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## One Hundred Years Ago

(with extracts from the *Alpine Journal*)

The view was again magnificent – almost indescribable. We looked across the island from sea to sea, and, in addition to the views northward, eastward, and westward, we now beheld a glorious alpine panorama stretching to the S. as far as the eye could reach. The giant Tasman and all the lesser mountains were dwarfed, and the whole country was spread out like a map in relief at our feet.

The extensive views from the highest point in New Zealand were recalled by Malcolm Ross who with Samuel Turner, T C Fyfe and the guide Peter Graham reached the summit of Mount Cook (3764m)<sup>1</sup> on 10 January 1906 from a bivouac below the north-east, Zurbriggen ridge. After securing 'the first photograph of a party that had ever been taken on the summit' Ross and his companions descended to the Hooker glacier and the Hermitage Hotel by way of the north ridge and Green's Saddle.

This outstanding climb – the first traverse of the highest peak of Mount Cook – was one of several notable expeditions in the Southern Alps during the first two months of the year. On 1 February the Rev H E Newton, R S Low and Dr Ebenezer Teichelmann with Alex<sup>2</sup> Graham reached the summit of the unclimbed La Pérouse (3079m) and a few days later Newton, Low and Graham made the first ascent of Mount Hicks (3183m). Another visitor to this region was the Dutch climber Dr Hank Sillem who with Peter Graham completed a number of new routes including the first ascent of the Low Peak (3593m) of Mount Cook and, on 15 February, the ascent of another unclimbed peak, Mount Elie de Beaumont (3109m).

In the European Alps severe storms during the winter and early spring were followed by a long period of dry and sunny weather which continued for much of the climbing season. In the Mont Blanc range, where many peaks were in perfect condition, a number of outstanding routes was recorded in the Chamonix Aiguilles by some of the strongest parties of the day. On 20 June a classic climb was completed by V J E Ryan who with Franz and Josef Lochmatter made the first ascent of the east ridge of the Aiguille du Plan. In the following month, on 23 July, the summit of the unclimbed Aiguille du Peigne was reached by G Liégeard and Count Robert O'Gorman with Joseph<sup>3</sup> Ravel and Joseph Couttet. A few days later two other ridges were ascended for the first time: the south-east, *Chapeau à Cornes* ridge of the Dent du Requin on 3 August by R C Mayor, C D Robertson and Geoffrey Winthrop Young accompanied by Josef Knubel

and a porter; and, on 7 August, the north-east ridge to the north summit of the Aiguille de Blaitière by Henri Bregeault and T Thomas with Auguste and Pierre Blanc. On 22 August another successful climb was completed when Mme Berthelot and her guides Joseph and Edouard Ravanel made the first ascent of the south summit of the Aiguille des Ciseaux.

Other notable climbs in the range included the first ascent of Mont Brouillard by Karl Blodig and Oscar Eckenstein with Alexis Brocherel on 11 July and two ascents of the Brenva ridge route on Mont Blanc: by Ryan and the Lochmatter brothers on 10 July; and, on 19 July, by J Maunoury with Camille Ravanel, Jean Amiez and Alfred Ravanel as porter.

Following their successful expedition in the Mont Blanc range Young and Knubel moved to the Pennine Alps where on 11 August they joined forces with Ryan and the Lochmatters to complete an epic climb: the first ascent of the very dangerous south-west face of the Täschhorn. After forcing a way onto the south-east ridge 'some 60ft. only from the highest point' the two parties descended in darkness to the woods below the peak where Young found the path to Randa 'by falling headlong down a bank of pine-roots and alighting on the abrupt surprise of a horizontal surface.'

A week later, on 18 August Young, Robertson and Mayor with Knubel and Moritz Ruppen completed another classic climb: the first ascent of the Klein Triftji ridge, now known as the Younggrat, below the east summit of the Breithorn. In the same district Ryan and the Lochmatters, one of the fastest parties of their day, undertook other outstanding expeditions including the first ascent<sup>4</sup> of the north-east ridge or *Cresta di Santa Caterina* on the Nordend of Monte Rosa and, on 30 July, the first complete ascent of the long east ridge of the Dent d'Hérens. Another fine climb, on 10 and 11 August, was completed on the south face of the Matterhorn when Ugo De Amicis and Arrigo Frusta, without guides, made the first ascent of the south-south-west ridge or *Cresta De Amicis* of Pic Tyndall. On 1 September a daring solo ascent was undertaken by Hans Pfann who reached the summit of the Matterhorn after scaling the north-west, Zmutt ridge.

In the Bernese Alps on 7 August a successful climb on the Trugberg, the long rock spur between the Jungfraufrirn and the Ewigschneefeld, was completed by Gustav Hasler and Miss Marie Hampson-Simpson, his future wife. Accompanied by Heinrich Fuhrer they reached the north summit by way of the unclimbed north-west ridge and continued to the central, highest summit before descending the east face. Later in the month, on 12-14 August, V A Fynn and H Brüderlin made the second ascent<sup>5</sup> of the north-east face of the Finsteraarhorn, a climb involving two bivouacs one of which the party spent sitting in rope slings.

To the east in the Dolomites S Bögle and M Niedermaier opened a new route on the Punta delle Cinque Dita – the Fünffingerspitze – by climbing the south-west ridge. In the Julian Alps on 9 and 10 July an outstanding expedition was completed by Felix König, Hans Reinl and Karl Doménigg who forced the first route up the great north wall of Triglav.

On 19 May ceremonies were held to mark the completion of a major engineering project.

On Saturday King Victor Emmanuel passed through the Simplon Tunnel and formally opened to traffic that great work of the modern engineer. By a curious but quite undesigned coincidence, the formal opening has taken place in the centenary year of the opening to traffic of the magnificent road over the Simplon Pass, begun by Napoleon in 1800 and completed in 1806.

The Royal train reached Brig at 11.30. It consisted of seven coaches drawn by two powerful steam locomotives, the electric traction installation not being completed. As King Victor Emmanuel alighted the President of the Confederation advanced and shook hands with his Majesty, and, after the usual exchange of greetings and introductions the King and the Swiss President, followed by their suites, inspected the guard of honour. ...

The tunnel is a double one, the bore having been a twin from the start, but the work of completion has only been pushed on in the eastern tunnel, the western one being used for ventilating purposes, and its further development<sup>6</sup> is left for future consideration. If the volume of traffic is sufficient to call for a double route, the double tunnel will be finished.

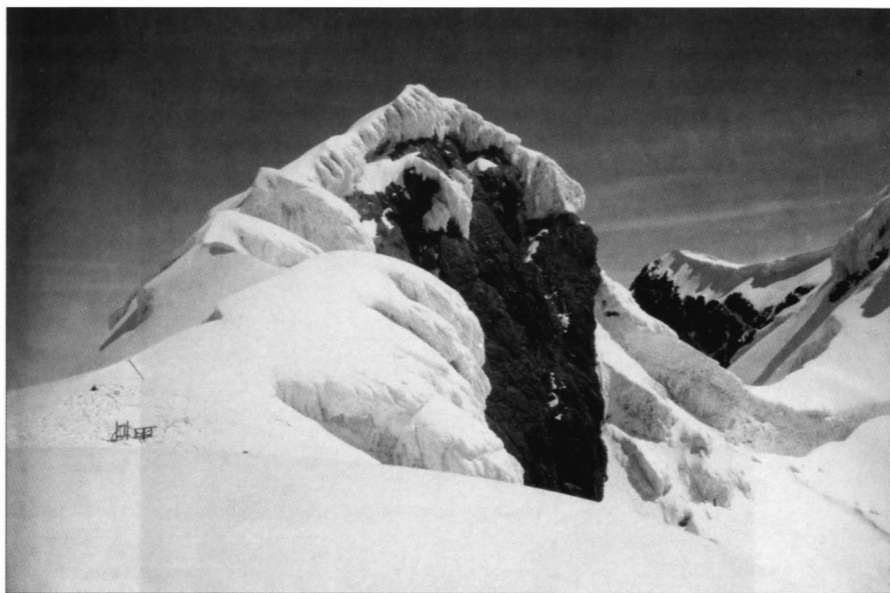
On 7 May the Duke of the Abruzzi arrived at Entebbe in Uganda to commence his expedition to the Ruwenzori range. The Duke was accompanied by Comdr Umberto Cagni as surveyor, Dr Achille Cavalli Molinelli as medical attendant, the geologist Alessandro Roccati and Vittorio Sella. Four guides from Courmayeur – Joseph and Laurent Petigax, César Ollier and Joseph Brocherel – travelled with the party which was completed<sup>7</sup> by Erminio Botta, Sella's assistant, and the cook Igino Igini. Earlier in the year other parties had undertaken exploratory ascents in the range. On 18 January Rudolf Grauer accompanied by H E Maddox and the Rev H W Tegart of the Church Missionary Society climbed to the small peak now known as Grauer Rock (4484m) on the main, summit ridge of Mount Baker (4843m); and several high points on Mount Baker were reached by the naturalist A F R Wollaston and other members of a British Museum expedition led by R B Woosnam.

After engaging some one hundred and fifty porters the Duke and his companions approached the peaks from Fort Portal and on 7 June established a base camp at the head of the Mubuku valley. Three days later, after reaching the main ridge of Mount Baker

... in the clear hours of the dawn of June 10, the Duke had a complete view of the mountain range and was able to obtain a notion of their position in the main axis of the range and their relation to the valleys.



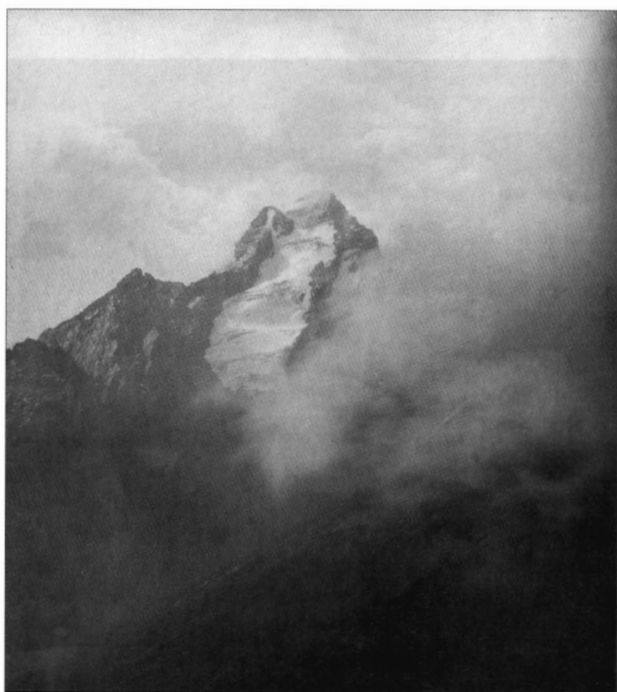
133. Simplon Tunnel, south portal during construction: *right* Tunnel 1, *left* entrance to parallel gallery. (*Gesellschaft für Ingenieurbaukunst, Zürich*)



134. Alexandra Peak and (*right background*) Albert Peak, Mount Stanley. (*Vittorio Sella, Ruwenzori, 1906*)



135. Margherita Peak, Mount Stanley from south-east ridge, Alexandra Peak.  
(*Vittorio Sella, Ruwenzori, 1906*)



136. Savoia Peak, Mount Stanley. (*Vittorio Sella, Ruwenzori, 1906*)

Before returning to camp the Duke, accompanied by Brocherel, Ollier and Joseph Petigax, continued along the ridge to complete the first ascent of Edward Peak, the highest summit of Mount Baker. A few days later, having established the correct location of the principal groups in the range, the Duke approached Mount Stanley and on 18 June, accompanied by the same guides, succeeded in making the first ascents of the two highest peaks 'which he named Queen Margherita<sup>8</sup> and Queen Alexandra.'<sup>9</sup>

As Filippo De Filippi, one of the Duke's companions on a previous expedition,<sup>10</sup> later recalled

The conquest of the peaks went on uninterruptedly. In a little more than a month, fourteen summits, all above 15,000ft., distributed in the various massifs of the range, had been climbed, some of them repeatedly. The expedition had also explored and surveyed the Bujuku valley, a large tributary of the Mobuku, previously unknown. Meanwhile, Cagni had measured a base and had connected and completed the net of angles taken by the Duke on the mountains. He had also made a series of magnetic observations. Roccati had carried on a glaciological and geological survey, and, assisted by Cavalli Molinelli, had made a collection of the flora and the fauna. With admirable perseverance, Sella had succeeded in fully illustrating the range with photographs and panoramas, taking advantage of every moment of clear atmosphere. In fifty days' work the problem of Ruwenzori was satisfactorily solved in all its aspects.

In South Africa on 14 April G F Travers-Jackson and A E Boothman visited the Klein Zwartberg range where they made the second ascent of the western, higher summit of Toverkop or Witch's Head (2202m), the peak crowned by a rock some 120m in height which is divided into two separate towers by a narrow cleft. Travers-Jackson, who had reached the eastern summit on a previous occasion, had hoped to scale the western tower by following the route of the first ascent<sup>11</sup> by Gustav Nefdt but completed the climb from the opposite side of the tower after finding that Nefdt's route was covered in ice.

In the Punjab Himalaya Dr William Hunter Workman and his wife Fanny Bullock Workman undertook the fifth of their mountain journeys accompanied by the guide Cyprien Savoye and six porters from Courmayeur. After travelling to the Suru district the Workmans spent several weeks making a complete tour round the Nun Kun group. The party also established a number of camps on the Shafat glacier and on 29 July, after reaching the snow plateau between the main peaks, Mrs Bullock Workman, Savoye and a porter ascended the peak known as Pinnacle Peak (6952m) on the north-east ridge of Kun (7087m).

In South America the Swiss climber Robert Helbling and the German geologist Fritz Reichert mounted an expedition to Aconcagua (6959m). On 31 January Helbling reached the summit to complete the third recorded ascent of the peak and three days later Reichert repeated the climb to a height of some 6900m. Later in the year the American Miss Annie Smith Peck spent several months in Peru where she travelled extensively accompanied by a number of local men. Starting on 20 July Miss Peck made two determined attempts to climb the north peak (6655m) of Huascarán but on each occasion was forced to retreat after reaching a height of some 5350m.

In the Canadian Rockies a successful expedition was completed in August when I T Burr, Samuel Cabot junior, W R Peabody and Robert Walcott with the guides Gottfried Feuz and Christian Kaufmann became the first party to reach the south, higher summit (3328m) of Mount Mummery in the Freshfield group, one of the main peaks near the Continental Divide. Kaufmann also accompanied Miss Henrietta Tuzo during the first ascent of the peak now known as Mount Tuzo (3245m), one of the Ten Peaks near Moraine Lake.

In Britain many parties were able to take advantage of the fine weather experienced during the summer and autumn in all the principal regions and several outstanding new climbs were recorded. In Wales on 12 August H Mitchell, A E Barker, W J Drew and G T Atchison made the first ascent of *Schoolmasters' Gully* on Cynr Läs, one of the steep cliffs above the Llanberis Pass. In the following month on Lliwedd J B Farmer accompanied by Mrs Farmer, A W Andrews and Oscar Eckenstein completed *Central Gully and East Peak*, reaching the summit ridge from the slabs of the Central Gully by way of the ledge known as the Bowling Green. In the Lake District on 8 June F W Botterill, leading L J Oppenheimer, Arthur Botterill and J H Taylor completed his second memorable route<sup>12</sup> in this region: the first unaided ascent of *North-West Climb* on Pillar Rock. On the Isle of Skye in July J N Collie and the guide John Mackenzie succeeded in reaching the Cioch, the rock pinnacle on the face of Sron na Ciche which Collie had discovered seven years earlier.

An important development during the year was the formation of several new climbing clubs. In Canada passes to travel on the Canadian Pacific Railway were donated by the Company to a group of enthusiasts who assembled at Winnipeg on 27 March to found the Alpine Club of Canada. The surveyor A O Wheeler was elected as President and in July the Club held the first of its annual camps, on this occasion at Yoho Pass in the Canadian Rockies. A welcome event in March was the publication of the first issue of *Sangaku*, the journal of another new club: the Japanese Alpine Club had been formed<sup>13</sup> with the encouragement of the Rev Walter Weston, one of the pioneers of mountaineering in Japan.



137. Fell and Rock Climbing Club group at Coniston, 1908. (Alan Craig)

At home a famous club, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District, was formed after Alan Craig, E H P Scantlebury and three other climbers had held an informal meeting at the Sun Hotel, Coniston on 11 November. The first President of the Club was Ashley Abraham and by the end of December 'upwards of 40 members had been enrolled.' Other clubs founded during the year included the Wayfarers' Club in Liverpool and the Derbyshire Pennine Club.

An event of considerable note was the publication of *Rock-climbing in North Wales*, written and illustrated by George and Ashley Abraham. This companion work to the book<sup>14</sup> by O G Jones on the climbs of the Lake District was soon in demand and received a favourable review in the *Alpine Journal*.

We may say at once that the book is a great success. The writers have for several years given close attention to the district, and they enjoy the very great advantage of combining in an unusual degree physical prowess as climbers with practical mastery of all the resources of the camera. The result is a beautiful and very instructive volume.

It is appropriate to conclude this account with a comment by D W Freshfield in his note 'The Conquest of Ruwenzori' which was published in the *Alpine Journal* during the following year.

It is not uncommon, even in unexpected quarters, to find it assumed that 'a mountaineering party' is incapable of rendering any return to geography and science. Mountaineers may point, in Ruwenzori, to an instance where they have succeeded, after many experienced travellers, who were not mountaineers, had failed, in lifting the veil of centuries and giving the world accurate knowledge of a most interesting and fascinating region – the Snows of the Nile.

## REFERENCES

1. For details of a recent alteration to this height see *AJ99*, 221, 1994.
2. Graham was known to everyone as Alex.
3. The famous guide Ravel, *le Rouge*.
4. The ridge had been descended by Walter Flender with Heinrich Burgener and Ferdinand Furrer on 5 September 1899.
5. The first ascent had been completed by Gustav Hasler with Fritz Amatter on 16 July 1904.
6. The enlargement of the parallel gallery, 'a rectangular opening one-fifth of the full size', was completed after the First World War, the tunnel being opened on 4 December 1921.
7. The other member of the party was Lt Edoardo Winspeare, Comdr Cagni's aide-de-camp, who contracted fever during the voyage to Africa and was obliged to depart for Europe on 12 May, shortly after his arrival at Mombasa.
8. Named by the Duke of the Abruzzi in honour of Queen Margherita, consort of King Umberto I of Italy.
9. Named by the Duke after Queen Alexandra, consort of King Edward VII.
10. The expedition to Mount St Elias (5489m) in 1897.
11. For details of this ascent see *AJ79*, 100-102, 1974.
12. On 3 June 1903 Botterill, leading H Williamson and J E Grant, had made the first ascent of *Botterill's Slab* on Scafell Crag.
13. A meeting to found the Club had been held on 14 October 1905.
14. Owen Glynne Jones, *Rock-Climbing in the English Lake District*. London, Longmans, Green, & Co, 1897.