

In Memoriam

Introduction

Geoffrey Templeman

1979 has been a sad year for the Club, as we have lost a number of very eminent and much-loved members. The list of 13 deaths notified since the last Journal is as follows: Alfred Zurcher (honorary member); Ivor Armstrong Richards (honorary member); Rosemary Enid Sanderson; Sir Percy Wyn Harris; Michael J. G. de Pret-Roose; Ronald Ralph Williams; Ralph Forester Stobart; David Carruthers Bryson; Alfred Sefton Pigott; Sir Ronald Macmillan Algie; Viscount Bledisloe; Mrs D. S. Porter; David Edmundson.

In addition, I am pleased to be able to include a full tribute to Ronald Dalle Nogare, whose death was only noted in the '79 AJ. So many of those whose names appear in the list above have done so much for the world of mountaineering that I do not intend to pick out individuals for mention, only to say that the world of literature has also lost one of its foremost critics and advocates in Ivor Richards, who had so little time in which to savour the Honorary Membership bestowed on him by the Club.

Most of those listed have full obituaries in the following pages, and I must again thank most sincerely all those who have given so much time to contributing. Writing obituaries is not an easy task, but one that is so worthwhile.

For the remainder, either the brief notes below must suffice for this year or, where time has not allowed the preparation of a full tribute, this will hopefully be available for a future Journal. In addition, notes have been received concerning the deaths of Willi Unsoeld and Eric Roberts. Whilst neither was a Club member, they were known to many and their inclusion here is welcomed.

Sir Ronald Macmillan Algie (1889–1978) was elected to the Club in 1925, being proposed by A. L. Mumm and seconded by H. E. L. Porter. He was Professor of Law at University College, Auckland, at the time of his election, with many ascents in the New Zealand Alps to his credit. He later became very active in New Zealand politics.

Benjamin Ludlow Bathurst, Viscount Bledisloe (1899–1979)

Ben Bathurst died within a few days of his 80th birthday whilst strolling in his garden at Lydney Park with a friend. Few who did not know him well would have guessed his age from his youthful manner and appearance.

He and I were at Oxford after the First World War, where, amongst other activities, he rowed for 2 years in a Magdalen boat of legendary reputation, and it was parties of his rowing friends that he took to stay at the Royal Hotel, Capel Curig for climbing on Tryfan and the Glyders.

He was immensely fond of climbing and ski-ing in the Alps, particularly the St Moritz area, where for some years he was President of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club. He also won the Curzon Cup on the Cresta Run. In the years between 1928 and 1938 we climbed together in the Alps almost every year, including the Meije, Réquin, Peigne, Obergabelhorn and Langkofel amongst others, a number of Dolomite peaks being reached by Ben flying my wife and myself out to Innsbruck in his small aeroplane.

Flying was only one of his many interests, and he was a Senior Commander of Transport Auxiliary in World War Two. In his mid-70's he took a helicopter to near the top of Monte Rosa and skied down to Zermatt. He was a skilled photographer and gardener, and also connoisseur of wine. This latter undoubtedly helped in his position as Senior Trustee of the Garrick Club, an appointment he much enjoyed.

When I first met him he was at the Chancery Bar, where his professional life was spent in a distinguished and most successful practice, first as a junior and for the last 25 years as a Queen's Counsel until his retirement in 1976. He was a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn for 23 years and was much loved by his fellow Benchers. As an advocate at the Bar, he brought a common-sense approach to the problem in hand and the capacity to relate that approach to the intricacies of the law. In the House of Lords he made contributions to legislative criticism.

All his skills and all his learning in so many fields were, however, concealed by his quiet modesty and charm, so that anyone who did not know him could be forgiven for almost being unaware that they existed.

With him I spent the happiest days among mountains I have ever known. He was a wonderful friend.

Herbert R. C. Carr

David Carruthers Bryson (1915–1979)

David Bryson died in early March 1979 at the age of 64. He had suffered a stroke about 5 years before, which had affected his mobility and to some extent his speech. His condition deteriorated during the winter of 1978–1979, but the end came suddenly. I had seen him a few days before his death in hospital at Oxford, when we enjoyed many happy reminiscences.

David's parents were missionaries in China, so that he was brought up through most of his youth in this country by an uncle and aunt. He went to Eltham College and on to Corpus Christi College at Oxford where he read greats. He then travelled in the United States under a Commonwealth Scholarship.

He joined the BBC after the war, and for many years was a great talks producer on the Midland Region, based in Birmingham. When a sort of sub-region was set up for East Anglia, David moved to Norwich to take charge, but I suspect that his enthusiasm lay more with the production of talks, than with administration. Later he moved to London, where he was involved in Education broadcasting until his illness led to his early retirement.

His Alpine climbing began in 1927 when he made one or 2 climbs in the Chamonix district with his uncle. He had 2 full Alpine seasons before the war, and in the years from 1946 onwards climbed regularly each summer. In 1948 and 1949 he was a leader with the Club's meets held at Kleine Scheidegg and Täsch. During the Scheidegg Meet, he led parties on the Hasler Rib on the Aletschhorn, the Silberhorn route on the Jungfrau and the Mönch by the Nollen. In 1952 he went to Garhwal in a party with T. H. Tilly, J. A. Jackson, J. Kempe and R. K. Misra. With John Jackson he made the first ascent of Avalanche Peak, 6175m above the Banguen Glacier, and an attempt on Nilkanta with Jackson, and the 2 French climbers, L. George and V. Russenberger. Later David and John Jackson went up to Kashmir where they climbed Kolahoi.

David was a delightful climbing companion, with a great sense of humour, and a marvellous conversationalist. For 2 or 3 years, when we were both based on Birmingham I climbed regularly with him at week-ends and in the Alps in summer. Our most memorable adventure was a traverse of the Main Cuillin Ridge which we did in 1951—an early Whitsun with much late snow still on the Ridge, most of which we traversed unseen. I have a vivid memory of David's expression when we saw the Bhasteir Tooth for the first time, from below, towards the end of a long day on the Ridge.

David will be remembered with affection by his many friends in the Club. Our sympathy goes to his wife and daughter.

J. H. Emlyn Jones

David Edmundson (1909–1979)

David Edmundson's wide circle of friends were shocked at the news of his sudden death on 5 December. Until that very morning he had been drafting letters for the Mount Everest Foundation and taking a very keen interest in the prospects of the opening of new areas of Tibet and Sinkiang to explorers and climbers. He had accepted the honorary rôle of Secretary on the retirement of T. S. Blakeney for 2 declared reasons: gratitude for what mountaineering had meant to his own family; and desire to help young people to do the mountaineering that circumstances had denied him in his own youth.

From his climbing companions in the 1930s, and especially from his cousin, Henry Rowntree, and Arthur Bullough of the Rucksack Club, come reminiscences of holidays in Wales, the Lake District and the West Highlands. David was taking his degree the hard way, by evening study after a day's work as an apprentice engineer at the BTH, Rugby, and limited to 2 weeks' holiday a year, with 4 days at Easter. A highlight of this period was the summer of 1935, spent on and around Skye and including completing the Cuillin Ridge from Garsbheinn to Sgurr nan Gilleann. Only deteriorating weather prevented their adding Blaven and Clach Glas within the 24 hours, and it was left to others to achieve this prize several years later.

The war and the demands of a young family prevented David's going to the Alps regularly before 1958, but from then on he hardly missed a season, gaining a very detailed knowledge

of many regions from the Gran Paradiso, Dauphiné and Lötschental to the Valtournanche, the Valais, and, increasingly, Chamonix. Founder and first President of the Rugby Mountaineering Club, he took great pleasure in the fact that both his sons became keen Alpine mountaineers and that the elder married the daughter of Dr Pierre Dartigue of Chamonix whilst the younger preceded his father into the Alpine Club and made several expeditions to the Hindu Kush and Himalayas with MEF support.

David's professional career was distinguished. From his early work in micro-wave radar and special flight instrumentation for the first jet engines, by 1959 he had been appointed General Manager of BTH, Rugby. In 1967 he was made a Director of GEC-AEI Electronics Ltd, and in 1969 was elected President of the Institute of Electrical Engineers; in this capacity he and his wife Margaret were to make a world tour.

On his retirement they moved to the Lake District—to a home overlooking Windermere, the Conistone range and the Langdale Pikes. There he took great pride in owning a piece of fell and cultivating a fine garden in which he waged—with increasing success—war against the depredations of deer. One room there was the Mount Everest Foundation office, from which he answered meticulously and sympathetically the many and varied queries which came to its Secretary, whilst extending his already wide knowledge of the world's mountain ranges.

A keen musician since his school days in Saffron Walden, and widely informed, his sense of humour and vital interest in others made him an excellent raconteur and gave him a boundless enthusiasm for living. He will be sadly missed by those many who valued his friendship and who now offer their sympathy to his family in their profound loss.

John Tyson



99 David Edmundson (Photo: A. Bullough)



100 Alfred Zurcher and Joseph Knubel

Ronald Dalle Nogare (1931–1978)

Ronald Dalle Nogare was killed by stonefall while descending the open slopes of Kilzikaya (3723m) in the central Taurus mountains on 5 August 1978. He was born and educated in Adelaide, Australia, and was an outstanding undergraduate at the University there. He had a great interest in the Classics and finally pursued Mathematics, came to England and became

an understanding and capable teacher to undergraduates and graduates of the University of London. I was one of many students who are greatly indebted to him, not so much because he coached us through exams and not only because he was a great mentor, forcing us to think and question and widen our horizons, but more for the kindness and generosity and friendship that he extended to us in our student days.

His interest in mountaineering developed from the early 1960s and I well remember the university and college club meets which he joined, particularly in N Wales. We always seemed to have appalling weather and not a few epics, but with Ron in the party spirits were never low for long. However his main passion was for the bigger mountains and he made regular trips to the Alps from 1963 onwards. He loved the great snow ridges and long traverses. The unusual also appealed to him, like climbing the Matterhorn for the Centenary in bad weather or Mont Blanc in a weekend from London—and narrowly missing the plane to return him in time for his 9.00am Monday morning lecture because he was held up by a brass band on the road below Chamonix.

It was remarkable but typical of Ron that in recent years he should relinquish his career, scholar that he was, to become only recently an established and able Probation Officer to the Inner London Probation Service. His abilities as a teacher were now diverted to winning the trust and confidence of the less fortunate who had been referred to him as a Probation Officer. They in particular have lost a friend, perhaps, to many, the only friend they have known.

Nick Longland

Alfred Sefton Pigott, OBE (1895–1979)

Fred Pigott received his education at Manchester Grammar School. In 1914, shortly after leaving school, he volunteered for military service and joined the Royal Fusiliers. Whilst in the front-line trenches, acting as a sniper, he was wounded in the hand and arm by shrapnel. This resulted in a gangrenous infection. He successfully resisted the advice of the surgeons to amputate his limb and eventually recovered, although his hand was left permanently damaged. He was invalided from the army in 1916 and so spared the holocaust of the Battle of the Somme in which many of his regiment perished.

It was during his army training that he met a member of the Rucksack Club who persuaded him to walk from Epsom to Brighton, a distance of about 40 miles. On arriving at Brighton they discovered they had insufficient money for the railway fare back to Epsom, so returned at a brisk pace, just avoiding overstaying their leave.

He joined the Rucksack Club in 1919 on what was described as 'a very sketchy walking qualification'. For a short time he contented himself with hill walking, until he suddenly took off and began climbing on the gritstone edges of Derbyshire. Here he joined forces with another outstanding climber, Morley Wood, who became his life-long friend and climbing companion.

It was soon apparent that Fred had remarkable abilities as a rock climber; many new routes on gritstone were pioneered; and in 1923 he led the 3rd ascent of Central Buttress, Scafell, at that time and for many years afterwards considered the most difficult climb in Britain. Other notable 1st ascents were the Crypt Route on Bidean-nam-Bian, a direct route up the Tower, Ben Nevis; several in Skye and the Central Buttress, Coire Mhic Fearchair, involving a 4-hour walk in each direction from and to Achnasheen. He was also active in the Lake District, pioneering new routes on Gimmer, Pillar Rock and Eagle Crag.

It was in Wales where Fred's name will be long remembered. The great black cliff of Clogwyn Du'r Arddu had been looked at by climbers for many years but none had ventured far up the steep repelling walls of the E and W Buttresses. Fred and Morley Wood addressed themselves to the task of forcing a route up the former. This was a formidable undertaking requiring great persistence, skill and ingenuity until all the problems were solved and the name of Pigott's Route bestowed upon a superb climb.

Attention was now directed to the virgin W Buttress but it soon became obvious that others had been attempting to make a route. Whilst Fred's party was grappling with the difficulties, another party led by Jack Longland appeared at the foot of the crag and it became clear Jack had also been making earlier attempts. Greetings were exchanged and Fred with 'the most perfect exhibition of mountain courtesy' descended and invited Jack to take over the lead. According to Jack 'A leader is simply powerless against a man like Pigott: he is pursued upwards by winged words of encouragement, and any voicing of hesitation is greeted by the briefest expressions of incredulity. My impression is that it was my instinctive desire never to

see the polite look of sorrow and unbelief cross Pigott's face that kept the party on the move'. Thus another fine route, 'Longland's' was completed. Later Fred also took part in the first ascent of the Narrow Slab, this time led by a young Rucksacker, the late Maurice Linnell.

His first season in the Alps was with George Bower when they did the first ascent of the Col de Nantillons to be followed by the first guideless ascent of the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon. Many more visits were made to the Alps and Dolomites, interrupted by the Second World War, a particularly notable event being Fred's lead of the Ago di Sciora, in a thunderstorm, and his masterly guidance of his party on the return to the Albigna Hut over the glacier in the darkness.

Little collective thought had been given to mountain rescue until a series of accidents during 1928–32 emphasized the need for a rescue service for the injured. This was met by the formation of the First Aid Committee (later the Mountain Rescue Committee) which consisted of representatives of the major climbing clubs.

Fred was elected as Secretary, a post which he held until he became Chairman in 1955, and later President in 1972. The first major task was the establishment of rescue posts in strategic positions, often club huts, inns, youth hostels and private houses, where equipment could be stored and cared for by the occupier or warden. When the need arose he (or she) would collect a group of climbers, shepherds, quarrymen and others to take out the kit, apply first-aid and bring down the injured climber to the nearest road and a waiting ambulance.

Fred undertook the difficult and delicate task of establishing these rescue posts in a most tactful and convincing manner, enabling a network of them to be established in all the mountain areas of Britain. The success of these early efforts can be appreciated by the fact that about 300 casualties are now dealt with each year. He was the driving force behind all aspects of the committee's work in developing and expanding its objectives, putting in an immense amount of effort and giving wise guidance with great tactfulness and modesty. He was also able to bring into the committee many experts in various fields of activity appropriate to its work whether it were designing stretchers, advising on medical matters or negotiating with government departments.

His colleagues were often amazed at the incisiveness, deep understanding and wide range of his thinking on the multitude of problems which arose during his many years of service to fellow mountaineers. His work for mountain rescue was recognized by the award of the OBE, and by the high esteem in which he was held by the mountaineering world.

He joined the Alpine Club in 1944, served on the committee 1961 and was Vice-President 1969. He had been President of the Rucksack Club, of which he was an Honorary member, and President of the British Mountaineering Council. He was also an Honorary Member of the Climbers' Club.

Of the man himself, he had a strong athletic body, a keen mind doubly blessed by a kind, gentle and modest manner. An engaging feature was the patience and interest he would show in one's own particular problems or ideas, no matter how remote from his own, and the encouragement he gave which made the difficulties ahead seem to be so much easier. He had a keen sense of humour and wit. He would regale his friends with amusing and often amazing anecdotes, whilst enjoying his company on the hills, or his generous hospitality at his home in Woodford.

His interests ranged over a wide field—literature, poetry (Wordsworth especially), the fine arts, religion, and his successful family business.

A particularly literary gem is a short article he wrote on the mundane subject of 'Washing Up' which, in a different context illustrates his character. It concludes:

'Patience, practice and courage will in time bring their own reward. Not all of us can hope to storm the virgin peak, or be the first to mark the untrodden snow, but even we simpler folk can feel the thrill of work well done, it is for us to point with pride to the spotless silver and stainless steel and say with Cornelia, "These are my jewels".'

Herbert Hartley

Ivor Armstrong Richards, CH (1893–1979)

Ivor Armstrong Richards was born at Sandbach in Cheshire in 1893, not a great distance from the Welsh hills which he learned to know and love in boyhood. As a Cambridge undergraduate and young don, he lost his heart to the crags. He was an inveterate designer of new routes. Many remained theoretical but not all. The Holly Tree Wall on Idwal Slabs was worked out by him with C. F. Holland. Dorothea Pilley, later to become his wife, was with them. It was a typical perfectionist enterprise discarding and incorporating variants until at a

later date it was finalized to Ivor's satisfaction. Dorothea remarks: 'He had great pleasure in telling his second (me) how to do an awkward move as though he were analysing a mathematical problem'. Good craftsmanship was at the heart of his delight in mountaineering, particularly in the Alps where so many different skills combine. It is the underlying theme of his superb essay 'The Lure of High Mountaineering'¹. I still recall his displeasure when I clumsily destroyed the outer edge of a snowstep on some traverse. Objectively, it did not much matter in that particular place. He minded the clumsiness. A well-made snowstep deserved to be respected like a well-made poem.

Though not perhaps one of the handful of great guideless leaders of the 20s and 30s, his talent for planning expeditions was of a high order and he and Dorothea made a remarkable team, picking up peak after peak, often traverses, as the seasons went by, mostly alone but sometimes with friends. Once or twice they had the rare pleasure of making a new route from some little-frequented quarter. Such was the ascent of the rock spire of the Becca Rayette by the big unclimbed ridge running up from the Val Sassa. It cost them a fearsome descent in the dark of the Upper Chardonney glacier followed by a night out and a dawn descent into the Valpelline.

1921 found them at Arolla. They climbed the Aiguille de la Za carrying on with a traverse of the extended crest of the Douves Blanches dropping down to the N Col de Bertol. Here, they were met by a young guide who explained that he had seen them on the long ridge, guessed they might be thirsty and had brought them a flask of hot tea. This was Joseph Georges le Skieur. They made friends at once and engaged Joseph for a week which finished with the Ferpècle Ridge of the Dent Blanche and a new route up the Petit Bouquetin from the Arolla glacier. So began one of the great guide-client partnerships. In succeeding seasons they did many fine expeditions with Joseph. I name 3 for their difficulty and/or diversity. The NE ridge of the Jungfrau, a second ascent. The summits of Monte Rosa to the Signal Kuppe, followed after a rest-day at the Cabane Margherita by the traverse of the Lyskamm and over Castor down to the Schwarzthor. The N ridge of the Grivola, that year (1924) a shining curve of ice which entailed more than 6 hours continuous step-cutting for Joseph. In 1928 came the climax, the longed-for unclimbed N ridge of the Dent Blanche, an achievement splendidly described in Dorothea's book *Climbing Days*.

Ivor's professional career began brilliantly at Cambridge in the 1920s. He became a Fellow of Magdalene in 1926 and was one of the key figures in building up the English School and in a revolutionary approach to literary criticism. He was also deeply involved with C. K. Ogden in the invention and use of Basic English.

But all told the Richards spent many years away from Europe. Ivor held a chair at Peking 1929-1930 and from 1936-38 he was director of the Orthological Institute of China. Wherever they went they sought out mountains and in Yunnan they made first ascents of Gyaloko (6100m) and Haba Sham (5790m) in the Soweto range. Returning home via America they visited the Bugaboo chain and made 2 first ascents. They were in Canada twice in the 30s and made a first ascent of the highest point in the Bobbie Burns range with C. Kain. I pick only a few examples and have not even enumerated all their 'firsts'. A complete catalogue of the ranges they visited would double my already over-running space. Ivor was still climbing small peaks in the Alps in his 85th year and in his 87th year he joyfully accepted for himself and Dorothea an invitation from the Chinese Government to return to the University of Peking for an extensive lecture tour, taking up once more the problems of Basic English. It was a gallant finale but more than his now frail strength could bear. He was taken gravely ill, flown home to hospital in England and died in Addenbrook's some weeks later.

At the outbreak of war, Ivor was due to go to Harvard where he was appointed to a chair in 1944. He was loath to leave England but the Foreign Office was insistent. So the war years were spent in New England. As always every possible opportunity took the Richards to mountains. Working with the Canadian Alpine Club Ivor trained Commando units in mountaineering. In winter, he and Dorothea, with the famous Bemis Crew of the Appalachian Mountain Club, climbed all the main summits of the Mt Washington range on snowshoes. Snowshoe travel appealed to them specially and they made many trips *à deux* in the White Mountains.

In 1935, 7 of us met to ski in the Oetzthal; Philip and Margot Bowden, Paul Sinker, Ivor and Dorothea, Theo Chorley and myself. All but the Bowdens were novices, but after a few days they suggested a glacier tour: 'You'll be alright' said Philip: 'You're all mountaineers'.

¹ Republished in *Complementarities*, New Carcanet Press 1977.

During the war, when we were scattered, I recalled those days, specially perhaps the evenings in some Austrian hut when with legs luxuriously stretched out and tongues loosened by '*thee mit*' or kirsch talk began—real talk. It was dominated though never domineered by Ivor. He began to talk only when he had sensed the mood of the company, moving through depth, brilliance, irony, wit that could blast away any sham position but at other times could be puckish in its play. During those privileged evenings I caught glimpses into one of the finest minds of my generation.

He was surely the most distinguished writer-cum climber member of the Club since Leslie Stephen and it was good to hear of his pleasure when he knew just before he fell ill in China that he had been made an Honorary Member. He wrote a number of brilliant books but unlike Stephen he wrote little specifically about mountains. I think of the essay already mentioned, 'Mountains and Mountaineering as Symbols', an exciting adventure with ideas (AJ 82 35), a few poems, among them the entrancing 'Building Fires in Snow', and 'Resign Resign' printed below, his own farewell.

Katharine Chorley

RESIGN! RESIGN!

Up hill, down dale . . .
So ran the tale.

We have them in our bones:
Ten thousand miles of stones,
Moraine, debris and scree;
As many, could be twice,
Over the fissured ice,
The clinging, slippery snows
That of our feet dispose;
As many again, or more,
Beside the torrent's roar,
Within the scented gloom
Or through the sorrowing cwm.

Or by the scythe-worn dell,
And cow-placated swell
Up the redeeming grass
Lifting toward the pass.

Along the ridge itself,
The ridge that earns its pride,
Riven from either side:
Lord of the rift or shelf
Whence the awaiting cliffs
Hang out their 'buts' and 'ifs'
To magnetize the eye
From sweeping round the suspect sky,
That could so soon prevent
Our inexplicable intent.

Or where the driven snow
Invites our steps to show
No fluted, rearing wall,
Or plum'd crest too tall
For our impertinence.

What did we gather thence?
The footprint in the dust,
The upward roll and thrust,
The limber footfall plunging down,
The axe head friendly in the palm
Or snug between the sack and arm.
Clutches of delicate fears,
Qualms as the *néant* nears:
Relieved—our summit joys;
Relieved—what toys!

All that—Goodbye!
And this has told you why:
Not of all that bereft,
But we, ourselves, have left . . .
Leave that behind.
And not as Fall . . .
Even resigned.¹

Eric Roberts

One spring evening in 1966 I found myself in the warm fug of Fraulein Biner's in Zermatt, rather reluctantly sharing a table with a crowd of noisy Austrians. Directly opposite me sat another Briton, but such was the fluency of his German that I did not discover this for some time.

Once he had lapsed into English, I soon realized that this lean youth, not yet 21, was something of a phenomenon. At an age when most of us were still looking forward to our first Alpine season, he had bagged more peaks than most British climbers hope for in a lifetime.

We arranged to meet in Chamonix the following March. Eight days later we were in Saas Fee having completed the High Level Route via the Plateau du Couloir, outflanking Zermatt

¹ From *Internal Colloquies* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

and its clanking machinery for reasons which I took to be aesthetic purity but which I now realize were largely economy on Eric's part: as a student, he had to stretch his pocket money a long way. We went on to do some peaks with ski, including a traverse of the 4 tops of the Grand Combin. During subsequent years we made other trips together, usually with ski but one of the most memorable was a splendid 5-day crossing on foot of the remote Irghil M'Goun, in the Atlas, in very arctic conditions.

On such trips, whatever the weather and however strenuous the tracking in deep snow, Eric was unstoppable.

His mountaineering had a certain fin-de-siècle character. Born in N Wales, reared within earshot of the Spurs' football ground where in season he spent his Saturday afternoons, educated at Mill Hill and King's College, London, Eric had a Welsh father, and a Swedish mother who introduced him to the Alps before his eleven-plus and thereafter encouraged him to spend his vacations there. Eric needed no encouragement. Often alone or with chance companions he spent his teens systematically working his way through the Eastern Alps. Before the age of 20 he had turned his attention to the bigger peaks of the Western Alps. Yet at no time did he take part in the domestic climbing scene. His experience of British rock climbing was negligible. He made no special effort to get fit for the Alps. Like the Victorians, he had no need: with 3 months or more of Alpine holiday he could well afford a week or 2 for 'training' excursions.

This approach had its drawbacks. He was out of his depth on technical ground, though, with suitable leaders, he had done several D, and TD, climbs. His rope management was disconcertingly casual. On ice, he was indifferent to the finer points of stepcutting or belaying. On skis, it was all too obvious that he was self-taught. His climbing and his ski-ing, however, made up in speed and sureness what they lacked in elegance.

In his early twenties, while remaining active in the Alps, he began also to branch out beyond, to Greece (Olympus), Turkey (Ararat), Iran (Demavend), the Atlas (all the main peaks), East Africa (ditto), the Hindu Kush (Noshaq), usually by the ordinary route on peaks straightforward enough, but each trip seemed to take him further afield and, inevitably, higher. In 1977, Nanda Devi. In 1979 Annapurna. Where next, one wondered. But no, for he was still some 1500m from the summit of Annapurna, sitting-out a five-day storm with 2 Americans, when their camp was erased by the windblast from a monster avalanche. One of his companions was Gil Harder, with whom he had climbed Noshaq and Nanda Devi.

Though Eric had climbed over 1100 peaks in the Alps, let alone other areas, he was no tiger, nor was he a pioneer. No new route bears his name. He might now fade into obscurity, but for one thing. His enthusiasm, his colossal breadth of experience, his energy and stamina, an excellent memory for topographical detail, and the ability to work far into the night, combined to produce a natural guidebook writer of extraordinary promise. West Col were not slow to appreciate this, and a fruitful partnership developed. His guide to the Stubai was published when he was 26, followed a year later by a guide to the High Level Route. Then came the Glockner. Guides to the Zillertal and Corsica were in hand and there were plans for many more. On his way out to Annapurna he delivered the manuscript for a new work on Welzenbach, which is to be published in 1980.

Like Welzenbach, he was only 33 when he died. That he was able to achieve so much is due in part to an equally remarkable person, his wife Ann, who cheerfully managed, more or less single-handed, their business, their home, and their small son, during Eric's long absences in the hills and in the sanctuary of his study.

Donald Mill

Rosemary Enid Sanderson (1924–1978)

The news of Rosemary's death, just before Christmas 1978, came as a shock. It seemed quite impossible to believe that, with her great strength, both in character and physique, she had been struck down so prematurely. Those who had the privilege to know her well were not surprised at the immense courage she showed when told by the doctor that she had inoperable cancer and had only a few months to live. During those last months, before finally going home to her family, she visited many of her friends, enjoying as best she could that wonderful autumn which seemed to go on and on.

Rosemary loved ski-ing and mountains. The challenge of ski-ing away from the beaten track, exploring little-known valleys and the high mountains, were very much part of her life. In the mountains and elsewhere she was always very able and skilled in whatever she did and tremendously strong. It was these attributes which enabled her to emerge as a first-rate leader

and to give so much pleasure to very many skiers who, for various reasons, lacked the confidence and ability which she was able to impart to them.

In a wonderfully active life, cut tragically short, Rosemary made an enormous contribution, not only to the many clubs and organizations in which she was interested, but also to the very many people she met in everyday life. She was particularly proud of being one of the first ladies elected to the Alpine Club.

I skied for 2 winters with her, once in the Stubai Valley and another week touring from Galtür to Klosters. I found her an excellent leader who knew how to keep discipline in her party (both times at least 15 or more members) and still be on excellent terms with everybody. We climbed 2 peaks from the Dresdner hut, one was the Zuckerhütl; I remember the last steep snowslope to the summit, which had to be climbed on foot. A few of the skiers had never climbed on snow without skis and felt insecure on the descent, but Rosemary brought them all safely down. On the long ascents her strength allowed her to move along the party at will. It did not matter to her, to talk now to some of the slower skiers like me, who may have stayed behind a bit, and then rush forwards to exchange a word with the guide in front. She was certainly one of our best guides, as well in the preparation as in the execution of her touring programmes. We all shall miss her very much.

E. T. Hartley and Walter Kirstein

Ralph Forester Stobart (1889–1979)

'Father has gone to fix a belay for us higher up'! Such was the laconic message which I had received from his son Geoffrey of the death of my old climbing friend, Ralph Stobart, who had long been known as 'The Belay'. He had died from a stroke on 10 March this year at his son's home at Tregony, Cornwall, at the age of 90, having been born at Stavely, Yorkshire, the fourteenth of 15 children. His father, William Cutley Stobart, was a prominent mine owner and a director of the historic Stockton and Darlington Railway. His mother, née Francis Wilkinson, was a niece of General J. T. Walker, sometime Surveyor-General of India.

After Wellington College and then a spell in the railway workshops at Darlington, Ralph studied engineering at Leeds University. His fine physique made him a useful Rugby footballer for Harrogate; but he soon developed a passion for potholing and local climbing. During the First War he was invalided out of the Grenadier Guards, owing to a peculiar form of sleepy sickness, but then joined the equivalent of the Home Guard in a battalion that was being trained to run the railways in occupied territory; and in the Second War he joined the Air Ministry Inspectorate as an explosives examiner, or as he put it 'O.C. Squibs and Crackers'.

I first met him at the end of the First War, and we were soon climbing together in Snowdonia, the Scottish Highlands and the Alps. A frequent member of our party was R. A. Frazer (late AC), and I was glad in 1920 to propose Ralph as a member also. In 1921, after a preliminary trip on skis in the Alps, he accompanied us to Spitsbergen on the first Oxford University expedition, and it was only an unfortunate attack of blood-poisoning that prevented his being a member of my exploratory sledging party into the interior of that glacier-bound land.

Of our Alpine climbs the principal was perhaps the traverse (guideless) of the Grands Charmoz and Grépon in 1920, apart from other local peaks. He was a sound mover on rock, snow and ice, and he soon earned the title of 'The Belay', as an excellent anchor of our party on steep terrain. This was, moreover, well exemplified on 2 of our Scottish climbs: (1) The Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis under winter conditions and semi-darkness, with R. A. Frazer in the party, and (2) the first complete ascent of 'the Chasm' on Buachaille Etive, Glencoe, involving an 11 hours' climb, in which my wife took part, and on which Stobart performed trojan work as a belay, and in backing up my lead on some of the rather fearsome pitches. His cheerful and generous disposition was a great asset on all these expeditions. He would sing vigorously during night driving to the N and ask us to join in to keep him awake; and on reaching the Scottish Border he would burst out into 'Ho-ro my nut-brown maiden ...', and 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled ...' etc.

Stobart had married 4 times and had 8 children in all, a son of his first marriage, terminated tragically by the 'Spanish flu' in 1918, being Tom (Thomas Ralph), born in 1914 and so well known as a photographer, mountaineer and big-game specialist. Tom writes that he recollects his father not as a 90-year-old, but as a willing and solid stance that had once provided his head for his own son's exit from Y Gully in the Cairngorm Mountains!

N. E Odell

Willi Unsoeld

Dr William F. Unsoeld 52, was killed in an avalanche at about 2pm on Sunday, 4 March while descending from Mount Rainier in the State of Washington. He was escorting a group of 22 Evergreen State College students and was at about 3300m when rapidly rising temperatures and warm rain loosened the snow. One of the students was also killed with him.

Willi Unsoeld had had wide Himalayan climbing experience. In 1949 he made an attempt on Nilkanta in Garhwal. It was at that time that, seeing Nanda Devi, he declared that it was the most beautiful mountain he had ever seen and that his first daughter would bear its name. He was a member of an unsuccessful expedition to Makalu in 1954. In 1960 he made the first ascent of Masherbrum (7821m), in the Karakoram. In 1963 he and Tom Hornbein made the remarkable first ascent of the W ridge of Mount Everest. In a bivouac on the descent, in typical fashion he tended to his companion's feet rather than his own and as a result lost nine of his own toes. Despite that, he kept on climbing. He was co-leader of the 1976 Indo-American Nanda Devi Expedition, which climbed the difficult NW face and N ridge. On that expedition, his daughter, Nanda Devi Unsoeld, tragically died of an embolism at 7400m. Both father and daughter would have been on the next summit team.

Unsoeld had a distinguished professional career. At the time of his death he was a professor of comparative religion at the Evergreen State College in Olympia Washington, where he combined standard, disciplined erudition with wilderness experience. He had also held other important posts. From 1962 to 1967 he was in Nepal, first as director of the Peace Corps there and then the Agency for International Development. From 1967 to 1970 he was vice-president of the American Outward Bound.

H. Adams Carter

The Right Reverend Ronald Ralph Williams, D.D., LL.D. (1906–1979)

The death of R. R. Williams, known to us as the Bishop of Leicester, on 13 February 1979 came as a great shock to his many friends in the Swiss Alpine Club and the Alpine Club.

Beneath his friendly and benign appearance there existed a personality of immense dedication to his chosen profession and of equally intense interest in the Arts, Music, Poetry and Sport.

He was educated at Judd School, Tonbridge, and afterwards at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and Ridley Hall. He served as Head of the Religious Division of the Ministry of Information during the Second World War after which he was elected Principal of St John's College, Durham, and became the Bishop of Leicester in 1953. Eventually he took his seat as one of 20 bishops in the House of Lords in 1959. He was appointed Assistant Bishop of London in 1979 but his death in February prevented him from taking up his duties in this capacity.

He served on many Commissions for the Church of England both at home and abroad and was a valued and respected member of every board on which he served. Being a self-confessed traditionalist, he was known in clerical circles as 'Leicester Square' but he was also acknowledged as a scholar of distinction, having a considerable number of erudite publications to his credit. In debate, his tone of voice, his smile and his understanding of the secular world gave his speeches the telling charm of gentle persuasiveness.

His love of sport—which included cricket, golf, riding, squash and tennis—led him to an interest in mountaineering which he and his wife enjoyed in the company of the Zermatt guide Bernard Biner. He was elected to the ABMSAC in 1947 and to the Alpine Club in 1958.

During any leisure time he managed to arrange during his official missions abroad, he took the opportunity to climb in the hills, whether it might be in California or the Middle East. He also knew the mountains in the Engadine and the Chamonix area but his heart was surely captured by the Valais Canton of Switzerland. This was the most enchanting district in which he could mix business with pleasure as he was Summer Chaplain of the English Church in Zermatt from 1946 until 1978. His pastorship, consequently, included the Alpine Club Centenary Meet in 1957 and the Matterhorn Centenary Celebration in 1965.

It was his welcome duty in 1970 to officiate at the Thanksgiving Service at the Centenary of the English Church in Zermatt. On that day, the quiet unobtrusive little church was filled to overflowing and the occasion must have given him a profound feeling of humble satisfaction.

He was a good man, a good friend and he will be sadly missed by his many friends in the Alpine Club.

H. N. Fox

Alfred Zürcher (1889–1979)

Alfred Zürcher was elected to the club in 1928, proposed by F. S. Smythe and seconded by T. Graham Browne. His list of expeditions began with the statement 'Probably about 1000 peaks and passes in all parts of the Alps (about half of them guideless) between the years 1904 and 1928'! These included Monte di Zocca N ridge (1922) and Piz Badile N ridge (1923) both first ascents with Walter Risch; the traverse of the entire Sciora group (1923), the E face of Monte Rosa (Marinelli; 1924) and the Viereselgrat (1924) also with Walter Risch. The following year he did the Dent d'Hérens by the NW face and the traverse of the Drus with Joseph Knubel. Two years later he did the N face of the Aiguille de Bionnassay and the traverse of the Grandes Jorasses with Eustace Thomas and Joseph Knubel. In 1932 he made the first ascent of the NW face of the Eiger with H. Lauper, Joseph Knubel and Alexander Graven. He also made the second ascent of the NE face of Piz Roseg and the third ascent of the Younggrat on the Breithorn.

In the succeeding years he climbed mostly with Joseph Knubel and Hermann Lochmatter until Joseph Knubel damaged his knee and was succeeded by Arthur Lochmatter. In 1943 they did the traverse of the Weisshorn, up the N ridge and down the Schalligrat, reversing the traverse the following day! Altogether Alfred Zürcher ascended more than 300 four-thousand metre peaks and did the E face of Monte Rosa 3 times. He continued active climbing until 1961 when he visited the Dolomites with Arthur and Hermann Lochmatter. His last visit to Zermatt was in 1976 at the age of 87!

I first met Alfred after the war, when staying at the Monte Rosa in 1946. I never had the good fortune to climb with him, but I met him on numerous occasions at Zermatt and I was privileged to be one of his friends. He was the soul of kindness and generosity and so good to us younger climbers. We had many memorable raclette parties at the Seiler House. Every year when I arrived at the Monte Rosa I found a bottle of Johannisberg waiting on my table. In 1957 it fell to my lot to arrange the AC Swiss dinner at the Monte Rosa. Alfred was an enormous help and he gave a champagne cocktail party to the club.

In 1961 my wife and I came over the Allalin pass to Zermatt. Alfred had heard that we were coming and when we arrived at the Täsch hut, there he was with Hermann and Arthur Lochmatter and a bottle of Johannisberg to celebrate our arrival. This act of his was typical.

Alfred was a great lover of the English way of life. He spent the years of World War I in Britain. He had a great sense of humour. He told me an amusing story about a mistake by his wife. She wanted a shutter repaired and assumed that an Undertaker would do the job. However, when she entered the shop she was greeted by a very solemn figure in black and retired hastily. Apart from being an outstanding climber Alfred Zürcher was a very great gentleman. He was made an honorary Vice President in 1957 and an honorary member in 1963.

T. A. H. Peacocke

Lord Hunt writes:

My recollection of Alfred: Firstly, in his role as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Club under my Presidency, during the Club's centennial year in 1957. During that memorable event, Alfred demonstrated his devotion and loyalty to the Alpine Club by taking a very full part in the anniversary events. I remember him particularly during the celebrations in Zermatt in the summer of that year.

Secondly, my wife and I used to meet Alfred regularly at Zermatt in the 1950s and early 1960s. It was always a delight to spend time with him at the Monte Rosa Hotel, where he greatly enjoyed remembering some of his fine climbs of a quarter of a century earlier. In those years, Alfred was usually accompanied by his 2 grandsons, of whom he was very proud and for whom he paid the expenses of a guide to take them up some of the classic routes. I am not certain how much the 2 boys (as they then were) enjoyed this grand-paternal oversight and encouragement!

I remained regularly in touch with Alfred, by messages at Christmas time, until last year. He was a loyal friend and a true mountaineer.

John Hunt