In Memoriam

The Alpine Club Obituary	Year of Election
	(including to ACG)
Alasdair Andrews	1984
George Band OBE	1953
Anthony (Tony) Bertram	1967
Alan Blackshaw OBE	1954
Walter Bonatti	Hon 2007
Peter Fleming	1976
Robert Folkard	1983
Alistair Gordon	1993
Arthur Grout	1976
Rev James (Jim) Harrison	1985
Rupert Hoare	1984
Jagdish Nanavati	1966
Alan Oliver	1966
Tim Oliver	1983
Roger Payne	1981
Guy Randle	1995
Wg Cdr Stewart Ward	1968
Michael (Mike) Westmacott	1952
Jocelin Winthrop Young OBE	1955

As usual, the Editor will be pleased to receive obituaries for any of those above not included in the following pages.



George Band, BMC Buxton Conference, 1994.
(Bernard Newman)

George Christopher Band OBE 1929 - 2011

With the death of George Band in August 2011 followed by that of Mike Westmacott in June 2012 the 'family' of British mountaineers who forged close bonds in the 1950s, notably on the crowning 1953 Everest expedition, suddenly seems much depleted.

George was the youngest of the climbers taken to Everest by John Hunt, and though Hunt, Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary died some years ago, he tirelessly kept the Everesters' show on the road at anniversary galas, countless lectures and through charitable work. Until illness laid him low, Mike Westmacott would be there too, a quieter presence out of the limelight.

On Everest, George played an important role in forcing a route through the Khumbu Icefall, but his greatest mountaineering

achievement came two years later on another Himalayan giant. On 25 May 1955, he and Mancunian Joe Brown became the first to stand – almost – on the summit of Kangchenjunga (8586m). In deference to Sikkimese beliefs, they stopped several yards short of the summit cone, leaving its sacred snows undefiled.

Everest and Kangchenjunga confirmed George as one of the top alpinists of his day and also provided the nexus for a network of climbers, their families and friends that in essence would constitute the British mountaineering establishment for the next half-century.

George was born on 2 February 1929 in Taiwan, then under Japanese control, where his parents were Presbyterian missionaries. He was educated at Eltham College, south London, and Queen's College, Cambridge, where he read Geology, followed by Petroleum Engineering at Imperial College, London. A member of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, of which he became president, he was at the forefront of a mainly Oxbridge set pushing the standard of British climbing in the Alps.

George had other qualifications that appealed to Hunt besides a 1952 season in the Alps which included a string of first British or first British guideless ascents. National Service in the Royal Corps of Signals appeared to make him a natural for radio duties and when George pointed out he had actually been a messing officer, Hunt responded, 'Better still, then you can also help... with the food.' At base camp, to vary the daily 'compo' diet, this, on one occasion, entailed George holding the tether of a yak as it was shot and then gutting it.

'At least there was no shortage of cold storage around,' he recalled in

235. George Band on mess duties during the 1953 Everest expedition. (Alfred Gregory/Royal Geographical Society)

Everest: the Official History (HarperCollins, 2003). 'To celebrate, we had scones for tea and then a tremendous supper of yak brains and liver, followed by jam omelette. The following night it was yak tongue.'

George's cheery writing style tends to obscure the committing nature of some of the climbing he did on Everest and elsewhere. He spent a week in the



hazardous Khumbu Icefall, along with a small group of other climbers, weaving between ice walls and bridging crevasses, opening the way into the Western Cwm, the great glacier trench that leads to the final ramparts of Everest.

A bout of flu obliged George to descend to the valley to recuperate, but he returned to help ferry loads up the Cwm and on to the Lhotse Face, as well as performing his radio duties, monitoring weather reports, and dishing out rations. His high point was escorting a group of Sherpas to Camp VII at 7300m. He was at advanced base camp with Hunt and others for the emotional moment when Hillary and Tenzing were escorted in, having, as Hillary put it: 'knocked the bastard off'.

Three days later, on 2 June, back at base camp, George tuned in the radio to the Overseas Service and the team listened to the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Then came an additional announcement: 'Crowds waiting in the Mall also heard that Mount Everest had been climbed by the British Expedition.' The climbers were dumbfounded that the news had got back so soon – a scoop for James (now Jan) Morris of *The Times* who accompanied the expedition. George recorded in his diary: 'A lively evening. Finished off the rum. Sick as a dog!'

Back home, the Everesters were feted as heroes; George returned to Cambridge for his final year and five days after his last practical examination was at London airport bound for Pakistan and an attempt on 7788m Rakaposhi in the Karakoram. The CUMC team, led by Alfred Tissières, reached a feature called the Monk's Head (6340m) on the south-west spur before being thwarted by days of fresh snow. George told the story in engaging style in his first book, *Road to Rakaposhi* (1955). As remarkable as the climbing was the team's decision to drive a Bedford Dormobile

the 7000 miles from Cambridge to Rawalpindi and back, via Damascus, Baghdad and Teheran. Three climbers drove it out, and the other three, including George, drove it back. He hoped the journey through 10 countries would be sufficient to learn how to drive, but failed his test twice on return.

George wrote the preface to *Road to Rakaposhi* while on the 1955 Kangchenjunga expedition. Led by Charles Evans, a Liverpool surgeon, it was a very different affair to Everest: compact and low key with much less national pride at stake. In fact as the climbers would be exploring new and dangerous ground there was no expectation they would reach the top; the expedition was a 'reconnaissance in force'. It was also a more socially mixed team than on Everest, exemplified by the pairing of George with Joe Brown, then a jobbing builder and rock-climbing phenomenon.

George was on messing duties again. He recalled being popular at first, but there were few villages en route and the craving for meat, eggs and fresh vegetables became strong. 'I was constantly reminded that "Just in case you're getting swollen headed, Band, the grub's bloody awful."'

Ascent would be via the 3000m Yalung (or south-west) face of Kangchenjunga. Hunt had predicted, correctly, that the technical climbing problems and objective dangers would be of a higher order than on Everest. At base camp George lay in his tent marking off avalanches on his tent pole with a pencil. After 24 hours he had counted 48 thundering down the face. Allowing that he had slept for a third of that time, George calculated avalanches were occurring every 20 minutes. 'The lower icefall was horrific and we were absolutely extended,' he recalled. 'But then we saw this little gully up on the left that seemed to circumvent seven-eights of it. Charles suggested Norman [Hardie] and I have a crack and hey presto!'

The team endured screaming winds and blizzards, but eventually George and Joe pitched their tent on an inadequate ledge at 8200m. Next day dawned fine – 'the God of Kangchenjunga was kind to us,' wrote George – and after a couple of pints of tea and a biscuit the pair set off for the summit. Shortly before the top they came to a wall broken by a vertical crack – an irresistible temptation to Joe. Cranking up the flow on his oxygen bottle, he disposed of the highest rock pitch ever attempted, though it would have been a modest Very Difficult grade at sea level; George followed, and there, 20 feet away and five feet higher, was the summit snow cone. They respectfully left it untrammelled.

Next day two other climbers, Norman Hardie and Tony Streather also reached the same point. Sadly, on return to base camp the climbers learnt that one of the Sherpas, Pemi Dorje, had died of cerebral thrombosis. To the Sherpas, it seemed, the God of Kangchenjunga had demanded a sacrifice after all.

Lecturing and writing kept George independent until 1957 when he pleased his parents by getting 'a proper job', beginning a long career with Royal Dutch Shell, initially as a petroleum engineer. At the end of the 1950s, while working in Texas, a millionaire offered to fund his next big



236. Khumbu Icefall, Everest 1953: George Band leads a group of Sherpas at 'Nasty Crevasse' across a ladder bridge between camps II and III. (Charles Wylie/Royal Geographical Society)

climbing trip. George was forced to decide which direction his life should take. When he asked Shell for more leave, he got a very similar letter to the one received by Chris Bonington during his junior days with Unilever. But whereas Chris, as he explained in his autobiography's title, chose to climb, Band would later quip: 'I chose to work.'

Oil and gas development took George to seven different countries – some, like Venezuela offering climbs on the side – before returning to England where, in 1983, he was appointed director general of the UK Offshore Operators Association. Home was in rural Hampshire where he and Susan raised three children.

After retirement in 1990, George returned to his first love of mountains – immersing himself in the affairs of bodies including the Alpine Club, the British Mountaineering Council, the Royal Geographical Society (serving as president of all three) and the Himalayan Trust, the charity founded by Edmund Hillary to provide education, health care and other aid to the Sherpa people of Nepal. He took over as chairman of the UK arm of the Trust in 2003 and worked ceaselessly as its ambassador even as his health was failing. George authored two more books, the Everest history and *Summit: 150 Years of The Alpine Club* (2006), also for HarperCollins, and led adventurous treks in the Himalaya for the company Far Frontiers, of which he was also chairman. In 2008 he was appointed OBE for services to mountaineering and charity.

George served as AC president from 1987 to 1989 and chairman of the council of Trustees of the Alpine Club Library from 1993 to 2005. He was also a regular and valued contributor to the *Alpine Journal*, well connected and informed, and able to turn round lucid copy, plus photographs, at short



 George Band high on Kangchenjunga on the 1955 first ascent. (Joe Brown/Royal Geographical Society)

notice. I already miss those 'George Band here' phone calls, re-assuring on the matter in hand and then diverging into mountaineering gossip.

News of George's cancer came as a shock to the mountaineering community. While other Everesters had aged and many passed on, George Band seemed to defy the years, energies matched by his affability. When the Alpine Club celebrated its 150th anniversary in Zermatt in 2007, George was in his element. For the media, AC leaders and their mountain celebrity guests made a mass ascent of the Breithorn, the 4164m snow summit above the resort. George had climbed it in 1963 during the club's centenary celebrations, via the tricky Younggrat. Fifty years later he reached the summit again, albeit by the easier standard route, but at aged 78 a testimony to George's unquenchable enthusiasm for the mountains.

Stephen Goodwin

Roger Chorley writes: In the summer of 1952 George suggested we team up for the Alps. I readily agreed. I had more alpine experience but George was considerably superior on rock. To help matters along financially – we were both Cambridge students – an American millionaire funded us to help with his theories of the Pleistocene ice age. For us this meant digging a tunnel in the glacier under the summit of Monte Rosa, the highest peak in Switzerland – a somewhat weird but very well paid job. We climbed on our days off, and one of our earliest big routes was the Cresta di Santa Caterina on the Nordend of Monte Rosa.

In those days the Brits – us that is – were keen to repeat as unguided amateurs some of the great routes of our forefathers. There was great cachet in doing 'first British guideless' climbs. The first ascent of the Cresta

di Santa Caterina was a Ryan-Lochmatter route. This was a quality assurance of a fine but difficult route. Ryan was a gentleman mountaineer and F Lochmatter – the 'incomparable Franz' to use (I think) Geoffrey Winthrop Young's accolade, possibly the finest guide in alpine history.

We started for the route in the early hours of the morning. And the fact is we did not find it very difficult and we were back at the hut by lunchtime. A few weeks later I bumped into a Zermatt guide who said: 'Oh you were the couple who said they had done the Santa Caterinagrat. It can't be true, because you couldn't have been back by lunchtime.'

I'm not sure that I ever told George this story. It doesn't matter, but it does underline the fact that George, even in those days, was a considerable mountaineer. Over that fantastic summer George amassed a fine record of great routes, of 'first British guideless' ascents. It was a summer of exceptionally good weather and George used it to the full. It is not surprising that John Hunt spotted him when selecting the Everest team for 1953. 'Not surprising', but nevertheless bold – George was by a long way the youngest member of the team.



Mike Westmacott in Derbyshire, 1970s. (*Ian Roper*)

Michael Westmacott 1925 - 2012

When several hundred breathless people reached the summit of Everest in May this year they did so thanks in no small measure to the labour of an unsung group of Sherpas known as the 'Icefall Doctors' whose job it is to maintain a passageway through the chaos of ice cliffs and crevasses of the Khumbu

Icefall. 'Mike' Westmacott was in essence the prototype Icefall Doctor. While the final assault was underway in 1953 that would see Hillary and Tenzing to the 8850m summit, it was Mike and his team of Sherpas who were charged with keeping open the expedition's vital line of supply and return.

In 1953 the Icefall was still relatively unknown territory and much feared. The 1951 reconnaissance expedition led by Eric Shipton had penetrated to the lip of the Western Cwm and in spring 1952 the Swiss rigged a rope bridge across the giant crevasse that bars the top of the Icefall and entered the Cwm for the first time. Though Raymond Lambert and Tenzing Norgay got tantalisingly close, reaching almost 8600m, fatigue

and bad weather finally forced them back.

As the Swiss were trying and failing on Everest – a second attempt in the autumn reached just over 8000m – young Michael Westmacott was embarking on his career as a statistician and enjoying a highly successful climbing season in the Alps. Everest hadn't seriously entered his head. That summer, with friends, he had spent three weeks in Switzerland and succeeded on a clutch of classic routes that would still be the envy of alpinists today, then finished with a traverse of the Matterhorn.



 John Hunt (left) and Mike Westmacott paying off porters, Everest 1953 (Alfred Gregory/Royal Geographical Society)

'As we made for our doss at Satfelalp, Dick [Viney] said 'We've had a marvellous day's climbing, Mike. Nothing like in the Himalayas – all slog, slog, slog – but wouldn't you give anything to go to Everest next year?' He was right, but I don't think it had occurred to me before to do anything about it.

The quote comes from a short recollection Mike wrote for the *Alpine Journal* on the 40th anniversary of the Everest ascent. Mike was the most self-effacing of men and first person accounts of his climbing emerged only in understated journal accounts and interviews. He was

one of the few main players of 1953 not to write a book of his experiences.

Born on 12 April 1925 in Babbacombe, Torquay, and educated at Radley College, Oxfordshire, Mike's first climbing adventures were scrambles on the limestone and sandstone cliffs behind the Torquay beaches. His father had been invalided out of the Royal Navy and would take the family for picnics among the tors of Dartmoor. But Mike was still years from catching the climbing bug and first had the excitement of service as a junior officer in King George V's Bengal Sappers and Miners, building bridges in Burma with 150 Japanese PoWs under his command. Then came Oxford, where he studied Mathematics, adding a further year of Statistics, and joined the university mountaineering club – initially more for the comradeship than to satisfy any great yen. His first rock climb was of Napes Needle in Wasdale, done in floppy tennis shoes on a cold day in December 1947.

The OUMC was on the cusp of a post-war mountaineering renaissance and together with its Cambridge counterpart would provide many of the

leading climbers of the 1950s. Both George Band (Cambridge) and Mike had been president of their respective university mountaineering clubs and at the time John Hunt was selecting his Everest team both had just enjoyed excellent alpine seasons. Mike speculated that they might both have owed their Everest places to the good weather in the Alps in 1952.

Mike had been climbing with Anthony Rawlinson and Dick Viney; together in a 22hr 30min day they had climbed the east ridge of the Dent d'Hérens, one of the longest arêtes in the Alps, more than 2km long, 'sustained, exposed and committing'; Mike and Rawlinson went on to do the Weisshorn Schalligrat and the Cresta di Santa Caterina on Nordend. (Band and Roger Chorley had done the first British guideless ascent of the latter route earlier that same season – see page 400)

Mike was by this time employed as an agricultural statistician at the Rothamsted Experimental Station, for example analysing the effect of feeding penicillin to pigs. Returning from the Alps he had put in his Everest application as a long shot and some weeks later was delighted to receive an invitation for an interview at the RGS. Hunt was certainly impressed by the young man's alpine record, but as an ex-Sapper, Mike had other valuable skills. He was given responsibility for structural equipment, notably the ladders needed for bridging crevasses. As kit was being tested on the approach march, Mike assembled one of the sectional ladders between two large boulders. Hunt noted 'an alarming sag' in the middle but Mike's Sherpa assistants soon gained confidence as they crawled along it.

Mike joined Hillary, Band and others in forcing a route up the maze of the Icefall. Grisly names like 'Atom Bomb Area' and 'Mike's Horror' reflect the hazardous nature of the beast – the latter being an awkward crevasse negotiated by Mike in what Hunt praised as 'a fine feat of icemanship'. Higher on the mountain he helped push the route and carry loads on the Lhotse Face, but was dogged by sickness and reluctantly had to retreat having reached a height of about 7000m, just below Camp VI. He spent the succeeding days in the Icefall, engaged on the risky task of keeping a route open as the ice continually shifted. However he was back up at the camp at the head of the Western Cwm when Hillary and Tenzing returned triumphant.

Handshakes over, Mike accompanied *Times* correspondent Jan (then James) Morris, down through the Icefall in order to get the news back to London in time for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It was late in the day and, as Westmacott recalled for the BBC, 'not the most sensible thing I've done from a mountaineering point of view. By the time we got to the bottom we were very tired indeed and it was getting dark.' Morris had already noted how much the Icefall had changed – 'messier and crumblier than ever before... its ice bridges soggy and ominous. Michael Westmacott had been working inside this horrible place for 10 days... I have often thought of Westmacott since, immured there in the icefall, and marvelled at his tenacity.'

Though few of the expedition members realised it at the time, the Everest

experience would shape the rest of their lives. A dinner invitation to the young celebrity (though he would never have described himself as such) led to Mike's courtship of Sally Seddon, then studying at the Royal College of Music, and a long and happy marriage; together they climbed together in the Alps, North America and throughout the UK, often with other Everest friends. Mike left Rothamsted to work for Shell as an economist. During a spell for the company in the USA, in 1964 he and Sally joined a lightweight expedition to an untouched range of granite peaks in northern Alaska, the Arrigetch, where they made eight first ascents. In 1956 he went to Peru with a party including George Band and made the first ascent of Huaguruncho (5748m); and in 1968 he and Sally went to the Hindu Kush where with Hugh Thomlinson they made the first ascent of Wakhikah Rah (5681m) – 'three rock pinnacles on a beautifully sculptured snow ridge. It was one of the most beautiful summits I have known,' he wrote .

Most of Mike's years with Shell were spent working in London and living in Stanmore. He retired in 1985 and in 2000 the couple moved to the Lake District, close to friends and the best rock climbing in England. Mike had joined the AC in 1952, served as honorary secretary from 1967 to 71, president from 1993 to 95 and rightly became an honorary member. He was similarly active in the affairs of the Climbers' Club.

Mike's most public legacy to mountaineering must be the development of the Himalayan Index, an initiative of the Alpine Club Library, the council of which he chaired from 1984 to 1992. Aided by a small team, he created a computer database that now lists more than 4,000 peaks of above 6,000 metres and their climbing histories – an invaluable resource to expedition planners and available on the internet. Mike's labours on the Index led to him probably holding a record for the most nights spent in the AC bunkhouse. One of the few compensations I recall for a night in that cheerless basement was the pleasure of breakfast with Mike – and sometimes Sally too – in a café round the corner from Charlotte Road.

Mike died on 20 June 2012 after more than two years of debilitating illness. Next year will be the 60th anniversary of the Everest ascent and family and friends of the 1953 team will gather at an AC event at the Pen y Gwryd Hotel in Snowdonia, venue of many happy reunions. The absence of Mike Westmacott and George Band will be strongly felt, but there will be great lives to celebrate.

Stephen Goodwin



Alan Blackshaw. (Ken Wilson)

Alan Blackshaw OBE 1933 - 2011

For hillwalkers and climbers learning their craft in the late 1960s and 70s, the name 'Alan Blackshaw' meant just one thing, except to those who knew him personally, and that was 'Blackshaw's Mountaineering'. This compact and compendious manual contained advice on everything from buying your first hiking boots to leading hard rock routes in the Alps.

Mountaineering: From Hill Walking to Alpine Climbing (Penguin Books 1965) was the training 'bible' of its day. The Americans had Freedom of the Hills, a bulky volume produced by a large team

of experts, and the Brits had 'Blackshaw's Mountaineering' – or just 'Blackshaw' – written in his spare time by a civil servant in the then Ministry of Power. My own 1977 edition runs to 556 pages. By then Alan was Director General of the Offshore Supplies Office with responsibilities for the development of the North Sea oil industry. A capacity for detailed work on several different fronts was just one of the talents of this courteous man: a warm and generous friend and host, yet resolute in causes and disputes – of which he pursued several.

Alan Blackshaw was born in Liverpool on 7 April 1933. His father was a docker and his mother had a corner shop on the dock road where the infant Alan slept under the counter. His first sight of the hills came during the Second World War when, aged six, he was evacuated to a farm in the Black Mountains. Welsh was the only language spoken. After returning home, he won a scholarship to Merchant Taylor's School, Crosby, and then an Open Scholarship to Wadham College, Oxford, where he gained an MA in Modern History and honed his skills as a climber. 'Night climbing' on the dreaming college spires and rooftops was, and maybe still is, one of the illicit pleasures of student life for a minority at Oxford. One Eights Week, he and Hamish Nicol, another leading light in the Oxford University Mountaineering Club (OUMC), installed a neon sign on the top of Trinity Tower, flashing on and off 'Bloody Trinity' in revenge for some since forgotten transgression.

Climbing had been discovered through cycling. Given a bike for his 14th birthday, young Alan cycled from Liverpool to Land's End and back. The following year he set off for John o'Groats. While pedalling through Glencoe he met a bunch of climbers and did his first route. One of them sold him a pair of nailed boots and a hemp rope. The die was cast: Alan entered the world of the impecunious climber, hitchhiking, dossing in

barns, climbing on crags such as Gimmer in the Lake District and Clogwyn D'ur Arddu, North Wales. In 1951 a place in a Workers' Educational Association party introduced him to the Alps and the climbing paradise of the Chamonix valley. Alan's best season in the Alps was summer 1955 when with various partners he made first British ascents of the north face of the Aiguille de Triolet, south face of the Aiguille du Géant, Republique Arête of the Grands Charmoz and south face of the Pointe Gugliermina, all in the Mont Blanc-Chamonix area, where later in life he would buy an apartment, and the north face of Piz Badile in the Bregaglia. Oxford days over, he was doing National Service and became an officer instructor in the cliff assault wing of 42 Commando, Royal Marines.

Alan was at the top of his climbing game and might have been expected to



239. Alan Blackshaw during an 800km ski traverse from Sulitjelma on the Arctic Circle to the North Cape in 1979. (Mike Esten)

graduate to the Himalaya where the 8000m peaks were being scaled. But in the summer of 1956 British mountaineers, and particularly the OUMC set, were shaken by the deaths of Tom Bourdillon and Dick Viney on the Jägihorn in the Bernese Alps. Bourdillon had been one of the bright stars of the OUMC and had reached the south summit of Everest in 1953. Alan recalled: 'It was a terrible shock and we had to think very deeply about mountaineering, the ethical issues involved, and the question of obligations to families and civil society. I came to realise that the very hard forms of mountaineering no longer held quite the same appeal

for me.'1 (AJ 2005) That still left plenty of scope: he went on expeditions to the Caucasus (1958) and Greenland (1960) with John Hunt and continued as a mountain warfare instructor in the Royal Marines Reserve until 1974. In a foreword to 'Blackshaw's Mountaineering', Hunt wrote: 'I know of no one with whom I feel more confidence and comradeship on a rope.'

In fact the feat for which Alan is best remembered did not come until 1972 – his leadership of the first British continuous ski traverse of the Alps, more than 400 miles in 49 days from near the Grossglockner in central Austria to the southern fringe of the Ecrins where the snow ran out. Later in the 1970s he skied Scandinavia from end-to-end in sections.

Traversing the mountains on skis remained a passion almost until his final months. Work and places of play had drawn closer in 1974 when Alan moved to Scotland to set up the headquarters of the Offshore Supplies Office in Glasgow for the growing oil and gas industry. He had been principal private secretary to three ministers of power, including Tony Benn, and held other senior posts, however decided to leave the Civil Service at the end of the 1970s to concentrate on writing and updating his mountaineering manual.

This bold career move was unfortunately timed. 'By a freak of fate', as Alan termed it, his resignation coincided with a parliamentary investigation into what was alleged to be mis-spending on North Sea oil grants; certain newspapers incorrectly concluded this was why Alan had left. Although he was exonerated by the government and awarded compensation, the legal wrangling dragged on. Eventually he obtained libel damages against the *Daily Telegraph* – upheld in the Court of Appeal in 1983 – and the *Daily Mail*.

The Civil Service's loss was the mountaineering community's gain, though a new manual was a casualty of those four traumatic years. While earning a living as a management consultant, Alan threw himself into the clubs and councils side of the outdoor world, voluntary work that culminated in the presidencies of bodies such as the British Mountaineering Council (1973-76), Eagle Ski Club (1980-82), Ski Club of Great Britain (1997-2003), and the Alpine Club (2001-4). He was made an OBE in 1992.

Most notable perhaps was his service on the world representative body for mountaineering, the *Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme* (UIAA). Increasingly concerned about issues such as sustainable tourism, he was a key player, on behalf of the UIAA, in the United Nations International Year of the Mountains in 2002. However in 2005 he resigned as UIAA President after just one year in the top post amid bitter faction fighting.

Causes and disputes were a speciality. He could be a dogged opponent, as Scottish Natural Heritage discovered when he challenged their somewhat feudal view on rights of access to the hills. Alan advocated a 'freedom to roam', and in alliance with Dave Morris of Ramblers Scotland helped secure access laws that are the envy of walkers and climbers south of the border. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 was a big feather in his cap.

Yet conviviality was as much a part of Alan's life as controversy. Home was on the edge of the Cairngorms, a comfortable house at Newtonmore where visitors were always assured of a warm welcome from Alan and his wife Elspeth, a GP in nearby Aviemore. Diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma in 2007, he remained doggedly active between bouts of treatment and late in 2010 crewed on a 36ft yacht sailing across the Atlantic from Tenerife to Brazil. Only days before his final admission to Raigmore hospital, Inverness, he was still engaged in busy email correspondence on mountain issues.

I will miss the arrival in the post of those heavy A4 envelopes – or their email equivalent – with pages of forensic argument that signalled Alan on another mission. However his biggest impact on my life came in late 2003 when he pressed me to take on the editorship of the *Alpine Journal*. Alan was the Alpine Club president at the time. Having done the editor's job himself for three volumes (1968-70) he knew what was involved, but being a skilful persuader he rather underplayed it.

Doug Scott writes: I first became aware of Alan Blackshaw 50 years ago when checking out climbs in the Alpine Climbing Group Bulletin that Alan had edited. In it were lists of routes British climbers were doing including some by Alan and his fellow alpinists – routes that might be possible for myself and friends in the Nottingham Climbing Club to do; the Cassin Route on the Badile, Dent de Geant south face. It was a useful, if not essential publication, before the plethora of magazines available today

He went on to edit the *Alpine Journal*, introducing a modern format with integrated black and white photos and an index – most useful for those researching information. He persuaded younger climbers to contribute, including myself, giving encouragement and advice – advice about many things, as when I was bemoaning national park and council bureaucrats. 'Don't write them off,' he replied, 'bureaucrats don't mind what they do, as long as they are doing something, so get in there first and programme them to do what is really needed.'

Alan's contribution to the world of mountaineering owed much to his appreciation of the traditional British climbing scene from which he drew great strength. He was very proud to have been president of the AC as I was and Chris Bonington and everyone so privileged right back to 1857. He wrote: 'The fact that the Club is so firmly within the world of mountaineering for its own sake – with practically no links with commerce or officialdom – is perhaps its greatest strength.'

As with many of you here I would from time to time receive even weightier reports usually on matters of access – the Cuillin mountain range of Skye comes to mind and then the Cairngorm Funicular railway project was another, not to mention The Land Reform (Scotland) Act of 2003. Alan derived so much pleasure from the time he spent in wild places on rock, snow and on the oceans that he naturally wanted the same for everyone. He sought rights of access also as a means not only to lift one's state of being, but as a means to conserve the remaining natural places. He pursued this quest all the way to the UN where he was a member of the UN Inter Agency Group on Mountains. Alan wanted it set in stone that there is a 'Fundamental Human Right to the Enjoyment of Nature'.

Another of the many 'causes' that Alan took on was that of the owner-ship and copyright of the Everest photos. They had been lodged at the RGS who had proceeded to claim them and benefit from sales. Alan swung into action producing a report on the matter one hundred pages long and in two volumes. This proved to be good background material for Martin Scott to subsequently bring about a compromise between the MEF and the RGS.

Hiroo Saso sent this message from the president of the Japanese Mountaineering Association Tadao Kanzaki and Fumio Tanaka, the former president: 'Alan was a good friend to us and we acknowledge his great contribution to the UIAA and to the mountaineering community of the world. We shall never forget his gentle smile on the floor of UIAA meetings.'

The Japanese, as in a haiku brush stroke, evoke an impression in that

one sentence of Alan that we all recall – Alan's gentle smile that survived all the extreme challenges he faced throughout his life – physical, intellectual and emotional.



Walter Bonatti at the BMC Buxton Conference 1984. (Bernard Newman)

Walter Bonatti 1930 - 2011

Walter Bonatti could have made the first ascent of K2. He was the most talented member of the Italian expedition that climbed the world's second highest mountain in 1954, but at 24 he was also the youngest, relegated to a disappointing support role that nearly cost him his life. With the local Hunza porter Mahdi, he had to carry up oxygen cylinders for the chosen summit pair, Achille Compagnoni and Lino Lacedelli, who at the last minute pitched camp some distance from the agreed site. After a long exhausting day, arriving at nightfall. Bonatti was unable to reach the re-sited camp and it was too late to descend to

a lower camp, so was forced to spend a night in the open, without tent or sleeping bag at 8100m. It was a hideous ordeal, made worse by Mahdi's delirious attempts to hurl himself from the precarious snow ledge, but both men survived, descending to safer altitude at first light. Meanwhile, aided by the vital oxygen cylinders, Compagnoni and Lacedelli reaped glory for themselves and for Italy, reaching the summit late that evening.

The K2 experience left Bonatti embittered. Not only was his heroic sacrifice unacknowledged: the summit pair blamed him for the fact that they ran out of oxygen near the top, suggesting that he had stolen some of it. The accusation was patently absurd – Bonatti had neither mask nor adaptor to deplete the cylinders; Compagnoni and Lacedelli were simply too slow – but the slur rubbed salt in the wounds of a man who, despite being one of the greatest mountaineers of all time, was quite thin skinned and prone to controversy.

Born on 22 June 1930 into a poor family near Bergamo, Walter had a tough adolescence around his home town during the Second World War and it was only in 1948, aged 18, that he discovered climbing, on the limestone pinnacles of the Grignetta, near Lecco. From then onwards, as he later wrote in his autobiography, *The Great Days*, 'I was devoted heart and soul to rock faces, to overhangs, to the intimate joy of trying to overcome my own weakness in a struggle that committed me to the very limits of the possible.' With a lesser climber, that might sound like posturing hyperbole, but with Bonatti the words rang true. He was bold and imaginative, with

a resilient streak of asceticism. Right from the start he was repeating the hardest existing routes in the Alps and in 1951 he opened climbers' eyes with his first ascent of the east face of the Grand Capuçin – a beautiful, forbiddingly steep wall of compact granite in the Mont Blanc massif.

After the K2 debacle of 1954, as if in search of catharsis, he resolved to push himself even harder. The result was the first ascent of the spectacular south-west pillar of the Dru, familiar to every tourist who has ever gazed across the Mer de Glace from the railway station at Montenvers. On the first day Bonatti accidentally sliced off the tip of a finger with his piton hammer. He also dropped his stove, so was unable to melt snow for water. At that stage most people would have packed it in, but he continued with his self-imposed task, for six days, quenching his thirst with two cans of beer, climbing alone up some of the steepest, hardest rock attempted at that time. After each rope length he had to descend, removing the pitons he had hammered into the rock, then climb laboriously back up the rope. On day five, faced with an insurmountable overhang, he tied a bundle of pitons and wooden wedges to one end of the rope, hurled it over the roof, then swung free over the thousand metres void, praying that his improvised bolas would hold in the jammed blocks of granite above. It did, and he survived to complete what became known as the Bonatti Pillar.

In 1956 Bonatti made the first complete ski traverse of the Alps. In 1958 he returned to Pakistan as a member of Riccardo Cassin's expedition to Gasherbrum IV (7925m). The final section up the north-east ridge gave some of the hardest climbing ever achieved at that altitude. Bonatti led every pitch, supported by Carlo Mauri and it was only 28 years later, in 1986, that the mountain was climbed again, when Tim Macartney-Snape found Bonatti's original abseil piton on the summit block.

Elsewhere in the world's greater ranges, Bonatti made the first ascent of Rondoy North in Peru; but his real legacy lies in the Mont Blanc massif, above his adopted home of Courmayeur. Earning his living as a mountain guide, he knew every nook and cranny of the range and in his spare time he was always exploring new corners, stretching his own personal limits. With Cosimo Zapelli in 1963 he made the first winter ascent of the Walker Spur, on the great north face of the Grandes Jorasses. On the same face, with the Swiss climber, Michel Vaucher, he made the first ascent of the Whymper Spur. He was the first to dare to tackle the high remote Grand Pilier d'Angle on Mont Blanc, creating two routes with Zapelli and one with Toni Gobbi. It was also on Mont Blanc, in July 1961, that he survived one of the most epic disasters in alpine history.

Bonatti and his two Italian companions joined forces with four French climbers to attempt the unclimbed Central Pillar of Frêney. It would be the highest, hardest rock climb on the highest peak in western Europe, but after a long, committing approach they were caught by a ferocious electric storm near the top. After three nights huddled on a ledge, Bonatti realised that continuing was impossible and retreat by their approach route too dangerous. The only other option was a long, highly complex descent down

an untried route onto the chaotically broken Frêney glacier. The storm barely relented, and in whiteout conditions Bonatti had to draw on all his instinct and experience to find a way down. Four of the team died from hypothermia and exhaustion, but without Bonatti's leadership it is doubtful whether anyone would have returned alive.

After operating for nearly two decades at the highest level, Bonatti decided cannily to retire from extreme alpinism. Ever the showman with a sense of history, he chose for his swansong an extremely hard new direct route up the north face of the Matterhorn. He climbed it alone, over six days, in the winter of 1965 – the centenary of the first ascent of the mountain. Aeroplanes filled with journalists circled the mountain as he emerged from the face to stand and wave beside the summit cross. Thereafter he concentrated on his own journalism, travelling the world as a freelance photojournalist, drawn particularly to the wild empty spaces of Patagonia.

In 2009 the Italian Alpine Club finally accepted Bonatti's version of what happened on K2 in 1954. Meanwhile, in 2007, he had been made an honorary member of the Alpine Club and invited to the club's 150th anniversary celebrations in Zermatt. There, beneath the Matterhorn, scene of his greatest triumph, he was the star guest – a charming charismatic man who gave no hint of the former controversies that had dogged his otherwise fulfilled long life.

Stephen Venables

Mirella Tenderini writes: During the last few years of his life Walter was bestowed a series of recognitions which he received with an almost naïve emotion: the first 'lifetime achievement' Piolet d'Or, awarded in Chamonix in 2009, the first honorary citizenship of Mont Blanc and honorary membership of the British Alpine Club among others. Walter was perhaps the best known and most popular mountaineer in the world. His books have been translated into countless languages and the first two, On the Heights and The Great Days, have been an inspiration for three generations of mountain lovers.

For Walter's postwar generation, mountaineering was a means of redemption from a life of mediocrity and deprivation and the achievement of self-assurance and respect. His climbing career began on spires of the Grignetta (2177m) that dominate the eastern branch of Lake of Como – the forcing ground which bred formidable figures such as Riccardo Cassin – and at age 19 he had already repeated most of the classic ascents of his predecessors, including Cassin's route on the Walker Spur of Grandes Jorasses, the *Ratti-Vitali* line on the west face of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, and the *Bramani-Castiglioni Route* on the north-west face of Piz Badile. In 1951 he accomplished the epochal climb of the east face of Grand Capuçin, applying Dolomite aid techniques to the great walls of Mont Blanc and showing the possibility of climbing vertical or even overhanging granite in the kingdom of ice and snow. He distinguished himself also by accomplishing the first winter ascents of the north face of Cima Ovest di Lavaredo and of the

Furggen Ridge of the Matterhorn, where he completed the classic route with a variation along a new direct line.

Walter's abundant success stimulated several young climbers to follow his tracks and played an important role in the development of rock climbing in the high Alps. When, in 1954, he was chosen to be part of the Italian expedition to K2, he was not only the youngest member of the team but plainly the strongest, and his presence upset some of his companions, especially those chosen for the summit, who feared he might take their role off them. They played a dirty trick on him and what was worse the leader of the expedition, Ardito Desio, refused to listen to Walter's version, accepting that of Compagnoni and Lacedelli, which became the official one.

It was a deplorable episode that scarred Walter's inner being so deeply as to torment him for more than 50 years, until the Italian Alpine Club officially re-examined the lamentable affair, corrected the falsified version and restored Walter's truth. That incident had an enormous impact on Walter's life: the utter injustice he had to endure for a long time frustrated him deeply. On the other hand it gave him a strong impetus; his want of revenge urged him to dare the impossible in order to assert himself in front of the whole world. His six-day solo ascent of the south-west pillar of the Petit Dru (1955), with an epic no-return pendulum, captured the imagination of mountaineers and even non-mountaineers and reached the front pages of daily papers and magazines, launching his popularity in Italy as a national hero.

Walter's success gained him many supporters, particularly among the new generation of young and ambitious climbers, but also gave rise to jeal-ousy and even open hostility. In Courmayeur, where he had moved in 1957 to be near Mont Blanc and to earn his living as a guide, he was generally considered an outsider and – with a few exceptions – he was spared no criticisms when accidents occurred, as in the case of the tragedy of the Frêney Pillar in 1961 when he lost his friend and faithful partner Andrea Oggioni. Soon afterwards he moved to Chamonix on the other side of Mont Blanc and continued his high level activity.

In 1965, at the zenith of his career, Walter decided to leave the stage after accomplishing a final, theatrical exploit: a new direct route on the north face of Matterhorn in winter and solo. He had given up guiding a few years earlier, however had written two very successful books and gave lectures illustrated with slides. He was a good photographer and a fascinating narrator, and soon received a proposal to work as a photojournalist for *Epoca*, one of the most prestigious weekly magazines in Italy. For some 15 years he travelled to the remotest places in the world, from the Yukon to Cape Horn, writing articles and photographing surviving wild places.

He quit *Epoca* when changes in the magazine management interfered with his freedom of choice. He went on writing books and delivering lectures. And he never stopped climbing mountains: with no publicity, just for his own pleasure. He also built his own house and tended his garden, like an ancient Roman hero, to live peacefully with Rossana Podestà, the movie

actress who shared with him thirty years out of the limelight. Together with her and a few close friends he continued his travels to distant places. During those years, far from competition and rivalries, his bitterness dissolved showing the best side of his generous personality and the fidelity to his own ideals which he enunciated in his books and practised his whole life: those ideals which made him a myth and an example for younger generations.



Alasdair Andrews. (John Monks)

Alasdair Ian Andrews 1939 - 2011

Alasdair Andrews was born in 1939 in Edinburgh where he lived all his life. Following National Service he joined Ferranti Ltd working in the accounts department. He had a long and successful career with the company, ending as Company Secretary, and retired in 1998 having worked there for 39 years.

Aside from his work, the two great interests in Andrew's life were music and mountaineering. At school he was a gifted chorister and he nearly became a professional singer. However, although he elected for a safer career, he continued singing. In 1975 he was a founder member of the Edinburgh Practice

Choir, and then in 1979 he joined both the Edinburgh Festival Chorus and what became the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus. He sang with all three choirs for more than 30 years, and many of their members sang at his Service of Thanksgiving.

He seldom missed a rehearsal. Evidence of this is that his Alpine meets always had to finish before the end of July so that he could start rehearsing for the Festival. His climbing friends had an opportunity to hear his singing voice on a wet day in the Valais when we visited the church in Ernen and he decided to test the acoustics by giving us a splendid rendering of the climbers' version of *Om Mane Padme Hum*.

But it was as a mountaineer that I knew him. Like many of us his love of the outdoors started as a Scout and as a member of the YHA, and then he joined the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland. Once at work he became a leading member of the Ferranti Mountaineering Club, a very active club in those days, becoming club secretary and organising many of the Club's meets. After his first trip to Switzerland in 1968 he joined the ABMSAC and in 1984 was elected to the Alpine Club.

It was through the ABMSAC that we met. In 1974 we found ourselves sitting next to each other at the Club's Northern Dinner at Glenridding. We discovered we had a mutual love of the Scottish hills and he suggested that I come up to Scotland for a weekend with other friends. He borrowed

a cottage at Fearnan by Loch Tay which subsequently became the base for many of his early meets. The weekend was a great success and included a traverse of Meall nan Tarmachan in winter conditions. This led him to start organising Scottish weekend meets for the ABMSAC. He arranged meets for us all over the Highlands and we used to joke about his encyclopaedic knowledge of Scottish bunkhouses. These meets were soon an established feature of the Club calendar. As is to be expected in Scotland, the weather was not always kind but the meets were always enjoyable occasions thanks to Alasdair's unfailingly cheerful personality and his knack of livening up any party.

The ABMSAC's annual calendars illustrate his energy. In 1997 he organised no fewer than 10 meets, with similar numbers in other years. He was elected president of the ABMSAC in 2003, and on demitting office was made an honorary life member in recognition of his service to the Club.

But his enthusiasm did not wane and he continued to organise meets, some hotel based, others trekking from hut to hut, always in different areas of the Alps, Dolomites or Pyrenees. These were joint AC/ABMSAC meets, and a number of AC members participated in them. It was on the first of his treks in 1999, the tour of Monte Rosa, that he met his wife Pamela, also an AC member, and they organised the next 12 years of meets together. In his last year he attended meets in Scotland, Fiesch and Bhutan, and was already making plans for the following year's meet in the Val d'Aosta. Even at the July meet at Fiesch those of us with him saw no sign of the cancer which claimed him so quickly.

Alasdair would be the first to agree that he was no North Wall tiger, but he had an enormous wealth of experience as a mountaineer, with a creditable list of peaks to his name. He had also climbed all the 284 Munros which is no mean achievement.

What we will miss, and Pamela most of all, is not just his energy in organising meets, but his personality. He was one of the most charismatic people I have known, always full of laughter and jokes, and a good person to have around when the ground was steep or the going turned rough.

John Dempster

Alistair Gordon 1943 - 2011

Alistair Gordon was born in Aberdeen in 1943. His father, Bill, was a baker, a reserved occupation. Bill had been sent to Fort William where he lodged while the family, including Alistair, remained in Aberdeen. Later, the Fort William connection became the high point of Alistair's childhood because the family Bill had lodged with invited the family back for summer holidays. It was the start of Alistair's life-long love of the hills.

In his early teens Alistair finally persuaded his parents to buy him a bike and this was his passport to freedom. Weekends and holidays were spent youth hostelling with friends and cousins. Then, in 1958, the music teacher



Alistair Gordon

at Aberdeen Grammar School started a hill-walking club and that was the start of his Munro bagging career, at the age of 14.

At 16 he started work as an apprentice quantity surveyor and once qualified decided to head for the bright lights of London and got himself a job working on the of the Museum of London project.

Later in life, wanting more fulfilment, he studied for 10 years to gain an honours degree from the Open University. This enabled him to become a chartered surveyor with

the RICS. All of this was fitted in around work and climbing.

Once in London he had plenty of spare time, outside work, so he joined an evening class in rock climbing. It was here where he met several people who together went on to join the London Mountaineering Club (LMC) and become lifelong friends. Thereafter most weekends were spent, travel-

ling 4-up in his mini, to Wales or the Peak District, with occasional visits to Harrisons Rocks and to Scotland for the snow and ice.

It was in his early LMC days that I met Alistair and after climbing together for a few months we made our first ventures to the Alps. Chamonix and camping in Snell's field was the usual fare. Over three seasons in the early 1970s while we climbed at a modest standard we did plenty of routes and gained much experience. Even today after nearly 30 years I can still remember the day we climbed the aiguilles Mummery and Ravanel: we had traversed Les Courtes from the Couvercle hut the day before and staved for another route; the ascent was uneventful until we got to the top of Aiguille Mummery when we noticed that cloud was building up, so we did not linger on the summit. By the time we gained the summit of the Ravanel the weather was very threatening with lightning over the Aiguille Verte. We quickly arranged to abseil down the east ridge and set off. Unfortunately when we tried to recover the ropes after the first abseil they would not move. At this point Alistair, with no discussion, had his prusiks on the ropes and was heading back up to free them. It was a long prusik and with lightning now around him he calmly sorted out the ropes before descending again. This was typical of Alistair and was just one of the fine virtues that made him a great climbing companion and good friend.

In 1974 our regular partnership came to an end when Alistair, answering the call of the mountains, found a job in Fort William. In the early 1980s we made several more trips together to the Alps for both summer climbing and spring ski-touring. It gave me great pleasure when he asked me to propose him for the AC when he at last decided to join the Club in the early 1990s. My last walk with Alistair was near his home in Matlock about a

year before he died. He said he was not very fit, he had just finished some chemo, but I still struggled to keep up with his long strides. It brought back the memory of the Alps and of him tirelessly climbing a snow slope with me needing three steps to his two.

He was based in Fort William for four years, climbing whenever it was fit – sometimes he would be up and down the Ben four times in a weekend – and whenever it was foul weather there was always a Munro to do, usually alone, on the grounds that it kept him out of the pub. He joined the Lochaber Mountain Rescue team but had to keep it secret from his boss who, at the job interview, had bizarrely asked for assurance that he would not join. Even with his active local climbing scene Alistair always made time to climb with friends from London who made the trip to Fort Bill. His Fort William days ended in 1978 when he resigned from his job after his boss refused him unpaid leave for the trip of a lifetime to climb in the USA and Canada.

With no money on his return from the North America trip he took the first job he could get and late 1978 arrived in Matlock where, almost on arrival, he joined the Derwent Mountaineering Club. However, this initial encounter with the club was interrupted when work took him to Hong Kong for 6 months. This did provide him with an excellent opportunity to fit in a trek to the Annapurna Sanctuary. Once back in Matlock he soon became one of the club's most enthusiastic members, taking part in all its activities: climbing, walking, running and finding his other great passion - caving. He was fascinated by the notion that you can squeeze through a little hole in the ground and enter a whole parallel universe where new discoveries are still being made. Through the club he met his wife to be, Ruth, and friendship gradually grew into love over the following five years. He was never one for hasty decisions. While in Matlock, the Carsington Reservoir project began and that brought him long-term employment. He often looked back with amused surprise that a short-term expedient had led to a long-term job, a house, a wife, a cat, alarmingly even nieces and nephews, 'and suddenly half your life is away'.

As an only child, Alistair was always comfortable in his own company and was utterly self-reliant. He was reserved and did not easily speak of his feelings. Integrity was central to his character, written right through him like the words in a stick of rock. For him it was important to achieve whatever he set out to do in style and so in his climbing he never really fulfilled his potential. It wasn't enough for him to scrabble to the top, heart in mouth, he wanted to savour the experience. He embraced new ideas such as modern protection, climbing walls and bolted limestone to continually push his climbing standard. Even in his 60s he was still improving until the utterly unexpected blow of the lymphoma struck him almost as soon as he retired and overshadowed the last three years of his life.

Alistair was a true mountaineer and will be keenly missed by his wife, Ruth, and his many friends.



Jim Harrison. (Rupert Hoare)

Reverend Jim Harrison 1930 - 2011

Jim Harrison died suddenly but peacefully on Saturday 23 July 2011 whilst reading in the library of the Savile Club, London. John Moore and I had been fortunate to have dined with him on the previous two evenings. He was a reticent man and rarely spoke about his family, achievements or his childhood. My thanks go to his family and friends for filling the gaps in my knowledge of his life.

Jim was born on 3 May 1930 and raised in Edinburgh with one sister. He attended the Royal High School but

contracted TB necessitating time in a sanatorium; this prevented him from taking his Highers. He worked for a while in a newspaper office and then emigrated to Canada where he did work for a Montreal newspaper, the RCA record company and also BBC radio. He then returned to Scotland and re-entered education, studying for his Highers. It was here that he met Maud who was his English teacher, and so began a loving partnership that lasted until Maud's death in 2007.

After Highers, Jim gained a degree in English and entered teaching. He and Maud then returned to Canada and both taught in Nova Scotia and Alberta. At this time he felt a call to the ministry and so returned to Scotland where he attended Seminary for a year. In 1972 he left again for Canada where he attended the Knox College, Toronto; here in 1975 he graduated with a Master of Divinty degree and was ordained by the Presbyterian Church of Canada. He became a minister for a year and a half. Jim then returned to Scotland where he taught Religious Education in the East Lothian School system for many years and was an adviser in RE to the Edinburgh schools. He was also a lecturer in English and Communication at Napier University. Jim continued working for the BBC as an independent interviewer, and gave the morning 'Thought for the Day' on many occasions.

Jim took up skiing and climbing in Canada and continued with his skimountaineering back in the UK, becoming a member of the Eagle Ski Club in 1980. He was vice-president of the ESC from 1991 to 1997 and president from 1997 to 2000. He attended and arranged many Eagle Ski Club meets in Scotland. These included the popular Dinner Meets, where he would give a Robert Burns grace in his inimitable style and was also an amusing after dinner speaker. He toured regularly in the Alps with, amongst others, Walter Mann and Mike Bennet. He had enormous respect for the leadership and skiing skills of Walter Mann. His accomplished photographs have

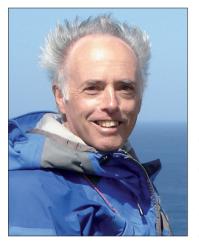
graced a number of ESC journals.

Jim presided over the 75th Eagle Ski Club Anniversary Dinner at Maloja in 2000 with his typical entertaining style and memorable literary quotations. He was made an honorary member of the Alpine Ski Club in 1995, served as secretary from 1996-2002 and joined the Alpine Club in 1991.

In 1996 Jim was elected a member of the Savile Club and enjoyed frequent visits to London. He had a wide circle of friends many of whom. like myself, enjoyed warm hospitality at his home in Edinburgh. His humour was epitomised for me by a quote from the 1983 ESC Journal. When cheerily greeted one morning in the Franz Senn hut in the Stubai Alps before an early start he replied: 'It may be God's good morning but He doesn't have to get up!'

Jim did not suffer fools gladly but was a kind man whose modest charm, conversation and mischievous sense of humour will be greatly missed by all his friends.

Robin Chapman



Rupert Hoare. (Jay Turner)

Rupert John Stephen Hoare 1956 - 2011

Rupert Hoare's tragically early death on 20 September 2011 from pancreatic cancer deprived his widow Jay, his family, friends, colleagues and climbing companions of an exceptional man and a mountaineer to whom the hills were an inspiration and the force that shaped his aesthetic and spiritual values.

At Winchester, Rupert excelled academically and at gymnastics. Rock climbing under the aegis of two dons, John Durran and Tony Ayres, came naturally. The Romance of Mountaineering, written by another Wykehamist don, RLG Irving, who had introduced

Mallory to mountaineering, particularly captured Rupert's youthful imagination and inspired him to join the British Schools Exploring Society's 1974 Expedition to Arctic Norway. That autumn, he went up to Exeter University to read Physical Geology having set his career sights not on banking but on the type of scientific research that allowed scope for travel and adventure. His university weekends were mainly spent in British hills, while on long vacations he made a second expedition to Arctic Norway and also visited South Africa where he climbed in the Drakensburg and had lunch with Desmond Tutu.

At Exeter, Rupert's principal climbing partner was Simon Mumford, later his Best Man. At Rupert's funeral Simon recalled select Rupert mnemonics that had found their way into the family lexicon. Thus, 'PMD' or 'Prudent Mountaineering Decision' covered those rare instances when Rupert decided on tactical retreat after coming across someone even more competitive than himself. After cutting their teeth in the Dauphiné, they crowned their first alpine season with an ascent of the Chardonnet's North Buttress.

IN MEMORIAM

Rupert's first overseas posting to Gabon in 1977 was followed by seismographic assignments to both Libya and Australia as party chief. In between, he trekked in Nepal, climbed Norway's Romsdalhorn and bushwacked his way through the Tasmanian wilderness to climb Federation Peak and, much later in 1992, Frenchman's Cap. On return to England, he joined the oil exploration company LASMO and the London Mountaineering Club, subsequently becoming its president. For the next nine years, he climbed most weekends throughout Britain, once with Mick Fowler to traverse the Needles. In the Alps, he did ambitious classic routes in the Oberland, Pennine Alps, and Bernina, principally with John Evans with whom he made his third visit to Arctic Norway in 1986 to climb Lofoten's Stetind, 'the most remarkable natural obelisk in the world'. Two years before, Rupert had been a member of Derek Fordham's 1984 Greenland Expedition. While attempting the south ridge of Mount Forel with David Waldron, a severe storm precipitated an epic retreat. Rupert's selfless gesture of giving his spare gloves and socks to a badly frostbitten David averted potential disaster. That same year, he was elected to the Alpine Club.

An early convert to ski-mountaineering, he attended a training course at Chamonix in 1981 and completed his first Haute Route a week later. During the 1980s when snow conditions in Scotland were exceptional, he was a leading player on Eagle Ski Club weekend Highlands meets, made possible by British Rail's excellent overnight sleeper services. He was a most valued member of the team that completed three stages of the Pyrenean High Route and the pioneer ski-tours that we did together in Spain's Picos de Europa, Sierra de Gredos and Cordillera Cantabrica. In 1990 he was on the Eagles' 1990 expedition to the Kulu Himalaya.

In 1990, Rupert's LASMO posting to Malaysia and Indonesia opened a new career window and unusual mountaineering opportunities. While on leave, he and his future wife Jay bagged Kinabalu and a string of Indonesian volcanoes before Rupert went on to traverse the Japanese Alps. In 1992 he joined the Eagles' Southern Alps ski-tour when, during a rare period of settled weather, they climbed Hochstetter Dome and Mount Aylmer; skied the Tasman Glacier; and then climbed mounts Grey and Lendenfeld before rounding up Rupert's 'best ever winter holiday' with an ascent of Mount Aspiring's north-west ridge.

Returning to Britain in 1993, he and John Evans did their last alpine season together and, in that same year, he became engaged to Jay. For the next 18 years they climbed together almost every summer in the Alps and Dolomites, developing a mutual love for alpine flora and also exploring the mountains of Mallorca, Spain and Greece. During the winter, there were Alpine Ski Club expeditions to Iran and Turkey; ski-tours in the Ötztal, Ortler, Oberland, Queyras, the Italian High Level Route, the Ecrins; the Corsican High Route and a ski ascent of Mt Blanc.

Rupert became president of the Alpine Ski Club in 2002 and an honorary Member in 2011.

In 1995, he joined WesternGeco with whom he was to spend the rest of his working life. The commercially successful investment projects he initiated and his pioneering work in North Sea Basin oil exploration earned him the plaudits and respect of both clients and colleagues and the gratitude of a generation of post-graduates. Professor John Underhill, president of the European Association of Geoscientists and Engineers, has written that, 'Without Rupert's foresight and him going out of his way to be helpful and accommodating, geoscientific understanding of basins would never have seen the light of day.'

Rupert's and Jay's decision to move to Aberdeenshire in 2002 assured them of the freedom of the Scottish hills at all times and seasons. Jay completed her Munros tally in 2008: Rupert was only 16 short before his death. Although they continued to make regular visits to European ranges, and did their last ski-tour together in 2009 on the Lyngen Peninsula, the Scottish highlands now claimed their deepest affections. Rupert's climbing biography *Mountain Views – A lifetime's enjoyment, (see page 349),* lovingly describes the many Scottish adventures and best days they shared together. On 29 April 2011, when his health was fast fading, he still managed to climb his last hill, Bennachie, within sight of their home at Hatton on Fintray.

Rupert's death on 20 September 2011, though inevitable, seemed inexplicably capricious. Although the most competitive of climbing companions, his mountain judgements were never rash and he had seemed physically indestructible. On the last leg of the Pyrenean High Route, a dramatic airborne leap into pinewoods followed by a five-metre fall onto boulder scree would have finished most men. Rupert just picked himself up, slightly shaken. On Aonach Mhor in 1994, an Ordnance Survey map inaccuracy resulted in his walking off a cornice during a white-out. Somehow, he survived a 75m free-fall and another of 200m down a steep snow slope sustaining only a severed anterior cruciate ligament. He was back in the hills that autumn.

In 2001, it was Rupert's super-charged effort getting back to the Sella Hut on Monte Viso to raise a helicopter to pick up Alan Wedgwood, unconscious with a smashed pelvis and bleeding profusely from a severed artery, that saved Alan's life.

When Rupert began to write his mountaineering testament *Mountain Views* he knew that he had only nine months to live. That last phase, made bearable by Jay's devoted love and care, was characterised by the same qualities that had held the respect, admiration and love of all who knew him. Whether in his work or in the mountains, his courage, enthusiasm,

meticulous planning and technical competence were always balanced by a disarming modesty, selflessness and generosity of spirit. His artistic talents were reflected in his outstanding photography for it was in the mountains that he found beauty's most obvious manifestation.

John Harding



Jagdish Chandulal Nanavati

Jagdish C. Nanavati 1929 - 2011

What was said about Beethoven was also true for Jagdish Chandulal Nanavati (JCN): 'Talent is what a man possesses, genius is what possesses a man!'

He had a rare talent for the study and enjoyment of mountains in all their aspects. But once he was interested in a climb, or a problem with it, he became a man possessed and would pace in his garden till late, sit at his table burning the midnight oil, poring over maps and old articles. Much correspondence followed by hours of talking on the phone to gather authentic information.

He used all his time, knowledge and talent to sort out truth from falsehood. And he would not rest till a problem was solved.

It is hard to go into details of expeditions he studied. However, some of the well-known peaks and claims of ascents that he studied included Nilkanth, Nyegi Kangsang, Kokthang, Matri, Sudarshan Parvat ... the list is endless. In the case of Gya, he later accepted and proved that the ascent was actually made though he had thought otherwise to start with. I learnt of his exactness in 1969 when we retreated from about 100 feet short of the summit of Tharkot after being carried down by an avalanche. The morning after our return JCN phoned to say that 'it will be appropriate to say that you were 125 feet from the summit and not 100'. We subsequently declared we were 150 feet short – after all, who would want to join issues with JCN?

His standards were high and many of us found it difficult to match his expectations. He was, as someone put it aptly, 'the inquisitor of mountains from Mumbai'. Studying maps, drawings and observations gave him enormous pleasure and through his incisive mind he solved many problems. He did not need to go to the mountain. By studying a mountain and details of its ascent, he could conclude whether it had been truly climbed or whether the climbers had made a mistake. He must have disproved ascent claims of more than 20 peaks, and in a few cases proved that peaks had been climbed when the climbers were not sure. It was not that he forced his view as the last word about a claim. He would prove it with detailed studies and

present it with logic, almost like a detective. In most cases climbers disagreed with his conclusions; after all, who wants to accept that their claim of climbing a peak is false? So through letter after letter and proof after proof he would make them understand their folly, and if they still refused he would stand by his finding. Later as the Ombudsman of the Himalayan Club, he decided without favour or fear that the Club-sponsored expedition to Nilkanth had failed to reach the summit.

JCN lost his father when he was 12 years old and was, therefore, a self-made man. He met his wife Mandakini while in college; he was so much in love and roamed around with her on a motorbike that he failed final exams twice. After their marriage in 1949 she was the balance in his life as her practical wisdom perfectly offset the lofty ideals of JCN. Whenever we had difficulties we ran to her. She survives him with a family of four children and many grandchildren.

Early in his life JCN met Swami Anand, a learned ascetic who lived at Gangotri who introduced him to the Himalaya and its climbing stories and also gave him many maps. This was the beginning of a love affair. JCN made many treks in the local hills, the Sahyadris and the Western Ghat. It was a pioneering effort as the sport was unknown then. He was at home in the hills, whistling, shouting, cycling; his wit was legendary, he was always full of stories and full of questions. We enjoyed many trips together but his questioning was one trait that I could never fully satisfy – he wanted to know everything about everything and this was beyond my knowledge and patience. He was very fond of my son, Lt Nawang Kapadia who died in Kashmir at the young age of 25. JCN got on fabulously with him. On a trek they always shared a tent and Nawang's eyes would light up while listening to JCN's stories. They would talk until late at night and suddenly JCN would start his loud and famous snores. JCN could never speak of Nawang after his death without tears welling in his eyes.

He completed his mountaineering course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling, in 1958. On his return he arranged with Brigadier Gyan Singh, the Principal of HMI, to send three instructors to Mumbai to conduct rock-climbing courses for the benefit of city dwellers. When the Himalayan Club was not interested in sponsoring it, he formed a 'Mountaineering Committee' that organised the courses. This small committee was converted into 'The Climbers Club'. After a decade of running these courses, for which he had explored the places near Mumbai and arranged everything, he fell out with the Club as they unfairly wanted to pass censure against an expedition sponsored by the Club to Bethartoli Himal in 1970. Four climbers died in an avalanche; it was a *vis major* but the Club wanted to blame the leadership and members. After a year of protracted arguments, JCN resigned as president of the Club when the committee published their prejudicial views. Many members, including myself, also resigned with him.

This resignation was surely an act of God. It was about the same time that the Himalayan Club moved from Calcutta to Mumbai as there were

no volunteers to run it at the former. Soli Mehta asked JCN to take over the reins of the HC. As the statistics show, he served as hon secretary of the Club for 23 years, then as the president for eight years and finally as president emeritus. He literally reconstructed the Club from ruins to a pinnacle. He was the face of the club, organised its files and finances, his office was used as the HC office, and he was encouraging to youngsters. When Soli Mehta, hon editor of the *Himalayan Journal*, was posted abroad, I remember a handsome JCN walking into my house and requesting me to be the editor. I was a novice and from then until his last days he was helpful and a guiding light for the *HJ*.

JCN organised local talks and programmes in Mumbai and invited famous foreign climbers to speak to youngsters, thus encouraging the sport of mountaineering. In 1978, for the golden jubilee of the HC, he organised a five-day festival at the prestigious Jahangir Art Gallery in a prime area of Mumbai. A photo exhibition was arranged with daily talks by a well-known speaker. It was always a packed house and people lined up an hour early to gain entry. No wonder, as that extravaganza had speakers such as Pertemba Sherpa, Dr Salim Ali, H.C. Sarin, Joginder Singh and others. The HC has never looked back after that event.

I was surprised to learn, after his death, that JCN was an ardent fish collector. He had 40 fish tanks in his compound – a rare thing for he was a Jain – strictly vegetarian and would not even eat garlic and onions. Another love he had was for roses – which he tended in his garden and talked about in detail. He cultivated 100 different varieties of roses and photographed them while listening to music – all his passions. At the same time he was much engaged in social work, running his family school, college and hospital. With his upbringing he was also involved in many activities associated with Gandhian institutions, though he knew that these institutions were dying.

After the accident on the Bethartoli Himal in 1970 and the acrimony that followed, JCN did not venture to the Himalaya until 1982. But when he did return, it was with great pleasure to Kumaun, where we undertook a long trek in two valleys. One could sense in him the same exuberance and love for the Himalaya. In 1984 and 1986, with many youngsters, we went to the Ruinsara valley in Garhwal and the Baspa valley in Kinnaur. These trips brought out best in JCN as he spread maps to teach the youngsters, taught them how to walk methodically, camp manners and much more. His wards were taught how to enjoy mountains without bravado, safely and with knowledge. He had a way with the youngsters.

He climbed no high peaks, for that matter not even a small peak. He did not explore major ranges or undertake heroic adventures. But still, in the world of mountaineering, he became a legend and a Guru to many of us. Not only the youngsters but the even the Himalaya benefited from his wisdom, observations and studies. The Himalaya, like many of us, will miss him.

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Tim Oliver. (Phill Thomas)

Tim Oliver 1956 - 2011

It was a great shock to learn that my good friend Tim had taken his own life in his home in North Carolina. Tim was elected to the Alpine Club in 1983, however his big contribution to mountaineering was through the Climbers' Club, notably digitisation of 110 years of climbing history in the club journal.

Tim's appearance on the South Wales climbing scene was about 40 years ago at the age of 16. He was a fresh-faced young-ster preparing for his GSEs, but with the extra energy and enthusiasm to take up climbing at such a busy period in his life. He gelled well with the active local climbers

and climbed extensively around the UK and in the Alps.

Tim's academic career went well and led him to university in Plymouth, where he studied marine biology, and then on to work in a London hospital. In London, he met his future wife and eventually went to live in her home area of North Carolina. There he gained his PhD and worked on the staff of several leading universities.

After he left Cardiff we saw less of Tim, but he continued to visit several times most years and maintained good contact with his friends and family. Tim continued his involvement in climbing, caving and kayaking, often teaming up with his old South Wales friends. One notable occasion was with Mike Harber when they established a new route on Huascaran.

Tim was not a talented climber, but he loved adventure in a variety of forms. I jumped at his invitation to join him kayaking in the Appalachians mountains with his local canoe club. It was great paddling in great company. That trip continued with mountaineering in the Cascade mountains of Washington State. During that trip Tim told me of his plans for a kayak trip down the Colorado River and invited me to join him.

Tim eventually pulled the trip together and we went when his permit was issued 10 years later. He did the same again two years later when my 'back-up permit' was issued. This was typical of Tim who was a very self-disciplined and organised person. These were fantastic trips when we soaked up the atmosphere of the Grand Canyon for days on end.

These trips in Tim's company have left life long impressions on me, together with a host of other memories. He was probably best known within the CC as one of the members who was keen to maintain the historic atmosphere of Helyg, the club's hut in the Ogwen valley, and more recently for taking over the editorship of the *CC Journal*. He had a great love of climbing traditions and climbing literature and had eagerly taken on this new role.

My deepest sympathies go out to his partner Wendy, mother Beryl and brother John. He will be mourned by his many friends. Such a sad loss.

Phill Thomas

David Medcalf writes: I was aware of Tim Oliver before I took over as CC archivist – I had seen his name in the Newsletter associated with 'some project' regarding CC Journals, but I didn't know, or think, much about it. I wasn't in the job for long before realising how very useful this 'project' was going to be, for me and for many others. The project, of course, was the digitisation of the journals, in a form that made searching 110 years of Climbers' Club history straightforward and very fast.

Without Tim's knowledge of imaging, scanning and the state of the art processes that were becoming available in the United States, this project would never have got off the ground. I was pleased to meet Tim and Wendy a couple of years ago on one of his regular trips back to Wales and I hope I was successful in letting him know how important his project had turned out to be. We owe him a debt of gratitude.



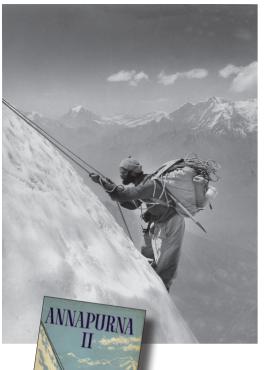
Stewart Ward (right) with Chris Bonington in Aden on route to Annapurna II in 1960. (Chris Bonington Picture Library)

Stewart Ward 1930 - 2011

Stewart Ward, who died on 17 May 2011 aged 81, joined the Alpine Club in 1968 having been proposed by Jimmy Roberts with whom he had climbed on two Himalayan expeditions. Brought up in a Lancashire village and leaving school at 14, he had become an apprentice draughtsman with Leyland Motors until

his 'call-up' for National Service in the Royal Air Force. A shortage of aircrew at the time enabled him to apply for a commission, which in turn took him to Canada for his initial training and where he seems to have found his metier as a navigator, later to spend most of his flying career in Bomber Command.

Ward's introduction to climbing had come in Norway on a meet with Norwegian Rover Scouts but it was another 10 years before he ventured further afield, to the Pyrenees. 1959 saw him on an RAF Mountain-



CAPTAIN R.H. GRANT.

240. Stewart Ward load carrying up fixed ropes on Annapurna II in 1960. cf. the cover of the Annapurna II expedition book.

eering Association meet in Chamonix, climbing with Norman Ridley (AC) before, in 1960, he was nominated as the RAF representative 'Oxygen Member' on British-Indian-Nepalese Services Himalayan Expedition led by Lt. Col. J.O.M. Roberts. Their objective was Annapurna II (7937m). With a team of six British Service climbers, including a young Christian Bonington, plus two each from the Nepalese and Indian Armed Services and nine Sherpas, Jimmy Roberts

regarded the expedition as being rather top heavy; moreover few of the team had climbed with or even knew each other. Nevertheless, in spite of this potential drawback their efforts were crowned with success, Bonington, Dicky Grant and Sherpa Ang Nyima reaching the summit after a four-day ascent in far from perfect conditions while Ward, with two others,

together with the very experienced Sherpa Tashi, climbed Annapurna IV (7525m).

Happily for Stewart Ward the expedition bug had bitten at a time when all three Services were exhibiting a growing enthusiasm for such adventurous activity. In successive years he led RAF parties to Lyngen in northern Norway and to the Vatnajokull Ice Cap in Iceland. Then in 1965 came further opportunity in the shape of the RAFMA expedition to the Dhaula Himal, post-monsoon, to climb Dhaulagiri IV (7661m). Led by John Sims, one of the RAF's most experienced mountaineers, the expedition again included Jimmy Roberts who, in making a reconnaissance of the lower slopes some few years previously, had detected what seemed a feasible route up this hitherto unclimbed peak. Unusually for those days, the expedition was able to charter a light aircraft and fly from Pokhara to an airstrip close to the site of their base camp. At first all went well in spite of strong winds and very cold weather. In little more than a week

three camps were established up to 6220m. However, snow conditions were decidedly suspect and the following day while climbing above the highest camp two Sherpas were avalanched and swept down some 100 metres. They survived unhurt, just short of a huge crevasse, but prevailing conditions left Sims with little option but to abandon the climb. Ward and Roberts, both sick, had meanwhile descended to the lower camps. Subsequently other members were able to climb Ghustung, a minor summit nearby, but then found themselves trapped for several days by heavy snowfall. Having exhausted their supplies they eventually escaped to return to base camp, in Roberts' view, 'lucky to survive'.

If 1965 was perhaps a disappointing year it still held compensation for Stewart. He completed the RAF Survival course and, not long after, met Elizabeth, the young WRAF officer who was to become his wife. Married life and in due course the demands of a growing family inevitably left fewer opportunities for mountaineering but he continued his involvement in RAF Mountain Rescue to the end of his service. Earlier he had on occasion been seconded as an instructor to both the Eskdale and Ullswater Outward Bound Schools and his interest in the personal development of young people persisted throughout his life.

Following retirement from the RAF in the rank of Wing Commander he was appointed Chapter Steward at Gloucester Cathedral and was also Chaplain to the local Air Cadets Squadron. Never seeking the limelight, he preferred a 'supporting' role; as Church Warden and Reader in his Gloucestershire village, he is remembered with respect and affection, not least for his 'fabulous sense of humour'. He died peacefully at his home after a long illness throughout which he was nursed by his wife, herself the Priest in their Cotswold parish.

John Peacock