General Meetings of the Alpine Club 1980

15 January	Members' slides
12 February	Paul Nunn: Climbing in Padar
11 March	Doug Scott: Nuptse and around Everest 1979
15 April	Joint lecture with ABMSAC—Tom Sage: Ballooning over the Alps
13 May	Robin Hodgkin: Mountains and Education
23 September	John Barry: Gauri Sankar
21 October	Alan Blackshaw with the Ski Club of Great Britain: Scandinavian Ski Mountaineering
18 November	Sally Westmacott: Three visits to the Wind Rivers Range
6 December	Annual General Meeting and Winter Dinner

Other Events

Dr Charles Warren mounted an exhibition of paintings—The Himalayan Scene—for the Annual General Meeting in December.

Alpine Club Meets

23 July—6 August Jointly with Climbers' Club family Meet at Bosigran, Cornwall.
23 July—16 August Jointly with ABMSAC Grindelwald, Switzerland, camping near Hotel Glacier.
16 August—30 September ABMSAC Meet at Bivio—Alpine Club members welcome.

Club Staff

Jean Fielding has taken over from Sue Lawford; Sue is now studying to qualify as a Chartered Accountant. Phil and Rosemary Seeney have taken over from Danny and Sherry Clarke-Lowes as caretakers of the Club. Phil Seeney is studying at both the Imperial College and the Royal College of Art.

Miscellaneous and Editor's Notes

Compiled by Edward Pyatt and John King

Contributions to the Alpine Club Archives It seems to me that many of us outlive our youthful circles and it becomes hard even for oneself to remember clearly what happened 60 or so years ago. This makes things difficult for editors and historians. Would it not be a useful thing for members to check and bring up-to-date for the archives their lists of climbs and dates of things alpine of special interest? It would also be valuable to list the date and place of publication of relevant climbing material. *Dorothea Richards*

The Library The long task of preparing the catalogue of books, guidebooks, journals and periodicals for publication is at last nearing completion. Typing the pages of the author catalogue of over 10,000 entries was completed in October 1980 and the subject catalogue should also be ready for the printer by mid-1981—publication should not be long delayed thereafter. Our next major task will be cataloguing the many manuscripts, volumes of tracts, maps, photographs and slides and a mass of correspondence for publication some years hence.

The Library is being used increasingly for reference particularly by younger members planning expeditions. In a recent twelve-month period a total of 517 visits were made of which 372 were by members. The demand for photocopying is also increasing and the Library has recently issued a leaflet giving information on the services provided with advice on copyright limitations, etc. The leaflet and associated order form may be obtained from the Librarian.

The sale of surplus books and journals to Members has provided further funds for the purchase of books to fill gaps in our collection and for the repair and re-binding of some of our older treasures. We are aware of further gaps to be filled as opportunity occurs and we have a list

of books awaiting repair. Gifts by Members of unwanted climbing books and journals for sale in aid of the Library have made a very worth-while contribution and more such gifts will be welcomed by the Librarian.

In these hard times financial contributions to this expensive undertaking are hard to come by, but they nevertheless can be attracted, if only on a scale lower than in easier days. Unremitting attention is paid to this by the Library Council which has to bear in mind the cost of cataloguing the manuscripts, etc. mentioned above. Many Members are and have been supporting the Library through covenanted donations; recent legislation has made such support more attractive to donors by reducing the minimum period from seven to four years and by providing relief of Income Tax on investment income and from the higher rates of tax in respect of covenanted donations. The Library is also able to benefit from concessions on Capital Gains Tax and Capital Transfer Tax on gifts and bequests made to it—our Treasurer, Mr J. H. Llywelyn Jones, will be happy to advise Members on the facilities available.

We have been particularly grateful to Mr Walter Amstutz, Mr Peter Lloyd, Mr W. E. Radcliffe and Dr Charles Warren for their gifts to the Library of rare and valuable books, slides and journals; to Mr W. R. Neate for the gift of his interesting bibliography of climbing books in the English language; to Mrs N. A. Pullman for the gift of slides; to our Honorary Member Mr Albert Eggler for the gift of a complete set of SAC Guidebooks; and for the very generous donation by Mrs I. A. Richards in memory of her husband. *Douglas Busk (Chairman)*

The Ice Chimney—*a play by Barry Collins* This one-man play is based on the life of Maurice Wilson, the man who thought he could climb Mount Everest alone and who perished in the attempt. This was in 1934 and his body was found the following year by Eric Shipton's Reconnaissance Expedition close to the site of Camp 3.

The play was first produced at the Edinburgh Festival where it won a first prize on the Fringe, and it was then brought to the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith, in a somewhat altered form during November 1980. Members of the Alpine Club and other mountaineers were invited to a special performance on Saturday 15 November, and to a wine party afterwards where they were hospitably received by the author, Barry Collins; the producer, John Chapman; the actor, Chris Ettridge; as well as the design, lighting, sound and stage managers.

Barry Collins based his play on what few facts are known about Wilson (from his diary and the book written about him) and the various myths that have sprung up around him. It is set at 22,000ft on Everest and the first act takes place the night before his death, and the second the following morning as he is about to set off for his final but unsuccessful attempt to climb the Ice Chimney which is barring his progress to the North Col. He is hallucinating and talking to people from his past and to God. It is a long and well-written monologue which very nearly, but does not quite, come off. It can best be described as experimental drama and the experiment was undoubtedly ambitious, interesting and valid. But the highlight of the evening was the superb acting performance of Christopher Ettridge.

The Alpine Club was asked to help with the production of this play and provided from its Archives the diaries of Wilson and Warren for display in the foyer at the Lyric Theatre, as well as photographs including one of Camp 3 (taken in 1933) to show where Wilson's body was found. A Meade tent of the period was used in the play.

A group of artists were invited to contribute works inspired by the Wilson story for an exhibition in the theatre to coincide with the showing of the play. An intriguing display of paintings and sculpture, including a laser design, was the result. *Charles Warren, Audrey Salkeld*

Errors in the AJ D. F. O. Dangar has drawn our attention to some errors in *AJ 85* 111. Annapurna I was climbed by M. Herzog and L. Lachenal in 1950 (not 1951); in two places in the same paragraph for 1971 read 1970; Ian Clough was killed by a falling ice tower and not by an avalanche; Machapuchare is 6997m (not 7059m).

C. Douglas Milner points out that the caption of Plate 14, p39, is incorrect. Mont Blanc is in fact behind the painter; the peak in view is the Aiguille à Bochard.

Problem in Logistics This is offered as an exercise for aspiring expedition leaders. Solution will be printed in a future *Journal*—no correspondence please.

Archpur is an easy mountain, 12 days' journey from Benthur, the nearest place for obtaining supplies. A climber tackling the mountain singlehanded can only carry 12 days' food supply at any one time. Where should he place his food stores on the march in? and how many days' food must he buy in order not to go short?

If your leader cannot solve this you may find yourself hungry some of the time.

Literary Stricture Trevanian, whose book *Eiger Sanction* (reviewed in *AJ 80* 291) was subsequently made into a film, writes in a footnote to his latest novel:

'In an early book the author portrayed the dangerous ascent of a mountain. In the process of converting this novel into a vapid film, a fine young climber was killed! (see *AJ 80* 304) Simple social responsibility now dictates that he avoid exact descriptions of tactics and events which, although they might be of interest to a handful of readers, might contribute to the harm done to (and by) the uninitiated.'

Tibet As spin-off from the closer relations developing between the UK and the Peoples' Republic of China, package tours are now available to Lhasa via Pekin. The cost was promised to be £2600 for a 3-week trip.

Mount Everest Foundation The new Hon. S cretary is Brig. D. A. Barker-Wyatt, North Close, Littleton Panell, Devizes, Wilts, SN10 4ES. This office functions purely for the business of the Foundation and cannot in any circumstances act as a general information bureau.

The System for In Memoriam Notices Last year (*AJ 85* 245) I outlined some of the problems we meet in reviewing books and explained why sometimes the note does not appear as soon as the author or the publisher might have wished.

Very similar circumstances affect the preparation of In Memoriam notices. The Assistant Editor responsible finds a multiplicity of attitudes varying from the willing volunteer eager to do something for a life-long friend to the proposer (or seconder) who, when approached, said 'I hardly knew the chap'.

If the expected notice does not appear in the Journal immediately following the death there are a number of possible explanations, but these hardly serve to mollify an anxious relative who looks for much more from us:

a) our long delay between going to press and publication
b) the sometimes long-drawn-out difficulty of persuading someone to undertake the task, and
c) the tardiness of a reluctant volunteer (or pressed man) in producing a notice after promising to do so.

Realization of these various problems would go a long way towards bringing out a journal as up-to-date as possible and serve to abate some undeserved criticism of our methods.

Building Climbing The 1980 E. Ward Drummond spectacular took place during May on the Statue of Liberty and involved an overnight bivouac. This year's beneficiary was once again Geronimo Pratt, described as a convicted murderer.

The Mountains of the Moon in profile In October a grazing occultation of Venus by the disc of the Moon, visible in midland England, silhouetted for a brief period some of the ranges of lunar mountains situated close to its edge. This phenomenon is only infrequently visible. The Liebniz Mountains rise to the same height as terrestrial Mount Everest.

Other volcanic activities Pavlof (2504m) in the Aleutian Range of Alaska was reported in eruption in November, 1980, hurling 'rocks, lava and ash 4000m into the sky'. It has exhibited activity 25 times during the last 300 years, most recently in 1975 and 1976, but the present spasms are more violent than usual.

Mountain on Tethys The spacecraft sending back pictures from Saturn in November revealed an enormous mountain on the moon, Tethys, which is 900km in diameter. 'At first the feature was thought to be a huge crater, but the shadows were in the wrong places'. As the moon in question has an irregular shape, it is not possible to define a height, only to speak in terms of height difference between peaks and adjacent hollows.

The Grivola decapitated Our contemporary *Montagnes* (11/80) carries a note that the Grivola in the Grand Paradis group is no longer 3969m. A massive rockfall of several thousand cubic metres has cast the summit down the SE flank, noticeably changing the shape of the mountain. Will it be harder or easier for mountaineers? A report is awaited.

'Conservation and the Countryside Heritage' This is the title of a paper by the Countryside Review Committee, which suggests replacing the present National Parks system by a 2-tier system. Small expanses of outstanding scenery should continue to be administered by the Countryside Commission, while the surrounding areas should come under local authorities. The French have a 2-tier system of this sort in their Parks.

There are strong fears that dismantling much of the hard won gains of the present Parks system would create considerable new problems without going any way towards solving old ones. We await the outcome with interest, prepared if necessary to add our voice when appropriate to the arguments.

The exclusion of all wheeled vehicles (and horses) from the central areas would appear to have attractive possibilities for *real* preservation of wild country.

Market Research invades Mountaineering An extensive market research exercise undertaken in the USA will be the subject of a book—*Mountaineering—A Sociologist's Perspective*—which is to appear in due course.

A poll was conducted of an appropriately divided cross-section of the population throughout the country. 1032 non-climbers were asked the single question—'What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of people who climb mountains?' The results are summarized in *Off Belay* (4/80):

a) 47% regarded the climber as a 'good' individual—adventurous, brave, strong, striving, and so on.
b) 20% took the opposite view—crazy, stupid, dumb, 'nuts', and so on.
c) 11% gave answers concerned with climbing environment—snow, rocks, flowers, goats etc etc.
d) 6% mentioned individuals such as Hillary, Jean Claude Killy, Clint Eastwood; or groups such as hikers, skiers, Sherpas; or places such as Everest, the Alps, Colorado etc.
e) 4% referred to the dangers
f) 2% saw mountaineering as a spiritual or transcendental topic
g) the remainder had no worthwhile impression.

The results were analysed according to age, sex and geographical area. We await the overall results with a complete lack of interest.

Lake District avalanche Early in the year an avalanche sweeping down Harter Fell (near Haweswater, Cumbria) was reported to have carried a party 5-strong for 300m down the mountain.

The West Highland Way This, the first long-distance footpath in Scotland, was opened during October. Let us hope there are to be many others.

Mount Saint Helens Volcanoes are something of an acquired taste. Even when glaciers cover their lava screes, their climbs can sometimes be monotonous; their views tend to be of distant horizons rather than of yesterday's or tomorrow's expeditions. But they do offer, to a degree that older mountains cannot match, a sense of intimacy with the forces that shape our planet. On this count they cast a spell over climber and non-climber alike. As President Carter is reported to have remarked (perhaps rather tactlessly, in the circumstances) after the major eruption of Mount Saint Helens in Washington State, USA, on 18 May 1980:

> 'People will come from all over the world to observe the impressiveness of the force of nature. I would say it would be, if you'll excuse the expression, a tourist attraction that would equal the Grand Canyon.'

As in the case of Mount Saint Helens, what volcanoes cast can amount to rather more than a spell. The explosion of 18 May was equivalent to 10 million tons of TNT, 500 times the Hiroshima blast. It removed (temporarily, we hope) about 1300 feet from this 9700-foot mountain, and spread 1.5 cubic miles of debris, mainly in the form of glass-like silica particles, across the northwestern States of the USA. The ash covered the small town of Ritzville to a depth of 7 inches, with drifts up to 2 feet in places. The larger towns of Yakima and Spokane were paralysed. By early June, after further eruptions, estimates of the damage caused reached £1.6 billions. But fewer than 100 people are believed to have been killed.

Mount Saint Helens had given fair warning. For some years geologists in the know have judged it the most likely of the Cascade volcanoes to erupt. In the second half of March earthquake swarms were detected beneath the mountain, with intensities rising to 4.0 on the Richter scale. By March 26 the level of activity had become so alarming that the Spirit Lake

Ranger Station on the north side of the mountain was closed. The first major tremor came on 28 March with the opening of a new crater near the summit; a second new crater followed two days later. Despite—or in some cases, perhaps, because of—these warnings and the threat of a $500 fine for 'trespassers', at least 3 parties made ascents in the next month.

A few comparisons may help to put Mount Saint Helens in some perspective. The blast on 18 May was similar in scale to that of Vesuvius in AD 79, when at least 2000 people in the towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii lost their lives. The eruption of Mount Etna in 1669 killed ten times as many. The eruption in 1815 of Mount Tambora, on Sumbawa Island in Indonesia, ejected 25 cubic miles of volcanic material—the largest amount in recorded times. The Krakatoa explosion of 1883 was heard 3000 miles away, and about 36000 people were killed by the tidal waves which followed. By contrast, there was no known loss of life in the eruption of Mount Katmai in Alaska in 1912; but the blast was ten times as big as that of Mount Saint Helens.

Our summers may, it seems, be very slightly cooler for the next year or two. Mount Saint Helens may still have much to teach volcanologists, and the rest of us: in its last period of activity between 1831 and 1857 it erupted 14 times. But for the moment it seems that the world has escaped with remarkably few scars from this latest show of instability in its crust. And it is surely good news that there will, after all, be some new routes for the next generation of climbers to pioneer.

Mountaineers and Scientists Before setting off to lead the Royal Geographical Society's 150th anniversary expedition to the Karakoram, our member Professor Keith Miller gave a briefing at the RGS. In the course of this briefing he is reported to have drawn a distinction between a scientific expedition such as this one and a 'mere' mountaineering expedition. The difference lay, he said, in the varying reactions to seeing a comrade drop down a crevasse. A mountaineer at once tries to haul up his mate. A scientist first goes for the rucksack with his findings in it.

Reporting this distinction to its readers, the *Daily Telegraph* described it as 'useful'. No doubt they had the interests of mere mountaineers in mind. Before accepting an invitation to join an expedition with companions with doubtful priorities, one should clearly conduct the appropriate experiment. But be warned: to do so might be to betray a scientific bent.

Alpine Conviviality The Concise Oxford Dictionary used to define a 'club' as an 'Association of persons united by some common interest, meeting periodically for co-operation (Alpine, etc) or conviviality.' Charles Warren, who brought this to our attention, writes:

> 'I rather like the way in which the Old Lady of South Audley Street takes precedence in this entry, and the delightful thought that not only is the Club united by a common interest, but also by conviviality.'

Being aware of the dangers which lurk between the covers of out-of-date guidebooks we decided to check the entry in the latest (6th) edition. Members will be pleased to know that the AC still takes precedence; but alas, the phrase 'by conviviality' has been usurped by the anodyne word 'socially'. We trust that this is simply a mistake which will be put right in the next edition. Or does the change suggest something more sinister? Is there, perhaps, a discontented Oxford mole in our midst?

Mountains in the Eye of Man An exhibition under this title was mounted in 1980 in the University of Lancaster Library, where the Library of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club is now kept. The AC was represented at the opening by Charles Warren, who describes it as a very professional effort.

The St Gotthard and Seelisberg road tunnels The longest road tunnel in the world, linking Goeschenen in Central Switzerland with Airolo in the Ticino, was opened on 5 September 1980. It is 16.3km long and at a height of 1175m. The task took 11 years with 500 workers excavating more than 1.2 million m^3 of rock, and cost 686 million SF. The tunnel provides an all weather route, handling 1800 cars per hour, and is toll-free. The car/rail service through the railway tunnel has been discontinued.

The Seelisberg Tunnel on the same route, linking Fluelen and Beckenried on the S shores of the Vierwald-Stättersee, was opened 3 months later. This is 9.25km long with two tunnels in each direction and has the same handling capacity; costing 725 million SF, it took 10 years to build.

The Lehn viaduct near the Seelisberg Tunnel is now Switerland's longest motorway bridge.

Mountain information We have received some details of a new co-operative mountain information service, based in Barcelona. Information is being assembled on a wide variety of mountain activities—first ascents, expeditions, books, journals, maps etc. The intention is to provide as comprehensive a service to climbers as possible. Anyone who would like to help or to know more about this project is asked to write direct to: Servicio General de Informacion de Montana, Apartado de Correos, nr. 2.291. Barcelona, Spain.

Acknowledgements I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Assistant Editors, Tom Connor, Geoffrey Templeman and John King (who has joined us this year). Their considerable assistance is deeply appreciated. The design and production owes much to Paul Sharp and Robin Collomb; the regular contributors (C. A. Russell, Evelio Echevarría, Michael Scott and M. J. Cheney) have played their usual indispensable roles; I thank them all. For many years now Bob Pettigrew has handled our advertisements, while Peter Foster has recently undertaken the task of boosting our sales; these unglamorous jobs are also important to the welfare of the Journal.

However, we are faced in the eighties with enforced changes in the publishing programme of the Club and the pattern of the *Alpine Journal* may well have to be altered; I shall make every effort to retain the best features of the prestigious publication, to which we have grown accustomed during the last decade.

The Alpine Journal

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