Abraham was one of the pioneers of rock climbing on British crags. Many hundreds of climbers, perhaps thousands, owe their own enjoyment of climbing directly or indirectly to George Abraham, not only for his own activities on British rocks (accompanied so often by his brother Ashley, and by Owen Glynne Jones), but also because of his facile pen in describing climbs in his books. Although some of our local rock climbs were first made by Collie, Collier, Haskett-Smith, and others—most of them members of the A.C.—the person above all others who really introduced rock-climbing in Britain to so many was George Abraham.

This was not merely because of his own participation in the sport, but chiefly due to his writings, of which *The Complete Mountaineer* (Methuen, 1907) and *British Mountain Climbs* were the most popular. The grading of rock climbs in orders of difficulty in the latter book, as

well as in Glynne Jones's *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District* (1897), was of inestimable benefit to those who, like myself, were starting their climbing career fifty or more years ago, and doubtless saved many young climbers from 'going above their paper' with disastrous results.

Abraham himself was a quick, nippy climber, a good friend, humble-minded as to his own attainments, unselfish on the mountains as in ordinary life, and possessed of a sense of humour which somehow made climbs done with him seem easier than they really were. He outlived most of his contemporaries on the mountains and was in fair health right to the end. One of the last times I met him was at the time of his being made an honorary member of the Alpine Club. How warmly he appreciated this honour (which was perhaps rather overdue; fifty years before, the Fell and Rock Club had made him an honorary member).

We mourn in his passing the man who did more than anyone else to popularise rock climbing, and mountaineering in its larger aspect, among his fellow-countrymen. We, his beneficiaries, salute him with gratitude.

IRVINE GEORGE AITCHISON

1889-1965

THE sudden death, in June at his cottage in Perthshire, of Irvine Aitchison will be felt as deeply in the world of ski-ing and mountaineering as in the optical profession to which he devoted his life's work. The son of James Aitchison, one of the pioneers of modern methods of sight-testing, from Dulwich he went, as a scholar, to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he took honours in the Natural Science Tripos, and also read Law. He was called to the Bar in the Middle Temple, but practised for a short time only as, at the age of twenty-two, he succeeded his father as Chairman and Managing Director of Dollond and Aitchison Ltd., posts which he held continuously for over fifty years, resigning to become President of the Company in 1964.

This early assumption of responsibility probably accounted for his relatively late introduction to the mountains, for he was over thirty before he started to ski. A few years later he started climbing, and during the late 1920's did several seasons with J. T. Lattey and Brian Harwood. It is evident that his ski-ing led him to a love of the mountains, for his first recorded summit was the Wildhorn in January, 1924, and for many years he climbed in winter and spring with Dr. Henry Hoek.

During the 1930's he climbed every year in the Alps with his son Peter,

whose election to the Club at the age of twenty-one gave him immense pleasure, and Hermann Steuri, and also often with Kenneth Smith, in Wales and the Lakes. A minor fall in Wales ultimately led to the arthritis which so crippled him in his latter years.

He was a great believer in technical competence, to the achievement of which he devoted great effort. As a result, although never an outstanding performer, he was a very safe climber on rock and ice, and a strong and steady skier, with a wide practical knowledge of snow-craft. His climbing record, both in summer and winter is comprehensive, but it is as a ski-mountaineer that he will be remembered, and then as much for his work and inspiration as for his actual achievements. Irvine had no use for half measures. If he was interested in a subject or a sport he gave to it all that he had. The acceptance of the responsibility of office was an integral part of his character and stemmed, in large measure, from a very genuine wish to help his fellows. In his profession his blend of scientific and legal training fitted him to take a leading part in the establishment of the National Health Optical Services. He was a founder, and on two occasions, Chairman of the Society of Opticians, an original member of the General Optical Council and, to the time of his death, a member of the Joint Council of Ophthalmic Opticians. He was Senior Liveryman of the Spectacle Makers' Company.

Irvine was elected to the Club in 1933 and remained proud of his membership. He served on the Committee from 1947-1949. When in London he rarely missed a meeting of the Club, and last spring was eagerly entering in his diary the date of the first autumn meeting.

He joined the Ski Club of Great Britain in 1923 and was its President from 1944-1946, when he carried the burden of rebuilding the Club after the stagnation of the war years. He became a member of the Alpine Ski Club in 1931 and, typically, in the following year accepted the President's request to take over, in a period of crisis, the duties of Honorary Treasurer and Secretary, which he did with some skill and tact until they could be safely handed over. He became President in 1946 and, in association with his friend Kenneth Smith, the Hon. Secretary, gave the leadership which was at that time sorely needed.

After Peter's death whilst motor-cycle racing in the Isle of Man shortly after the war, Irvine did virtually no climbing. He continued to ski, occasionally going high, until he was seventy. He was then induced to take up salmon fishing on the Tay. He soon learned the new technique, and spent many happy days on the river, from which he could see his beloved mountains.

Irvine was, at all times, a delightful companion, at ease with people of all ages. He could talk well, but much preferred to listen, and was adept at stimulating good conversation. His legal training had given him a clear and analytical mind and the ability to penetrate the heart of a prob-

lem. His quiet 'Why?', when one of his younger friends had been speaking with more enthusiasm than reflection, could be a most friendly but salutary corrective. Modest and considerate, enjoying the good things of life, nothing gave him greater pleasure than to share them with his friends.

To his widow we extend our sympathy in her loss, a loss which is shared by us all.

C. B. C. HANDLEY.

JAMES RAE AITKEN

1930-1965

JIMMY AITKEN died in North Wales on Saturday, May 29, 1965, after a fall whilst leading the first pitch of Route 3 on Crib Goch. The accident was inexplicable, of the kind which can happen to the most experienced of mountaineers when climbing well within their capacity.

Jimmy was born in Aberdeen on June 15, 1930, and later moved to Edinburgh with his family. He was educated at George Watson's College and at Edinburgh University, where he was an enthusiastic member of the Air Squadron. When called up for his National Service in 1953 he was granted a commission as a pilot in the Royal Air Force, and served with No. 145 Squadron in Germany.

On completing his National Service he returned to Edinburgh University where he took his degree in 1954. Choosing the Royal Air Force as his career he qualified at the Central Flying School and was posted to No. 5 Training School at Swinderby as an instructor. He subsequently returned to the Central Flying School as a staff instructor, and later joined No. 19 course at the Empire Test Pilots School at Farnborough. In 1961 he commanded the Radio Flight at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, from where he was selected to join No. 54 course at the Royal Air Force Staff College. After leaving the Staff College in December, 1964, he was appointed Personal Staff Officer to the Deputy Controller of Aircraft (R.A.F.) in the Ministry of Supply. He had attained the rank of Squadron-Leader at the time of his death.

Jimmy's many interests included mountaineering, skiing, sailing and golf; of these, mountaineering was his first love. His apprenticeship started when he was very young, when his father (himself a keen mountaineer) introduced him and his brother to the pleasures of the Scottish hills. From that time his mountaineering career continued unabated. After acquiring a thorough knowledge of the British hills he extended his activities to Norway, the Austrian, Central and Southern Alps,

where he covered much territory and made many classic ascents. In 1961 he accompanied Tony Smyth on the Royal Air Force expedition to the Karakoram, where his cheerful disposition, masterly handling of the treasury, and sterling work with the survey party, contributed greatly to the success of the expedition.

His breadth of interest and love of life required a sensitive imagination and deep understanding; he had both in full measure. His many attributes were bound together by a sunny and inspiring personality, coupled with a happy knack of making firm friends. His deep love of the mountains expressed itself in many ways, from an ability to argue the deeper whys and wherefores, to the practical discussion of safety and rescue techniques. Always ready to help where he could, his advice was given freely, but only when required, and he was always one of the first to volunteer for rescue work. He will be missed by many people in all parts of the world who were lucky enough to count themselves as being amongst his friends.

A member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the Swiss Alpine Club for many years, he joined the Royal Air Force Mountaineering Club in 1953 and was elected to the Alpine Club in 1962. His boundless energy enabled him to support them all, and all will suffer by his death. Men of his calibre are rare, we can only be grateful for his example and extend our sympathy to his parents and brother.

N. M. RIDLEY.

Group-Captain A. J. M. SMYTH writes:

Before 1960 I had not met Aitken at all, but I was then looking for someone in the R.A.F. with climbing experience and academic qualifications for the survey party in the Karakoram. Aitken seemed ideal and I invited him to come along.

Jimmy was a mixture of many things. A first-rate pilot, with a good brain, he had an orderly and meticulous temperament, and rapidly secured the task of expedition treasurer, a job he did with superb efficiency. He was the pleasantest of companions on an expedition except on the rare occasions when his temper blew up, and then he was frightful! He had any amount of initiative, and it is my great regret that we did not use this side of his character to the full.

Except for a climb on Ben Nevis, I have no experience of his actual ability on rock and snow, but from what I know of him I think that, had he lived, he would have done a lot of serious climbing in his next decade.

FREDERICK GILBERT BRETTELL

1884-1965

GILBERT BRETTELL was elected a member of the Club in 1933 on the nomination of Walter Barrow and W. P. Haskett-Smith; he certainly shared the latter's ebullient enthusiasm for mountains and zest for life's activities in general.

He did not take up serious alpine climbing, however, till he was forty-four years old, but in his first season a traverse—Mont Blanc du Tacul-Col Maudit—Mont Blanc—indicated that he was a good 'go-er' on alpine snow and ice, which at that time would have been almost new to him. He was already an experienced leader of British rock-climbs, and it was in this capacity that many in the Midlands knew him best, not only for his ability and his infectious enthusiasm, but for his kindness; all qualities which helped to provide a very happy initiation to rock climbing for the many younger men and beginners he so readily roped-up.

He joined the Midland Association of Mountaineers in 1924, and later served for many years on its Committee and led meets in Wales, Scotland and in the Alps. He was elected its President in 1933, and in 1951 joined its small band of Honorary Members.

He practised in Birmingham as a Chartered Patent Agent and, as would be expected of him, his vigour and enthusiasm led him to the summit of his profession. He was President of the Chartered Institute of Patent Agents, happily in the Institute's Jubilee Year (1932-3). He was a member of its Council for over forty years and was an authority on the law relating to Trade Marks, and was so acknowledged by his membership of the Board of Trade's appropriate Departmental Committee. In his professional work, as in his mountaineering, he will be especially remembered for the guidance and kindness which students and juniors received so readily at his hands.

I spent many weekends climbing with Brettell and we were together for several seasons in the Alps, the last in 1937, when he seemed, almost exasperatingly, still to have the vigour and energy of a man in his twenties; and so it was through, and after, the War until arthritis put an end to most of his outdoor activities.

He was a man of short stature, but of stocky build and very strong in arms and fingers. This gave him a tendency, anyhow on British rocks, to consider that handholds were what really mattered; perhaps to the detriment of style. All who climbed with him, however, knew that he was essentially a safe climber, always with a reserve of power in store. I remember perhaps a rather trivial incident, but one in which this reserve of strength was practically demonstrated after he had had the misfortune to break a finger. We arrived at the foot of the Great Gully of Craig-yr-

Ysfa, his finger immobilised in a sort of tubular bamboo splint. Many would regard this as a definite handicap on a difficult climb, but he led it without hesitation and with no apparent inconvenience—we who followed certainly had no misgivings about his safety.

CLAUDE E. A. ANDREWS.

CHARLES CHRISTOPHER CORNISH

1939–1965

CHRISTOPHER CORNISH was an officer in the 14/20th King's Hussars. His regiment was stationed at Benghazi, and early in 1965 he took three of his men to Kenya on an adventure training course, the object being to climb Mount Kenya. They first climbed Point Pigott, Midget Peak and Point John. They then set out at 3 a.m. on February 14 to climb Batian, using a route only once tried before. They left one man suffering from mountain sickness at the Two Tarn hut and, when the party had not returned by 10 a.m. the next day, he went back to arrange for a rescue party. They discovered that the three climbers had been hit by a severe fall of rock at the head of the lower Diamond glacier, as they were taking off their crampons to begin the rock climb. They were either knocked unconscious or killed instantly, and rolled some 200 ft. down the glacier. Mr. and Mrs. Cornish asked that the bodies should not be brought off the mountain if this involved any danger to the rescue party, so the three men were buried where they were found. A cairn has been erected, a funeral service was conducted in an aeroplane over the place and the regiment is arranging for a plaque to be fixed to the cairn. These three young men were very unfortunate to have met their deaths in this way, for it is most unusual for a fall of rock to occur so early in the morning when the temperature is still below freezing point.

I knew Christopher Cornish well all his life. He went to Charterhouse and then to Sandhurst, from which he passed out very high. He enjoyed his work in the Army and was already regarded as a promising young officer. He and his younger brother had been encouraged by their mother to walk in the mountains in the Lake District and Wales, and they first came out to the Alps with my wife and myself to join the Jubilee Meet of the A.B.M.S.A.C. at Saas Fee in 1959. They spent a month with us and did six good climbs led by guides, including the traverse of the Lenzspitze and Nadelhorn, the Matterhorn by the Hörnli ridge, and the Dom.

Christopher and his brother came out with us to the Alps in 1960 and 1961, doing more difficult climbs, with guides, including the Weissmies

by the North ridge, the Jägigrat, the Zinal Rothorn by the Rothorngrat, and the traverse of the Rimpfischhorn. Christopher was much admired by all the guides with whom he climbed for his skill, calmness and prudence.

In 1962 he did some climbing in Norway with F. L. Jenkins, who also had a high opinion of him, and he started doing guideless climbs in the Alps. For his first climbs, with his brother and a cousin, he repeated climbs he had previously done with a guide. Both in 1962 and 1963 he led parties in the Army Mountaineering Association meets in the Alps and he had been selected for an A.M.A. expedition to the Himalaya in 1965 or 1966.

Christopher was a mountaineer in the best sense of the term, not only enjoying the effort, the skill and the sense of achievement of a good climb, but loving the mountains and the beautiful views to be obtained. He was a fine young man, keen on his job and good at it, dependable, cheerful, unselfish and full of fun.

He died a mountaineer's death and it is fitting that he should be buried among the mountains. The Army has lost a promising officer; the Alpine Club a mountaineer of fine quality; and his family and friends an unselfish and lovable companion.

A. W. BARTON.

MALCOLM DOUGLAS-HAMILTON

1909-1964

LORD MALCOLM DOUGLAS-HAMILTON, O.B.E., D.F.C., was killed at the age of fifty-four in an aeroplane crash in the Cameroons in July, 1964, while ferrying a plane to the Sabena services, the catastrophe having been apparently caused by a heretofore uncharted magnetic anomaly. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1938, served on its Committee in 1946 and was elected to the American Alpine Club in 1954.

Born on November 12, 1909, at Strathaven, Lanarkshire, Lord Malcolm was at Eton, and in 1930 graduated from the R.A.F. College, Cranwell, where he won the middleweight R.A.F. boxing championship. Active at all times in flying, he had the good fortune, through wide assignments, to do much varied climbing—from the Alps to the Coolin and New Zealand. He was able as a leader on rock, but was at his best on long and strenuous snow and ice climbs, where his great endurance and his never-failing cheerfulness in times of discouragement will always be remembered by his friends.

He was with the R.A.F. throughout the War. No. 540 Squadron,

which he commanded, was the first to photograph the German rocket base at Peenemünde—and, later, all the V1 bases in France; for these services he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Standing for Inverness-shire, he was elected to the House of Commons in 1950.

After founding the Highland Fund in Edinburgh for rehabilitation of the Scottish Highlands, Lord Malcolm moved to the United States in 1954, where he continued his activities on behalf of his beloved Highland rehabilitation. Continuously active in aviation, he also directed American Boy Scout groups towards mountain climbing. We in the States will always bear witness to this unique transfer, across the seas, into American climbing circles, of the best of British mountaineering tradition. His tragic and sudden death will be a deep loss to his many friends, around the entire world.

Lord Malcolm is survived by his American-born widow, the former Natalie Wales Paine, his son Niall having been lost with him.

JOEL E. FISHER.

ROBERT LIONEL GREG

1892–1965

ROBERT GREG died on March 28, 1965, after a wearisome illness lasting some months. He was, perhaps, not very well known to the majority of the members of the Club, as he was rarely able to attend meetings owing to his residence in Cheshire. It was for this reason that he did not join the Club until 1954, despite the fact that he already had been climbing in the Alps for many years.

Robert was, however, well-known and very highly regarded by the members of A.B.M.S.A.C. of which Association he was Vice-President during the years 1954–56. He was a very good man at meets, being always ready to promote the general good by leading people on climbs and expeditions, often at the expense of his personal ambitions, and one has recollections of many happy days of climbing, both here and abroad, in association with him.

Greg was very proud of the fact that he was taken on to his first glacier at the age of eleven years; and this long mountaineering life made him somewhat of a traditionalist in that, to the very end, he insisted on doing some of the things which were routine in earlier days.

In his younger days Greg was a very successful cricketer and had a fund of stories on this subject. In his later years, after the marriage of his daughter, Greg devoted more and more of his time to Freemasonry,

whilst being looked after by a faithful married couple in his home in Altrincham.

Robert Greg was a good friend and companion and will be sadly missed from his place in climbing circles.

G. STARKEY.

CHARLES FREDERICK HADFIELD

1875-1965

DR. C. F. HADFIELD died peacefully in his sleep on June 15 just two days before his ninetieth birthday.

He was educated at the Leys School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a double first in the Natural Science Tripos, and he qualified at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. After some years of educational and scientific work at Cambridge and with the Marine Biological Station at Naples, he devoted himself entirely to medical work and went into general practice in Malvern and in London. Later he decided to specialise in anaesthetics and became a leading authority in this branch of medicine. He was appointed consultant anaesthetist to Barts Hospital and the Prince of Wales' Hospital, and in the 1914-18 War was attached to the City of London Military Hospital and then to the Emergency Medical Service, and was awarded the M.B.E. In 1906 he married Miss Wine-Field MacDougall of Dunolly-by-Oban, Argyll.

I first met Hadfield at Wastdale Head at the beginning of the century. He was with a reading party of Cambridge men, amongst whom was his friend and fellow Leysian, the late E. V. Oulton of this Club. So began an enduring friendship, and for many years a party of intimates met in spring and autumn for a few days' climbing in the British hills. Dr. Hadfield's favourite ground was Lakeland and the formation of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District appealed to him greatly. His genial nature and first class intellect made him universally popular and he was elected Vice-President of the F. and R.C.C. 1925-27 and President 1931-33, and was made an Honorary Member in 1956. It was largely due to his enthusiasm that the London Section of the F. and R.C.C. was started, and he presided over the Section's activities for many years and seldom missed a lunch or dinner or a Sunday walk.

As a climber he was a good all-rounder, competent and safe on steep rock and snow and of fine endurance. His great joy was to tramp the fells and ridges, and he struck a novel note by climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in a single day, assisted by two members

of the F. and R.C.C. who dealt with road transport. After the First War he visited the Alps extensively. In 1923 the Graians yielded the Aiguille de Polset, Pointe de l'Échelle, Dent Parrachée, Grande Casse and Tsanteleina amongst others. The Dauphiné was visited in 1925, a season of doubtful weather; climbs included the Grande Ruine, Pic de Neige Cordier, the fine rock peak of the Aiguille Méridionale d' Arves, Pic de la Grave, Pic Coolidge, Tersiva and Grivola. The summer of 1926 was fine and much ground was covered. In the Dolomites, Monte Cristallo, Grosse Zinne, Antelao and Monte Pelmo were climbed, followed by the Marmolata and Fünffingerspitze. Moving to Sulden, he traversed the Ortler by the Hinterergrat. Then came the twelve-peak walk. From the Rifugio Casati above Sulden, Monte Cevedale may be easily climbed. From this point a great semi-circle of peaks extends round the Forno glacier, individually named and each from 11,500 ft. to 12,400 ft. in height. The sky-line was followed throughout, via Monte Vioz, Punta San Matteo and others to Pizzo Tresero, the twelfth and last top, whence a descent was made to the inn at Santa Caterina; a superb ridge-walk of some twenty hours and one entirely after Hadfield's heart. Thereafter a further move was made to Pontresina, and Piz Bernina was climbed in perfect conditions.

During the following years he repeatedly revisited the Alps climbing the Grande Fourche, Blümlisalphorn, Rinderhorn, Gross Grünhorn, Finsteraarhorn and others. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1926 and served on the Committee in 1940. To an advanced age he attended the Club lectures and dinners regularly and he will be missed by many devoted friends.

J. OSBORNE WALKER.

JAMES EDWARD MONTGOMREY

1882-1965

J. E. MONTGOMREY (he was very particular about the correct spelling of the last syllable in his name) was born on March 16, 1882, and took his B.Sc. (Eng.) with Honours at London University in 1906. During the First War, he served as a Staff Captain.

In 1920 he joined the staff of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in London, being appointed Assistant Secretary the same year; in 1939 he became Secretary, relinquishing the appointment in 1942. He gave up his house in Surrey in 1945 and retired to Cornwall, and as a result he had been seen but rarely at the Alpine Club during the last twenty

years of his life. He had, however, been a familiar figure in the Club, and at meetings of the A.B.M.S.A.C., in the 1930's.

He retained his interest in the Club unflaggingly. He had been elected a member in 1928, having been climbing in the Alps since 1923; and he served on the Committee from 1939 to 1941. He specialised in the Austrian Alps and Dolomites, and in the Engadine; he contributed an attractive and lavishly illustrated paper on these regions in *A.J.* 48. 58-65. With the guide Gottfried Schöpf, of Sölden in the Oetztal, he struck up a friendship which lasted until 1937; he wrote a short note about Schöpf in *A.J.* 57. 93.

On his retirement, Montgomrey threw himself into local affairs in Cornwall with much energy. The Church, Civil Defence, and pre-eminently technical education were all objects of his devoted interest; he was a co-opted member of the Cornwall Education Committee and a Governor of Cornwall Technical College and of a number of schools. His death (May 16 last) was the subject of notable tributes in the Cornish press and his funeral was attended by an immense number of representatives of educational establishments from all over the county.

His wife pre-deceased him and there were no children.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

FRANCIS ADOLPHE MARCELLIN NOELTING

1886-1964

WITH the death on December 28, 1964, of Francis Noelting, the Alpine Club lost one of its few remaining members who were climbing actively in the golden decade before the First World War. He had been elected to the Club in February, 1909.

He was born on July 5, 1886, at Mulhouse, where his father was Professor of Chemistry. He was educated at the University of Mulhouse himself, taking a degree in Chemical Engineering; he took a further diploma at Basle University.

During his student days he was a very active mountaineer, and a pioneer ski-mountaineer. He climbed the Matterhorn at the age of sixteen, with his grandfather, and repeated the climb forty years later. He did numerous standard climbs on the bigger peaks of the Oberland, at Zermatt and round Mont Blanc, and in Austria. As noted by Lunn, he joined in 1908 the first British party to ski guideless above 13,000 ft.; later on, he was ski-ing constantly with Oscar Supersaxo, and as mentioned in Noelting's contribution to Supersaxo's obituary in *A.J.* 55, in April 1915 he had 'one of my most glorious weeks on ski, when we

climbed Alphubel, Allalin, Fluchthorn, Adler Pass and Strahlhorn (with descent to Zermatt), and Egginer from the pass, a fine rock climb with two feet of fresh snow'.

In 1909 he went to Russia, working there until the revolution. Climbing and ski-ing must have been an incentive, for he lost no opportunities. He was in the Caucasus in 1910 in the Terek valley, and again in 1911, in the Adyl valley and in Suanetia. He was the first to ski in the Caucasus. His climbing there was modest, as he was alone and dependent only on local guides and porters.

In 1912 he was in Central Asia from July to September. He was one of the first to visit the Tien Shan, exploring around the Karakol valley and ascending several peaks. Again he depended on local helpers. He returned by Kashgar, Tashkent and Bokhara, where he was able to indulge his passion for oriental carpets. It is possible that he also visited the Hindu Kush.

After the Russian revolution he returned to France and was in Grenoble for two years. He naturally climbed extensively in the Dauphiné Alps.

In 1919 he joined the du Pont organisation and whilst in New York in 1920 he married an Italian lady, Signorina Margherita Gerli, by whom he had a son and two daughters. He was appointed du Pont's Far Eastern Manager, and was resident in Shanghai until 1949. It was here that I met him shortly before the Second War. In Shanghai mountaineers were scarce, and members of the Alpine Club rarer still. My evenings spent in Noelting's company, refreshed by the charm and courtesy of his manner, and by his lively recollections of his Tien Shan journeys, are greatly to be treasured. In those days he was still active; he was a keen horseman, and used to join the band of enthusiasts who rode and 'paper-hunted' in the Shanghai delta country. Visiting Japan, he climbed Fuji, Asama and, I believe, in the Japanese Southern Alps.

He retired to Geneva in 1950 where, ten years later, I was also to meet him again, and found his health and vigour unimpaired. He had a passion for motor cars; he owned his first car in 1905, and in his seventies drove an XK Jaguar.

It was a tragic end to so active a career that he should have been run down by a passing motorist when standing beside his car. He was terribly injured and spent more than a year in the hospital in Sion. He bore his injuries without complaint, and with determination that he would recover. He was on the point of returning to his home when he died. We have lost a great gentleman.

I am greatly indebted to Noelting's daughter, the Contessa Giovanni of Milan, for her help.

B. R. GOODFELLOW.

WILLI RICKMER RICKMERS

1873-1965

IT WAS with the greatest regret that I heard of the death of my old friend Dr. W. R. Rickmers. In the old days he and I made several ski-ing trips together, chiefly in Austria.

Rickmers was born near Bremerhaven on May 1, 1873. He was a wonderfully preserved old man: I wrote congratulating him for his ninetieth birthday and received back from him a charming postcard from his home in Munich, in beautiful hand-writing and perfect English. He was elected to the Alpine Club as long ago as 1899, but had to resign in 1916 on account of the war. Re-elected in 1929, he retired again in 1939, and was made an Honorary Member in 1958.

When he was seventeen years of age Rickmers began to make ascents of three and four thousand metre peaks in Switzerland, where he was studying. As well as being a mountaineer he was a very expert skier. He was a friend of that well known skier of former days, Vivian Caulfeild, and there is an amusing caricature of him drawn by Caulfeild showing him as a young skier with the enormous pole, used at that time instead of our modern sticks, successfully carrying out one of the old-fashioned stem turns, while other skiers were lying about on the snow after attempting the same turn.

Rickmers's first five thousand metre peak was Mount Ararat. Later the whole mountain world of Asia became a great attraction to him and in 1895 he carried out his first expedition to the Caucasus.

In 1901 Rickmers presented the German Alpine Society (D.A.V.) with 5,000 books on exploration and the like for the nucleus of a central library and in 1948, on its reconstruction, added another 2,000 volumes.

In 1935 he received the award of the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for these long and continued travels in the Caucasus and in Russian Turkestan, culminating in his leadership of the Alai-Pamir Russian-German Expedition in 1928. Rickmers's British-born wife accompanied him on all his travels.

Rickmers was elected a Life Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1895. In 1929 he was made an Honorary Member of the Ski Club of Great Britain. He was an Honorary Doctor of the University of Innsbruck, an Honorary Member of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and an Honorary Member of many geographical societies in Germany and elsewhere.

His contributions to the *Alpine Journal* were numerous, the principal being those on the Caucasus in vols. 19 and 22, and (vol. 21) on 'The Alpine Skee (*sic*) and Mountaineering'; two articles on the Pamirs in vol. 41; and two more of reminiscences, 'From Titlis to Bitlis' (vol.

46) and—the substance of an address to the A.C. in 1938—‘The Switch-back of Life’ (vol. 51), in the last of which he sketches in his early family background.

As recently as June of this year he published an article on the Pamir glacier in the *Geographical Journal* which, however, he did not live to read in final form, although he had the satisfaction of reading through the proof.

This is a brief account of the life of one of the really great mountaineers, explorers and skiers of our time.

G. SELIGMAN.

HAROLD NEWNHAM PENROSE SLOMAN

1885–1965

HAROLD SLOMAN, who died last July, was educated at Rugby and Balliol, and after four years as a master at Radley, went out to Australia as Headmaster of Sydney Grammar School (1913–1920). His service there was much interfered with by the war; he was commissioned into the Rifle Brigade, was wounded and won the M.C. in 1917.

In 1921 he came home, to Rugby School, but the following year was appointed Headmaster of Tonbridge School, from which he retired in 1939. He then served for a while in the Ministry of Economic Warfare, and the Home Guard; then from 1941–47 he was an assistant master at St. Paul’s School, and, after working with the British Council in Argentina as Educational Adviser, did a further four years at Charterhouse (1950–54) before finally retiring.

Sloman’s father, Canon Arthur Sloman, was a member of the Alpine Club from 1879 to 1919, and the son’s first seasons in the Alps, from 1906 onwards, were with his father. Their climbs were of the conventional order and do not call for record here. On going to Australia, Harold Sloman took the opportunity to visit the New Zealand Alps, in 1914 climbing Elie de Beaumont and Malte Brun. He made other visits, in 1915, 1916 and 1920; some of his climbs were done with Conrad Kain.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1922. In his later years he became very lame and he had probably not attended a Club meeting for a number of years, though he would regularly, once a year, call in with his Alpine Journals, to arrange for their binding.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

THOMAS GUY BURTON FORSTER SMITH-BARRY

1886-1962

GUY SMITH-BARRY inherited Holt Manor in Wiltshire on the death of his father, Colonel Forster, in 1927, and in 1930 he succeeded to the estate of Bally Edmond in County Cork, and added to his paternal name that of his uncle. In 1948 he married Miss Elsa Lang of Zürich, who survives him.

Guy's introduction to mountaineering, a guided ascent of the Tschingelhorn in 1905, all but cured him of any desire to climb. It was not until five years later that he took to guideless climbs of a modest nature, such as the Claridenstock, Glärnisch, Schächentaler Windgälle, Spannörter, Sustenhorn, Tödi and several easy passes, and finished up this apprenticeship with an ascent of the South face of the Pucher, a by no means easy rock climb.

Guy and I first met in Zürich in 1907 as students in the Swiss Federal Polytechnic, and later in Grindelwald, where we had both learned to abandon snow-shoes in favour of skis as a means of access in winter to the Scheideggs, Faulhorn, Lauberhorn and such-like lesser peaks and passes.

Guy's first serious winter expedition on skis was in 1912 with my brother, over the Furka and Nägelisgrätli to the Oberaarhorn, whence they were driven back to the hut by bad weather which made the snow conditions for their subsequent return to Andermatt both tricky and dangerous. Early in 1913 Guy crossed the Oberland on skis and climbed the Jungfrau, Mönch and Ebnefluh. He followed this up in the spring and summer of the same year by climbing most of the summits of the Windgällen-Rothorn group and the Fleckistock-Sustenhorn regions. In the autumn of 1913 we together made the ascent of the West ridge of the Bifertenstock.

Early in 1914 Guy skied into the Rotondo group and climbed almost every summit within reasonable reach of the hut. Later, in the early summer, he was active in the Scopi and Medelser groups. By this time he had become an enthusiastic, able and safe climber, with a fine eye for route-finding and assessment of conditions. In this he was certainly helped by his remarkable gifts as a landscape artist whose black and white sketches and water-colours of mountain scenery are of a rare and individual beauty. One can never think of him on a mountain top without his small sketch-book and pencil.

Soon after the outbreak of war in 1914 Guy, who was in the reserve of officers in the Royal Engineers, was serving in France, and I was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery. During the war our paths crossed at Sidi Bishr, both of us destined, as we then guessed, for Galli-

poli. In the event, however, Guy went to Gallipoli and after the evacuation was posted to the North-west Frontier in India, while my battery was sent to Salonica. Nevertheless, during our fortnight together in Egypt we talked mountaineering and roughed out plans for the future. In essence these were that (i) we would climb only for the sheer fun of it, (ii) two days of climbing would be followed by a rest day, irrespective of the weather, and (iii) we would shift our ground to the lesser mountains when the weather conditions promised to be consistently bad.

In 1920 we were able to put these plans to the test. We met at Stalden, sent on our bulging rucksacks by post to Saas Fee and walked up to the Mischabel hut. Guy, having already climbed in the Maderanertal, Medelser and Titlis groups, was trained to a hair, while I found it a struggle to keep up with him on the steep ascent to the hut. After traversing all the peaks from the Lenzspitze to the Balfrin and picking up some oddments on the way, we moved over to the Britannia hut and from there traversed the Allalinhörner, Alphubel and Rimpfischhorn. Thence we went to Zermatt, climbing the Strahlhorn en route. Throughout, we had tested out our scheme of two days of climbing followed by a rest day, and found it highly successful. The weather, never very settled, now took a turn for the worse, so we moved over to Mont Blanc, traversing this by the Aiguilles Grises route to the Col du Géant. In dubious weather we then climbed the Géant and most of the neighbouring lesser peaks. An attempt on the Eccles route was frustrated by a heavy overnight snowfall to well below the Gamba hut. Nevertheless, we had the fun of rescuing a party of five charming Italians who were in difficulties on the Brouillard route to the hut. Persistent bad weather now drove us to implement the third part of our agreed plan by moving off to the Maderanertal, where irrespective of climatic vagaries we could roam about to our hearts' content.

It was not until 1923 that we could climb together again. Guy, Raymond Peto and I, all in good training, then climbed the Dent d'Hérens by making use of the great glacier terrace which rises diagonally across the North face of the mountain. After this, academic demands cut short my climbing, but Guy moved over to Bonneval whence, having made a clean sweep of practically everything within reach, he finished up in the Tödi group and Maderanertal.

By this time Guy had proved himself to be a first class all round mountaineer. Expert in route-finding and in judging conditions, he climbed safely and with outstanding skill on rock, ice and snow. It was indeed something of a revelation to watch him work his way over iced-up rocks and slabs, or surmount a difficult bergschrund. And perhaps most endearing of all his attributes was a never-failing, infectious and joyous sense of humour.

In November, 1923, Guy submitted his application for membership

of the Alpine Club. This, perhaps the most remarkable document of its kind in the possession of the Club, lists over 140 qualifying climbs, of which only the first was professionally guided. Later, he joined the Academic Alpine Club of Zürich.

As the years went by, professional duties restricted my climbing activities more and more. For all that, however, we were occasionally able to enjoy some good climbs together. I remember particularly the Gletschhorn (South ridge), a traverse of Piz Roseg, the North face of Castor, the Bianco ridge of the Bernina, a traverse of the Nesthorn-Breithorn, and also a wholly delightful and successful campaign in the Viro valley in Corsica.

Guy's climbing was not restricted to the Alps, for he climbed also in Ireland, Norway, Tunisia and Morocco. I hope that Binnie, Malcolm and Herbert will be able to add notes of Guy's climbs, particularly after 1927.

I last saw Guy at Holt a few weeks before his death. We spent much of the time cutting up fallen timber. He worked at the pace of a two-year-old and soon had me trying hard to keep up with him. His sense of fun was as lively as ever.

Guy's versatility was astonishing. He climbed the mountains and he sketched and painted them; he managed two large estates; he soldiered on active service throughout the First World War; he ran his own market garden; he was an expert photographer. Everything he did was well done; he was indeed a whole man.

G. I. FINCH.

MR. A. M. BINNIE and MR. H. R. HERBERT write:

A chance meeting in Switzerland led to a hundred expeditions. One day in 1930 we had come over the Allalin Pass from the Britannia hut under such thick conditions that at more than one place the expedient of shouting was adopted to test if cliffs were near. We were walking up the street in Zermatt when we encountered a party hard to recognise. Betsey Gates was easy enough; her husband Caleb (A.C.) was concealed under an enormous beard, the result of a fortnight at the Sustli hut. The third was a stranger, Smith-Barry, or 'Potts' as he became known to us for a reason now lost in the mists of time.

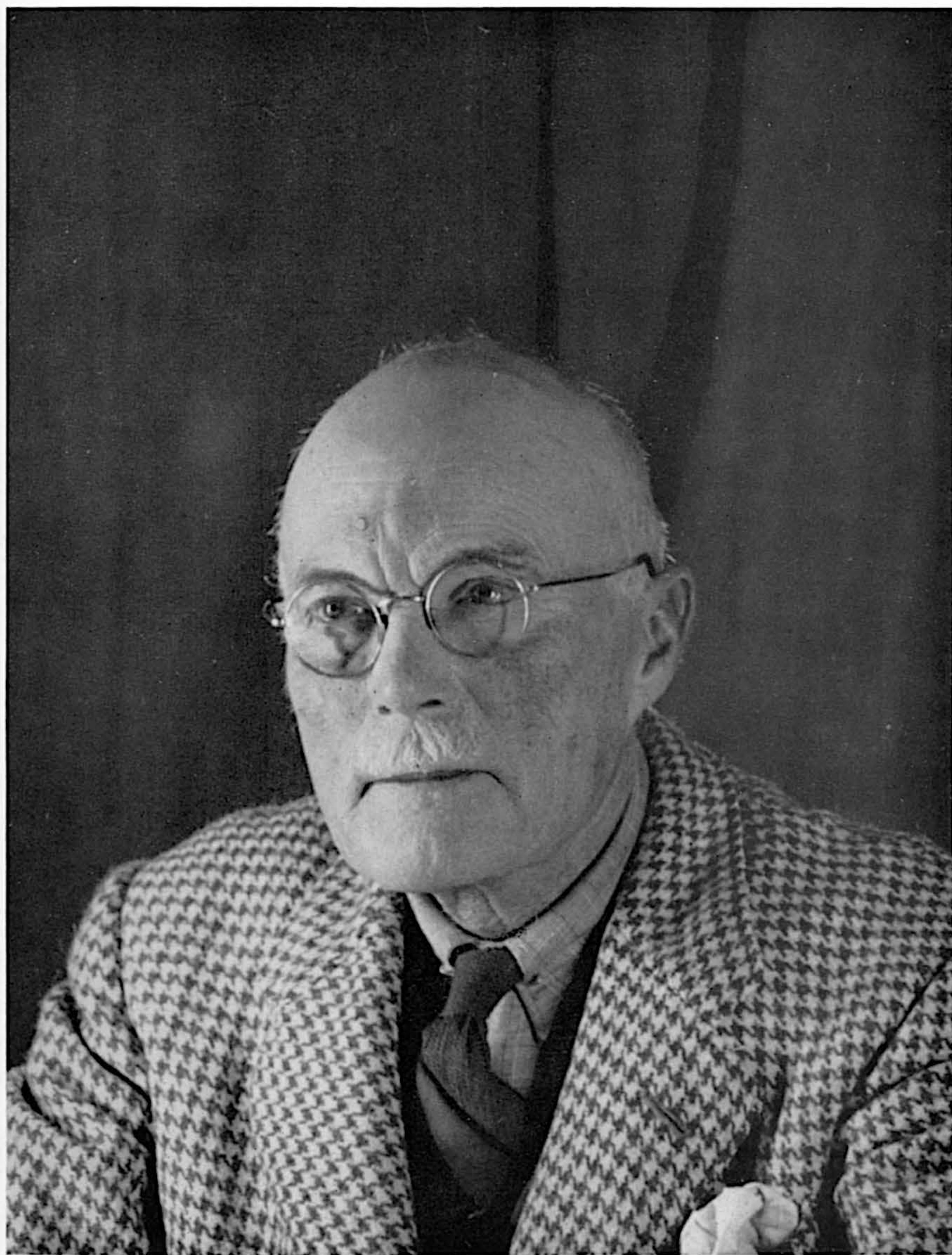
From then up to the outbreak of the Second War he led a party which commonly varied in numbers from four to two, and which from time to time usually also included A. D. Malcolm and occasionally Caleb Gates and H. L. Pryce. Smith-Barry was naturally the leader, not merely because he was older than the rest of us. His personality and charm were most attractive, and he possessed a very remarkable skill and toughness, dating from the days when he was a volunteer in Dr. Dübi's

surveying parties. Moreover, his knowledge of languages and customs was so complete that in Switzerland and France he could readily pass himself off as a native. In spite of the limited time available each summer, an astonishing number of peaks were ascended in all parts of the Alps except Austria. Little mountains were visited at the beginning of the season and in unsettled weather, and large mountains when the party was fit and conditions were favourable. With the aid of his car which he generously provided, no time was lost when the campaign was in progress. Thus, although it was discouraging to wake up one morning in Courmayeur to find snow lying low in the valley, yet the same evening we were installed in the Gelmer hut above Handeck. The tactics commonly employed were to take five days' provisions up to the hut on a Monday. This method could on occasion be strikingly successful, notably on a visit in 1933 to the Bernese Oberland. With the aid of a mule to the Eggishorn, a porter to the Concordia and finally a hard grind with heavy sacks over the Grünhornlücke, the party was established at the Finsteraarhorn hut. The next six days dealt with the Fiescherhorn, Gross Grünhorn (South-east face), Finsteraarhorn, Agassizhorn (traverse), Finsteraar-Rothorn (descent to the Oberaarjoch hut), Studerhorn-Altman-Oberaarhorn (traverse) and down to Biel in the Rhône valley.

Another good year was 1936, though it began badly with five days' imprisonment in the Lenta hut, beyond which we did not advance more than a hundred yards. But it finished well in the Dauphiné, with ascents of the Pelvoux, Les Ecrins, Ailefroide, Meije (traverse), Les Bans, and L'Olan—not a bad lead for a man of fifty. On one occasion we persuaded him to go to Norway where, in weather not good but better than average, climbs were made from Tūrtegro, Øye and the Romsdal, and the Jostedalsbrae was crossed to Loen from the south. But he was always reluctant to miss a summer in Switzerland, and in 1938 we could not get him to join us in Lofoten.

In the following year, which was as good as any, there were five sorties: Blümlisalphorn and Doldenhorn from the Fründen hut; the Pigne, Mont Blanc de Seilon, and the la Luette-Mont Pleureur-la Salle ridge from the Val de Dix hut; the Weissmies (North ridge), Fletschhorn and Laquinhorn from the Weissmies hut; the Nesthorn and Breithorn from the Oberaletsch hut; and finally the Brunegghorn, Gässispitz and Wasenhorn from the Topali hut, where the party was nearly caught by the outbreak of hostilities.

After the war, operations were resumed, but naturally on a smaller scale and in not quite so breathless a way. Nevertheless, the Blümlisalphorn was climbed in 1948 and the Tour Noir, Tiefenstock and Gletscherhorn in 1950. From his house near Granges, between Sion and Sierre, he made numerous ascents of the local mountains, such as the Bonvin,



T. G. B. F. SMITH-BARRY

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Illhorn and Bella Tola, and there he royally entertained the younger members of the party when it was no longer possible for him to climb big peaks. After his move to Bally Edmond in County Cork he visited many of the mountains of southern Ireland, some of these expeditions involving very long drives as well. His last visit to a summit was to the Brecon Beacons—a day's outing from his home in Wiltshire. No complete list of his ascents was made, but he was accustomed to insert a date against the guide book account of his climbs. The little mountains, particularly those accessible from the A.A.C.Z. Windgällen hut, he visited many times, and the ascents thus recorded add up to hundreds.

BERNARD Biner

1900–1965

BERNARD Biner, guide of Zermatt, died on April 12, 1965. He was sixty-four. His health had been worsening for some years, and he had been seriously ill during the winter; but he was thought to be better, and his actual death was sudden and unexpected. His family telegraphed at once to the Alpine Club, and the Club was represented at his funeral in token of the esteem in which he was held among British mountaineers. His links with the British had become especially close in the last phase of his career when, after his retirement from active guiding, he found a new direction for his vocation as the counsellor and friend of the young guideless climbers who made the Hotel Bahnhof their headquarters. On the day of the Alpine Club centenary dinner in Zermatt in 1957 he flew the Union Jack side by side with the Swiss flag over the front door. His sister flew it again on the Matterhorn centenary day in 1965. It might have flown there always.

Bernard was born on December 29, 1900, the second (and eldest surviving) of the seven children of Alois Biner, himself chief guide of Zermatt in his day. He received an excellent education, ending at the technical high school in Berlin, but he returned to Zermatt to start guiding as soon as his education was complete. He was early apprenticed in the mountains. His sister recalls his stories of walks when about twelve years old with his father's clients to the Riffelalp, Gornergrat or Schwarzsee, carrying their coats, which were often too heavy for him. He climbed the Matterhorn for the first time when he was sixteen, being engaged as a porter, but in the event (as he used to tell) having to take a large and heavy man on his own rope, following the older guide. His *Führerbuch* shows that he obtained his guide's certificate on March

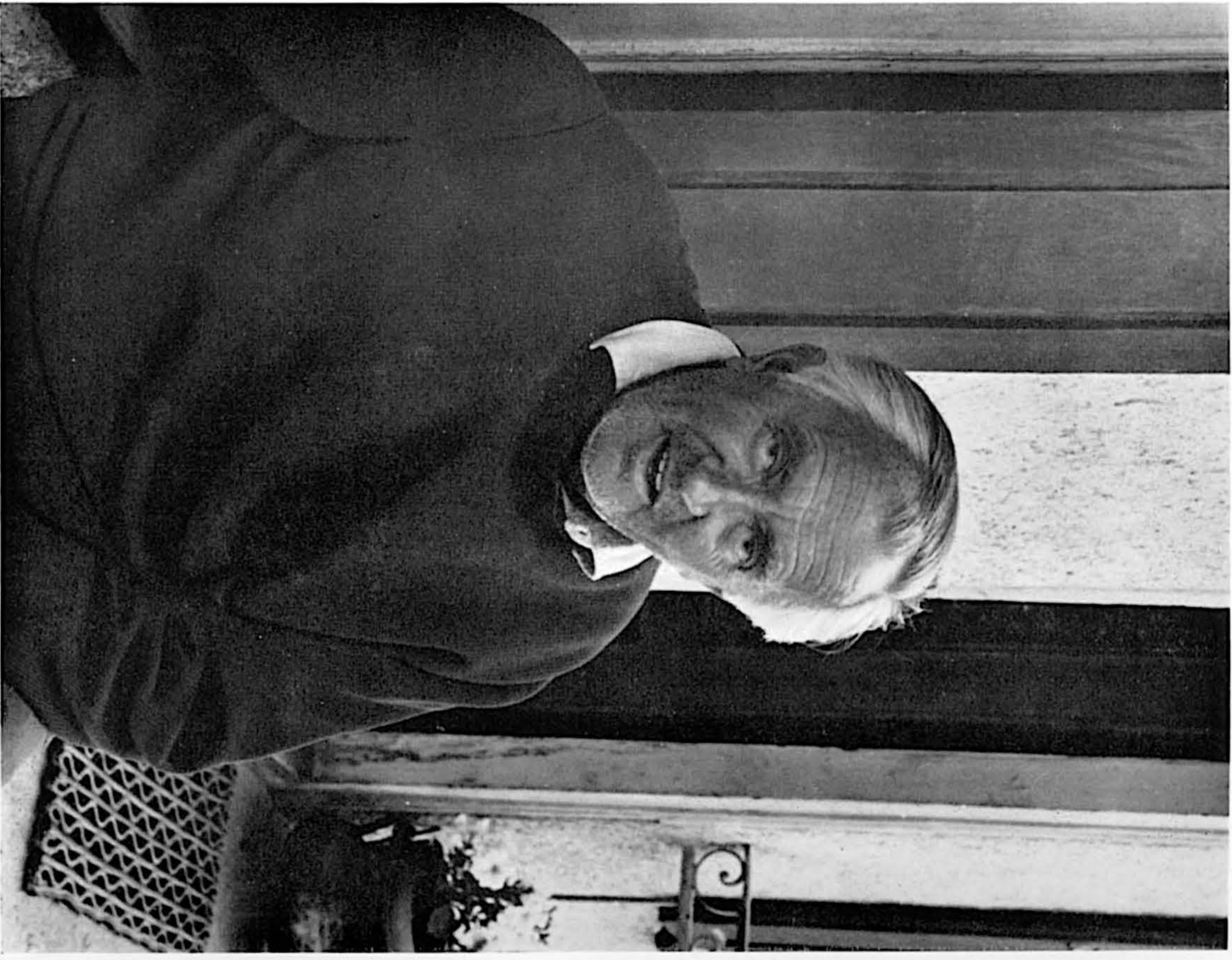


Photo: A. Blackshare]

BERNARD BINER

14, 1924, but he was active as a porter long before that. Entries by clients begin in 1918 and he was guiding on the Matterhorn in 1923.

Between the wars he was one of the most active of the Zermatt guides. Occasionally he visited other parts of the Alps, but he does not appear to have climbed much outside his own district. There, however, he built up a large international clientèle, many of whom came back year after year. In the testimonials in his book the same themes recur over and over again: patience, willingness and skill in teaching, companionship. 'He always makes one feel that the climb is an adventure we are sharing.'

Records are incomplete, for after the first few years he rarely bothered to make entries in his book, but his repertoire included all the most enterprising climbs of his day round Zermatt. He had the reputation of doing many of them in record time. Favourite climbs, which he did many times, included the Younggrat on the Breithorn, Zmutt ridge on the Matterhorn, Rothorngrat from the Triftjoch, East ridge of the Dent Blanche, Weisshorn Schalligrat, and Lyskamm North-east face. In March, 1929, he made an interesting first ascent, in winter, of the West flank of the Lyskamm. But the climbs with which he was particularly associated were those on the East face of Monte Rosa. According to *Les Alpes* he was the first Zermatter to do the direct route to the Dufourspitze. He climbed the face at least a dozen times, mostly by the Marinelli, but also by the Brioschi route. These repeated ascents did much to revise the exaggerated reputation the face once had.

A sign of his standing among his fellow guides was his election as President of the Zermatt guides for no less than five three-year terms, so that he filled that office for fifteen of the years between 1926 and 1956. He was also head of the rescue service for many years. He was one of the founders of the pension scheme for Zermatt guides introduced in the 1920's. He was no less prominent in ski-ing. He obtained his diploma as ski-guide in 1926. He took a leading part in building up Zermatt as a winter resort, especially by developing the Gornergrat Derby as an international race. He was President of the Ski Club of Zermatt for many years, and was appointed Honorary President in 1961. Of his conscientiousness in such offices witness an anecdote told when tributes were being paid to his memory at the Alpine Club. When inspecting a ski-lift, he was seen to insist on riding personally on each 'meat-hook' separately before he would pass it for use. No less exacting was his conception of the duties of a guide. Discussing an accident in which a guide had been pulled off by a client's unexpected slip, he maintained categorically that while no doubt sympathy was due, it was the right of anyone who engaged a guide to fall off at any time with impunity. 'That is what a guide is for.'

Throughout his life Bernard was active in the affairs of his village.

He was a member of the seven-man Gemeinderat for twenty-four years. A special distinction came to him, and through him to Zermatt, when during the war he was appointed an official delegate of the International Red Cross. He served in this capacity in Berlin. Shortly before his death he was invited to serve as President of the Matterhorn centenary celebrations, but he felt obliged to decline because of his health.

Just after the war, when he was forty-five, he suffered a heart attack. This compelled him to curtail his climbing, but he continued on a restricted scale for a few more years. In 1951 he had the misfortune to be immediately behind Otto Furrer on the Matterhorn on the day when Furrer was killed by the breaking of a fixed rope on the Italian ridge. The first aid he rendered to Furrer's client probably saved her life, but Bernard was profoundly shocked by the death of Furrer, his lifelong friend, and by the controversy that followed the accident. This was virtually the end of his active guiding. In the years that followed he climbed only rarely, usually with old friends. His last climb was the Trifhorn, on July 9, 1963.

But 1951 was by no means the end of his career. Rather, it was the beginning of a new and perhaps uniquely fruitful phase, for in that year he and his sister opened the Hotel Bahnhof. They did so almost by accident. The hotel had been built by their father, and for many years rented to the Seilers; but latterly it had been closed, being in need of modernisation. A party of French schoolboys, in the charge of a priest, enquired about cheap accommodation in Zermatt. Someone suggested to Bernard that he might allow them to use the disused Bahnhof. He agreed, and then forgot about it. The schoolboys arrived, Bernard and his sister were found and the building hurriedly unlocked. It was the beginning of a new life for the Bahnhof, and for Bernard. In collaboration with his sister Paula, he made it a real home for young climbers. It was cheap, it was informal, and no genuine climber was ever turned away, though sometimes he might have to sleep on the floor or in an outhouse. And Bernard was always there to take a friendly interest in his doings, to give good advice if asked (but not otherwise), and to give unfailing help in any crisis or difficulty.

He kept a fatherly eye on all who passed through the hotel. The advice he gave was always matched to the recipient. He was a remarkably shrewd and rapid judge of character, seeming to divine accurately after the briefest of talk and observation both a man's personality and his climbing ability. He had no time for those he thought conceited, but was full of encouragement for the properly enterprising, however modest their attainments. As one example among many who enjoyed his friendship and his help, the late John Emery may be mentioned. Bernard took an intense interest in his return to climbing after he lost his fingers and toes in the Haramosh disaster. A close friendship formed

between them. When in 1963 John was lost on the Weisshorn, it was to Bernard that his friends turned for help. None of those who were concerned can ever forget his kindness. Today John and Bernard lie not far apart in the Zermatt cemetery.

Fluent in several languages, a man of wide culture and interests, keen student of affairs and of men, Bernard was a delightful companion. 'I am only a simple peasant,' he would say. He was far from that, but deep in him was a proud love of Zermatt, of its mountains and its people, and of his vocation as a guide. He was an outstanding son of his native valley. But it is as a personal friend that he is most deeply mourned.

A. K. RAWLINSON.