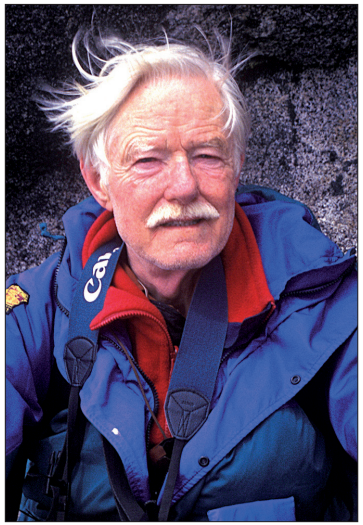
Obituaries

Julian Cooper, *Täschhorn*, oil on canvas, 40 x 61cm, 2013

In Memoriam

The Alpine Club Obituary	**Year of Election** (including to ACG)
Mike Banks MBE	1952
George Bintley	1970
Shirley Bridges	LAC 1972
Pam Caswell	1993
E W 'Ted' Dance	1992
Sandra Gartside	1999
Gwen Greenald	1953
Maurice Herzog	Hon 1982
Richard (Dick) Isherwood	1970
Alex Jones	1974
George Lowe	1953
Jürg Marmet	1959
Geoffrey Rowe	Assoc 2007
Martin Scott	1974
George Spenceley	2000
Derek Walker	1964
Jack Wooding	2012

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



Mike Banks on Kinabalu, Borneo, November 1996. *(John Cleare/ Mountain Picture Library)*

Mike Banks MBE, Polar Medal
1922 - 2013

Mike was a man of many parts: Royal Marine, high altitude mountaineer, alpinist, pioneering rock climber, journalist, photographer, travel guide, adventurer, would-be politician and more. His name was already legendary when, as a young alpinist in the '60s, we first met. Tom Patey was lecturing at the Club, and walking with him up South Audley Street that evening, I noticed a slight, neatly-moustachioed, dark suited, bowler-hatted, briefcase and rolled-umbrella-wielding figure striding towards us. 'Ha! A classic civil servant!' I thought. But Tom rushed forward to embrace the fellow and I was introduced. It was Major Banks, of course, serving out a desk posting at the Admiralty and dressed for the part.

Mike had just become a civilian the next time we met, when I stayed overnight with him and his charming Irish wife Pat at their seaside pad outside Plymouth, together with mutual American friends. Mike took us down to Bosigran where we climbed a few routes and he guided us around the local antiquities, *Ding Dong*, *Mên-an-tol*, *Lanyon Quoit* and the rest. Obviously he was passionate about the area and possessed a talent for succinct explanation, qualities that were later to serve him well. We became good friends, working together professionally on several media projects, and enjoying morale boosting pub lunches in his final, widowed, care-home years. With several chums we celebrated his 90th birthday a couple of days before Christmas 2012, but he was already slipping away and he died six weeks later.

Michael Edward Borg Banks was born in Chippenham but spent his early years in Malta where his father was an engineer. He worked his passage on a tramp steamer back to his grandparents in Wiltshire for his secondary schooling. Here the war caught up with him: his elder brother in the RAF was killed over France, his father died on active service and Mike was commissioned into the Royal Marines in January 1942. After initially commanding a gun turret on the battleships *Malaya* and *Valiant*, he volunteered for more action and in 1944 was posted to 42 Commando with whom he fought in a series of fiercely contested amphibious landings on the Arakan coast of Burma. Though reluctant to talk of the war, he did remark to close friends that it was only the atomic bomb that saved his life – heavy casualties had been expected on the next assault, aborted at the last minute upon the Japanese surrender.

Mike always said that the bloody aftermath of battle dispelled any idea that war was fun, none-the-less peacetime must have seemed an anti-climax, until, having volunteered for anything exciting, 1947 found him learning to climb and then instructing at the celebrated Commando Cliff Assault Wing. Climbing in Cornwall and Cyprus, mountaineering in the Cairngorms and Norway, he found his métier. By 1951 the now Captain Banks had recorded three alpine seasons, with ascents including the Finsteraarhorn, Matterhorn, Grépon, Géant, Grivola and some Dolomite routes, as well as a Services expedition to Greenland. After a moonlight ascent of the Route Major with Richard Brooke (Lt. RN) and already a member of the CC, Mike was elected to the AC in December 1951 and later to the ACG.

Much of the next two years was spent back in Greenland, as a member of Jim Simpson's Naval Queen Louise Land expedition, during which his swift reactions and cool head averted tragedy on a couple of occasions: once when his weasel tractor plunged into a crevasse and he was able to rescue his companion before it exploded, and again when in winter, miles from any assistance, his lonely tent was destroyed by fire. He found time to climb several virgin summits and was awarded the Polar Medal.

Rock climbing was once again part of his job description when, now commanding the Cliff Assault Wing (CAW), Mike put up a dozen or so new routes in Cornwall, often in partnership with one of his brilliant instructors, Sgt. Zeke Deacon. Notable was their solving of the problem of the Green Cormorant Face in April 1957. Tom Patey, Alan Blackshaw and Barrie Biven all served under him in the CAW.

On leave in 1956, Mike had attempted Rakaposhi, then a major prize, with Hamish MacInnes and two American chums. An indulgent Admiralty allowed him to return two years later, this time leading a powerful British/Pakistani Services team, and he reached the summit with Surgeon Lt. Tom Patey RN. An MBE was awarded. Promoted Major in 1959, postings included Hong Kong and an exchange with the US Marines. In 1962 he led a small Joint Services team to Mt McKinley – the first all-British party to summit the mountain – and '63 saw him climbing in the Logans with American friends. In '66 Mike was back in Greenland, laying depots with a dog team for a later RN expedition.

More conventional military duties intervened. Posted to Aden in 1964 as a company commander with 45 Commando, Mike saw fierce action, sometimes hand-to-hand, against insurgents in the desert mountains of the Radfan, where his intrepid night assaults on strategic, heavily defended mountain tops led the commanding general, Julian Thompson, to write that success was due to '…Banks's skill and free-spirited approach to orders'.

'Perched on my summit I had time to reflect that in peace there is no finer place than the top of a mountain; in war there is no safer,' was Mike's own telling comment.

'We'd have followed him to Hell and back,' said one of his troop commanders at Mike's funeral, where a large turnout of Royal Marines,

past and present, demonstrated the respect and affection in which he is still held.

Mike was a meritocrat; he believed in doing things properly though with a relaxed attitude to formal discipline. Something of a maverick, he was outspoken and has been dubbed an 'Establishment Renegade'. He was a free-thinker and it was at his instigation that the CAW took on the additional Arctic and High Mountain role it occupies today. Nevertheless, his Colonel warned him that his mountaineering activities were not endearing him to senior officers and he retired from the Service in 1969. He was only 47, so what next? Journalism was one successful answer, politics less so when he stood, in vain, in the Liberal cause for Devonport in 1970 and '74.

Mike resigned from the AC Committee over the 'Kensington Bunker' affair (a proposal to rehouse the Club in the basement of the RGS) and stirred the Club by suggesting an exodus from London to a suitable country mansion. Climbing now with a new ethos, Mike bagged several virgin peaks on Ellesmere Island in '72 and ticked off a series of good routes in Britain and the Alps, often with AC members such as John Hunt, George Band and the Westmacotts. In 2007 he donated his extensive library of mountain and polar books to the ACL.

At this time 'adventure travel' was just starting to take off, and Mike fell in with Mountain Travel, the leading firm in the business, run by the Californian climbers, Allen Steck, Barry Bishop and Leo LeBon. He led the first commercial dog-sledding trips in Greenland, and moved on to work for MT in the Himalaya, Tien Shan, Kenya, Kilimanjaro and Peru. Back home, he planned and with Pat operated a series of journeys which took American clients from Land's End to Scotland in three weeks via classic hill walks, celebrated sights such as Stonehenge and famous pubs such as the PyG. A subsequent development involved affluent clients staying as house guests in stately homes. Always the gentleman, his perfect manners, clipped British accent, moustachioed military bearing, and fund of well-researched stories endeared him to American clients.

Expedition living was second nature to Mike, who, in later years, was a vegetarian. While occasionally abrasive with little time for fools, he was always stimulating company, and there were many convivial hut evenings and campfire bivouacs shared with Johnnie Jameson or Barossa Valley.

Mike was now writing for publications ranging from the national broadsheets to the outdoor press. A highly competent writer, he employed an entertaining turn of phrase and was a proficient photographer too, taking the Outdoor Writers Guild photo-journalism Award for Excellence in 1995. By now he'd written six books; reviewing his first – *Commando Climber* in 1955 – Chris Brasher had jealously noted that the author '…has been able to do so much, and attain his high degree of competence, as part of his job'. *High Arctic* (1957), *Rakaposhi* (1959), *Snow Commando* (1961), *Greenland* (1975) and *Mountaineering for Beginners* (1979) followed.

Nosing around Garhwal, Mike had noted the attractive east ridge of Jaonli (6632m) and persuaded *Saga* magazine to sponsor an AC Golden

Mike Banks, at age 67, arrives at the summit of the Old Man of Hoy, Orkney, 10 September 1990. Mike repeated the route twice more – the final time at the age of 77. *(John Cleare/Mountain Picture Library)*

Oldies attempt in 1989, climbing with Alan Blackshaw, Joss Lynam and Paddy O'Leary. Beaten by bad weather, he returned two years later with a team – average age 64 – that now included Mike Westmacott, and with success almost in their grasp, had a narrow escape when the cataclysmic 1991 Garhwal earthquake obliterated the final ridge above their top camp.

Other *Saga* exploits included an ascent of the Old Man of Hoy in 1990 when Mike was 67 – a feat he repeated twice more for charity, becoming surely the 'Oldest Man of Hoy' in 2000. In '93 it was back to Greenland and in '95 to the Tien Shan, where the team, average age now 66, made first British ascents of six 4000m peaks in the Bogda massif. Other *Saga*-sponsored expeditions included one to Kinabalu when the regular South China Sea typhoon turned the summit into a facsimile of the Buachaille in November – a rare occasion when Banks's meticulous expedition research slipped up. The final Golden Oldies jaunt involved sun and sand rather than snow and ice, an expeditionary crossing of Australia's Great Victoria Desert with camels, in company with his old Rakaposhi mate Warwick Deacock, several old Aussie and Royal Marine chums, and me, the kid at 61. Then *Saga* appointed a new editor and adventure was finished.

Anyway, Mike was ready to retire, Pat was not well and his own health began to deteriorate. Naturally he continued to climb and developed a fingery traversing wall in his garden outside Bath. Often he was to be found at Bosigran and until his mid-80s he made frequent visits to the Bristol climbing wall with friends. But Alzheimer's crept up and Mike and Pat moved into a care home in 2004 where she died shortly afterwards. Unfor-

tunately Mike's health foiled his own and others' attempts to compile his biography; with his wry sense of humour, and unexpected sensitivity for so tough a soldier, it would have been enthralling. He'd been there and done that, yet he was characteristically reticent about his considerable achievements, remarking, 'I've made the first ascent of some 35 mountains, most of them in the Canadian Arctic or Greenland, but few are worth repeating.'

Of his life, he wrote: 'I cannot say where it will end. The one sure thing is that it has been a good journey and I do not regret a single step of it.'

John Cleare

John Slee-Smith writes: I climbed with Mike Banks a number of times, both in the Alps and in Scotland in winter. Our alpine climbing was mostly in the Dauphiné. I remember Mike had a slightly annoying habit (probably as a result of his Army career) when, after quite an exhausting day climbing we would arrive back at my car in the valley to find Mike (who was always there slightly ahead of the rest of us) with a map and guidebook flat out on the bonnet and as soon as we had all arrived he would say, 'Well chaps, tomorrow we go up to the Bans Hut and climb the Dents de Coste Counier, you'll like that.' Whereas all we wanted to do at that moment was to get back to our tents and lie down.

When the Alpine Club left South Audley Street, all those years ago, he expressed strong opinions about where it should be based. He didn't want a dingy basement in the RGS, indeed London was the wrong place altogether. He felt the Club should be based in some mountain area. Mike was always like that, often with strong opposing views that he generally expressed very well in writing. Mike was a good careful climber on both rock and snow and ice. We enjoyed each other's company and, yes, I miss him a lot.

Richard Sykes writes: Mike Banks and I did not meet until we were both nearing the end of our climbing lives – Mike was in his seventies and I ten years his junior. But over 10 years or so we climbed regularly together, in the Avon Gorge, the Wye Valley, Cornwall, the Spanish Costa Blanca and, twice, the Old Man of Hoy. The second time, led up the by a youthful Emma Alsford, was to raise money for a Bristol charity for people with ME. On that occasion, Mike, at 77, became the oldest person to climb the Old Man.

Mike was an ideal climbing companion – always enthusiastic, well-organised, wholly reliable, and a great conversationalist with an ever-present sense of humour. He was also meticulous about doing the right thing. When we had a small bump in a hired car in the Costa Blanca, he was insistent that it was reported to the police and properly dealt with.

Though a Marine Commando, Arctic explorer and Himalayan mountaineer, he was far from a gung-ho, brainless gladiator. He wrote three mountaineering books, stood as a Liberal MP candidate, loved opera, was a vegetarian and had a wide range of other interests. He was very much in the tradition of gentlemen climbers.

His final years were very sad. Struck down by Alzheimer's Disease and by the death of his wife, Pat, he had no family or relatives to sustain him. He was looked after in care homes in Bath and Bristol. Richard Brooke, with whom he had climbed in the Arctic and Himalaya, Jean Douglas and I were regular visitors. Even then, his ingrained courtesy did not desert him. When he no longer knew my name or who I was, he would still thank me courteously for visiting him. I, and others, will miss a good man and a very good friend.

Pam Caswell on Saraghar, Hindu Kush, Pakistan, in 1999. *(Dave Wynne-Jones)*

Pam Caswell 1953 - 2012

Pam Caswell was a natural. You only had to see the way she moved on rock, stylish and graceful, or the determination and stamina evident on a long alpine ascent. But it could all fall apart in a moment if she was rattled. And Pam had coped with enough to have reason to be rattled at times.

Pam discovered mountaineering late, after years as the wife of a naval officer, bringing up their family. With the children at school she had time on her hands and went to university as a mature student. There she was introduced to climbing by a lecturer who later became her second husband. Together they embarked on a successful alpine partnership that complemented her career as a primary school teacher, taking an advisory role for science. She and Steve shared a passion for the mountains and were elected to the Alpine Club in 1993.

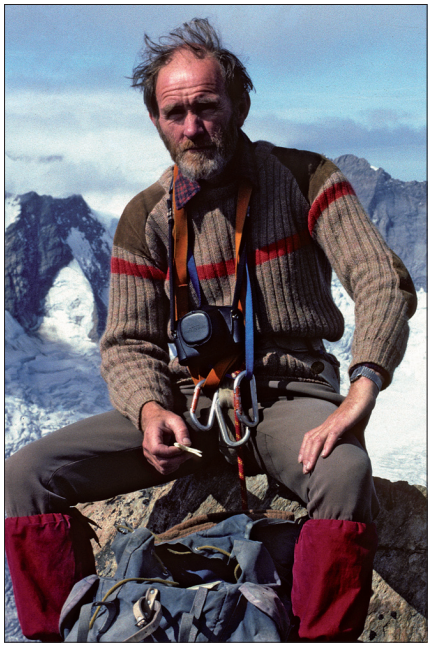
On Sunday 7 August 1994, Pam and Steve Caswell were traversing the Aiguille de Bionnassay from the Durier refuge with her 16-year old son, Simon Painter. They had planned to continue over Mont Blanc but had taken much longer than anticipated on the Bionnassay so were attempting to descend to the Rifugio Gonella when the accident happened. Pam went through a snow bridge and, unable to arrest the fall, the others were pulled into the crevasse. Steve died of his injuries five hours later but Pam and Simon were not to be rescued until the Tuesday following. Bad weather had kept climbers off the route. It was the 'silly season' for the British press and reports tended to sensationalise details about her stripping the duvet jacket from her dead husband in order to keep her son warm. Pam never understood why it seemed they questioned her actions.

At the time of the accident she had just discovered that she was pregnant

and was particularly vulnerable. Even as a single parent, she encountered comments in the press trying to advance the commentators' agendas at her expense. Pam was particularly hurt by Nigella Lawson's stinging attack on her as an example of the 'me first' attitude the TV cook was fixated on at the time.

Pam tried to put her life back together and even got back into the mountains with sympathetic fellow climbers: trips that included return visits to the Alps, organising some AC meets, and expeditions to Argentina, Peru and Pakistan. More recently she completed the South West Coast Path in one go, raising money by sponsorship for the air ambulance services of Devon and Cornwall, and Dorset and Somerset. However, her obvious delight in the outdoors was hedged about with attacks of insecurity and, despite her extraordinarily tough constitution, there were health issues that bedevilled her relationships: health issues that eventually led to her losing touch to some degree with family and friends. She died of a pulmonary embolism on 29 September 2012, leaving sons Simon and Stephen, daughter, Nicki and granddaughters, Millie and Scout.

Dave Wynne-Jones



Peter Fleming *(Les Swindin)*

Peter Fleming 1936 - 2012

February 1979: Peter was leading a winter Alpine Club meet in Wasdale when we first met him. He was evidently a fit, fast walker, accomplished mountaineer and Lakeland enthusiast with an intimate knowledge of the fells. Above all, what we discovered that day was that we had much in common with Peter as far as alpinism was concerned. Peter asked Les how many 4000m peaks he had climbed. When they realised that they had both climbed approximately half the peaks on Collomb's list, it occurred to them that they might join forces to help each other complete the task. By the end of the summer season in 1986, they had both reached this goal, having climbed all 52 peaks guideless.

In the course of their many annual visits to the Alps together, the Fourthousanders were rarely their only objective. Frequently they would have other goals, as Les recalls:

Peter and I had very similar ideas about the routes we chose to climb, and it is certainly the case that they were often under 4000m. The north ridge of Piz Badile is a particularly good example. Peter just delighted in this sort of climb, as it is more or less free of snow in summer. We climbed the route in great style, reaching the summit in very good time; the presence of numerous parties, some of which were slow might have held us up, if we hadn't used the ploy of leading through using the Italian hitch to speed up the proceedings.

Sometimes we repeated Fourthousanders simply in order to climb a particular route we hadn't previously done, such as the Kanzelgrat on the Zinalrothorn. This was one of the finest climbs we made together. Apart from some snow on the approach, this Difficile rock route was another of the type in which Peter revelled. We were in a superb situation, the sound rock with pitches of grade V was a joy and we had the route to ourselves.

All sorts of incidents occur when you are alpine climbing and one we often laughed about afterwards happened quite early on, in 1983, when Peter and I did the Inner Rottal route on the Jungfrau. Having climbed 3000m from the valley to the summit, we sat down to refuel. Peter, a man of habit and a slow, careful eater, brought out his customary hunk of cheese from his rucksack, took a little bite and placed the main bulk of it on a nearby rock. Seconds later, a chough swooped down and snatched the entire remains of the cheese. Peter was left with not so much as a crumb.

Barbara also climbed many times with Peter in the Alps:

It wasn't only Les who gained an alpine partner when we met Peter. On many routes the three of us climbed together. Peter's presence was always reassuring. He was calm, competent, and considerate. He pursued his objectives with determination and decisiveness. He was enthusiastic in a quiet, unassuming way and he was so encouraging to other climbers. It is thanks to Peter's nudging over the years that I too finally decided to accept the challenge of climbing all the 4000m peaks. Later, Peter encouraged me to write my memoirs. In a telephone conversation in June 2012, aware that his life was under threat, he stressed that I must complete the work without further delay; he so much wanted to see the book in its finished form. Two days later, he suddenly passed away.

Peter was born in Barrow-in-Furness and lived there all his life apart from the five years he spent in the Merchant Navy after completing his apprenticeship as a marine engineer in the shipyards. The years he spent at sea travelling the world influenced him deeply, and right up to the end of his life, he was eager to explore other continents and their cultures. In 1968, he married Margaret, and over the decades their house became a veritable treasure trove, filled with artefacts brought home from the Far East, the Americas and all the other places he visited. Peter's numerous interests were represented by his fascinating collections. At school, Peter had not been a sportsman, though he excelled at gymnastics. His neat, wiry frame later proved an excellent asset for rock climbing. He was also extremely swift of foot and, at the age of 18, with no history of fell running, he came third in the Vaux Mountain Trial. He had by then joined the Barrow Rambling Club and begun to explore the Lake District fells, which he continued to roam until the end of his life. He first went to the Alps in 1956 and, with three other novices, made a successful ascent of the

Hörnli Ridge on the Matterhorn, a mountain he was to climb four times by various routes.

After leaving the Merchant Navy in the early 1960s, Peter became a sales and service engineer with Hoover, later setting up his own business. He joined the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, which he served, at different times, both as Vice President and Hon. Assistant Librarian. His interest in books was reflected in his own vast collection. Not only a prolific reader, he also wrote articles for journals and magazines.

Peter's interest in rock lay underground as well as on the surface. Forty years ago, through a mutual interest in mine exploration and hunting mineral specimens, Peter met Philip Meredith, geologist and member of the AC. Phil recalls in detail some of their exploits together:

It was in Red Ghyll Mine on the Caldbeck Fells where I first noted how others crashed around wielding large lump hammers, while Peter carefully and meticulously worked away at one small cavity, and came away with the best specimens. On another occasion, after excitedly descending 800 feet of highly dubious and rusty ladders on the first exploration of Greenside Mine, we came to the last descent. The only way down was a rickety old wooden ladder – but who to send down first? The decision was unanimous, it had to be featherweight Fleming. The first step went well – but the second rung snapped dropping Peter onto the third rung and the rest of the ladder unzipped like a ripe banana, dumping Peter into a pool of water in the level below. Getting him out was quite a trial – but get him out we did. We are all rather pleased about that, because it allowed us to go on and have many years of great friendship and great adventure with Peter and Margaret: exploring mines, climbing mountains, learning from Peter's encyclopaedic knowledge of the Lake District and visiting as many of the islands and remote corners of Scotland as we could.

In their retirement, Peter and Margaret frequently travelled the world together. We shall all miss Peter, not least for his excellent sense of humour. We had great times together, and we offer Margaret our deepest sympathy. She has lost a loving, loyal husband and we have lost a very special friend.

Barbara and Les Swindin

Maurice Herzog 1919 - 2012

Maurice Herzog became a hero of France when, on 3 June 1950, he and Louis Lachenal became the first human beings to reach the summit of an 8000-metre mountain – Annapurna in central Nepal. But it was success at great cost. Herzog reached the top in an altitude-induced trance and, after a nightmare descent, lost all his fingers and toes to severe frostbite.

'Annapurna, to which we had gone empty-handed, was a treasure on which we should live the rest of our days,' Herzog wrote in the conclusion of Annapurna, his best-selling account of the adventure. For him, despite the amputations, this proved true. Idolised, Herzog prospered as a Gaullist politician and businessman.

Maurice Herzog at the *Piolet d'Or*. *(Martin Scott)*

It was not until 1996 that it became clear Herzog had put a good deal of spin into Annapurna. He appeared to have covered himself in an heroic mantle while relegating his companions to technical assistants or workhorses – notably Lachenal, a Chamonix mountain guide.

It was Herzog who determined to press on when Lachenal, fearing frostbite, counselled retreat. 'My whole being revolted against the idea,' he wrote. 'Today we were consecrating an ideal, and no sacrifice was too great.' Without such resolve, the French flag would not have flown from the crest of Annapurna.

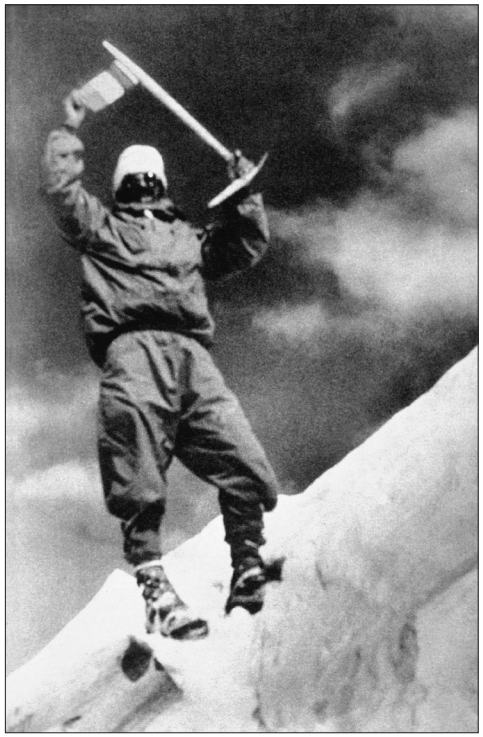
France and the Club Alpin Français (CAF) badly wanted a Himalayan victory. National self-esteem had been brought low by the war, while mountaineering had been dominated by Germany, Austria and Britain. Lucien Devies, president of the CAF, saw in his friend a leader who could restore the country's honour.

Herzog was born in Lyon, the eldest of eight children. He studied law in Paris and acquired a love for high places at the family chalet by Chamonix. His engineer father also climbed. During the war, the young Maurice joined the French Partisans and Riflemen – though its Communist leanings were at odds with his own politics – and was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his deeds as captain of a troop of mountain fighters.

Herzog became an executive with the tyre manufacturers Kléber-Colombes, which limited his climbing, and there was controversy over the decision to appoint him leader of the 1950 expedition. He was an accomplished alpinist but not in the same class as the men who, with him, would prove to be the stars of the expedition – Lachenal, Lionel Terray and Gaston Rébuffat, all Chamonix guides at the cutting edge of alpinism.

Technical brilliance was not the prime consideration. Diplomacy and organisational skills were as necessary. They were entering virtually unknown territory for westerners. Nepal was only just opening its doors and nearly all previous Himalayan expeditions had approached from the north. Maps would prove to be plain wrong.

Annapurna was not the first objective, but Dhaulagiri (8167m). But after three often hazardous weeks exploring its icy flanks they turned their gaze east to Annapurna (8091m). They had been warned by a lama that Dhaulagiri would not be 'propitious'. The monsoon season was approaching and there was still much uncertainty. As a frustrated Herzog put it on another



Herzog atop Annapurna, the iconic photo taken by Louis Lachenal on 3 June 1950.

high pass: 'Where on earth was Annapurna?'

With time running out, they picked the glaciated north face, although, raked by avalanches, it was far from free of danger. Herzog had hoped to make a summit bid with Lionel Terray; the two were in good physical form. But with Terray carrying loads, the pair got out of step and on 2 June Herzog and the volatile Lachenal were poised at the top camp. A storm almost blew them off and at dawn they were still clinging to the tent poles.

Herzog described his mental powers as 'numbed'. By then the weather was fine, but a bitter cold penetrated their eiderdown jackets. Herzog was aware of the risk of frostbite, but in Lachenal, whose career as a guide depended on full mobility, it became a terror. He grabbed Herzog and demanded: 'If I go back, what will you do?' Pictures went through Herzog's head of the team's 'daily heroism' and the difficulties they had overcome. 'I should go on by myself,' he replied. And Lachenal said he would follow.

Lachenal was motivated by his duty as a guide and friend, as was revealed when his complete diaries emerged in 1996, free of earlier censorship by Devies and Herzog. 'I guessed that if he continued alone, he would not return. It was for him and him alone that I did not turn around,' wrote Lachenal.

Herzog slipped into a trance, a great happiness welled up inside him, and he thought of the shining ladder of St Teresa of Avila. Gasping for breath, they reached the summit, a corniced crest of ice. Lachenal grew anxious as his dream-fuddled leader brandished the French flag for photos and incensed when he held the Kléber-Colombes flag aloft – Lachenal and Rébuffat conspired to prevent publication of the tyre flag photograph.

That the pair survived the descent is near-miraculous. Not far below the summit, Herzog watched helpless as his gloves rolled away. Rébuffat and Terray received him with delight at Camp V, but when Terray shook Herzog's hand the smiles vanished: 'Momo – your hands!' After an awful night spent massaging frostbitten limbs, the four struggled on down in a white-out. Exhausted and lost, they tried in vain to find the next camp.

Then Lachenal vanished into a crevasse and this ice cave became their hellish bivouac. Next morning, after struggling to find boots buried under spindrift snow, Terray was barely able to drag Herzog up from the cave.

Lachenal was delirious and Terray and Rébuffat snowblind, having removed their goggles to see in the previous day's storm. Herzog was convinced death was near. 'It's all over for me,' he told Terray. 'Go on – you have a chance.' But Terray, his rock, would have none of quitting.

Herzog lived thanks to the loyalty of his comrades, indefatigable Sherpas, who carried him for weeks over difficult terrain, and Dr Jacques Oudot, the team's medical officer, who performed amputations and artery injections along the jungle trail and later in Indian railway carriages. The last digits, mainly Lachenal's, were swept out on to the platform at Gorakphur 'before the startled eyes of the natives'. British climbers know this part of the drama best through a satirical Tom Patey ballad sung to the tune of *Twenty Tiny Fingers*:

'In an Eastern Railway carriage where the River Ganges flows/
There are Twenty Tiny Fingers and Twenty Tiny Toes.'

Herzog was carried down the aircraft steps at Orly a hero. His climbing days were over and he poured his energies into boardrooms and public affairs. Charles de Gaulle appointed him Minister for Youth and Sport, and later – 1968-77 – he became mayor of his beloved Chamonix. He was a champion of the Mont Blanc tunnel, serving as president of its parent company.

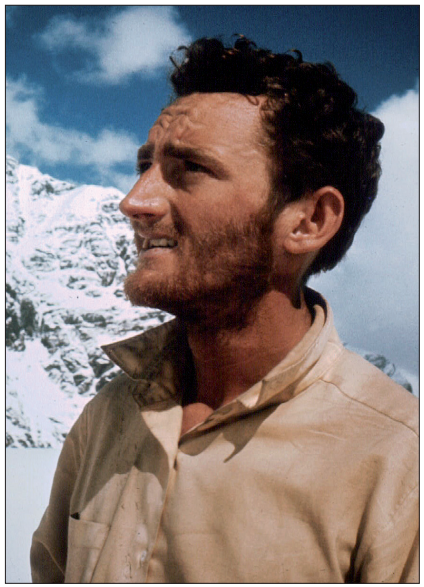
Annapurna is still the best selling mountaineering book ever – up to 15 million copies – though the royalties went not to its author but to subsequent expeditions. Herzog dictated it from his hospital bed as he underwent 12 operations in a year. It is interesting to read it alongside *True Summit* (2000) in which David Roberts analyses the accounts that emerged in 1996 with a biography of Rébuffat and Lachenal's notebooks.

Herzog had exclusive rights to the story for the first five years. As the deadline was expiring, Lachenal skied into a crevasse above Chamonix and was killed. After his notebooks had been edited by Devies and Herzog, what emerged, Roberts wrote, was 'a sanitised, expurgated whitewash'.

The expedition was clearly a more acrimonious affair than originally painted. Herzog lost some of his noble gloss and the three guides received a posthumous boost to their reputations. But when Roberts asked him in 1999 if the furore had troubled him, Herzog, dignified as ever, said he had a clear conscience. However it is construed, the first ascent of Annapurna remains one of the greatest epics of mountaineering.

Stephen Goodwin

Richard (Dick) Isherwood
1943 - 2013



Dick Isherwood in 1974 on a joint services expedition that made the first ascent of Lamjung (6983m), central Nepal. *(Phil Neame)*

Although he had not lived in the UK for more than 40 years, Dick Isherwood was an active and loyal member of the Alpine Club and a regular contributor to the *Journal*.

Dick was born in Lancashire in 1943 and attended Manchester Grammar School, where he excelled, both academically and as a cross-country runner. In a class several years below his I well recall our chemistry teacher one day going into rhapsodies about a brilliant student in the sixth form, the finest he had ever taught – none other than Dick! At Cambridge Dick studied Natural Sciences and did a postgraduate diploma in agronomy. Perhaps more importantly, he discovered rock climbing. His first job on leaving university gave him a company car and had him visiting agricultural test plots around the country. Conveniently, he could arrange for Friday's test plot to be on the road to Wales or the Lakes, regular visits that gave him the chance to reach the top levels of climbing ability. As related in his excellent *Climbers' Club Journal* article 'Climbs of My Youth' he quickly progressed to the leading edge, with early ascents of Cloggy's *Great Wall* and Anglesey's *Big Groove*, plus pioneering routes such Carnmore's *The Sword*. His Alpine career progressed too. A summer trip to the Dolomites was frustrated by bad weather, but succeeded on one quality route, the *Aste Diedre* on the Crozzon di Brenta, and in 1968, with Mike Kosterlitz, he climbed an important new route on the north-east face of the Piz Badile. They had intended to follow the existing *Corti-Battaglia* route, but ended up doing a direttissima. Many years later Dick was delighted to discover that their route was number 100 (i.e. hardest) in the Rebuffat-style book *Hundred Best Climbs in The Bregaglia*.

Dick's career in exploratory mountaineering began in 1964 when he joined an overland expedition to Swat Kohistan led by Henry Day. They managed to lose all their ice-axes on the journey out, but nevertheless proceeded to the mountains, and accomplished some respectable ascents (the ice-axes were eventually replaced through the good offices of Buster Goodwin). In 1969 Dick returned to Pakistan to lead an expedition to Thui II in the Hindu Raj range. This signalled the start of a decade of activity in the Greater Ranges. Dick moved to Bangkok in 1969 and to Hong Kong in 1972. From Hong Kong he organised, together with Jack Baines and Leo Murray, an expedition to the Carstensz Pyramid in New Guinea. Not only did they succeed in an early re-ascent of what was then a remote peak, but Dick also soloed a new route on the north face of Sunday Peak, of which he gave a typically hair-raising account in *AJ* 1973. The following year Dick joined Rob Collister on the first ascent of Parbati South (6227m) by a very impressive rock route. On the return from this expedition, in which John Cardy and I also participated, Dick was in a hurry to get back to work in Hong Kong. With his huge sack he got well ahead of us on the walk down the Parbati valley, and as we were unable to cross a river it ended up with Dick having all the cooking equipment and no food while our situation was the reverse. We did not see him again for several years!

In 1974 Dick took part in a joint services expedition that made the first ascent of Lamjung (6983m) in central Nepal; and in 1976 accompanied by Ron Giddy and Dave Holdroyd he succeeded in gaining access to Kanjiroba via the difficult Jagdula Khola and reached the virgin summit (6883m) with only Sherpa Pemba for company. In 1978 Dick and Rob Collister made a bold two-man attempt on Annapurna II but were beaten back by weather and snow conditions.

Having worked in Hong Kong since the early 1970s as an agricultural representative of Cyanamid, with a brief to support research and trials of pesticides in a variety of Asian countries, in about 1977 Dick took up a post offered by the Overseas Development Department to manage a UK-aided farm at Pakhribas in eastern Nepal. This gave him a hugely enjoyable two years in which he enlarged his knowledge of Nepali, did a vast amount of solo and accompanied trekking in the Arun and Barun valleys, as well as enhancing his appreciation of all things Nepali, especially raksi and chang. The agricultural project developed very successfully under his leadership, but at the end of two years, feeling the need of a change, he tried his hand at leading treks for the burgeoning American trekking company Mountain Travel. Although he was clearly a popular and highly competent trek leader, Dick was too interested in exploring byways for this to become a career choice. Having enjoyed a solo cycle tour of southern India in early 1979 he wrote to me suggesting teaming up for a year of Himalayan climbing combined with a winter tour of India's archaeological sites, bird sanctuaries and chai shacks. Dave Broadhead had recently proposed a similar venture, so it came about that the three of us, together with Anne Macintyre, went to Dorje Lakpa (7007m) in late 1979, followed by further sorties in Rolwaling, the Garhwal and the Hushe valley in 1980 (described in his article in *AJ* 2012).

With a need to change career, Dick self-funded an M.Sc. in Community Medicine at the London School of Hygiene in 1980-81, and then took a post back in Asia with Save The Children. He had married Janet in 1981 and in Bangladesh they adopted their daughter Marion, followed by Sam, adopted in Nepal a couple of years later. On being posted to Dhaka,

Dick rehydrating on *chang* after descending from an unsuccessful attempt on Annapurna II, October 1978. *(Rob Collister)*

Dick commented that the Overseas Development Administration classed it as a hardship post because booze was cheaper than anywhere else in the world and hence a risk to health. While in Nepal Dick joined Henry Day and Rob Collister on a reconnaissance expedition to Shisha Pangma, and more typically he enhanced family holidays by trekking on the flanks of Dhaulagiri and penetrating to Hagen's Col at the far end of the Langsisa glacier where he climbed a couple of 'easy' 19,000ft peaks.

A serendipitous meeting with a former colleague, plus the need for a stable income for bringing up his new family, resulted in Dick rejoining Cyanamid in 1984. After a spell in Singapore (allowing an ascent of Mt Kinabalu) he and Janet relocated to New Jersey in 1987, though he kept a foothold in the UK by purchasing a house in the Duddon Valley that was very conveniently situated right next to a pub. Over the next decade Dick's work still took him regularly all over the world supervising agricultural field research trials, but his family responsibilities allowed less opportunity for climbing expeditions. The family went on camping/canoeing trips every summer in the Adirondacks and to various Canadian lakes and rivers; trips which got progressively hairier until the teenage kids called a halt. They lived next to a small lake and having taught himself to roll a kayak he took up sea kayaking on the east coast of the US, allowing him to pursue his bird-watching interests while seeking out remote places nearer home.

Having retired at only 55, in 1999 Dick entered a new phase of his adventurous life. The family relocated to Port Townsend on the Olympic Peninsula of north-west USA, where remote mountain and sea kayaking trips were on the doorstep. He twice teamed up with Rob Collister for multi-day kayaking adventures among the Gulf Islands north of Vancouver. The most recent was in September 2012, to visit Tremble Island set amidst the fearsome Nawakto Rapids, when Dick's energy and his meticulous planning and attention to detail were still both much in evidence. Dick made ascents of important 'local' peaks such as Mounts Rainier, Baker and Shuksan, and took to making winter canoeing trips in Baja California, although he also canoed in the Arctic, making a fascinating circumnavigation of Bylot Island. Later he acquired a sailing boat and indulged in exploration of the San Juans and other nearby islands. He also returned many times to the

Dick travelling light at 6000m on the summit slabs of Parbati South, Kulu, on the first (and to date only) ascent in September 1973 *(Rob Collister)*

Himalaya. In 2000 he joined a party making a winter traverse of the frozen Zanskar river; in 2002 he was on an Alpine Club expedition to Pokharkan in Nepal and between 2004 and 2009 he made four expeditions to Sichuan; in 2010 he joined us for an expedition to Sikkim. There were also frequent treks in Nepal, often with Sam.

On our 2004 trip to Haizi Shan he survived a savaging by an uncontrolled Tibetan mastiff and later came within a few hundred feet of this virgin summit. On the descent over unknown ground, I was embarrassed when a snow mushroom that I had prepared for an abseil over a bergschrund collapsed when Dick was on his way down and left him deposited in a heap of soft snow. Characteristically he was unfazed and later commented that it was worth six visits to the chiropractor.

Throughout his life Dick was a keen naturalist, and on treks was rarely to be seen without his binoculars. He was particularly interested in birds and an abortive climbing trip in the Gilgit area in 1975 was put to good use when he wrote an article for the *Himalayan Journal* on the birds of Swat and Gilgit. To trek in his company was a privilege; it felt like having a personal wildlife handbook. Even if he couldn't identify a plant or animal he could usually have a good stab at the family it was related to; and of course he noticed far more birds and interesting plants than most of us.

Dick had a wonderfully dry sense of humour, employed to great effect in his many articles for the *Alpine Journal*. In 2005 he took on the task of compiling the Nepal section of Area Notes in the *AJ*, the annual summary of principal mountaineering achievements, and in 2009 added the Pakistan Notes to his portfolio. With his vast experience of exploratory trekking in both countries, and ability to quickly grasp the essentials of complex mountain terrain, he was an ideal person for this task. When I commented that it must be a huge amount of work he replied, 'Doing the Nepal (and Pakistan) notes for the *AJ* is fun, and I get to correspond with all today's Himalayan hard men. They are generally very helpful as basically, like politicians, they think all publicity is good.'

A slightly strange feature of Dick's climbing life was how he changed from being a top class rock climber in the 1960s to lacking confidence on technical ground once he moved to the Far East and had no opportunity to climb regularly at a high standard. But he was always amazingly strong

when it came to carrying heavy sacks for long days over difficult ground; my diaries of our trips together frequently stress that he 'made 95 percent of the steps' and 'I would never have made it without his steps'. He was quite highly strung in the sense of having a huge amount of wound-up energy that could occasionally be released in flares of temper. These bouts were never in my experience directed at fellow climbers; obstructive porters or bureaucrats were the targets of his rage. In 1973 on my first Himalayan trip we hired about 20 porters to take us from Gosheini to the Sainj Nala. We first needed to cross a grassy ridge at about 12,000 feet but when we reached a high point on the ridge, from which we had to descend several thousand feet, the porters announced that they were going no further. Disingenuously they said they had thought we only wanted to go as far as this high pasture. We had no liaison officer as the authorities had been too dilatory in dealing with our application. It appeared that the expedition was going to fail at the outset. But by sheer force of character, and with very little linguistic competence at his disposal, Dick managed to persuade the column to continue. We still had to do several days of load ferrying from the Sainj Nala to basecamp, but without Dick's controlled rage we would probably never have got to the mountain.

Long years of working and travelling throughout the developing world, but especially in south Asia, induced in Dick strong emotions regarding the incompetence of bureaucracies – not that he was much less patient with the European variety. Despite his occasional rants his attitude was always leavened with humour and his lack of self-regard meant that his impatience could be taken at face value – the wish of a highly intelligent and competent man that things should be managed better for the sake of everyone, rather than the selfish desire that things should be organised better for his own benefit. In this way I came to understand how he could make disparaging comments about lazy and duplicitous locals and yet be extremely caring about the poor in the villages we passed through. His knowledge of Nepali and his ability to make comparisons between the state of affairs in remote Himalayan villages 40 years ago and now made him a fascinating travelling companion. Added to this was his immense gusto for Asian food and drink. Perhaps this contributed to his untimely demise, but I cannot think he would have wished to forego his tumba and raksi even if he had been told that it would finally do for him. He just took enormous pleasure in being among Himalayan hill people, and with his great white beard and his sense of fun they took to him too.

Dick enriched his enthusiasm for travel to remote places with a formidable intelligence and an eclectic range of interests. When holed up in a tent in bad weather he might be well into a serious book on English history, or he might engage in thoughtful and wide-ranging discussion of politics and economics, as well as touching on his agronomic areas of expertise. He was really a delightful companion. The climbing world has lost a splendid character and a very fine mountaineer.

Geoff Cohen

George Lowe 1924 - 2013

George Lowe, who died in March 2013, aged 89, played a crucial part in the first ascent of Everest in 1953. His skills on steep ice – as much as his positivity and sense of humour – were of huge benefit to the team and his efforts greatly helped his best friend, Ed Hillary, reach the summit.

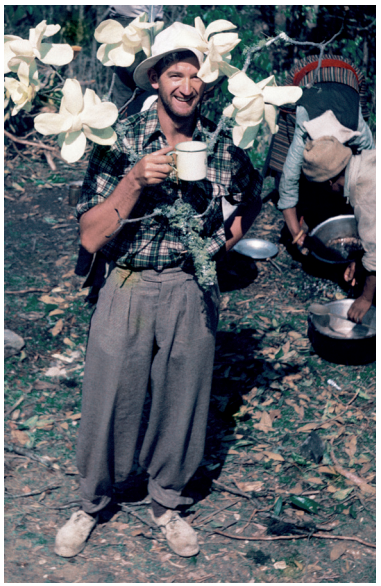
Cameraman on Everest. George Lowe. *(The George Lowe Collection)*

The stone grows old.
Eternity is not for stones.
But I shall go down from this airy space,
this swift white peace, this stinging exultation.
And time will close about me, and my soul
stir to the rhythm of the daily round.
Yet, having known, life will not press so close,
and always I shall feel time ravel thin about me;
For once I stood
In the white windy presence of eternity.
– Eunice Tietjens, 1917

George Lowe was one of two New Zealanders on the 1953 Everest expedition and his efforts were vital to their success. He was one of the lead climbers, forging the route up Everest's Lhotse Face without oxygen and later cutting steps for his partners up the summit ridge. In John Hunt's

words: He 'put up a performance which will go down in the annals of mountaineering as an epic achievement of tenacity and skill'. For his own part, George was just happy to be on the mountain sharing in the teamwork of something incredible; doing something he loved.

George was a modest man who never sought the limelight. Sixty years on, his achievements deserve wider recognition. As a historian, it's not often that you meet your heroes and, better still, to have the chance of working with them. Over the course of creating George's Everest memoirs, which have been published by Thames & Hudson this year[1], we gathered together materials from his rich lifetime of adventure. Of the Everest climbers of 1953, George was the last alive as we entered this happy, anniversary year. I feel heartbroken now that he is now longer with us.



High spirits. George Lowe sports a head-dress of magnolia flowers in the Khumbu.
(Royal Geographical Society)

George has been called the 'forgotten man' of Everest, an unsung hero. George is passed by, perhaps, because he played his part so well. He was a master of his craft on ice and snow, ensuring the success of the final pair – Hillary and Tenzing – who would step up onto the summit on 29 May. And it was George who first embraced them as they made their way down from the top. George had been observing their progress from high on the South Col and climbed up to meet them as they descended. He brought with him a thermos of warm tomato soup. Ed unclipped his mask, grinned a tired greeting and then sat down on the ice for a rest. Finally looking up to his old friend, he said in his matter-of-fact way: 'Well, George, we knocked the bastard off!'

Wallace George Lowe was born in 1924 in New Zealand and grew up in Hastings, a small town on the North Island, the seventh child of Archibald and Teenie. His father was a fruit grower known locally for his 27 varieties of apples and his equally prodigious clan of active children. After George came a younger brother, bringing the tally of Lowe children to eight. In 1931, when he was seven, George was felled in the school playground by one of the biggest earthquakes ever to hit New Zealand. He and the Lowe family survived, though 256 people died and many more were injured. His schooling continued for the next 18 months in a tent on the Hastings racecourse.

When he was nine he fell awkwardly during a playful time with two of his brothers, badly breaking his left arm. Over the next year a doctor broke it a further seven times in crude, kitchen-table, operations that left George with a permanently bent arm. The army rejected him because he couldn't stand to attention, and medical experts branded him a cripple, advising the safety and security of an office job. But George had other ideas.

1. *The Conquest of Everest: Original Photographs from the Legendary First Ascent* (Thames & Hudson, 2013).
See also: *Letters from Everest* (Silverbear, 2013)

He first met Ed Hillary while working in New Zealand's Southern Alps just after the war and they soon struck up a friendship. George had taken a holiday job at the Hermitage Hotel, and quickly progressed from handyman to assisting the chief guide Harry Ayres, whom Hillary had hired to teach him to climb. Over Christmas 1950 Ed and George with three companions made the first ascent of the arduous Maximilian Ridge on Elie de Beaumont and the experience would be a formative one for their future climbs together. Ed would later write that it was George who 'set off the spark that finally got us both to the Himalayas'.

In 1951 the pair joined the first New Zealand expedition there, exploring the Indian Garhwal and being part of the team that climbed Mukut Parbat (7242m). The following year, thanks to Ed, George was invited by Eric Shipton to join the British expedition to climb Cho Oyu (8201m), next-door neighbour to Everest and the sixth highest peak in the world. They found a possible way up from the north-west side, but with a severely stretched supply chain Ed and George only reached 6850m before they were turned back by dangerous ice-cliffs. Shipton suggested that they might like to have a go at crossing for the first time a pass near Cho Oyu called the Nup La. The young pair agreed without hesitation.

In June 1952 they crossed the Himalayan divide from Nepal down onto the immense glaciers of Tibet to secretly explore the north side of Everest. It took them six days to cover just four miles. The experience remained, in George's estimation, the most exacting and satisfying mountaineering that they had ever undertaken. Standing on the Rongbuk Glacier, Ed wrote: 'There was Everest, proud and aloof against a wind-streaked sky. The glacier was a shining pathway of ice sweeping up to the foot of the mountain.'

They managed to explore over halfway round the great northern flank ridges of Everest and eventually clambered back into Nepal, though they had for some time to keep their journey a secret. Within days George and Ed set off on their next adventure with Shipton and Charles Evans, with just what they stood up in, plus only a sleeping bag, lilo, down jacket and a few exposures left in their cameras. In fact, George recalled, he had less than he would have had for a weekend tramp in New Zealand. Their aim was to get onto the Barun glacier – an unexplored ice stream between Everest and Makalu (8481m), the fifth highest mountain in the world. Makalu had never been approached before and reaching the head of the Barun and looking into Tibet from there would complete a circuit of Everest over its highest passes.

The following year came Everest. Together with Alf Gregory and Sherpa Ang Nima, George supported Ed and Tenzing by placing a final advance camp just 300m below the summit. More expeditions followed:

George Lowe begins the couloir that leads from the South Col towards Everest's south-east ridge. *(Royal Geographical Society)*

to Makalu in 1954, again with Ed Hillary, although the mountain was not climbed. Then, after meeting Vivian Fuchs, he and Ed were invited to join the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, which, between 1955 and 1958, not only traversed Antarctica but also became the first to reach the South Pole overland since Captain Scott in 1912.

George, ever versatile, was given the job of filming and photography, while also assisting with their important experiments. On Everest his high-altitude work without oxygen became a study for the expedition's physiologist, and in Antarctica, where geological, physiological and geographical priorities underpinned the crossing, George assisted daily with experiments and soundings that greatly furthered man's knowledge and understanding of that massively unexplored continent. And all this in amongst cooking, repairing, building, and dodging major crevasses in whiteouts that often halted the expedition. He even found time to read *War and Peace*, whilst driving standing up with his head out the roof of his snow-vehicle.

He would also become a talented teacher, first in New Zealand and then, in 1959 at Repton School in Derbyshire. In 1962 he married John Hunt's daughter Susan and they had three fine sons together, Gavin, Bruce and Matt. George completed a 10-year spell as head of the Grange School in Santiago – renowned as Chile's Eton – with a further and final 10 years of working life as a specialist in Her Majesty's Inspectorate overseeing and pioneering outdoor school activities in the UK. In between these appointments he was active with his father-in-law Hunt, who became first director of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and he continued his mountaineering, climbing in Greenland and the Russian Pamirs where fellow Everest team-mate Wilf Noyce tragically fell to his death. He also revisited

the Himalaya where he joined Ed Hillary in 1960 on the famously public trail of the Abominable Snowman.

In active retirement George found new challenges. With Mary, his second wife, he founded the UK branch of the Sir Edmund Hillary Himalayan Trust, and spearheaded the campaign of teacher training in the Sherpa schools founded by his friend. With Ed Hillary, George Lowe's legacy is established in the history of Himalayan and Antarctic exploration, in photography, filming and mountaineering worldwide, and in the provision of education for the children and young people of the UK, New Zealand, Chile and Nepal – a country that stayed close to his heart throughout his final years. The Lowe Scholarships have recently been founded in George's memory, and financed largely through Mary's superb efforts they will provide funds to support bright pupils in the Solukhumbu each year.

When so many Everest climbs since 1953 have been attempted out of all sorts of personal ambition and commercial interests, there is still something reassuring in the thought that most of the men who first went to Everest became climbers simply for the joy that the mountains bring. As Ed Hillary often said – 'It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves'. They were all much changed by the Everest experience and that is why it was such a special time in their lives. George wrote:

Everest was never really about the superlatives, conquering a mountain, or about an idea of man battling with nature to win some gallant and great fight. I let others use that language back in 1953, and they were free to do so. For me, it was simply about wanting to be there. The deep desire that I had to go and try – making the most of the opportunity to be part of something significant and to give my very best.

It has been an honour to have spent the last few years working with the family on his memoirs and photographs from his time on Everest; a true gift. George was a gentle soul, a fine climber and a wonderful man – funny, generous, positive in his approach to life and humble in his success. He can close his eyes and be proud of his happy time upon that mountain:

We were a group of people that had gathered together from all corners of the world, yet we nonetheless quickly became a team of friends. I will forever be grateful for Everest and for my other journeys in the Himalaya. To me the mountains are not a place for competition. The mountains are just where you want to be. Before we arrived Everest was still a dream. It was available for doubt and uncertainty. It still remained that way after we left. Within days the drifting snows had covered our footprints.

Huw Lewis-Jones

Reflections from friends

George Lowe was a mountaineer of classic stature, straight as they come, indefatigable, unselfish, fine at the long haul and the apparently insoluble obstacle. The world was to grow familiar with the names of

Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, the two who reached the top of the mountain, and of John Hunt the leader who got them there. Lowe was to remain more private, but he was essential to the character and success of the venture.

There was no phase of the expedition in which he did not play a vital part, spending long periods at extreme heights, ready to turn his hand to any task, step in at any emergency and tackle the most demanding stages of the route. Hillary, his life-long friend, said afterwards that if Lowe had been in the summit party he would certainly have got to the top, and anyone who knew him would have had no doubt about it, either.

Jan Morris, 2013, the Times correspondent on Everest.

George kept Ed Hillary laughing. When I think of George Lowe I think of his ability to tell stories and of laughter; he used to be a wonderful raconteur who liked nothing better than seeing those around him entertained. For my father this was a big part of their long friendship.

George was my godfather and he told me lots of stories, always with a mischievous smile on his face. He said once that his parents could not agree on his name so they called him Wallace George Lowe, with an unwritten deal that they would actually call him George, because his father was adamant that 'over my dead body will you call him Wallace' – and so George it was. When his father died, George and his mother sat together at the funeral and as the organ music played at the end of the proceedings she looked at George and said, 'Wallace, I want to go home now'.

My father and George shared many expeditions together to the Himalaya and to Antarctica. They had a terrific rapport and enjoyed each other's company greatly, whether tied together on a rope on a snowy peak or sitting in a teashop at a remote road end before setting out on another adventure. For both of them the 1953 expedition really was that ultimate adventure. Climbing Everest was pushing the envelope of what we all thought was humanly possible; they climbed into the unknown and in so doing extended the frontiers for all of us.

Peter Hillary 2013.

With the passage of time, it would be a mistake to underestimate the achievement of the 1953 Everest expedition, and the fact that so many have now climbed there shouldn't cloud the enormity of this feat. We shouldn't forget the difference between following in someone's footsteps and blazing the trail. Though Everest remains a universal symbol of human will and ambition – and its first ascent, the clearest and strongest statement in the history of mountaineering – I'd like to think that the impulse to explore will always lead us to new ground. There are countless peaks, most of them nameless, in the 5000m to 6000m range that can offer adventure to climbers of all abilities, and the kind of satisfaction that need not always be measured in altitude. This is the kind of pioneering that George Lowe and his fellow mountaineers revelled in during the 1950s. *Chris Bonington, 2013.*

George Lowe was, essentially, the third man on that summit attempt. It would have been tireless labour in thigh-deep snow too, soul-sapping effort in an area that is now known to some climbers as 'the death zone', but which then was simply an unknown place – further than anyone had ever gone before. One newspaper at the time in London called Lowe 'the first hero' of the expedition; such were his efforts on that day alone.

As the 60th anniversary of their pioneering climb in 1953 fast approaches, it is right to remember and honour these men. Knowing how they approached their mountains, they will stay forever as firm points of orientation for all future climbers. They went in with good hearts and up into the unknown! Traditional mountain climbing will never finish, if we follow the spirit and the enthusiasm of men like George Lowe.

Reinhold Messner, 2013

Roger Payne 1956 - 2012

Roger Payne at the Cosmiques hut in April 2006 prior to climbing the *Super Couloir* on Mont Blanc du Tacul. *(John Harlin III)*

A chance encounter

I first met Roger after an unexpected invitation to a base camp party in the Cordillera Blanca, Peru. I still have the diary from that trip and know the exact date – 18 June 1985. He was there to attempt Nevado Kayesh with a British team; I was there with a New Zealand group on my very first expedition. Amongst all the climbing there was a whirlwind romance, and by the end of the trip I knew he was 'the one'. Fortunately he did too, and by February 1987 we were married. Meeting Roger back then I couldn't help but be drawn in by his huge smile, great sense of fun, incredible enthusiasm for mountains, and even greater enthusiasm for talking. I came to learn that he always had a plan for the next big trip, and it was my great fortune that we then embarked on many years of mountain adventures together.

Highs and lows

Roger's passion was to find new routes to climb. He loved the technical challenge of attempting first ascents, and he had an incredible capacity

Roger Payne on Frontier Peak during explorations in Sikkim, 2006.

Julie-Ann Clyma and Roger Payne during their first ascent, with John Harlin III, of *From Dawn to Decadence* on the south face of Mont Blanc in 2004 (a super-direct line up the Innominata Ridge). 'It was a cold sitting bivvi when Roger and I were both 48 years old. I asked Roger and John if we were maybe getting a bit old for such camping, but they only laughed – and continued laughing through most of the shivering night as Roger brewed up every couple of hours for warmth.' – Julie-Ann.
(John Harlin III)

for pulling off the hardest pitches in the most difficult conditions. Our attempt on the north face of Changabang was a perfect example, him scratching his way up a desperate mixed corner in full storm conditions with night falling, me with my heart in my mouth until I heard the elated shout from the darkness above. Our ascent of Mount Grosvenor had another similarly epic first day, pitch after pitch of technical climbing that saw us with another finish in the dark, both ropes nearly chopped through from stone fall, spending the night lashed to a tiny sloping ledge too exhausted to eat or drink; he revelled in it.

Many of our trips were inspired by Roger's reading of early accounts in the history of mountain exploration. Two well-thumbed books in the collection are *This My Voyage* by Tom Longstaff, and *Memoirs of a Mountaineer* by Freddy Spencer Chapman. Those books led us to the summits of Nanda Devi East and Chomolhari, and I remember Roger's delight in quoting long passages of both, as we toiled first with the uncertainty of the bureaucracy in order to get there, and then with the climbing difficulties

before finally standing on the top. Roger had enormous respect for the vision and toughness embodied by such pioneers, and I think he loved the sense of connection in becoming part of that tradition.

Legendary among Roger's talents was not just his climbing skill but also his ability to work his way around and through rules and regulations. Many times I have sat back with other team-mates and watched in awe as he dealt with another obstacle. With the mixture of winning smile and implacable resolve, anyone in his path was either soon won over or completely worn out. Thirty kilos of excess baggage? Not a problem, it suddenly appeared on the manifest. Baggage stuck in customs? Out in two hours rather than the two days it would take normal mortals to achieve.

On any climb, but particularly in the greater ranges, another of Roger's talents was his good judgement. No matter how committed he was to achieving an objective, he kept a strong sense of perspective on coming home safely. We faced disappointment on many expeditions – Pumari Chish, Gasherbrum II, Tirsuli West – turning back from summits because of bad weather and conditions. But Roger could always find value in having made the best attempt possible, and enjoying the whole experience of the expedition. That pragmatic approach to enjoying the mountains in safety was carried through to his work as a guide, and what makes his death in the mountains still so hard to believe.

Brief facts

Roger was born on 16 July 1956 in west London and educated at Holland Park Comprehensive School. He gained an Outdoor Pursuits diploma at Dunfermline College in 1977 and a B Ed. (Hons) in education at Sunderland Polytechnic in 1983 – the same year he also got his British Mountain Guide ticket. Roger was perhaps best known for his work at the British Mountaineering Council – as national officer from 1989 to '95 and general secretary until 2001. Moving on to the UIAA, he became its first sport and development officer, actively promoting links with the Olympic movement and United Nations agencies as well as the World Conservation Union. In 2005 he returned to his roots as a mountain guide, and it was while with clients on 12 July 2012 that Roger died in an avalanche on Mont Maudit.

The bigger picture

If I had to sum up Roger in one word I would describe him an idealist, and in his world of mountains he worked constantly, in all avenues, to try and make things better. He was deeply interested in, and concerned about the local people we met and worked with on our trips, and he had the vision and determination to find ways to help them. This led to ambitious projects in our early expeditions, such as the installation of micro-hydro electricity schemes in villages in the Karakoram. In his last seven years he contributed regularly to training and development programmes while climbing in Sikkim. His interest in the mountain environment was just as strong, typified by an expedition to Nepal to make a film for UNEP

(United Nations Environment Programme) about climate change and its impact on the Himalaya. He also believed in the power of 'sport' and of mountains in particular, to bring people together to foster understanding and cooperation. His role in the BMC International Meets was a good example, but a Peace Climb he organised between mountaineering friends from India and Pakistan that took place in Switzerland was something he particularly cherished.

Saying goodbye

For more than 25 years Roger was my climbing partner, my husband, and the best friend I could have wished for. He was a loving and generous companion, and I hardly know how to do justice to the special man I knew he was. But I remember him telling me many years ago that he believed we had a moral duty to be optimistic, and now that he is gone it seems the only way forward is to follow that advice. I've returned to the mountains and find some comfort that his presence still surrounds me there. The final words, which Roger felt a great affinity for, come from Geoffrey Winthrop Young, *On High Hills*.

Julie-Ann Clyma

What if I live no more those kingly days
their night sleeps with me still.
I dream my feet upon the starry ways
my heart rests in the hill.
I may not grudge the little left undone
I hold the heights, I keep the dreams I won.

R Martin Scott 1941 - 2013

Having a theoretical physicist as a father and a classicist as a mother, Martin grew up in an intensely intellectual environment. While he undoubtedly acquired his considerable intellectual prowess from his parents, he chose not to follow an academic career, but to plough his own furrow in industry after completing his degree in physics at Merton College, Oxford. On graduating, he first joined Schlumberger as a geophysical engineer and subsequently spent several years in exotic desert locations prospecting for oil. Feeling the isolation of this work he then joined ICL (International Computers Limited) where he rose to become President, in France, of what was now Fujitsu-ICL after twice turning round ailing sections of the company. It was during his long spell in Belgium and France that he became fluent in French.

Martin's ability and strong competitive talents became evident at a very early age when, at school in Cambridge, he became both Head of School and swimming captain. At school he broke the record for the 100 yards breaststroke in a time that stood for many years. He retained a life-long enthusiasm for swimming and regularly took to the local waters in Hampstead Pond. Martin also had a long-standing love of mountains, developing particular affinity for Scotland and subsequently elsewhere. His first recorded exploits were in the Zillertal around 1957, with more challenging ascents in the Picos de Europa in 1962, just prior to his long sojourn overseas. On returning to the UK he was persuaded to join the MAM (the Midland Association of Mountaineers) and later the Alpine Club in 1974. He was an active participant in both clubs, becoming a regular attendee at family meets after his marriage to Julia in 1973.

Martin Scott. *(Al Scott)*

As a long-standing, active member of the Alpine Club, Martin was elected to the committee in 2001 and went on to serve both as Honorary Secretary (from 2003) and as Vice-President in 2008. Like all tasks, he took these positions seriously and put considerable energy into changing the AC into an organisation more fitting of the 21st century. In this he initiated the electronic bulletin as a more versatile means of communicating with members and was a major supporter of the AC Climbing Fund. He also represented the Club as Chairman of the Mount Everest Foundation and as its representative at the UIAA.

I first really got to know Martin in 2002 when the AC organised an expedition to the Lemon Mountains of Greenland. Partnered together we made six first ascents and three new routes on previously climbed mountains as well as completing a significant circuit on skis. Since then we regularly climbed together, in Europe and in Asia. Particularly memorable were three expeditions to Tibet – to the Nyenchentanghla range and western Tibet – and another to the Obra valley in the Indian Himalaya. On every occasion we successfully made one or more first ascents while exploring the unfamiliar terrain. It was a productive time and Martin's fertile mind and broad range of intellectual interests rarely let the lively evening discussions dry up.

In Europe Martin was an active participant at the Club's 150th anniversary in Zermatt in 2007 and he also took part in several of the 150th anniversaries of first ascents made by the early AC members. Notable among these was a re-enactment of the first ascent of La Grande Casse by Vanoise Guides in 2010. Fluent in French, Martin maintained a lifelong friendship with many well-known French climbers in the Provence region where he and his wife Julia own an apartment. It was a great pleasure to join him in this predominantly sunny part of France where extensive rock climbing

at a variety of levels is available on Mont St Victoire, Chateuvert and, of course, the iconic sea cliffs of the Calanques. Being in France the evenings shared with his many French friends over one or more bottles of fine wine were especially memorable!

Latterly Martin migrated seamlessly into cycling, a pastime in which he also had a long-standing interest. He was an active member of the Aix Cycling Club that regularly organised energetic day tours. I vividly remember joining one of these events during which, being a non-cyclist, there was considerable concern that I should not overdo it. Martin, of course, did it all in his stride and went on to complete several long-distance multi-day tours supported by Julia. Especially notable were his traverse of France from the Channel to the Mediterranean and completion of the gruelling L'Étape du Tour on the route of the Tour de France up the Col du Galibier and the Alp d'Huez on his 70th birthday.

When, late in 2012, Martin was diagnosed with disseminated kidney cancer it was a very sad day for all those that knew him for his integrity, generosity and companionship. He died relatively peacefully on 31 May 2013 surrounded by his family.

Derek Buckle

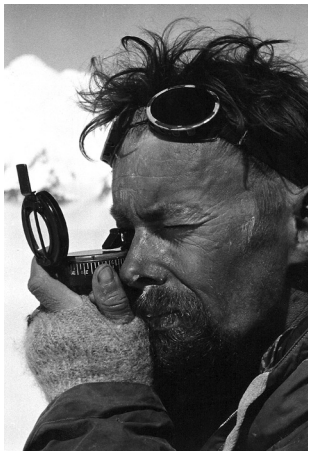
Eric Vola adds: I first got to know Martin in 1974 when we both worked in the ICL European Headquarters in Paris, however it was not until we both retired at about the same time that I realised that he was also an alpinist, particularly so when he started to come regularly to the South of France and bought a flat in Aix en Provence. I took him climbing a few times in the Calanques, we cycled a bit in the area together and he came regularly to my chalet in Chamonix. In return he offered Esther and I generous hospitability at his London home. I remember a memorable evening when he had organised for me with his son a malt whisky tasting session with some 30 different brands. He was a really good friend, a true gentleman whose company Esther, myself and the many friends he made in Aix en Provence, thoroughly enjoyed.

George Browning Spenceley 1921 - 2013

'If I'd done something amazing over the weekend, then I wanted to tell Mr Spenceley about it.' – Ron Fawcett.

George Spenceley became a member of the Alpine Club somewhat late in life, in his mid-seventies. He was more a mountain explorer than a climber, but in relating his adventures to pupils at Aireville Secondary School, Yorkshire, where he was a geography teacher, he helped to mould one of Britain's finest ever rock climbers.

'Mr Spenceley' seems to have been about the only teacher to have got through to the otherwise disinterested young Fawcett. 'I loved listening to stories about his adventures,' Fawcett wrote in his 2010 autobiography *Rock Athlete*. 'I felt I was talking to a kindred spirit, even though we came from very different backgrounds.'



George Spenceley. On the back of the print it says simply: 'Me somewhere.'

Spenceley encouraged Ron in rock climbing, though soon the lad's abilities had outstripped his teacher's knowledge of the game. When one weekend teenage Ron climbed *The Ghost* (now E3) on Castle Rock, Lake District, he told Spenceley about it the next week. 'He was polite enough to sound impressed, even though I imagine he didn't know anything about it.'

Mountaineer, explorer and teacher: George Spenceley brought something of all these together in a successful later-life career as a master of that venerable tradition – the illustrated lecture. Long before digital images and the worldwide web revolutionised information technology, Spenceley brought a human face and his real life adventures to a live audience. Wilderness expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic, disaster in the Himalayas with him the only survivor of an accident on an unclimbed peak were all grist to his lecturer's mill. Climbing expeditions to 20 other countries followed where his descriptions and skilfully aimed camera took his audience into remote corners of the world. It was a career he continued into old age, becoming, aged 85, probably the oldest man to reach the Annapurna Sanctuary in the Himalayas and, in his senior years, to canoe down the entire lengths of the Danube and Mississippi rivers.

Born in Harrogate and brought up in the Yorkshire Dales, Spenceley was educated at Ashville College in nearby Pannal Ash where he rebelled against all sports that relied on rule books. Instead he showed a keen interest in pot-holing, fell-walking and rock-climbing and he was an avid reader of books on exploration. The prospect of travel to far-off lands as a mining engineer led him to the Leeds College of Mining, but as his course was about to begin World War II intervened. Spenceley had earlier approached the RAF Volunteer Reserve and within the first week of the war applied for aircrew. Losses at the time were so heavy that even before completing the course he was posted to join an experienced crew as second pilot with 214 Squadron flying Wellington bombers. He survived 38 operations, many over Germany as second pilot and occasionally as rear gunner, in which lonely post his aircraft was hit returning from a thousand-bomber raid on Essen. Spenceley baled out, the only one on board to survive. The following three years as a prisoner of war ended with a gruelling forced march across Germany. Many died on the way and he was convinced the years spent striding the northern hills helped him survive. He left the RAF as a sergeant pilot.

Mining held no post-war appeal and Spenceley took a teacher training course in Manchester, specialising in geography. The prospect of long summer holidays to be spent mountaineering and the serious post-war shortage of teachers made a teaching career a pragmatic choice. Weeks before his last flight Spenceley had met his first wife, Marjorie, a young art teacher from Cambridge, and on his return from the war they married. Mountains dominated his life however, consuming all his holiday time, and he ruefully admitted to being a neglectful husband and father of their two sons.

Spenceley's skill as a mountaineer and self-taught photographer led to an invitation from Duncan Carse, leader of the 1955-56 South Georgia Survey (better known as the actor who played Dick Barton, Special Agent), to join the survey expedition. His task would be to help safeguard the surveyors as they went about their work often in difficult terrain and blizzard conditions. When a three-man survey party was overdue at their camp, five mountaineers, including Spenceley, set out to look for them. In the blizzard that descended on both parties, the surveyors safely reached camp as one of the mountaineers fell into a crevasse, landing on a snow bridge. Since the crevasse was out of the storm, all the mountaineers joined him to spend a safe but uncomfortably cold night. Overall the survey was successful and celebrated by naming certain features on the island after expedition members. Maps now show the Spenceley Glacier.

A year without pay and the arrival of a third son had left him seriously short of funds so he decided to test his presentational skills with a number of modest lectures to local audiences. His tall bespectacled presence, easy style and sense of humour as he described his adventures, with dramatic pictures projected across the darkness of the lecture hall, clearly impressed his audience and gave him confidence. Profitable bookings from lecture societies and agencies opened a parallel career with teaching and in 1957 came the prospect of further lecture material when he was invited to be deputy leader on the Nepal Himalayan Expedition, organised by the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club. It was the first serious expedition to be sponsored by an individual group and although the club's name might suggest hedgerows and gentle pathways, the Yorkshire Ramblers were some of the toughest mountaineers around.

Their target was Loengpo Gang, also known as the Great White Peak, an unclimbed, technically difficult 7083m summit in the remote Jugal Himal of Nepal. All went well until the moment when Spenceley with Crosby Fox, the expedition leader, and Sherpas Mingma Tenzing and Lakpa Norbu were caught by an avalanche as they crossed a heavily crevassed area. The force of the avalanche swept all four men into a crevasse. Spenceley, 25ft down in the narrow end of the void, managed to struggle to the surface but the others had been deeply buried beneath a thick cover of debris choking the crevasse. There was nothing Spenceley alone could do; the fine line dividing safety and sudden disaster in mountaineering had been crossed.

Spenceley returned to a full-time teaching post in Yorkshire with

lecturing making increasing demands for new material. He travelled on ski or foot across north Norway, Sweden and Finland. Turkey and the unspoilt countryside of Romania gave more ideas for lectures, then came an invitation to join an Anglo-Danish expedition to East Greenland, disappointingly hit by the worst weather since records began. More profitable on the lecture circuit were two visits to Ethiopia, traversing the Simian mountains and descending through bandit country into Eritrea. He remembered this as one of his most successful lecture topics.

In 1976 after an amicable but unsurprising separation from Marjorie and with their three sons, Julian, Adrian and Nicholas, grown up and gone, Spenceley married the author and travel writer Sylvie Nickels. With a hundred bookings each winter and a growing demand for lectures from Independent schools, he retired from teaching and the couple moved to a village on the edge of the Cotswolds. Shortly after, Tom Price, a mountaineering companion from the South Georgia expedition, introduced Spenceley to canoeing, first briefly on Windermere and then on a five-week 500 mile paddle through the Canadian wilderness down the Hanbury and Thelon rivers. Spenceley declared canoeing to be a delightful, relaxed, silent way of travelling, ideal for an ageing mountaineer.

Sylvie insisted on joining him on his next expedition by canoe, 1,700 miles down the Danube through seven countries to the Black Sea, followed in 1984 by a four month cruise by Canadian canoe down the Mississippi, more than 2,000 miles from Lake Itasca to New Orleans. For Spenceley the trip made more excellent lecture material, for Sylvie a book entitled *The Big Muddy*.

Ronald Faux

Mikel Vaus writes: I met George Spenceley and his wife, Sylvie Nickels, in July 2008 through a colleague, Judy Elsely. Because Judy, George, and Sylvie came from a common home near Oxford they arranged to trade places for a few months one summer. Knowing of George's life of adventure, Judy suggested I make contact with him. While in Utah, George reached his 85th year and to celebrate, my wife, Janis, and George and I wandered a sharp ridgeline leading to the summit of Utah's Ben Lomond. Sylvie, meanwhile, sauntered about a glacial basin in search of interesting rocks and wild flowers. I can't think of a better way to make it to the halfway point of one's ninth decade than summiting a peak of almost 10,000 feet. I am grateful for that day in the high cool air of the Rocky Mountains, to shake his hand and see his smile. George was the real deal and one of the last of a brave and noble breed.

Derek Walker. *(Alex Messenger)*

Derek Walker 1936 - 2013

Derek was a man of many parts and also of contrasts. He was a family man and yet an enthusiast who climbed most weekends and had many holidays in the Alps. He was a very personable individual with not a chip on the shoulder or any edge to his character, qualities that served mountaineering well when he became a BMC bureaucrat and was for several years the interface between the climbing world and many aspects of government. He was a very experienced fell-walker, capable of gruelling long-distance treks such as the Welsh 3000ers. He undertook backpacking trips, sometimes with friends, always with Hilary, in many parts of the world including the Alps, Patagonia and the Himalayas. He was an accomplished skier who loved winter holidays with friends and especially with his daughters and grandchildren. Above all he was a dedicated climber and mountaineer, and this dominated his life.

Derek Wentworth Walker was born in 1936 in Widnes and was educated at Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby (old Crosbeians include Alan Blackshaw and Robert Runcie) and Bristol University where he read History.

After leaving school he served his National Service at RAF Valley in the Mountain Rescue Team under Johnny Lees. This was the real start of his mountaineering career, reinforced at Bristol where he met Hugh Banner and followed him as President of the University Mountaineering Club. He formed life-long friendships with both Lees and Banner.

In 1960 Derek visited the Paine region of Patagonia with a team from the University, a trip that was marred by the loss of the leader Peter Henry who drowned whilst ferrying food and equipment across a fjord. The following year he returned to Patagonia with Don Whillans and Chris Bonington, both of whom formed strong friendships with Derek (if not with each other). Don and Chris climbed the Central Tower of Paine, whilst Derek and Ian Clough succeeded in getting to the top of the North Tower. Recently Vic Bray's superb film of the expedition was re-mastered by Leo Dickinson with sound including Derek's imitation of Whillans adding to the fun.

After graduation Derek worked briefly at Pilkington's Glass and at Lymm Grammar School before being appointed as Headmaster of the British School in Punta Arenas, Chile. From there he returned to the Paine area, making a reconnaissance of the very impressive Fortress and later joining the 1967-68 expedition that successfully climbed it.

In 1970 he and his family returned to the UK when he took up the post

The 1962 Paine team. Standing l-r: Vic Bray, Derek Walker, Chris Bonington, cook, cook's assistant; seated l-r: John Streetly, Barry Paige (Expedition Leader), Don Whillans, Ian Clough. *(Chris Bonington)*

of history master at Helsby Grammar School for Boys (later Helsby High School). He made the most of the proximity of the local crags of Helsby and Frodsham, developing considerable strength to add to his very neat and efficient climbing technique. Moreover he introduced many of his pupils to the sport, some of whom became life-long enthusiasts themselves.

The opportunity to take early retirement from teaching coincided with the vacancy for the post of General Secretary of the BMC. Derek had already served as President of the Climbers' Club and was very well known in the mountaineering world. The BMC President of the day was Chris Bonington who spoke of Derek bringing 'relaxed diplomacy' to the post, and this was just what was needed by a somewhat troubled organisation. From 1989 to 1995 he successfully presided over a marked expansion in the activities of the Council, an increase in membership to over 60,000 and a move to new premises in West Didsbury. He later became President of the BMC and also served as Vice-President of the AC.

Derek's enthusiasm for rock-climbing drove him to visit most of the major crags of the British Isles and he became a 'puerile ticker', working through all the routes in Ken Wilson's *Hard Rock* except for *The Scoop* of Strone Ulladale in the Outer Hebrides.

I first met Derek on the idyllic and rather intimate campsite at La Bérarde (not to be confused with the new site outside the village) in 1971 when he was part of a team composed of Bob Allen, Ian 'Sherpa' Roper and Trevor Jones aiming to justify the latter's membership of the ACG. Trevor's reading had revealed that the *Gervasutti Route* on the SSE ridge

Derek ferrying loads to the west side of the Paine. *(Chris Bonington)*

of the Pic Gaspard was without a British ascent. I was with friends from Leeds University and Trevor's paranoia led him to believe that we had the same objective; much fun was had leading him on but, in fact, we had other plans. However, when they succeeded and Trevor's membership was secure, we were pleased to join in the celebrations.

Trevor and Derek regularly visited the Alps together, more often than not *en famille*, not necessarily with great success but always returning with hilarious tales. In fact, most of Derek's best routes outside the Eastern Alps were done with other people; climbs such as the *South Face Direct* of the Meije, the north-east face of the Piz Badile, the *Graue Wand* and the *Swiss Route* on the Grand Capuçin.

In 1986, Derek and Bob Allen climbed the *Dülfer* on the Fleischbank then moved to the Dolomites where they made an efficient ascent of the *Constantini/Ghedina* route on the Pilastro di Rozes before joining Marjorie and me in the Tre Cima. Our objective was the *Cassin Route* on the north face of the Cima Ovest. We decided to climb as a rope of four across the difficult and very exposed traverse that forms the centrepiece of the route, especially as Trevor was borrowing a pair of my boots several sizes too large for him. This went well but very slowly (it was Trevor's alpine swan song) and inevitably we had to bivouac, albeit at the end of the difficulties.

After that we immediately moved to Civetta where two years previously Derek and Hugh Banner had climbed the formidable dièdre on the north face, the *Phillipp-Flamm*; this was Derek's first really big route in the Dolomites, quite an achievement as neither of them had done an alpine route for more than a decade and they were far from fit. Riccardo Cassin was the instigator of four great routes in the Alps; with the Cima Ovest, Derek had now ticked off two of these and the south-east ridge of the picturesque

Derek on Cactus Wall, south side of Jebel El Kest, Tafrout, Morocco in 2001. *(Chris Bonington)*

Torre Trieste was to be the third. Not only is this route consistently difficult for 700m it has a long and complicated descent so we were very pleased to be back in the valley before evening. Derek was so keen to complete his quartet of Cassin routes that he rang the Torino hut from Alleghe to enquire about the prospects for an ascent of the Walker Spur. The reply, however, was 'don't bother' as the conditions were quite unsuitable.

A few years later we did actually make an attempt on the Walker but were forced to descend when a young pair just in front pulled a huge block off that nearly took Derek with it.

In 1992 we made free ascents of the *Comici* on the Cima Grande and the wonderful *Spigolo Strobel* on the Rochetta Alto di Bosconero. In 1996 he was back in the Dolomites where he climbed the superb *Constantini/Appolonio* on the Pilastro with Malcolm Cameron before completing the *Gogna Route* on the south face of the Marmolada with me in just less than twelve hours. Derek was now sixty years old and that was to be his last big route.

However, Derek remained very active, especially in the Anti-Atlas mountains of Morocco, where he had joined his old friends, Joe Brown, Les Brown, Chris Bonington, Trevor Jones and Pete Turnbull in developing this area as a major rock-climbing venue. The predominantly perfect quartzite suited his style and he made first ascents of routes that are already recognised as classics.

In 2010 he had a major illness that left him considerably debilitated and though we climbed together twice more in the Dolomites and even did a new route in Morocco, he was clearly not himself. Shortly after attending the 2012 AC Annual Dinner he was diagnosed as suffering from pancreatic cancer (the same disease that killed Trevor) and died a few weeks later.

Our heart-felt sympathies go to Hilary, daughters Jane and Susie and the three grandchildren.

Mike Mortimer