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Cader Idris

Samuel Davis (1757-1819)

Undated. Watercolour, with pen, in brown ink and graphite on medium, slightly textured, cream, wove paper, mounted on, medium, slightly textured, cream, wove paper, 16 × 20½ inches.
 Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

Paul Mellon: Generous Helpings from a Silver Spoon

This year's section frontispieces celebrate the philanthropy of Paul Mellon (1907-99), in particular his enthusiastic collection of British art, with mountain drawings from that collection. Fifty years ago his endowment was in place to build the Yale Center for British Art as a home for his enormous collection of prints, drawings and books, and forty years ago the Yale Center was completed and opened to the public. In 1970 he founded the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art in Bloomsbury. Mellon was continuing the philanthropic tradition established by his father Andrew, who had endowed the National Gallery of Art in Washington, and furnished it with his collection of European paintings.

Mellon began collecting in 1948 along with his second wife Bunny (born Rachel Lambert) who was a well-known horticulturalist and garden designer, eventually designing the White House gardens.¹ Bunny collected American and European art (which mostly passed to the NGA in Washington) and Paul collected British art. Initially he concentrated on art close to his own interests in country sports and horse-racing – he was the owner of the famous stallion Mill Reef – but around 1959, under the guidance of art historian Basil Taylor, his interest shifted to English watercolours and drawings, and he acquired whole collections from several well-known British collectors. His autobiography made his motive clear: he was trying to give British art the place in the sun that he thought it deserved. He achieved this through exhibitions, by founding the Center at Yale to curate and display the works, and the Study Centre in London to promote scholarship here.

Mountain drawings are not numerous in the Yale Collection. There are perhaps fifty or so that might have been used, from which I made the following selection.

Elijah Walton: 'Sasso di Pelmo'. The Pelmo was first climbed by John Ball in 1857, marking the beginning of our Club, and of climbing in the Dolomites. Ball's route is now a *via ferrata*. Walton's method seems well suited to the highly structured surfaces of Dolomite peaks. This alpenglow drenched Pelmo is drawn from the west, from high ground near Colle Santa Lucia.

Charles Gore: 'Mer de Glace'. Charles Gore was a Lincolnshire landowner, who acquired further wealth by marrying a Yorkshire heiress. He began by drawing the coast and shipping, but seeking warmer climes for the benefit of his wife's health he went on tour by sea in 1773, spending three years in Italy where he met the painter John Cozens. It seems likely that his drawing of the Mer de Glace was made on his overland return journey from Italy. Although clearly amateur work, it shows some influence of Cozens, and the Moine, Jorasses and Requin are well drawn. It is one of the earliest Alpine drawings. Gore became acquainted with Johan Wolfgang von Goethe at this time and in 1791 he moved to the Ducal Court at Weimar where he remained until his death in 1807.

John Robert Cozens: 'The Pays de Valais'. This view, looking down from the Forclaz to Martigny with the fertile plain of the Valais beyond, was a favourite of Cozens, who produced several versions of it, e.g. in the Fitzwilliam Museum and at Stourhead (National Trust). Cozens was a master of light, cloud and distance effects, and his methods imparted an aura of mystery to his landscapes. Constable famously described Cozens as 'all poetry, the greatest genius that ever touched landscape.' He became mentally ill in 1794, and died aged only 45 at the end of 1797. Yale has some other works by Cozens with Alpine subjects, and other fine examples can be viewed online at the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert.

John Ruskin: 'Macugnaga'. Ruskin spent the summer of 1845 in Macugnaga, mountaineering and sketching from a rented chalet: 'little more than a hut. It was next to a torrent, approached by a stony path and a pine bridge, rocks and waterfalls to one side, pines and stunted acacias on the other',² so this may well be the hut drawn here. Presumably his guide Joseph Couttet of Chamonix, the son of Saussure's guide, and his servant George Hobbs, had to make do with the former animal accommodation below. The drawing depicts the Valle Anzasca spreading to the east in the late evening light with Pizzo dei Vittini, Pizzo della Moriana and Pizzo della Caccia rising to the south. Despite Ruskin's over-praise and adulation of Turner, his style was very much his own, and his Alpine drawings have seldom been bettered.

Samuel Davis: 'Punakha Dzong'. Davis is a romantic figure who was born in the West Indies to English parents. After soldiering there, he returned to England and made a career with the East India Company in India where he married Henrietta Boileau from a refugee French noble family. He eventually became a director of the EIC after returning to England in 1806. While in India he was sent with a mission to Bhutan and Tibet in 1783, but was left behind in Bhutan where he spent his time sketching the country and its astonishing buildings. Yale has around 140 drawings by him, all of excellent quality. Punakha Dzong, standing at the confluence of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu, is once again the winter capital of Bhutan. The *dzong* and its environs look today much as they did in 1783, a testament to the conservative nature of Bhutan.

William Daniell: 'Loch Scavaig'. Daniell sailed around the entire coast of Britain in the early 19th century, although very often he 'sailed on horseback'. In the course of his voyaging he made the earliest drawings of many Scottish mountains. While he was an able watercolour artist, he is better known as a printmaker. From the sketches made on his circumnavigation he produced a magnificent series of etchings enhanced by the novel technique of aquatint and then hand-coloured.³ His Loch Scavaig drawing – judging by the position of the Mad Burn – appears to show Gars-bheinn and Sgurr a' Choire Bhig, both greatly exaggerated. Although Daniell was in Loch Scavaig in 1815 in the course of his voyage, the tourists and their vessels

2. T Hilton, *John Ruskin: The Early Years*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985, p92.

3. W Daniell & R Ayton, *A Voyage round Great Britain*, London, Longman, 1814-25. Published in eight volumes, Ayton supplied text for the first two volumes only.

1. See P Mellon, *Reflections in a Silver Spoon*, John Murray, 1992.

imply a later date for this drawing.

John Warwick Smith: 'The Junction of Lyon and Tay'. Smith made around fifty Perthshire drawings for the 4th Duke of Atholl sometime after his return from Italy in 1781. The drawing shown is a version of one of these. By means of a visit to Blair Castle I was able to identify the subject of this drawing correctly, and also a second Yale drawing of the Pass of Killiecrankie.⁴ Smith drew the Perthshire mountains, in this case Schiehallion, without exaggeration, and with scrupulous attention to detail.

Francis Towne: 'Ambleside'. Drawn in morning light on 7 August 1786, according to Towne's inscription on the reverse of the mount, therefore looking north.⁵ Towne's style seems to fit no artistic context, and to encompass them all: it might be described as an abstract approach to *plein-air* art.

Edward Lear: 'Yewbarrow'. Kirkfell is shown on the right. Most of Lear's 124 graphite drawings from his 1836 tour of the Lake District have survived.⁶ He used all forms of graphite – pencil, chalk, stump, charcoal – achieving remarkable effects. He was direly neglected in his day, but is now avidly collected.

Joseph Farington: 'Gordale Scar'. Although the Yale drawing is untitled, it was identified as Gordale Scar by John R Murray, and there seems little reason to doubt this identification, since the resemblance is so close.⁷ Farington had at one time the idea of illustrating the poet Thomas Gray's *Journal of his Visit of the Lake District*, which culminated with a visit to the Scar.⁸ Farington was a most accurate topographer, of natural features as well as buildings.

Henry Moore: 'High Tor, Matlock'. Henry Moore was brought up in York, and studied there with his artist father until going to the Royal Academy Schools in London. He became established as a maritime artist, but until the late 1850s he drew many attractive landscapes in a Pre-Raphaelite manner. Here, the Tor and the reflecting surface of the Derwent are both very skilfully drawn.

George Fennell Robson: 'Tryfan'. Robson exhibited three drawings of Tryfan at the Old Water-Colour Society in the 1820s. One was bought by G H Pennant, the owner of Penrhyn Castle, and remains there. The Yale drawing is beautifully composed and coloured, with not only Tryfan, but the Bristly Ridge and Y Garn accurately drawn. A very similar version was in the collection of Graham Watson of Bradford (see Bonhams, 4 Feb 2003, Lot 219), where it was titled 'Skye'. The Yale drawing was also originally mistitled, and eventually corrected by Peter Bicknell.

Samuel Davis: 'Cader Idris'. This view of Craig and Llyn y Cau resembles the well-known painting by Richard Wilson from the 1770s. However, Davis,

4. See R N Campbell, 'The Scottish Watercolours of John Warwick Smith', *Scottish Society for Art History Newsletter*, No45, Spring 2014, pp4-6.

5. See T Wilcox, *Francis Towne*, Tate Gallery, 1997, for the full set of Lake District drawings.

6. See C Nugent, *Edward Lear: the Landscape Artist*, The Wordsworth Trust, 2009, for a comprehensive account of the tour.

7. *A Tour of the English Lakes with Thomas Gray & Joseph Farington*, Frances Lincoln, 2011, p145.

8. Gray's journal of his tour was first published in *The poems of Mr Gray. To which are prefixed memoirs of his life and writings by W Mason, M A*, London, H Hughs, 1775.

unlike Wilson, faithfully delineated the form of the crags, and this must be one of the earliest crag drawings. It is unfortunate that the date of his visit to Wales is unknown.

Robin N Campbell

140 Years on: an ascent of Storen

On 21 July 1876, William Cecil Slingsby made the 'most legendary climb of any Norwegian mountain' with his solo first ascent of the much sought after 2,405m Store Skagastølstind, Storen for short, in the Hurrungane's rocky summits of Jotunheimen. It was not only this bold climb by a foreigner which was significant but that it followed on immediately from a multi-day mountaineering traverse unprecedented in Norway. Repercussions, especially from the last day had enduring effects on the mountaineers and on Norwegian mountaineering.

Slingsby saw Storen from a road on his first tour of Norway in 1872. Impressed by its rocky tower and forbidding reputation he decided there and then to climb it if at all possible. On the way home from another visit in 1874, he met a 33-year-old schoolmaster, Emanuel Mohn, on the *Bergen* steamship and discovered they shared an enthusiasm for the mountains. With Cecil's sister, Edith, they explored the Jotunheimen the next summer and Slingsby urged Mohn to share their experiences with Norwegian audiences while he himself wrote an account of their climbs. Then through the winter the pair corresponded to plan a grand summer mountaineering tour.

In July 1876, Mohn and Slingsby met again in Oslo to take a cariole to join the leading mountain guide Knut Lykken. The two went on into the mountains but, detained by poor weather, were caught up by Lykken after he had mended his boots. Then came a five-day excursion of first ascents: Torfinnstind, Galdeberget, Urdanostind, Urdanostind North (aka Slingsbytind) and Jervvasstind. After a comfortable evening at a summer farmstead east of Storen, the three set out at 7am on Friday 21 July in unpromising weather. After ascending beside a cataract then traversing round a high spur they dropped into a cloud-filled hanging valley. Cairning their way, they crossed a second spur and a break in the clouds gave them a revitalising glimpse of Storen's 'truly noble aiguille'. By noon they were scrambling steeply down into the rough valley running north-west up towards the peak for an hour's rough going. Slingsby, being better equipped and less tired,



Slingsby and Mohn photographed in Ålesund in 1876 when they climbed Kolåstind (1432m).



Slingsbybreen above Kjetil Tveranger on the approach to Storen (Michael Smith)

was route-finding and turned up the steep glacier heading just east of the summit pyramid. He had identified this potential route the previous summer when with Edith and was confident of it but 45-year-old Lykken had doubts. Footprints on a snow patch had them thinking they had been usurped but, on closer inspection, they were a bear's.

On the glacier and slabs, Slingsby's nailed boots gave better grip while the Norwegians found the going harder and at one point Mohn totters and was held by the rope. Slingsby became impatient, unroped and went ahead and up a ravine to Storen's north col. Arriving there soon afterwards, both Mohn and Lykken came to an exhausted halt and found even Slingsby had doubts. Mohn declared that Storen was patently unclimbable but, after an exchange of words, a fired-up 27-year-old Slingsby continued. Solo he summited the 500ft final rock tower after struggling past an overhanging outward sloping ledge. That overhang required an ice-axe for aid in descent.

Meanwhile, having lost sight of Slingsby, Mohn and Lykken started back down the glacier. Mohn, perhaps regretting that an Englishman and not a Norwegian might first make the summit, said he felt 'strangely indifferent' at the outcome while Lykken was convinced that 'the Englishman will kill himself.' Slingsby caught up with the other two on the glacier, later named Slingsbybreen and, by Mohn's accounts, ashamedly expressed the view that solo climbing like that was indefensibly dangerous. It was an 18-hour day before they were back at the farmstead.

News of the breakthrough ascent spread. So that autumn Mohn lectured on the ascent, opining that Norwegians were not yet ready for such rock climbing. This inevitably brought condemnation for his failure to complete the ascent and for allowing the glory to fall to a foreigner. The criticism, repeated periodically for several years, lay heavily on Mohn's shoulders and may have contributed to his deteriorating health and eventual suicide in 1891.

Lykken revisited Storen in 1878 and again remained at the col while Harald Petersen, solo, made the second ascent by the same route. In Petersen's subsequent correspondence with Slingsby, both were critical of Lykken's mountaineering capability. Lykken though suffered no loss of reputation as a mountain guide.

Slingsby, a strong promoter of Anglo-Norwegian exchange, was convinced that Norwegian mountaineers had the cragsman's skills and knowledge but regrettably lacked interest in summiting their own mountains and lacked snow-craft. However, it has been argued this apparent lack of interest was indifference to the imperialist and aggressively masculine cultural perspective prevalent among English visitors at that time, extolling 'derring-do and toughness in adversity'. The traditional Norwegian ethic is more about preservation of wilderness and being inspired by 'unknown' territory rather than conquering peaks and subjugating nature. Norwegians commonly considered mountain climbing (as opposed to touring) 'extremely hazardous and a meaningless risk to life'.

Repeated assertions of this untapped national capability by Norwegians are found in the early publications of those involved in constructing mountaineering as a national sport, wresting it from the Victorian-era English visitors. Slingsby, still active in Norway, encouraged this development, partly by instructing the first professional mountain guides. By 1910 an all-Norwegian trio's ascent of Stetind had set the seal on home dominance of Norwegian mountaineering. This change was occurring as the country was enjoying successes in polar exploration and asserting its 1905 independence from Sweden. Some commentators note a distinct intensification of mountaineering activity arising from the ascent of Storen, especially through Slingsby's influence.

To mark the 140th anniversary of Slingsby's ascent of Storen, English and Norwegian mountaineers joined forces to make a more modest ascent of the peak. Two members of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club (Slingsby was the YRC's second president), joined three local mountaineers and a family descendent of the Klingenberg who ran the Årdal hotel where Slingsby stayed after landing from the Bergen ferry. In the party were two AC members and two board members of the Slingsby Trust (Slingsbystifinga) which encourages youngsters getting out into the local mountains. The AC has recently supported the Slingsby Trust with donations of *Alpine Journals* to maintain the complete set available to the public in the Klingenberg Hotel where it sits beside many items of Slingsby memorabilia.

The YRC pair left the Klingenbergs, walked up the Utladalen valley towards the original approach route and after a night in a mountain hut



Summit photo on the 140th anniversary ascent of Storen: Kjetil Tveranger, Michael Smith, Lars P Bryne, Are John Knudsen, Knut I Tønsberg and Erling Eggum.

dropped into the valley leading to the foot of the Slingsbybreen but kept on to the head and up the Mitmaradalsbreen to spend a night at the bivouac shelter on the Bandet col. They were joined early the next morning by the four who had spent the night at the NKT hut to the north. Poor weather had set in, windy and damp. Rather than Slingsby's route a more sheltered and readily accessible one was called for: Andrew's renne. On his 25th ascent Knut Tønsberg (AC, NKT) was generally in the lead with Michael Smith (AC, YRC, ST) generally bringing up the rear. Several others made an ascent the same day but by other routes.

They descended by abseiling the same flank of the peak then out north to the NKT cabin to dry out while enjoying a meal and celebratory toasts. It was only at this stage that the two AC members realised they had this affiliation in common. Knut immediately disappeared and returned wearing his AC tie. As dusk slowly descended, three continued down to Turtagrø to finish a memorable 19-hour day.

The Times obituary of Cecil Slingsby from 1929 stated: 'For a mountaineer and explorer, he had the ideal equipment – a magnificent physique, exceptional hardihood, grace and agility, an unerring judgement ... coolness and courage'. He certainly made his mark on mountaineering in Britain and Norway. Slingsby was named father of Norwegian mountaineering by Knut Tønsberg's grandfather, Henning Tønsberg, first president of the NTK. Cecil encouraged both Anglo-Norse endeavours and mountain exploration, work the AC, YRC and ST continue. If you are passing through

Årdalstangen, do call in and see the library and memorabilia at the Klingenberg and have a chat to Erling Eggum there.

Michael Smith & Knut Ihlen Tønsberg

Acknowledgements: The authors are most grateful to John Snoad and Johan Kofstad for their assistance in preparing this article. The image of Slingsby and Mohn probably originated from Jocelin Winthrop-Young, was provided by Per Gran and enhanced by John Snoad. The other climbers on the 140th anniversary ascent were Lars P Bryne, Erling Eggum, Are John Knudsen and Kjetil Tveranger (YRC). A bibliography of sources for this article is available from the editor.

A Mountain Museum for Norway

In June of this year the long-awaited Norsk Tindesenter or Norwegian Mountain Centre was opened by Crown Prince Haakon Magnus in Åndalsnes in Romsdal, located in its fjord-side building, its architects having been inspired by the surrounding mountains and snow-capped peaks. I was invited there a month later for a special event at Romsdal's Mountain Festival by Fred Husøy, a driving force behind the creation of the Tindesenter for which he was presented with Norway's 'Mountain Goat of the Year Award' by a joint committee of the festival and DNT, the Norwegian Trekking Association.

Above the Tindesenter shop and its already popular quayside restaurant and past a bust of one of Norway's most famous mountaineers, Arne Randers Heen, who lived in Romsdal and whose idea the mountain museum was, is a stunning 21m climbing wall, the highest in Norway. Adjacent to it is a library and reading room which has one of Norway's largest collections of mountaineering literature including English as well as Norwegian books. Beyond is a multimedia experience depicting 'the motivation, triumphs and tragedies of Norwegian mountaineering' with 16 diverse interactive installations about climbing, mountaineering, backcountry skiing and base jumping. The cinema screen is unique being 3D and simulating a rock wall whilst the digital archive of over 7,000 photos, videos and summit books dating back to 1880, as well as newspaper articles and more.

The museum covers Norwegian climbing history from its origins and includes alpenstocks and boots from Norwegian pioneers in the 1820s like Carl Hall, Matias Soggemoen and Erik Norahagen, up to equipment used by Arne Randers Heen: old hawser laid ropes and worn out tennis shoes and the like that were *de riguer* for climbers before the mid 1950s. There's more modern equipment and personal stories from lead climbers of today and examples of early nuts up to today's cams. Also on display is an early Edelrid chest harnesses used by the 1965 Norwegian Troll Wall first ascent team. Gear from the simultaneous English first ascent is there too including my own leather waist belt made in 1963, a precursor of the Troll Mark 2 and the later Troll Mark 5, the template for almost all modern sit harnesses. Displayed alongside the Mark 5, are the Troll Whillans

and Troll Black Master, the latter billed as ‘the first lightweight sit harness’. An eight-metre photo of Trollveggen (the Troll Wall) is almost overpowering in its proximity. A remarkable video of a huge chunk of it falling down is even more scary!

The Tindesenter has been a dream years in the making and is a credit to its designers, so much so it’s easy to spend half a day there and still want to go back for more. If you are climbing in Romsdal it’s an essential visit even if it doesn’t rain. Its website is at www.tindesenteret.no.

Tony Howard

Julian Cooper’s Marvellous Year

It was something of a shock to Lakeland Arts, the managers of Abbot Hall Art Gallery, that over 400 people turned up for the opening by Lord Melvyn Bragg of Julian Cooper’s 70th birthday retrospective exhibition. Among them were members of the Alpine Club, including the president and the *AJ* editor, curious to see the life’s work of our member, Julian Cooper, represented by 30 monumental paintings, some of them loaned by AC members. Three things were immediately striking about this work: its continuous search for new subjects, themes, conceptions as perceptions; the sheer hard work of not only organising painting expeditions to the Alps, Peru, Nepal, Tibet, Tasmania, Brazil and the Carrara marble quarries of Italy, but working for months and years in the studio on the studies brought home; and the unifying, shifting, distinctive voice that is more than a style: more a deep understanding that comes from total immersion in the huge and subtle forces of nature. By contrast the new work in ‘Upstream’ focussed upon familiar fellside becks around Buttermere, the nearest to the artist’s Cocker-mouth home, where that same voice sings lightly, knowingly, of water ‘that nourishes and drowns’, as Ted Hughes put it. As always in Cooper’s work, environmental issues underpinned by human conceptions of natural forces are never far away, as in a Cocker-mouth artist naming a show ‘Upstream’.

The earliest paintings shown here demonstrate both a determination by the Goldsmiths College School of Art graduate to develop a line of work as far away from the family tradition as possible and a fascination with the then fashionable possibilities of abstraction. That Abbot Hall bought the 1970 work ‘Ghita’ is an early indication of local support for homebred promise and, of its kind, this playful painting stands up well today. ‘Sierra’ (1973) and ‘Matterhorn’ (1974) are experimental abstract engagements with water, rock and foliage, and with rock, snow and greenery, respectively. Strangely, both paintings, whilst challenging perception, strongly evoke movement in the present moment and also on a geological scale. There follow narrative paintings based either upon Malcolm Lowry’s novel *Under the Volcano* or Edward Hopper-ish bars and buildings in which the figure is marooned in the moment.

But by 1988 Cooper’s subjects are less diverse as he seems to have come home to the mountain environment, albeit a challenged one in the pivotal



Julian Cooper’s ‘Towards the Sea’: the only truly allegorical of his works, painted for an environmental exhibition about radioactivity in the Irish Sea.

painting ‘Towards the Sea Scafell’ (1988), Cooper’s contribution to a Greenpeace exhibition called ‘Clean Irish Sea’ which travelled up both coasts to draw attention to the most irradiated sea in the world. Cooper’s father, William Heaton Cooper, had been commissioned to make a painting to celebrate the opening of Windscale nuclear power plant heralding what was to be a new era of ‘clean’ energy. Julian Cooper’s painting foregrounds a strange dark shaft in the colourfully painted summit rocks of Scafell Pike, and takes the eye down Wastwater, past Joss Naylor’s little green farmstead and out over yellow fields to a distant sea and a misted Isle of Man on the horizon. The painting’s subject, now rebranded as Sellafield, is faintly in the distant right corner. But the eye is drawn back to a feather and two bones on those summit rocks. This appears to be Cooper’s only explicitly allegorical painting. But its agenda – human interaction with natural forces – lies behind much of his later work.

In the large-scale studies of light on snow and rock forms in the Eiger series the human history of legendary climbs is an unseen presence. Cooper’s

major regret concerning this retrospective is Messner's refusal to part with 'The White Spider' (2000), which would have left a huge gap in his famous museum of mountain art. So we have 'Light Patch' (2000) and 'Fluted Ridge' (2001) in which gravity is ever-present in the runs of paint down the canvas. Again movement of the elements of the mountain is suggested by the passing of light over them. In 'Eiger Face' (2005) we are invited to peer deeply into a complex falling face of snow and rock as light is confined to the periphery of the painting. It is work like this that Melvyn Bragg described as almost getting under the surface of its subject. A trip to Brazil produced a cinematic triptych of panels narrating the 'Assassination of Chico Mendes' (1994), in which the union representative of rubber workers appears silhouetted in his shack doorway on a hot night, an easy target for the bullet that crossed the terrain traversed by the panels of his back yard.

It may seem an unlikely parallel, but Cooper's interest in the quarries of the Lake District and Carrara is also concerned with the exploitation of local natural resources and its human legacy. In his 'Honister Crag' paintings of 2003-4 the lines left by quarrying roadways are only slowly discerned in the grain of the fellside, and manmade scree cannot be distinguished from natural scree. Two monumental paintings from a pilgrimage to Mount Kailas (2007) reveal the quite different characters of the north and south faces, each catching the spirit of this holy mountain with quite different palettes. Even the sky is treated differently, contributing to a sense of the aura of the mountain whose summit is almost touching the top of the canvas. Of the square orifices of the Carrara quarries that invite the imagination into the depths of the source of Michelangelo's marble, it is probably best to avoid being too Freudian, but the mystery they evoke is palpable and certainly serious. The most remarkable painting from this series, 'Ravaneto Battaglino' (2009) evokes scale, zigzagging roadways and scarring in a green hillside that persists only in the top corner of this giant canvas. This is high level desecration of pure white rock on behalf of high culture. Tiny industrial vehicles suggest the long history of plunder here, although, as ever, the patterning of the human imprint has its own kind of beauty.

There is only one painting from the brilliantly coloured, fast decaying open mine in Tasmania where Cooper was invited to make artworks that would raise awareness of environmental issues there. And none from the Peruvian trip for which Cooper prepared by carrying camping, climbing and large-scale painting gear in a ski bag balanced on his rucksack into Carnmore to paint the Wisdom Buttress face of Ben Lair. But the local paintings of 'Low Rigg' (2013) and 'Coniston Quarry 2' (2015-2017) return home to trees barely rooted atop complex broken structures of subtly coloured, delicately lit little outcrops.

These works led to the homecoming of the most recent work in 'Upstream', where, after all the monumental displays from long journeys into the world's mountains, a fresh look with a lighter toned palette at the life of local becks amongst working quarries, sheep runs and tree roots appear as a joyous breath of fresh air. Here that voice sings (yes, you can often

hear the water in these paintings) with the ease that only a mature insight into the familiar can achieve. The technique seems to be newly liberated from the intensity of those deep searches into vast faces, so that apparently vaguer strokes achieve their cumulative effect only when viewed at a distance. 'Scope Beck' is almost abstract in its sheer joy of colour. The pulsing of water can be seen in 'Rigg Beck' cutting through rock, turf and roots, and heard amidst the miraculous colours and free hand of 'High Rannerdale Beck'. It injects a life force to the side of the workings of 'Force Crag Mine', its falling contrasting with that of the scree on the other side of the surprisingly light scars of the mine spoil tips. Human structures are also there in the single wall that will not contain the full flood force of the deeply cut beck in 'Low Bank' and in the canalised lake channels of 'Outflow 2' and 'Inflow 2' where the quite different colours of moving water is celebrated against stolid mountains on the other side of the lakes. But human presences are humbled and frail in these eroding upstream fells. In 'Outwall (Rannerdale Beck)' it is at first hard to see the wall at all amidst the tonal plays of purple heather, brown bracken and various greens of swelling growth, all ultimately shaped by the falling stream.

In this latest work, after all the bravado of the big mountain pictures, Julian Cooper is delighting in the intimacy of home with all the time to look and feel, smell and hear, with a lighter heart and deeper knowledge, that which has always been giving and taking, joyously and ominously, upstream.

Terry Gifford

- Julian Cooper: Paintings from 1970 to 2017, Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal: 2 April-7 July 2017.
- Julian Cooper: Upstream, Art Space Gallery, London, 28 April-26 May, 2017.

Boardman Tasker Award 2016

The 2016 Boardman Tasker event was a great success. As usual, there was a big demand for tickets and four of the five shortlisted authors were able to attend. Andy Perkins welcomed everyone to KMF with Martin Wragg, the Boardman Tasker chair welcoming everyone and handing over to Stephen Venables, who was to interview the shortlisted authors.

Stephen began by talking with Simon McCartney, the author of *The Bond*. The title is the theme of the book, the bond between mountaineers upon which the author returns to often in his accounts of two epic new routes in Alaska in 1978 and 1980. The effect of the second route on the author was such that he gave up climbing and his story is an extraordinary account of survival in the most extreme conditions.

Next up Stephen talked to Steve Olson, author of *Eruption*. When a smoking Mount St Helens erupted on a spring morning in 1980, 57 people were killed, some over 13 miles away. Steve's book not only tells their personal stories with compassion, but also turns the tension between the science and the cultural assumptions at play on that day into a dramatic

narrative that reads like a classic thriller. Steve's total surprise and delight at having his book shortlisted was very evident and there was much admiration for his book.

The third writer on stage was Mark Vallance the author of *Wild Country*. More than the story of 'the man who made Friends', Mark's book reveals how the spirit brought to bear on friendships, climbs, BMC management and tough business dilemmas might be harnessed in dealing with the onset of Parkinson's disease. Mark spoke with great humour of the difficulties he encountered and was warmly received by the audience.

The final writer on stage was Robert Wainwright, author of *The Maverick Mountaineer*, a biography of George Finch. It was the Australian rebel Finch who demonstrated the value of oxygen in reaching almost 27,000ft on Everest in 1922. Robert's biography reveals an eccentric scientist and inventor whose complex personal life extended to his strange relationship with his son the actor Peter Finch. This is a fine contribution to the history of Everest and makes clear the huge contribution Finch made to climbing at high altitude.

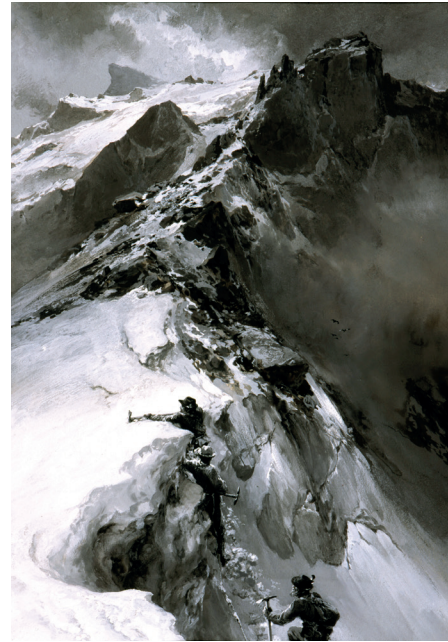
The fifth book shortlisted was *Alone on the Wall* by Alex Honnold with David Roberts. Unfortunately Alex was unable to attend. The cover of this book sends a shiver down the spine and the life of an unroped solo climber gives a gripping subject matter. Alex's book delves into this dangerous world with skill, and revealing honesty about the personal costs of his lifestyle and amazing achievements.

The chair for 2016 was Graham Desroy and the other two judges were Helen Mort, chair for 2017, and Terry Gifford. Graham gave a humorous speech, outlining the difficulties of dealing with 35 entries. He explained the difficulties the judges had in dealing with such an outstanding shortlist. After much deliberation, they decided that the winner of the 2016 Boardman Tasker Award for Mountain Literature was *The Bond* by Simon McCartney.

Alpine Club Library 2016

The 'Les Trésors de l'Alpine Club' exhibition with hundreds of items from the AC collections re-opened for the winter season in the Chamonix Musée Alpin (see *AJ* 2016, p424); this followed a break to change the AC water-colour paintings on show, to limit their exposure to light. After over 20,000 visitors, it closed in April 2016. Subsequently, the ACL team has given lectures, celebrating 150 years since the Golden Age to a number of schools, colleges and special interest groups around the UK.

In January, the Library played a part in the book launch at the AC of *The Maverick Mountaineer* by Robert Wainwright. The 'maverick' was George Ingle Finch; his grandson, Francis Russell, spoke fondly of him. Finch was a member of the expedition to Everest in 1922. He took on the task of understanding and maintaining the oxygen kits from the Air Ministry, developed for high altitude pilots, now to be used by mountaineers. It was a useful occasion for us to gain more understanding about the photographs and artefacts held by the Library.



Above: Edward T Compton's 'Meije Pic Orientale, 1870' capturing the first ascent by Miss Mary Brevoort, her nephew W A B Coolidge, Christian Almer, and his son Ulrich. A large wall hanging of this painting featured in the hugely successful 'Les Trésors de l'Alpine Club' exhibition in Chamonix.

Right: Barbara Grigor-Taylor, new honorary librarian.



Above: Visitors to 'Les Trésors de l'Alpine Club' exhibition examining Whymper's ice axe, alpenstock and map of his travels.



We have often wished for 'rolling stacks' (bookshelves on rails) to fit more books into our limited space but the expense was prohibitive. Then the auction house Bonhams decided to rearrange their warehouse in Acton and dispose of a set. On the basis that we dismantled them and took them away, they agreed to donate them to us. Now, was this good or bad news?

ACL teams were mobilised, dismantling the racks, numbering the pieces and transporting them. These components covered the floor of the lecture room. Next, we moved out metres of books from existing shelving and built a false floor in the basement: this involved accurate levelling for the racks to roll freely with no fixings to penetrate the waterproofed floor. Then we re-assembled and aligned all the components. A mammoth task, but it gained us a compact rolling stack providing an extra 130m of shelving.

Glyn Hughes, our honorary archivist was delighted with new material on Everest 1953 arriving from Susan Band and Sally Westmacott, an expedition account from an anonymous donor, and Kangchenjunga material from Norman Hardie who reached the summit in 1955.

Meanwhile, library project work continued: Peter Rowland and Bernie Ingram digitised hundreds more photos and documents; Sue Hare gained good fees for reproduction of our historic photos in books and journals; John Fairley constructed a catalogue, with thumbnail illustrations, of our 700 paintings and prints; John Town made scans – searchable by keywords – of recent *Alpine Journals* and added these to the AC website; Sally Russell added many new entries to the Himalayan Index (including Chinese peaks).

After 26 years as honorary librarian, Jerry Lovatt decided to retire. At the Club AGM Barbara Grigor-Taylor, who has been a trustee for many years, was elected new honorary librarian; Jerry was appointed honorary librarian emeritus in recognition of his immense knowledge of mountaineering literature, and he was presented with an engraved memento at the AC/ACL volunteers' Christmas lunch.

The Library cares for the Alpine Club's collections of mountaineering books, journals, tracts, archives, artefacts, photographs, and paintings. These form one of the most significant assemblies of mountain material in the world. Visit us on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays (except during August and Christmas-New Year week). Do telephone to check if travelling from afar. Catalogues of books, archives, and the Himalayan Index are on the AC website. Also, 2017 will commence with a small version of the Chamonix exhibition at Frenchay Village Museum, Bristol, opening in January.

Once again, congratulations and thanks are due to everyone in the Library team for providing so much willing volunteer work and expertise.

Hywel Lloyd

Contributors

COSMIN ANDRON was in a former life a classically trained philosophy professor but now makes a living as a certified mountain guide based in the mountains of Transylvania. Fond of the seldom travelled and a climber for experience's sake, he shares at least one expedition a year to the far corners of the world with his wife Cristina, also a mountain guide.

JONATHAN BAMBER is a professor of glaciology at the University of Bristol and president of the European Geosciences Union. He completed his PhD at the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, in glaciology and remote sensing before spending eight years in the Department of Space and Climate Physics, University College London. He is a world authority on the ice sheets covering Antarctica and Greenland and how they respond to climate change. He is also an adventurer, long-distance runner and mountaineer.

MALCOLM BASS has always been fascinated by exploration. At first he focused on caving and cave diving, but his head was turned by a winter trip to Ben Nevis and since then he has been absorbed by the process of trying to climbing new routes in Scotland, Alaska, Pakistan, India and China. He and Paul Figg were nominated for a *Piolet d'Or* for their ascent of the west face of Vasuki Parbat in 2010.

ANTONIO GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ is a librarian and information scientist and lives in Murcia, Spain. He has climbed since 1967 and specialises in ascents in the north Peruvian ranges. He has written two books: *La Cordillera Blanca de los Andes, selección de ascensiones, excursiones y escaladas* and *Cordillera Blanca, Escaladas, Parte Norte*.

KESTER BROWN is the managing editor and designer of publications for the New Zealand Alpine Club. He produces the club's quarterly magazine *The Climber* and the annual *NZ Alpine Journal*. He is a rock climber and mountaineer of many years' standing and lives at Taylors Mistake Beach, New Zealand.

ROBIN CAMPBELL has held every office in the Scottish Mountaineering Club for which administrative competence is not required, including a long stint as Editor in the 1960s and 70s, and as Archivist since 1997. Retired from a desultory career as an academic child psychologist, he now wastes his time and money in collecting and studying old drawings and watercolours, particularly those depicting mountains before they were trampled into familiarity by the boots of mountaineers.