
Alpine Club Notes

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NO 'MORALITY-FREE ZONE' IN CLIMBING

By Doug Scott

In the Tyrol Declaration on Best Practice in Mountain Sports (2002), which subscribed to the above dictum, it was noted in the foreword that a 'growing callousness in society is making inroads into mountaineering and is causing deep concern in the climbing community'. Thus, in section six, 'Emergencies', delegates came up with the following maxim:

If a person we meet – regardless if it is a fellow climber, a porter or another local inhabitant – needs help, we must do everything in our power to provide qualified support as quickly as possible. There is no 'morality-free zone' in climbing!

1. If aid by an official instance – like mountain rescue – is not possible and we are in a position to help, we are obliged to give persons in trouble all possible support if this is possible without unduly endangering ourselves.
2. Helping someone in trouble has absolute priority over reaching goals we set for ourselves in the mountains. Saving a life or reducing damage to an injured person's health is far more valuable than the hardest of first ascents.
3. Life-preserving measures should only be stopped if the death of an accident victim or a sick person has been established beyond doubt.

Not all delegates, including Chris Bonington, Roger Payne and myself, could see the point of reiterating what appeared to be self-evident, for was it not a fact that most committed climbers had at some time either given or received such assistance in the mountains – Bonington and Whillans rescuing Nally on the Eiger north face; Bonington with Scott rescued from the Ogre by Anthoine and Rowland; Yates rescuing Simpson from the summit ridge of Siula Grande. There have been, and will be, many more such acts of courage, even above 8000 metres.

In May this year, a bombshell exploded into the climbing world when massive media coverage reported ailing English climber David Sharp had been largely ignored and left to his fate by 40 other would-be Everest ascensionists, 300m from the summit. The response was swift with letters to editors about inhuman mountaineers and this being the antithesis of the Good Samaritan principle. There was outright condemnation from Edmund Hillary – ‘It would never happen in my day’ – and Chris Bonington who was horrified at such indifference to human life. American climber Ed Viesturs, who has climbed all fourteen 8000-metre summits without oxygen and rescued a woman from just 100m below Everest summit, told the *Seattle Times*: ‘If you are strong enough to mount a summit attempt, you’re strong enough to attempt a rescue, or at least sit there with him and try to provide a little comfort.’ Others rationalised that norms of common humanity could not always be applied in the so-called death zone. Our member, Alan Hinkes, suggested that above 8000 metres it was unlikely that anyone would have the strength to help another ailing climber. ‘It is not realistic to expect help or rescue; climbing Everest is very serious and expensive, you have to be prepared to pay the ultimate price,’ said Alan. I was also unsettled by the concluding words of an article in the *Daily Telegraph* under the name of our president, Stephen Venables: ‘Morally, as well as physically, you are entering a different world – a world with different rules.’ However, Stephen’s words were apparently toughened up by a sub-editor for a final flourish to an article intended to convey the complexity of ethics and behaviour at high altitude and pointing out that great nobility is possible on mountains too.

Yet the fact remains that those 40 Everest hopefuls assumed at the time that they had the strength and oxygen to go the extra 300m up to the summit and back, and then further down to camp for the night. Why was it that at least a splinter group did not react to Sharp’s condition and help him down to the camp, less than half an hour away? It would appear that some of the 40 variously were already exhausted, like Sharp, and mistook him for a dead Indian climber of 1996, or thought that he was resting, that he did not require help, or they never saw him at all.

It seems that the 40 climbers were predominantly from commercially guided organisations, whose organisers called the shots and, like dogs on leads, the clients continued up under orders. Now there is a syndrome that has to be addressed and taken into account, especially on Everest, and that is those who pay the money (up to £65,000) to be taken up Everest, from

then onwards often absolve themselves from all further responsibility for not only their own lives but also for the lives of others. This problem of disengagement was made clear by Jon Krakauer in *Into Thin Air* where he described how in 1996, at the south summit, he came across his friend and guide, Andy Harris, who was in a very confused state. '...it's inconceivable to me that I would have neglected to recognise his plight,' wrote Krakauer. 'But on this expedition he [Harris] had been cast in the role as the invincible guide, there to look after me and the other clients; we had been specifically indoctrinated not to question our guide's judgement.' Krakauer left Harris and headed down the mountain. Harris subsequently died, to Krakauer's eternal regret: '...the ease with which I abdicated responsibility – my utter failure to consider that Andy might have been in serious trouble – was a lapse that's likely to haunt me for the rest of my life.'

This 'absolvement syndrome' puts a huge responsibility on the commercial outfits and their agents when guiding on Everest. It is incumbent upon them to issue guidelines as to just which emergency procedures should be adopted. The clients should know that the blinkers of ambition may have to be lifted when need arises to be Good Samaritans.

It is worth reflecting that it is predominantly the Sherpas who put in the greater effort when it comes to rescuing the foreigners. Is it simply that they are that much more acclimatised and stronger? Undoubtedly this is a factor. However, the fact that many Sherpas have persevered in their attempts to save the foreigner, to the point of terrible frostbite and even at the cost of their own lives, suggests that there is more to it than physical capability. Way back in 1938, on K2, three Sherpas perished in a vain but extraordinarily selfless and persistent attempt to save the ailing American Dudley Wolfe, abandoned by his compatriots at camp VII.

Ang Phurba, a couple of years after helping us climb the south-west face of Everest, was himself above the Hillary Step, only five minutes from the summit, when he turned his back on the prize to help his altitude-sick Korean companion down to the south summit and, next day, to the south col. He had saved the Korean's life. Sungdare Sherpa, in 1979, remained with Hannelore Schmatz below the south summit after she collapsed and finally died. He lost most of his fingers and toes.

The Sherpas remind us that under our veneer of civilisation and our attachment to fame and fortune, we are all capable of the same heroic deeds when it comes to rescuing others stricken in the thin, cold air of Everest. It is just that sometimes we lose the plot and are only reminded of our obligations after returning. By then a visit to the summit will be forever a hollow victory if we fail another in need.

All people whose lives are intimately connected to the land and are governed by natural processes seem to be able to stay in touch with themselves through generosity, kindness and help to others. This is the common denominator amongst all indigenous peoples. Regrettably it would appear that the more sophisticated we become the less this is so.

KANGCHENJUNGA QUINQUAGENARY 1955-2005

The year 2005 marked the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Kangchenjunga 8586m (28,169ft) the world's third highest peak, first climbed on 25 May 1955 by Joe Brown and myself, repeated on the 26th by Norman Hardie and Tony Streater, on the expedition led by Charles Evans, who had been John Hunt's deputy on Everest in 1953. The other team members were Tom McKinnon, John Jackson, Neil Mather and the doctor John Clegg. The strong team of high-altitude Sherpas was led by Dawa Tenzing. Sadly, two members of the team died during 2005: John Jackson in July and Neil Mather in December, both after a period of ill health, leaving just the four summiters and John Clegg.

As Everest and Kangchenjunga were the only two of the world's fourteen 8000m peaks to be first climbed by British expeditions, and the Everest Golden Jubilee has been well documented in the *Alpine Journal* 2003, the Editor has asked me for a brief account of the events associated with the Kangchenjunga Jubilee during 2005.

The Himalayan Club was the first off the mark, arranging special celebrations during February in Mumbai, Kolkata (formerly Bombay and Calcutta) and Darjeeling, recognising that 'Kangch' was India's highest peak. Three of the team were able to participate with our wives, Norman and Enid Hardie coming from New Zealand, John and Eileen Jackson, Susan and myself. There was just time to include Jackson's account of this trip in *Alpine Journal* 2005, the last article he ever wrote.

Nepal came next, having an equal claim to the mountain. Their government was thrilled that Sir Edmund Hillary chose to celebrate his Everest anniversary on 29 May 2003 with the Sherpas in Kathmandu. The ensuing publicity was so beneficial that they decided to sponsor similar celebrations for the jubilees of all Nepal's eight 8000m peaks. The Hardies, Tony Streater with his son Philip, Susan and I were able to accept the invitation to attend on 26 May, coming just two weeks after a similar event for Makalu, first climbed by Jean Franco's French team. To make the trip more worthwhile, I decided to lead a 14-strong trekking party to visit the Kangchenjunga south-west and north-west base camps, one of Nepal's best – and probably most strenuous – treks lasting 23 days. Just below the south-west base camp we were able to make contact with Alan Hinkes, wishing him luck and sending up fresh vegetables, a few paperbacks, and Superglue to repair his Yeti gaiters. He was impatiently waiting for a break in the bad weather to be able to tackle his last 8000er, the final summit push on 30 May being described in stop press terms in last year's *Journal*.

We had a nail-biting finish to our trek. We should have been collected from the grass strip at Suketar by a fixed wing aircraft, but the strip was waterlogged for several days and we waited in growing frustration. Even the 24-seat Russian helicopter became grounded in Lukla in thick cloud. We missed an evening reception specially arranged for us at the British

Embassy, and were at risk of missing the Government celebration on 26 May for which we had been invited to Nepal, as well as our international flights home the following day. Frantic phone calls to the Ambassador, who appreciated our position as 'distressed British citizens', resulted astonishingly in not one but two helicopters, a nine and a five-seater, just sufficient to accommodate our party and enable us, after a dawn flight and a quick change, to catch up with the procession, and to be capped and garlanded and awarded commemorative plaques of appreciation in the ancient Durbar Square of Kathmandu. We summiters were then conveyed through the milling throng in the streets of old Kathmandu in open horse-drawn carriages, preceded by squads of soldiers, military bands, and flanked by schoolchildren and civil officials. It felt rather like a coronation. Badly in need of our first cup of coffee, the rest of the day passed in a whirl of lectures and presentations on adventure tourism, conservation and development in the Kangchenjunga region, publication of a new bird book, and a set of commemorative postage stamps. A reception in the presence of Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev and the lovely Crown Princess Himani Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah was followed by a Royal audience and a Gala Dinner. And so to bed for a few hours sleep before we caught our plane home.

The Nepal Mountaineering Association and the Tourist Board were most generous in their hospitality, and were grateful that I was able to say that despite the current Maoist problems in the country we had been most warmly greeted on our travels and felt entirely safe, and foreigners should not be put off from coming to Nepal.

A week after our return, we gathered at Pen-y-Gwryd for our traditional five-year private party, generously hosted by Jane Pullee. Over 40 members of the extended 'Kangchenjunga family' sat down to dinner. Neil Mather who was now very frail after several strokes was not to be outdone. He and his wife Gill chartered a light aircraft to fly them from Inverness to an airstrip at Caernarvon to be with us. We were distressed to learn that PyG's gong, to summon residents to breakfast and dinner, had recently been stolen, and as a modest thanks for Jane's hospitality over the years, the Kangch' team have now presented the hotel with a new gong of orchestral quality which we hope will remain in place for many years.

The next event was the Club's own informal and most enjoyable party on 6 July to celebrate the quinquagenary. It also served to bring to a close the magnificent exhibition held at the Club on 'Kangchenjunga: Imaging a Himalayan Mountain', curated by Simon Pierse, a lecturer in art at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. It was accompanied by a superbly researched and scholarly memoir written by Simon to form a permanent record of the exhibition, which explored the differing ways in which the mountain had been interpreted by artists, photographers, writers and explorers from Victorian times to the present day.

The main British event was a lecture evening and supper organised by

and in aid of the Mount Everest Foundation, who sponsored the 1955 Expedition. It was held at the Royal Geographical Society on 7 June and compered by David Attenborough, who had actually produced the original BBC TV programme about the climb broadcast on 18 August 1955, and a clip from the historic film was shown. A souvenir programme carried a message of congratulation from Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who was the patron of the expedition. But the unique feature of the evening which made it particularly memorable was the combined lecture by the four summiters, which is unlikely ever to happen again. The evening was certainly a financial success, raising £14,100 for the charity – marginally greater than the original £13,652 cost of the expedition, albeit in rather more valuable 1955 money!

A final unexpected event was an invitation by the Government of Sikkim to participate in their annual Festival of the Snows – the Pang Lhabsol – which celebrates the deity of Kangchenjunga. We had originally been invited for 25 May but could not be simultaneously in Kathmandu and Gangtok, so were invited for the Pang Lhabsol on 18 September instead. Only Norman Hardie, his daughter Sarah, and I were able to accept. The invitation was not to celebrate the climbing of Kangchenjunga, but to felicitate us for stopping just short of the top, thereby respecting their particular Buddhist religious principles and leaving the summit undefiled. Slight consternation was caused a few days beforehand when a senior Buddhist monk, who felt we should not have been invited, served an injunction to stop us participating. The judiciary advised the Government to serve a counter injunction which prevailed; the monk was defeated and had to pay costs! We were looked after most hospitably, visiting several fine monasteries and a fascinating exhibition of early photographs at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. We made an excursion to the Tsomgo Lake near the Natu La, the pass into Tibet used by the early Everest expeditions which had been closed for many years but we were told would be opening again for limited trade with China on 12 October. Hopefully this may gradually lead to securing permits more easily for mountaineering and trekking in the border areas of northern Sikkim.

And so we come to the end of 2005. Earlier in the year I had been surfing the internet on ExplorersWeb.com looking for ascent statistics. I came across a comparison between K2 and Kangchenjunga just prior to their 50th anniversary years of 2004 and 2005 respectively. By the end of 2003, K2 had 198 individual ascents, but then a record number of 48 in the anniversary year itself. The writer speculated whether the same thing would happen to Kangchenjunga in 2005, but on the whole thought not and came up with an article entitled: Ten Top Reasons for Not Climbing Kangchenjunga – basically it was 'Too long, too high, too cold, too hard!' He was rather perceptive. The only additional ascent claimed in 2005 was on 30 May by our member Alan Hinkes, who thereby became the first Brit to complete

the ascents of all fourteen 8000ers, only the thirteenth person ever to do so. So there have now been just 196 ascents of Kangchenjunga to end 2005, compared to over 2250 on Everest to end 2004. Congratulations to Alan, also for his OBE in the 2006 New Year's Honours List. What a splendid way to celebrate the quinquagenary!

George Band

THE BOARDMAN TASKER AWARD FOR MOUNTAIN LITERATURE 2005

The Alpine Club was once again the venue for the Boardman Tasker Award's lunchtime reception on 7 October. Guests included Pertemba Sherpa, who summited Everest with Pete Boardman in 1975 and with Chris Bonington 10 years later. Four of the five shortlisted authors were also able to attend. In his adjudication, chair of judges, Steve Dean, spoke of the high level and diversity of the 2005 entries before going on to comment on the shortlisted titles individually:

Andy Cave *Learning to Breathe* (Hutchinson)

A first book by one of our premier Alpine climbers. *Learning to Breathe* is Andy's recollection of his journey from a school-leaver working down the pit in the Yorkshire coalfield, to becoming a major performer in Himalayan climbing. The book contains tender and often very funny accounts of life in the coalfield and of early days getting into the sport and becoming an accomplished mountaineer, culminating in a gripping, and often grim, account of the first ascent of the North Face of Changabang.

Mick Fowler *On Thin Ice* (Bâton Wicks)

A second book of memoirs from one of Britain's finest and most experienced high-altitude climbers. This is an astonishing account of gripping deeds throughout the world's great ranges by a man who has combined extreme mountaineering with all the demands of a conventional career and of raising a young family. We enjoyed this book enormously; it is written in that British tradition of modest recollection with wonderful and often self-deprecating humour, that serves to take the edge off the great seriousness of the adventures described. A climber's climber if ever there was one.

Jim Perrin *The Villain* (Hutchinson)

Never has a mountain book been so eagerly awaited, with all the consequent pressures on the author. *The Villain* grapples with the complexity and myth surrounding the life of one of Britain's greatest mountaineers, Don Whillans. The reader is introduced to the world Don grew up in, in Salford, and then follows his progress to becoming a superb rock climber and alpinist.

All the triumphs such as the Frêne Pillar and Annapurna are well documented, as are the many problems that confronted what emerges as a troubled genius. At times very funny, at times frustrating and full of sadness, this book emerges as both a compassionate view of Don's life and as a social history of British climbing from the end of the war until the mid-eighties.

Richard Sale *Broad Peak (Carreg)*

This book was the subject of by far our longest discussions and the decision to include it on the shortlist was not a unanimous one. There was strong disagreement about it both on content and style. Nonetheless, *Broad Peak* made for fascinating reading. It is an account of the first ascent in 1957 of Broad Peak by Marcus Schmuck, Fritz Wintersteller, Hermann Buhl and a young Kurt Diemberger. The book is largely based on the personal accounts of Schmuck and Wintersteller and pulls few punches as to the various pressures and conflicts between the expedition members. Nevertheless one is left in no doubt as to the significance and magnitude of what they achieved in climbing the mountain.

Anne Sauvy *Mountain Rescue: Chamonix- Mont Blanc (Bâton Wicks)*

This fine book is a documentary following the deeds of the mountain rescue service in Chamonix, through the 1997 alpine season. It brings into sharp focus the stresses and problems faced by the helicopter crews in their difficult and often dangerous work. The tenderness and humanity of Anne Sauvy's insights and recollections draw into sharp relief the often tragic and careless waste of life in a typical season in the Mont Blanc range. Chamonix fans will warm to this book, written by someone with an intimate knowledge of the area, and of its often fatal attraction. This is a humbling and grave book, and one all serious alpinists should read.

Steve Dean made no apology for the fact that, for the first time in 14 years, the judges decided to award a joint prize to **Andy Cave** for *Learning to Breathe* and **Jim Perrin** for *The Villain*.

The Banff Mountain Book Festival, a month later, doesn't allow itself to award joint prizes. But it is interesting to note that the BT shortlist showed up well in the Canadian Rockies. BT shortlisted Mick Fowler came up on the rails to win Banff's coveted Mountain Literature prize with his *On Thin Ice*; Jim Perrin's life of Don Whillans won the Mountaineering History category; and Andy Cave's *Learning to Breathe* emerged, by some feat of judicial imagination, as the winner of Adventure Travel.

Maggie Body, Honorary Secretary

19TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE

On what felt like the first real day of spring (25 March 2006) we gathered at Bretton Hall Campus, Leeds, in anticipation of the 19th International Festival of Mountaineering Literature. There were elements of 'first' and 'last'. It was the first time I had attended a literature festival of any sort, and the last time this much loved event would be held at Bretton Hall. The hotch-potch campus set amid the Yorkshire sculpture park has been a place of annual pilgrimage for bookish mountaineers for almost two decades, but festival director Terry Gifford is ringing a change. For his Bretton Hall finale, Terry had invited an inspiring selection of writers and speakers from Canada, the UK and the USA. The theme was 'Who Preserves Our Heritage?' and it provided a great forum for debate amongst both the speakers and an audience that appeared to be quite diverse in both age and background.

'Who Preserves our Heritage?' Do we as mountaineers tend to think of this at all, and when we do, do we differentiate between the preservation of 'mountain' versus 'mountaineering' heritage? To set the tone for the day Peter Hodgkiss of the Ernest Press began with a plea to us all, as individuals, to keep and archive any photos, diaries and notes from our mountaineering lives. He reminded us that it is not only the outstanding mountaineers and their achievements that are important, but that the everyday archives of an era may be a significant contribution to our mountain heritage in the future.

A well considered overview and provocation of the theme was presented by Bernadette McDonald of the Banff Centre as well as a reflection on her book *I'll Call You in Kathmandu* (review, p360). The book is a fascinating biography of Elizabeth Hawley, a remarkable woman who has become central to the recording of Himalayan mountaineering. Bernadette left us with a number of questions to ponder, challenging us to really consider what the relevance of our heritage is, and to whom it is relevant. We all have some responsibility, whether as individuals or as organisations, to care enough about our mountains to share them, and to want to protect them. As individuals do we make enough effort to record and tell the stories that we see? Do authors, publishers and magazines do their best to tell, and allow to be told, all good stories with honesty? Can book festivals provide some neutral ground for informed debate on some of the great mysteries and controversies of our mountaineering heritage? Do organisations strike the right balance between archiving and acquiring information, and dissemination, research and education?

A major attraction of the day was to hear several of those well-known and well-respected 'outstanding mountaineers' of our own era talking about their lives and their writing. The cast was impressive. Andy Cave gave us some great readings and thoughts on writing his *Learning to Breathe* (review, p348). Colin Wells, of *Climb* magazine, is quoted as saying people will be

disappointed with what was left out of the book, so perhaps we can look forward to more? The book is written with 'soul' and movingly demonstrates how mountaineering can be anchored within the conflicts, the politics and the joys of everyday life. His advice for aspiring writers was to have a story, a good one, and to then be confident and to find one's own voice.

Arlene Blum talked with great enthusiasm. Her fascinating story is told in a new book, *Breaking Trail* (review, p353). You could feel the strength of her love of the mountains. Perhaps from a woman's perspective it intrigued me to hear how she managed to pursue a life in the mountains and to balance it with her career and family life. There is a time for everything, and at different stages of life one will have very different priorities. Her talk, like her book, was both intimate and yet universal.

Mick Fowler gave us an insight into his semi-autobiographical *On Thin Ice* (review, p348). It is aptly named, since his life appears to successfully tread the fine line balancing work, climbing and family. Another legend, David Roberts, gave a very honest and frank discussion of his life and his reexamination of it in his book *On the Ridge Between Life and Death* – sincere reflections on deaths, resentments and doubts, leaving us with the thought that heroism is courage in service to others. Arlene Blum and David Roberts also took part 'in conversation' – with Vicki Robinson and Ed Douglas respectively – the questioning admitting us deeper into their thoughts and feelings than might otherwise have been revealed.

Ed Douglas left us with this quote from the mountaineering page of an Italian newspaper ringing in our ears: 'Alpinism won't have a future if it forgets its history.' Mountaineering is essentially living; it is the life that we live – we go to the mountains, because we love to go. But the rich heritage of its past is where the future is born.

Next year the Festival will be held in conjunction with the Kendal Mountain Film Festival. Terry Gifford has promised an enticing day 'in colour' rather than 'black and white' – so perhaps we will have to attend on 10 November 2007 in order to divine for ourselves just what he means by that.

Elizabeth Hawker

The last 'Mountain Lit' Fest at Bretton Hall ended with a special moment when Jim Curran – ever a festival favourite – bade farewell to the campus venue of the first 19 years with a piece of 'verse' in the style of the Scotsman rightly known as 'the world's worst poet'.

ODE TO TERRY GIFFORD

(with apologies to William McGonagall and Rupert Bear)

'Twas in the autumn of eighty seven,
That Terry got a sign from heaven
To mount a festival of mountain literature – (OK, the words don't fit.)

He put it on at Bretton Hall,
(The name for most meant bugger all)
But every year in autumn mist
We all drove up to get the gist
Of Terry's annual list
Of mountaineering's glitterati
Invited here to join the party,
To air their views – sometimes contentious
And one or two downright pretentious.
Taking his cue from Andrew Motion
Terry excels in self-promotion,
Working flat out rain or snow
To change the format of the show
And bring in people in the know.

Half a teacher, half a preacher,
The festival would always feature
Ideas good – a few were bad,
Some were mad and some were madder,
He got Ed Drummond up a ladder
(Though if you want to be pedantic
He used a tripod for this antic.)

The audience was often voluble,
Some impressively knowledgeable,
Until that dreadful moment when
Discussion was upset by Ken,
Who would invariably rant
At any controversial cant,
And always found it quite revolting
When hearing any praise for bolting.

'Twas an event not to be missed,
Though not much chance of getting pissed
With vile red wine a pound a glass
And catering reduced to farce.
Some saved themselves for the slim
Chance of getting drunk with Jim
Who has fond memories of Bonatti
Drinking Stones with this old fatty
Along with Sheffield's illiterati
Who never missed the chance to party.

So today is Terry's curtain call,
 Alas, the end for Bretton Hall.
 Now is the time for him to send all
 You faithful punters up to Kendal.

Jim Curran

ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2005

This report must start with thanks to George Band who has served as Library Council Chairman for 12 years. Despite some recent challenges, George leaves a very strong Club Library which looks after the Club's collection of books and pamphlets, archives, photographs and the Himalayan Index. I am honoured to be following his illustrious leadership.

We have 30,000 books to care for and make accessible to members. Since last summer, you have been able to search on the Club Website for any book. Also we hold recent expedition reports which many members find extremely useful. Jerry Lovatt (Hon Librarian) has been able to select some non-relevant or triplicated books and has sold them well; this has provided £53,500 to start the Club Climbing Fund.

This year has seen the completion of work to catalogue the Archives – letters from famous members, news cuttings of ascents – collected since 1857 (25,000 items). This catalogue is currently going 'on-line'. Thanks must go to Peter Berg (Hon. Archivist) and Margaret Pope for this splendid achievement.

The Himalayan Index under Mike Westmacott and Sally Holland lists ascents and attempts on all 6000m peaks in the Himalayas, and spreading westwards to the Hindu Kush; north and eastwards into Tibet and China. The main Index is on our website.

The Photo Library collection now comprises 40,000 images and the next task is to create a searchable (electronic) catalogue of these. It is also providing many images for the Club's '150 years' book by George Band and is doing work on the images for Peter Mallalieu's book about Artists of the Club's paintings.

Meanwhile, the Library Council is working to solve the many problems of ever increasing costs. For example, it really is not possible to run the Photo Library on a free basis and some charges will become inevitable. Nevertheless, we hope to have a good selection of photo images on the website within the next year.

The Library is open Tuesday to Friday each week; Yvonne Sibbald, our librarian, will be delighted to receive you. If you let her know in advance what you are seeking, she will do her best to have it all ready for your visit; photos and archives can be seen by arrangement.

Hywel Lloyd
 Chairman of the Alpine Club Library Council