

In Memoriam

Compiled by Geoffrey Templeman

Plates 88–93

The Alpine Club Obituary

Year of Election

Dawa Tenzing	Hon 1970
André Contamine	Hon ACG 1970
Donald Desbrow Whillans	} Hon ACG 1976
Rev Edward John Whiteley	1962
Gaston Rébuffat	1965
Roger Baxter-Jones	ACG 1976
Mrs Cicely M Williams	LAC 1942
Michael John Harber	1981
Michael George Geddes	ACG 1979
Edward Hamilton Marriott	1932
Edward Charles Pyatt	1957
John C Case	1926
Richard Cook	1959
Noel Peskett	1960

The 1985 In Memoriam list includes the names of a number of members who were notable mountaineers, none more so than Don Whillans. In view of Don's importance to British mountaineering I have included a number of tributes to him in an effort to build up a composite picture.

Sadly, notification of the last three names on the list came too late in the year to do anything about them, but John Atherton kindly sent me sufficient details on 'Charles' Marriott for a brief note to be included here. Full obituaries of each will appear next year.

Happily, to balance this, full tributes are included here for all those who were missed last year, namely Tom Brocklebank, John Bingham, Henry Booth, Mrs Evelyn Carr, Mrs Margaret Milsom and Hugh Pasteur.

One or two of the notices included here appeared in similar form in climbing magazines during 1985 — I make no apology for this as both the contributors and I thought them the best available, and the more magazines and journals there are, the harder it is to find original contributions!

Finally, my thanks again to the many who have helped.

Thomas Anthony Brocklebank 1908–1984

I know Tom's many friends would wish rather more about him to be added to the brief obituary which appeared in the *A790*. It was, I think, inevitable that he was best known as an oarsman. He stroked Cambridge to victory three times, stroked the winning crew at the Grand at Henley twice, and very nearly won the Diamond Sculls against the then finest sculler in the world. I think he

was undoubtedly the greatest Cambridge oarsman in the period between the wars, light in weight but of immense stamina and determination. But when Tom was chosen to join the 1933 Everest team, he was very much more than 'the inevitable rowing Blue' whom Sandy Irvine had prefigured in 1924.

He had served a thorough and very well taught apprenticeship in guideless alpine climbing in the 1920s and early 1930s, thanks to the Eton masters who used to take promising pupils to their own favourite mountain districts, and put them through their paces. It was a terrible shock to Tom when three of them, Powell, Howson and Slater were killed on the Piz Roseg just when Tom was returning from Everest.

Competition to be chosen for Everest in those days was understandably fierce, but let there be no doubt that Tom Brocklebank more than amply justified his selection in 1933. As Hugh Ruttledge wrote in his book, 'His one idea was to be of service, and he never departed from it, now or later.' Tom Brocklebank, and his companion and friend 'Ferdie' Crawford were the essential link between the leading climbers and the support party of older and necessary specialists down the line. Hugh Ruttledge pays informed tribute to what they contributed. 'Crawford and Brocklebank began their great series of six ascents and descents of the North Col slopes, revictualing Camp IV and escorting porters. This hard work made the position of the higher party secure . . . the fact that it was carried through without a single accident reflects the greatest credit on both the skill and the energy of the pair.'

In the lost days between 21 and 25 May when through a conjunction of human failure and unlucky weather we forfeited our one real chance of reaching the top of Everest, Tom and Ferdie were putting in an immense amount of work, escorting parties up and down the North Col and keeping the long line of steps in order. When Camp V had temporarily to be abandoned, Ferdie and Tom were a tower of strength at the top of the ladder (over the ice bulge) roping up the invalid porters and lowering each man to one or other of us below. It was when the going got tough that Tom and Ferdie justified their selection to join the 1933 party.

Tom's contribution to Ruttledge's book, *Everest 1933*, included anonymously as 'Extracts from an Everest Diary', is one of the most human and revealing sections of the book. None of us who has been there will forget Tom's vignette of the great pyramid of town, monastery, fort of Shekar Dzong, wantonly destroyed by the Red Guards in the 1950s — 'The rock looks immense in the moonlight, and the clusters of ghostly white buildings seem to stand upon nothing at all.' Or there is the coming of spring to climbers chilled, frozen and debilitated by weeks of storm and cold on the upper mountain. 'When we reached Camp I, we found little tufts of grass all around the camp. The change is really wonderful; six weeks ago Jack and I were hacking through a young glacier with ice-axes to get water here.' Tom goes on to Base Camp, and tells, 'I slept in a Whymper tent all to myself, and it felt like bedding down in the nave of St Paul's.'

Our friendship, nurtured on Everest, continued, to my good fortune, till Tom's death in 1984, the night before Jane and he were coming to stay with us. After 1933, we did not climb much again together, but the occasions when we

did perhaps have a certain significance. Between VE day and VJ day there were naturally readjustments in the plans for the future of the armed services. There was a real risk that the lessons learnt in fighting through mountain terrain might be lost in lowland Europe. I believe that the laboriously fashioned Mountain Division was employed in capturing the infamous island of Walcheren, which is mostly below sea-level. There seemed also a risk that the commando units might be scrapped in the expected rundown which peace would bring. Tom Brocklebank had, as an Eton beak and housemaster, organised two very successful mountain training courses for members of school cadet corps, in Snowdonia in 1944 and 1945. This gave us a certain leverage, and Tom recruited me to visit Leo Amery, a Cabinet Minister but also, most appropriately, a former President of the Alpine Club.

At the India Office, Amery listened sympathetically to our plans for the official and continued blessing on mountain training. It is not for me to say what degrees of results we can possibly claim. The facts are that the Commandos survived, mountain training gradually blossomed into the Mountain Leadership Training Board, the Outward Bound Schools grew and flourished, and bit by bit Adventure Centres emerged from encouragement by local education authorities and voluntary organisation, a long time before royal endorsement was gratefully received in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. In these linked developments, Tom Brocklebank played an early and influential part, and many who do not know of this have cause to be grateful to him.

Tom was pre-eminently a Preux Chevalier, fortuné by birth, looks, talents. But he gave back far more than he received, and it is not only mountaineers who have cause to be grateful to him.

Jack Longland

Anthony Rawlinson and Alec Malcolm write:

Tom Brocklebank was a modern language master at Eton from 1936 to 1959, and a housemaster from 1946 to 1959, when he retired because of failing health. At Eton he is remembered as an aesthete rather than an athlete, but he was a highly successful rowing coach, and an intensely compassionate if sometimes moody housemaster.

He took part in parties of Masters and Old Boys which assembled at the Old Royal Hotel, Capel Curig, or at Pen-y-Gwryd, in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

John Sutton Martin Bingham 1908–1984

John Bingham was introduced to climbing while at Eton by the well-known Eton master and mountaineer, John Hills, climbing at first in the Lake District. At Oxford he was an active member of the OUMC, becoming, in due course, secretary of the club. Over a relatively brief period he climbed extensively in the Alps, also in Corsica, the Lake District and Scotland, climbing, often guideless, many of the better known Alpine peaks. However, soon after leaving Oxford, he became a land agent, a factor in a firm of which he, in due course, became senior partner and his climbing career ended.

William Younger

Tom Peacocke writes:

John Bingham was my contemporary at Oxford. He was Hon Sec and then President of the OUMC. I climbed with him in the Forno and Bernina Districts in 1929 on an OUMC meet. I also climbed with him on another OUMC meet in North Wales in 1931. He was a very good rock climber, but not so keen on ice and snow. He led six of us up the Holly Tree Wall which in 1931 was considered extremely difficult. Of course we were all wearing nailed boots. I know little about his Alpine ascents except that he climbed the Zmuttgrat in 1929.

I always found him a very pleasant companion though he did not suffer fools gladly.

Alec Malcolm writes:

John Bingham went up to Oxford where he became President of the OUMC and took a leading part in organising several club meets in the Alps. He then got a job as a land agent in Scotland. He joined the Black Watch as a Territorial and was made prisoner with the Highland Division at St Valéry. After the war he returned to Scotland and eventually set up his own firm of estate agents in Inverness.

He was a contemporary of Tom Brocklebank at Eton in his early days and took part with him in parties of Masters and Old Boys at the old Royal Hotel, Capel Curig, and at Pen-y-Gwryd, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, where they learnt the basics of rock-climbing.

Henry Booth d.1984

I first met Henry Booth at Oxford in, I think, 1920 or 1921 where he joined the Mountaineering Club which I had revived. His family owned the Booth Steamship Co at Liverpool.

In 1922 he attended meets of the OUMC at Pen-y-Gwryd in January and at Easter, and then at the end of June joined my parents and myself at Pralognan in the Tarentaise. With a porter, my father, Henry and I went to the Felix Faure hut, and Henry and I prospected the route up the Grande Casse. We were well trained by *Badminton* then. Next day, without the porter, we climbed the mountain and I remember cutting a lot of steps up snow in excellent condition. My father went back to my mother at Pralognan, but Henry and I left the Felix Faure hut and on the following day he and I went up a lonely glen and over the Col de la Laisse till we found a lovely campsite (I had a small tent with me that season) just below the Grande Motte, which we climbed the next day before going down to Val d'Isère. That week the same party climbed the Tsanteleina and the Grande Sasiere. Henry was also on the OUMC meet later that year, when we all went over to the Victor Emmanuel hut, and he was in my party on the Grand Paradiso.

Henry was elected to the Club in 1923, when he had a long season in the Alps, and I remember that he joined one or two of the Alpine Meets I ran in the later 1920s, but I fear I lost touch with him later on and never met him again.

Herbert Carr

Mrs Evelyn Dorothy Carr 1900–1984

Evelyn Ritchie, with her sister Brenda, was already an experienced rock climber with several seasons in the Lake District when, a classics student at St Hilda's Hall, she met her future husband, Herbert Carr whom she married in 1927, at an OUMC lecture. In 1925 he introduced her to the Alps and from then until the outbreak of war she climbed in the Alps every season achieving an impressive record of first class climbs, many of which she led, in addition to her climbs in Wales, the Lakes, Scotland and Skye. She resumed alpine climbing after the war but injuries sustained from a rock fall while she was leading near the top of the Trifhorn limited her later alpine visits to moderate glacier excursions. Sadly, the last few years of her life were under the shadow of a progressively disabling illness. We extend our sympathy to Herbert Carr and his daughter.

Frank Solari

Mrs Marjorie G Milsom d.1984

Marjorie Milsom's first Alpine season was in 1930 and her last in 1938; she never climbed after her marriage to Maurice, an unrepentant non-climber. She joined the Ladies' Alpine Club in 1934, served on the committee from 1937–9, had two spells as Editor and was President in 1950. Her presence at meetings and dinners (and she came often) always added to the friendliness and life of the evening. She was diffident in showing holiday slides not connected with climbing, but the few she did show were a delight to see and her commentary a model of brevity and point. Her earlier black and white photographs were very good.

Marjorie climbed in the Alps in 1930, 1933, 1935, 1936, 1937 and 1938, often with G R Speaker and usually in Switzerland. The Engelhorner made a favourite centre. Her last season in 1938 included the Obergabelhorn S face with a new direct finish, and the Matterhorn Traverse, up the Zmutt ridge and down the Italian. She was for a time a member of the Fell & Rock Club and walked and climbed in the Lakes, Scotland and North Wales.

After Oxford she worked for a time with the Woolfs at the Hogarth Press. Virginia, she found delightful but sometimes disconcerting: she liked to settle down to write in the Packing Room, oblivious to the confusion as people edged round her. Marjorie was Illustrations Editor to *The Listener* from 1936–45. She had three novels published; one went into a second edition.

I got to know Marjorie and Maurice well through the lucky chance of staying on after a Skye Meet. They also had a day in hand and we spent it together and became friends. We were never again in the hills together but met often. They were delightful hosts and guests. Marjorie had many interests; she was a good pianist and enjoyed painting.

The Ladies' Alpine Club owed far more to Marjorie than her brief record suggests and she kept alive her interest in the Club and afterwards in the Alpine Club until her death. She must have been good company in the mountains and it is sad that there is no one to report on this at first hand.

Margaret Darvall

Hugh William Pasteur 1899–1984

Hugh Pasteur inherited his love of mountains from his father Charles and grandfather Henri, and from the family's origins in Geneva, from where his grandfather moved to England in the 1860s. The writers of their obituaries in this journal used words which serve as well as any to describe the attitude to mountains which Hugh inherited. Alfred Wills wrote of Henri Pasteur, 'he was one of the best types of the true lovers of mountains, belonging to a class of which, as well as its great mountaineers and discoverers, the club may well be proud; of men whose souls are permeated by the beauty and grandeur and glory of the mountains and whose lives and characters are more or less moulded by their wholesome and invigorating influences', (A724). W B Carslake wrote of Charles Pasteur, 'he was indeed a mountain lover in the widest sense of that term . . . for him mountains became old friends', (A760).

The first entries in Hugh's diaries are of col walks on family holidays from 1910–13. After the war he was in the Alps most years between 1920 and 1936. At first there were the regular family holidays, when he and his brother Mits were introduced to Alpine climbing by their father, usually climbing with guides. Hugh's fourth climb in his first season was a traverse of the Matterhorn, up the Hornli and down the Italian ridge.

He acquired new climbing companions who joined these parties in the early '20s, notably Bill Carslake and Leslie Letts. In 1923–25, when he was working as an engineer at Winterthur, he was able to climb at week-ends in some of the lower ranges, sometimes with his life-long Swiss friend Robert Etienne. There were two excellent years in 1927 and 1928 when he climbed with Carslake and Letts without guide from Belalp, Zinal and Grindewald. The best season must have been 1928 when in 12 days they climbed the Rosenhorn-Mittelhorn-Wetterhorn, Monch, Jungfrau, Eiger, Dreieckhorn, Weisse Nollen, Finsteraarhorn and Schreckhorn. This trio would also visit North Wales and the Lake District for rock-climbing weekends.

He became a member of the Club in 1924. His diaries are good on the record of routes and times, but without much comment apart from unusual incidents. Quite a number of these seem to concern either objects or people falling into crevasses; in 1911 it was Auntie Mary's butter dish on a walk from Breuil to Gressoney; in 1957 it was an English bishop near the Loetschenlücke.

He married in 1929, and his wife Grisell shared his love of mountains, accompanying him on the easier ascents in the early years, and on pass walks in later years. The family holidays continued in the '30s, the favoured areas, as in the '20s, being in the Valais, particularly Saas-Fee and Arolla. He only made two brief visits to Chamonix.

In 1948 he introduced his children to the Alps at Champex, taking them up some manageable peaks, with his father, then 78, also present, still walking up to the passes with measured rhythm and restraining the youthful enthusiasm to rush the pace. Hugh's last real climb was the Wildspitze in 1954 with myself. Then valleys and passes replaced peaks and glaciers, with favourite places for later walking holidays being Binntal and Fafleralp, usually with his brother Mark in the party. He lived long enough to see one of his grandsons, a fifth generation, show great promise as a climber.

His other interests were music, gardening and above all the family. Music was a pervasive influence and joy in his life, and he was a very competent pianist and accompanist. He inherited music, married into it, and passed it on. He was a successful and knowledgeable gardener, developing the garden of the family home at Fairseat in Kent, where he lived for just short of 50 years, and where he died peacefully. His favourites in the garden were rhododendrons and azaleas, and a pine imported from Arolla. There was a small corner for gentians and he was an expert with fruit. Almost his whole working life was spent with the old established firm of refrigeration engineers J and E Hall of Dartford. After the second war his successful work on the export side took him to many countries, from which came many life-long friendships.

He was never happier than when he was with a family party, whether of his immediate family, the wider family in England, which was very close-knit, or a visit from the Swiss branch, with which he maintained continuous links. Again the words of Alfred Wills of Henri Pasteur are remarkably fitting to describe how Hugh would receive family and friends at home: 'his manners were distinguished, with something of the courtly grace of an older time. There was a heartiness and sincerity about his welcome of a friend of which many must have felt the charm.'

David Pasteur

Dawa Tenzing d.1985

I first met Dawa Tenzing in Darjeeling in 1955 when he was our Sirdar on the Kangchenjunga expedition. He was already a close friend of Charles Evans, having been with him on Himalayan trips for the previous three years. In 1952 and 1953 he was his personal Sherpa and then in 1954 he was Sirdar to the New Zealand Barun Expedition. On Everest in 1953 he had twice carried loads to the South Col without oxygen and, from the South Col, had been fit and ready to go further if need be. He was tall for a Sherpa and had a more serious expression than most. In spite of his long service with climbing expeditions he had insisted on retaining the old traditions and still wore the pigtail and ear-ring.

When he joined us it was difficult to judge his age but he was thought to be between 45 and 50. We all took to him immediately and it was clear to us that here was an exceptional person.

Weeks later when Norman Hardie and I returned from the summit of Kangch to Camp 5 in a state of extreme exhaustion, it was those two great mountaineers Charles Evans and Dawa Tenzing who came up to meet us, sustain us and help us down. Although Dawa was putting on a brave face it was clear that he was preoccupied. We were soon to learn that news had just been passed up by radio from Base Camp that one of our young Sherpas, Pemi Dorje, had died. He had literally worked himself to death by exhausting himself on a carry to Camp 5 a few days earlier. He had never recovered from this. For Dawa Tenzing his death was a great grief for he was Pemi Dorje's brother-in-law. The loss of other close relatives on the mountains was something that was to dog Dawa over the years.

After the 1955 expedition Dawa came over to England for a while and many

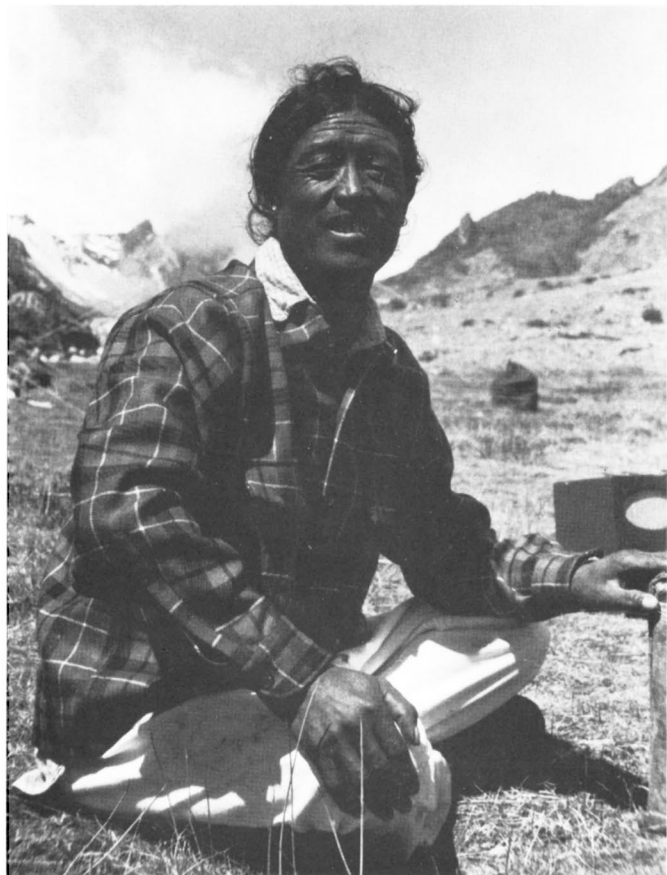


Photo: John A. Jackson

88 *Sirdar Dawa Tenzing in the Yalung valley during the first ascent of Kangchenjunga, 1955 — then 53 years old.*

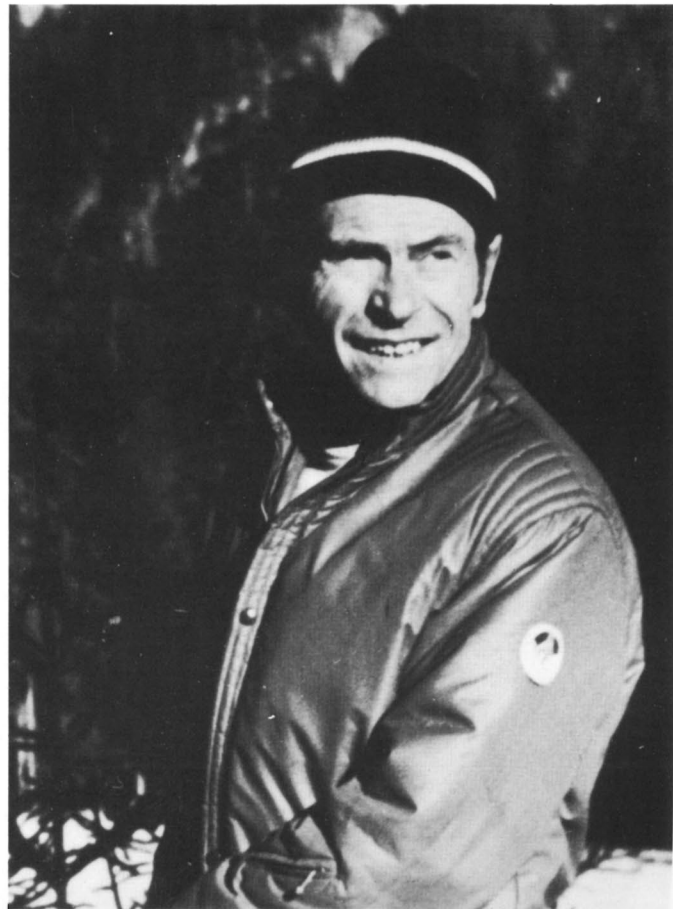


Photo: Jozef Nyka

89 *André Contamine.*

will remember the impact he and his young companion Chanjup made as they travelled around staying and climbing with their many friends — Dawa dignified and slightly aloof. He went on to be Sirdar of many expeditions after that, rapidly becoming one of the greatest Sirdars of all time. He was made an Honorary Member of the Club in 1970.

I next saw Dawa in 1976 when I passed through Duweche on the way to Everest Base Camp. I was very shocked at the state in which I found him. He had just lost his second wife and a son had been killed in a climbing accident and on top of this he had been accused of stealing items from a Monastery — something that was quite unthinkable to anyone who knew Dawa. It was later established that this was a false accusation resulting from a family feud but it had been taken very seriously by Dawa with the result that he had given all his money to the Monks in the hope that this would help him. He was drinking heavily. He was living in very poor conditions, and was being looked after, as best she could, by Nisha Llamu, his second daughter. He was convinced he had only months to live and wanted me to take his medals, including his Tiger Badge, and his papers and hand them to the Alpine Club. This would clearly have been an admission of defeat and so I persuaded him that he should hold on to his valuables and said that the Club would be honoured to have them in due course. His court case came up while we were there. I had in my team a very well connected Major of the Royal Nepalese Army who could see at once that such accusations against Dawa were clearly false and he insisted on remaining in the valley and going to court to speak for him. They both came up to Base Camp some days later with the good news that Dawa had been acquitted of the false accusations. This was to be a turning point for him. He flatly refused to accept charity but we did persuade him that he was more than deserving of a small pension after all he had done for so many expeditions and this we started to pay him straight away. Many of his friends contributed to this and it enabled him to live his last years free of financial worry. It was paid to him monthly through the Doctor at Kunde Hospital to ensure that he went there for regular medical checks.

I next saw him two years later. He had regained his strength and was much more his old self. He was married again, to a fine old lady who was the sister of Tashi, another of our Kangchenjunga Sherpas and an old friend of Dawa. Tashi had later gained fame by being the first to the summit of Nuptse with Dennis Davis. I stayed a few days with Dawa that year and late one evening, as he was reminiscing about his early expeditions, he said how he remembered as a boy being with a British Expedition to Everest which went into Tibet via Darjeeling and then two Sahibs disappeared high on the mountain. He was of course talking about Mallory and Irvine in 1924. Had he been even 17 then, Charles Evans' estimate that he was between 45 and 50 at the time of Kangchenjunga would have been correct and he would now be in his early 70s — very old for a Sherpa. But he now went from strength to strength. He moved house because he was convinced that the old one had brought him bad luck and settled down with his third wife to enjoy his late years. Those who met him during this time found again the same old Dawa — full of fun and always ready for a chat about the past and a drink or two.

Tragedy struck in February 1983 when he was on a pilgrimage to India with his wife and a large party of Sherpas from Solo Kumbu. The bus in which they were returning to Kathmandu left the road and plunged into a ravine. Thirty two people were killed and 20 others, including Dawa and his wife, were badly injured and admitted to hospital in Kathmandu. Another of his sons was killed in the accident. Dawa and his wife recovered sufficiently to be flown back to Solo Khumbu but Dawa was never to recover fully. He also lost all his valuables in the accident.

He spent his last years in Thyangboche, sometimes in the Monastery or with his daughter Nisha Llamu who was now married and ran a tea house just opposite. His right arm was paralysed and he seldom got up from his bed. He died peacefully in his sleep on 3 February 1985. He must then have been about 78. His wife had been to visit him a few days before.

And so we mourn the loss of a distinguished Honorary Member who had been a close friend to many of us. Dawa Tenzing will be long remembered as the great Sherpa personality of his era. With the changing times in which we live, there can never be another like him.

H R A Streater

André Contamine 1919–1985

André Contamine, Honorary Member of the ACG since 1970, died of a heart attack in March 1985, shortly after retiring from his work at the École Nationale de Ski et Alpinisme (ENSA), Chamonix-Mt Blanc. A man of remarkable warmth, he was always ready to help and advise climbers from his enormous knowledge of the Mt Blanc area, and will be missed sadly by his many British mountaineering friends.

He came from the mountain village of Feissons-sur-Salins in the Tarentaise. When in Paris, he met up with Pierre Allain and subsequently returned to the mountains with the Chasseurs Alpains, participating in the Liberation of the Tarentaise. As a guide he was an instructor at the École Militaire de Haute Montagne; and joined ENSA when it first started.

His influence on French mountaineering and skiing technical development through ENSA was continuous and profound. He climbed and ski'd with flair and technical perfection; and was able to demonstrate and teach his methods with great clarity and precision. He made a particular contribution in ice-climbing, with brilliant use of crampons on steep ground, exemplified by his direct ascent of the N face of the Triolet (with Louis Lachenal) and with the development of the *Super Conta* ice-axe, regarded by many as the best of its time. But he was also an initiator of the new French skiing methods of the 1950s and 1960s, particularly by *avalement*, seeming to float down through deep snow, like a bird on the wing. He became chief mountaineering instructor at the École, before eventually taking national responsibility there for French ski-teaching and for the training of mountain guides.

I first met him at the Envers des Aiguilles hut in 1952, when Roger Chorley, Geoff Sutton and I were there to do the East Ridge of the Dent du Crocodile. He was very helpful about the line of the route; and it was only much later that I heard that he had himself done this climb, together with the E ridge of the Plan,

and most of the E face of the Caiman, in a single morning, before a storm stopped them!

He did about 1500 routes, including most of the major ascents of the time, with notable speed. Of these, about 40 were first ascents, and there is many a *voie Contamine*, for instance on the S face of the Dru or the W face of the Petites Jorasses, characterized by a directness and elegance of line and, originally, by a lack of pegs, which is still apparently found quite hard even 30 or more years later. He was very much tied to the École; but managed to get away for the successful Mustagh Tower expedition in 1956, with Paragot, Magnone and Keller.

He also made a major contribution to mountain rescue techniques, being responsible for the training of mountain rescue teams. He took part in about 60 rescues himself, sometimes at considerable personal risk. He was an early believer in the potential of the helicopter for rescues, demonstrating this by landing on the summit of Mt Blanc in 1955.

A fine photographer, he won first prize at the Trento Film Festival.

His links with British climbers were particularly close; and he was a regular source of information for the ACG Bulletin. He was a correspondent for Ken Wilson's *Mountain*, and provided reports of outstanding value and completeness about developments in the Mont Blanc group at a time of many major new winter ascents and solo climbs. His article 'Mont Blanc — the massif and its climbs' in *Mountain 43* gives an indication of his immense knowledge of the area.

Sad to say, he and his wife, Raymonde, suffered a deep personal tragedy with the loss of their daughter Arielle, French junior ice-skating champion, in a road accident.

I last ski'd with him at Lognan in January 1985, when he and Raymonde were about to undertake a post-retirement tour to Ceylon. It was a happy renewal of my earlier ski-ing with him, with André still demonstrating that ski-ing fluency, and love and enthusiasm for the mountains, combined with his customary humility and sense of humour, for which I will always remember him.

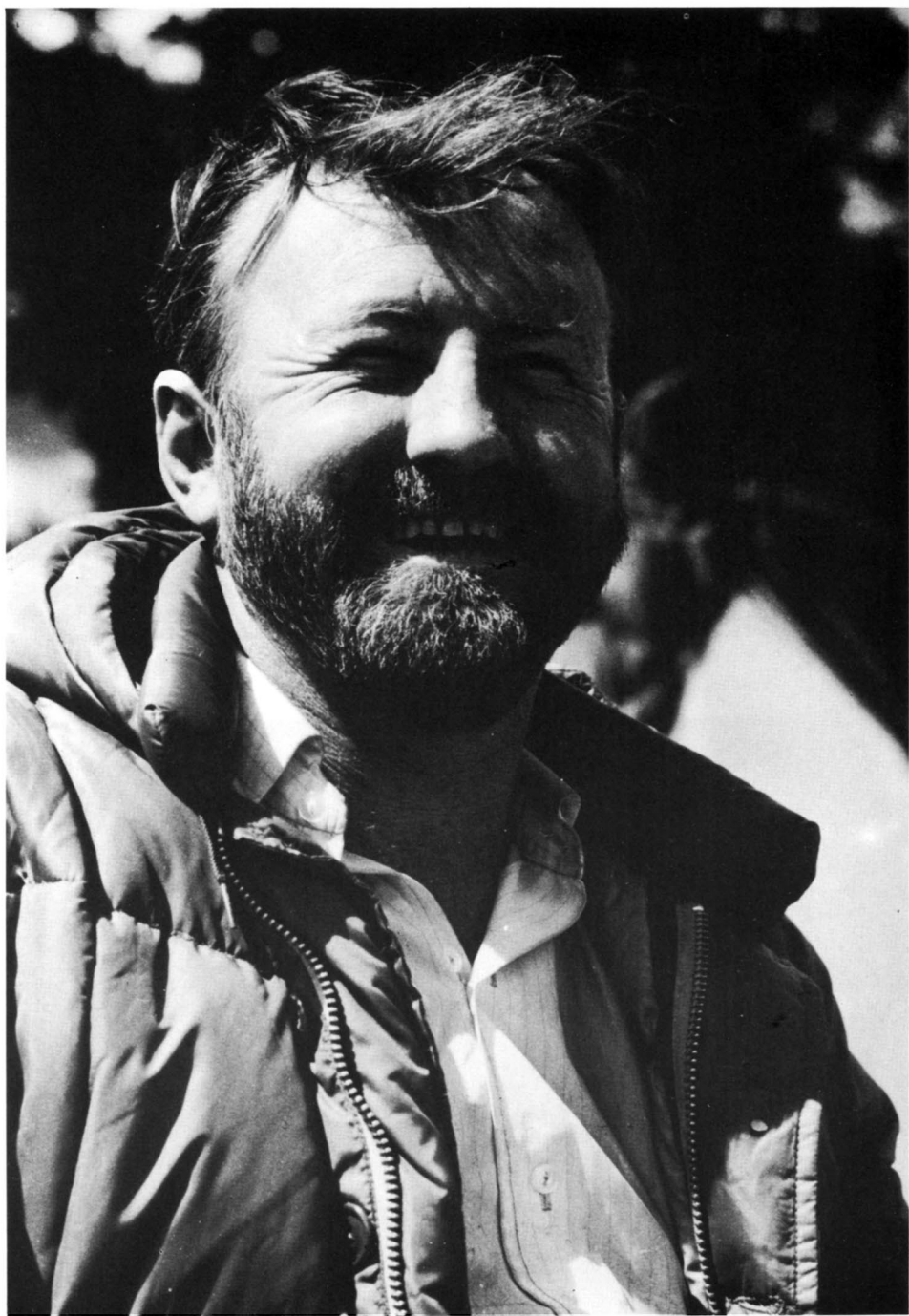
Alan Blackshaw

Donald Desbrow Whillans 1933–1985

Oration read at Don Whillans's funeral 9 August 1985.

Donald Desbrow Whillans was without fear of contradiction the most outstanding all-round mountaineer this country has ever produced. He excelled in every type of terrain; on the cliffs of Britain, in the Alps, in Patagonia with its ferocious storms, in the Andes, but most significantly in the Himalaya. The fact that he survived an unparalleled series of adventures and ascents in the mountains is perhaps the most telling aspect of his career, for only a climber with the soundest of judgement could have been so successful. But Don was more than a mountaineer; he was a legend, an institution beloved by us all.

Don was born in Salford in 1933 and therefore grew up in an era of austerity during and immediately after the last war. He hailed from a typical Northern



city background, with a grimy environment, but a close-knit community which bred self-reliance, determination and a no frills attitude to life. Don when young was an excellent gymnast, and a fine rugby player. On leaving school he had to work hard at physically demanding tasks and eventually became an apprentice plumber. Young climbers today train to develop strength and fitness but in Don's youth it was physical employment which did this. He developed great strength, stamina and fitness beyond the norm.

He started hill walking and this naturally led on to rock climbing and a chance meeting at the Roaches with Joe Brown. This led on to the formation of The Rock & Ice Club in 1951, and the stage was set for one of the most outstanding partnerships in British climbing history. From the beginning Don carved out his own niche, for his first ascents were like his own character: bold, uncompromising and fierce, and were not often repeated in those days of almost unprotected leads. First on gritstone, then on the bigger rock walls in North Wales, the Lake District and Scotland, his brilliant climbs such as Sloth, Slanting Slab, Extol and Centurion presented a challenge that few could follow. Surrounded by an elite of young climbers, the halcyon days of the 1950s led Don to become an alpinist, and before the decade was over he was undoubtedly the country's leading figure in this field. First there were the early climbs with Joe Brown such as the third ascent of the W face of the Dru, and the first ascent of the W face of the Blatière in 1954, followed by many other great climbs which included early repeats in the Dolomites and the Mont Blanc Range, routes such as the Bonatti Pillar and the Cima Su Alto, culminating with an outstanding first ascent in 1961 of the Central Pillar of Freney. On this he shared the honours with Christian Bonington.

In 1957 Don visited the Himalaya for the first time, as a member of the Masherbrum expedition. This was a most significant experience for him, and although he failed narrowly to make the first ascent of this most difficult peak, and his close friend Bob Downes died of oedema, from that moment onwards he was held in the thrall of the highest mountains of the world. He could have continued easily to make rich pickings at home, in our homeland hills, but more and more the hostile environment and the adventures to be found amongst the remotest ranges was where he wished to place his effort.

Don married early and was extremely fortunate in his life-long partner Audrey, who stood by him through the vicissitudes of some of the greatest mountaineering adventures of all time. In Patagonia on the Aiguille Poincenot, on the Towers of Paine, in attempting the Torre Egger, in the Andes on Huanoy, in the jungle of Roraima, but most of all on the many Himalayan expeditions he undertook. On Trivor, on Gauri Sankar, the South Face of Annapurna — that trend setting, most technically difficult face route of its era — followed by the subsequent attempts on the SW face of Everest, and the many later expeditions such as Shivaling and Broad Peak.

Don was an innovator as a climber, but he also brought to other aspects of our sport an enquiring mind. He developed the first modern type of sit-harness, which up until recently was the most widely used piece of equipment of its type in the world. He designed an alpine rucksack, a type of piton hammer (the famous Whammer!), he was forced to consider the inadequacy of tents in the

high winds of Patagonia and came up with the idea on the Paine Expedition of 1962 of a 'Box'. These were later to prove a key factor in the successful Himalayan climbs of the early 1970s. Through all this Don remained unaffected by success or failure, and truly Kipling's poem 'If' could have been written about and for him. For triumph and disaster were equally well met by him; he hated cant, could not stand bull and remained true to his own standards and beliefs throughout his life.

Don kept up his friendships and in touch with his roots. He maintained an amazing network of contacts throughout the world, and in this country he must have had a resting place, a stop-over spot in almost every town and city in the UK. He worked at this, he kept up his communications and the roar of a motor bike engine outside the front door usually signalled the arrival of the Villain.

He had the physique of a pocket Hercules, and the stories of his brushes with bullies and over-zealous authoritarian persons will probably grow each year in their telling. Usually he managed to come out on top, and as in all the best stories the bullies were routed, though occasionally he did come out the worse, and on those occasions was not frightened of telling the story against himself.

Don was scrupulously honest about his climbing, and always saw things in a black and white fashion. He could not understand any reason why it should not be so. You described the climb exactly as you achieved it, with no frills into the bargain. In his earlier days he was possessed of such drive, physical energy and strength that lesser mortals such as myself found him a forbidding companion whilst waiting to climb, but once under way then you knew he would either get you to the top or organise a retreat in good order. And quite the opposite of his behaviour socially at that time, his patience with younger climbers was surprising. He once held my rope for half a day whilst I battled with Slope Direct. Retreat was not to be countenanced, he intended for me to be successful and if need be he would throw me to the top.

Over the years he mellowed. He continued with his interest in motorbikes and he was a safe and competent rider. In the Rock and Ice era he often managed to keep his bike up on its wheels when every other rider dropped their bikes due to bad road conditions. He became interested in matters as diverse as sky diving, sub aqua and breeding tropical fish.

My fondest recent memory of him was of his teaching my small girl to somersault — despite his accumulated girth — across our living-room carpet. The hardest of hard men, he had beneath the surface a soft centre. He retained throughout a common touch, and a quick wit. When young this could be hurtful, but over the years it was refined and it became loving, and it became a legend. He was truly a master of repartee and the one-liner. His lectures of his climbs were always punctuated by laughter, and this made him popular with a younger audience, and he became a cult figure although they had never seen him climbing at his peak.

We shall miss him so much, especially those of us who are no longer in the first flush of youth. For to know that Don was out there, indestructible and engaged in some titanic struggle or keeping his end up in the pub brought comfort. For it was a signal to us that you could just keep on trucking throughout this life.

The ancient Greeks believed that as long as you were being talked or written about, as long as you were in somebody's thoughts somewhere, you had immortality. Don is assured of this, for his memorials are his climbs and deeds. They will be talked about, written about as long as human beings set forth to take up the challenge set by our physical environment. In the telling they may become exaggerated, they may even become distorted. But we will be able to say truthfully to the enquiry 'What was Don Whillans really like?' simply the answer 'Absolutely unique.' I doubt if any of us will ever see his like again.

Dennis Gray

Chris Bonington writes:

He was wearing a cloth cap, was small, lean and obviously very hard. I recognised him immediately, and felt an excitement that was akin to awe. In 1958, Whillans and Brown were undisputed stars; many of their routes were unrepeated and their best climbs were at a standard on their own, considerably harder than anything that anyone else could put up. They had dominated the scene for a period of ten years, but in an age that today seems almost prehistoric, when there was no popular climbing media and climbing tales were passed haphazardly by word of mouth, their achievements and the activities of the Rock and Ice, inevitably, were embellished in the telling.

Hamish MacInnes and I, with the two Austrian climbers Walter Phillip (of Phillip Flamm fame) and Richard Blach, were bivvied on the Rognon below the Drus, about to attempt its SW Pillar. At the time it was the chief Alpine test piece and had only had four ascents, none of them British. Don Whillans and Paul Ross also wanted to try it out. On our first bivouac a crisis occurred when Hamish was hit on the head by a falling stone. We did not want to retreat, having just witnessed thousands of tons of rock, that had broken away from the *Flammes de Pierres*, go crashing down the gully we had climbed that morning. I do not think I could have got Hamish, in his concussed state, up that climb, and it was in this kind of crisis that Don came into his own. He hauled Hamish up the rest of the SW Pillar, looked after him and encouraged him over the next three days as we worked our way up and over the Pillar.

It was on the SW Pillar that I discovered that Don was much more than a superb climber and allround mountaineer. If things were going to get rough, you could not be with a better partner. He was totally dependable, never flapped and maintained a dry sense of humour that somehow helped keep the situation in perspective.

We spent the summers of 1961 and '62 laying siege to the North Wall of the Eiger, spending over a month in '61, living on £20 loaned us by John Streetley, waiting for the face to come into condition. We went onto it three times that summer but the conditions were never right, either too much snow, too much stone-fall or unsettled weather. Each time we returned to our tent and a diet of potatoes and eggs. Sharing a tent with Don was a matter of constant manoeuvre. He did not believe in cooking, washing up or doing any of the day-to-day chores. I was equally lazy and we would go for hours without cooking, each trying to wear the other down. Don usually won, commenting, 'The trouble with you Chris is that you're greedier than I am.' He was right.

He had been brought up in a hard school, and would often say, 'I'll meet anyone half-way.' This could make for a difficult relationship because it meant that his friends had to go slightly more than half-way to make the whole thing work.

In '61, we finally abandoned our Eiger vigil to go over to Chamonix to attempt the Central Pillar of Freney. We climbed it with Ian Clough and Jan Djugloz, hotly pursued by a Franco-Italian team comprising Desmaison, Julien, Poulet Villard and Piussi. It was the finest climb that I suspect any of us had ever climbed before or since. Don led most of the key section of the 'Chandelle', having one of his very few leader falls in trying to get into the overhanging chimney near the top, climbing free about 7m above his last piton runner. All I could see were his legs kicking against the rock 15m above me.

'I'm coming off, Chris.'

There was a long pause — not even a man as hard as Whillans resigns himself to falling. I hunched over my belay, wondering what the impact would be, whether his pegs would stay in. A mass of flailing arms and legs shot down towards me, the rope came tight with a sudden, but not over-violent jerk, and I found myself looking up into Don's face. He was hanging upside down a metre or so out from me, suspended from one of his pegs. He had fallen around 15m.

'I've lost me bloody 'at.'

He spun round a second time and the dreadful realisation came.

'Me fags were in the 'at.'

He was not worried that all our money was stuffed into his hat as well.

We raced back to the Eiger shortly after completing the Central Pillar, this time reaching the Swallow's Nest Bivouac, just beyond the Hinterstoisser Traverse, but the weather was unsettled, the stones whistling down even in the early morning, and we turned back. Our decision-making on the mountain was very easy. We thought along the same lines. It was a partnership, but Don was the senior partner, in age and experience, through the sheer force of his personality and his excellent, intuitive mountain judgement.

We spent the summer of '62 in the Alps with the Eiger once again our main objective. This time we had Don's bike, which we drove all the way up the narrow path to Alpiglen to find that the face was streaming in water. We went off to climb the W face of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, and then once again back to the Eiger. This time we reached the foot of the Second Ice-Field, were about to turn back because of stone fall, when some Swiss guides caught us up to tell us that two of our compatriots were in trouble at the other end of the Ice-Field. One of them, Barry Brewster, fell to his death, but we were able to bring Brian Nally back across the ice-field amongst a bombardment of stone-fall. It was certainly the most frightening thing that I have ever done and it was Don's totally cool, proficient presence that helped make it feasible.

I shall always be a little sad, even guilty, that circumstances dictated that we did not climb the North Wall of the Eiger together. Don had had to return to England earlier than I, the weather was perfect and I went for it with Ian Clough. It undoubtedly created a strain in our relationship; it was almost a repeat of the odd chances that had given his climbing partners better breaks than he had experienced — the way that Joe Brown had been to the top of

Kangchenjunga and the Mustagh Tower, when Don had given his all on Masherbrum and Trivor, but had not made it.

We went to Patagonia in the Autumn of 1962 to attempt the Central Tower of Paine. Throughout the earlier part of the expedition we tacitly avoided each other, climbing with other partners. It developed into a siege against the winds and weather which was compounded by the arrival of an Italian team determined to go for the same objective. It was Don who conceived our secret weapon, the first ever Whillans Box, prefabricated from timber and a tarpaulin found round Base Camp. It showed a practical strategic ingenuity that amounted to genius. It meant that pairs could take turns in sitting out the storms just below the Central Tower itself.

We were back at base camp one night when Don and I happened to go out for a pee at the same time. We stood looking at high cloud scudding across the moonlit sky. We looked at each other.

'You know Don, we've avoided each other up to now — I think we'd best get together.'

'Aye, I've been thinking along the same lines myself.'

A few days later we climbed the Central Tower of Paine a day in front of the Italians.

Except for a short spell on the Eiger Direct in 1966, we did not climb together again until 1969. I was planning the Annapurna South Face Expedition and Don was an obvious, indeed vital, choice but he seemed to have lost interest in British and even Alpine climbing; he had undoubtedly put on weight, not to the magnificent proportions of recent years, but he certainly was not as fit as he had been in the early sixties. We went winter climbing together in Scotland with Tom Patey and after an abortive attempt on Surgeon's Gully, did the first winter ascent of the Great Gully of Ardgour. Don had taken his time on the way up, was content to let Tom and myself lead the first two pitches, but at the foot of the third, an ice encrusted chimney that was uncomfortably wide, he said:

'It's my turn.' And he moved up it without any kind of protection with a complete certainty. I found it desperate to follow. He had lost none of his genius.

On the S face of Annapurna Don's forthright, single-minded approach undoubtedly complemented my own leadership style. His work out in front with Dougal Haston, culminating in their push to the summit, was a magnificent piece of mountaineering in the face of deteriorating weather.

It was a delight to climb with Don again in the *Lakeland Rock* television series shown in April 1985, when we repeated Dovedale Groove, the route he and Joe Brown had pioneered in 1952 (it was ten years before it was repeated). We had had our differences in the past, but we had also had some of the finest climbing together that either of us had ever had. No doubt both of us had mellowed with time and it was good to share a rope once again, to be at the receiving end of that shrewd, sharp, yet essentially kind, humour. Don had grown with the years, in every sense of the word, to be the best loved personality in British climbing. It is a reputation that will stand the test of time. He was both one of Britain's greatest climbers and characters.

Harry Sales writes:

Don Whillans was a splendid man. I use the word advisedly: if in doubt consult the OED, ignoring meaning 1. which is wide of the mark for Don. His splendour lay in his climbing and mountaineering achievements about which I am not competent to write. Fortunately others have done so, both here and in the many other mountaineering journals, at his memorial day and, even in verse, here at the Club.

I, like so many others, knew him better as a mere human. His toughness and potential aggressiveness masked one of the most kindly and loyal personalities. Again I use my words advisedly because not only did he decry the modern tendency to push oneself to the exclusion of others but he put his principles into practice throughout his life, caring for and seeking to sustain the lives of others in the direst of situations. Instances of this are legend.

He had the reputation for not suffering fools gladly: see, for example, Ronnie Wathen's poem if you can get a copy. But foolishness does not equate to not being a hard man: Don was equally at home with ordinary mortals like myself. He used to visit us when we were using that splendid house of Su and John Fowler at Sennen Cove, he happily enjoying all our facilities and we delighting in his company. Whillans stories are countless but now I cannot resist telling my own, which I properly refrained from using when we paid tribute to him at the Club, thus intriguing the President.

Don had been watching an old film on television of the murderer who was pursued everywhere, even into his bath, by the severed hand of his victim. The next morning he, Don, with a drinking friend, sauntered across from the Lands End Hotel to the rocks at the top of the Long Climb up the Hotel Buttress. By sheer coincidence Derek Walker, his daughter Jane and I were on that climb and I led through that last, easy pitch. My hand appeared on the final rock as Don approached and with horror he staggered back with the words, indelibly printed on my memory: 'Eee, there's an 'and 'ere.' Then, with a profound sigh of relief, 'Ooh, it's 'Arry's.'

Other stories are stronger, more sardonic or scathing. That of Chris, about the German climbers, is one of the best. The one about the noise in the Alpine hut is more succinct. What they all have in common is that they show that Don was never at a loss for words and that the words, though few and laconic, were always right for the occasion.

But this was just one part of his personality. He in the round, figuratively and literally, was a delight and a man one can be proud to have known.

John Barry writes:

I last saw Don Whillans at a rock'n'roll competition. He was the judge, taking his duties with great mock-seriousness, up on the stage and rolling his bones with the best of them. And the best of them were mostly 30 years his junior, which did not seem to matter to anyone. That was one of the things that always struck me about the man; how it was he bestrode generations, commanding instant attention, quick respect, no matter what age the audience; or who they were; or from where they came. When Whillans was doing the talking (and he usually was), others, all others, listened.

I saw that often, and wondered at it: Buxton conferences, Kendal film festivals, Alpine Club symposiums, lectures, bars — anywhere where climbers gathered. When he spoke they, great and small, young and old, tyro and tiger — they listened; and, as often as not, they learned. He was awesome — literally — and gave every impression that he enjoyed being it. Not that he exploited it particularly, but he was clearly at home before an audience. Which was just as well since that was where we all wanted him — before us.

I did not know him well (we all knew of him), but he seemed to be all we wanted, all we needed; some-time master of all the mountaineering games we play, a star in every climbing theatre.

In a way that is difficult to put a finger on, he was funny, very funny. I heard him say quite ordinary things that spoken by you or me would have met with stony silence. Uttered by Whillans the same few words had audiences falling about. His wit was acerbic, pithy, northern (or so northerners like to think). We, the audience, laughed or listened as he bid. He had a gift that is given to few. He could stand gravitas and levity side by side, word by word, so that laughter was succeeded by reflection; a happy knack that made him the most oft-quoted man in modern mountaineering.

He was special, perhaps unique, without peer or successor; recognised as king where there is no recognised kingdom; an image that will survive our inonomachy.

He died in his sleep, a good enough way to go and a tribute to his own judgement as a mountaineer. (On one of his retreats from the North Face of the Eiger, he passed two Japanese heading resolutely through the storm towards the mountain. 'Up, always upwards', they said. 'You may be going up mate but a lot 'igher than you think', Whillans warned.)

He was short, lean and mean when he began. At the end he was the short, fat, funny man who we all took seriously, partly because few dared not to, partly because he could squeeze more neat wisdom into the wit of one sentence than most of us manage in a lifetime.

There will be a rather bigger than average gap at tomorrow's festivals, conferences, symposiums and shindigs. Yes, and at the rock'n'roll competitions too.

Phil Bartlett writes:

'Dear Phil,

Many thanks for your letter re AJ article. I think that an article along the lines you suggest would not be out of place; I would write it from a personal viewpoint, that way it wouldn't be "heavy" in the way of attempting to tell anyone else how they should be doing things. Should have plenty of time to do it while I sit about in the Karakoram with Doug Scott this summer.

Cheers the noo,

Don.

PS "Taking Stock" seems a good title.'

I received this letter from Don Whillans some time before he died. The subject I had in mind is well indicated by the title the article was to carry — 'Taking Stock'.

Freedom is an unreasonable business; we go to the mountains to find it, but if a climber has talent and ambition it is forever threatening to slip away. Problems of sponsorship, of the media, of the subsequent pressures to 'get to the top', put decisions on a new level and can make a travesty of 'The Freedom of the Hills'. It is tempting to suppose that with regard to climbing in the greater ranges these problems are today greater than they have ever been before, though that must be arguable. What is not arguable is that Don Whillans was seen by the mountaineering fraternity as the man 'in charge' *par excellence*, one man who still had his freedom and made his own decisions. In this he had no peer, indeed, no equal. His climbing achievement was outstanding but his importance was much more than that. He was felt to represent a psychological achievement which was difficult to define yet clearly recognisable by everybody. Jim Curran referred in a recent obituary to his participation in the recent AC/ACG Himalayan Climbing Symposium and the effect his words had on all present. He was accepted as the man with the wise answers.

And when a journal editor wanted to commission an article with the title 'Taking Stock', not just of the writer's own career but of the whole state of mountaineering, there was absolutely no question of whom he would want to write it.

'Life is meeting' as John Hunt says, and so is mountaineering in large part. This issue of the AJ contains a number of appreciations by people who knew Whillans. But amongst the rest of us there is still an enormous feeling of regret. In terms of his insight and good sense Whillans was regarded as public property; and amongst all post-war mountaineers it is perhaps Whillans whom one most regrets not having met.

Edward John Whiteley, 1929–1984

John Whiteley started climbing as an undergraduate at Cambridge in 1952 with a group at King's which held regular meets in North Wales and the Lakes, and he first climbed in the Alps with members of this group in 1952. He became a member of the Club in 1962 after further seasons in the Alps in 1959, 1960 and 1961. In 1955 he was ordained in the Church of England. He first worked in an industrial parish on Teesside, and then for seven years was Chaplain of Marlborough College. After a further period of ministry on Teesside, he became Chaplain of Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury. It was here that he was working when he died unexpectedly in January 1984 from a tumour on the brain.

In the early years Richard Morgan and myself were among his most regular climbing companions. He was a competent rather than an adventurous climber who appreciated the whole experience that mountains could offer. He was a delightful and stimulating companion, an excellent organizer, and completely unselfish and generous in all he did. As chaplain and teacher he introduced many boys at Marlborough and Salisbury to the hills in this country, and there were also school expeditions to the Alps on more than one occasion. As one who lived his life to the full and gave so much to all with whom he came into contact, he will be greatly missed.

David Pasteur

Gaston Rébuffat 1921–1985

Gaston Rébuffat, who died in Paris on 31st May after a long illness at the age of 64, was one of the outstanding French mountaineers who came to prominence at the end of the war. Following his first major Alpine climb, the N face of the Grandes Jorasses by the Walker Spur in 1941, he proceeded to acquire an international reputation by climbing many routes which were, in their day, in the first order of difficulty; his fame was enhanced through his books, lectures and films.

Gaston was born in Marseilles in 1921 and spent his boyhood in Provence. Throughout his life he retained the distinctive drawl of a Marseillais. Although his subsequent profession as a guide and his lecture tours took him far afield, he never lost his love for the Midi and, in later years, he spent a part of every winter with his family at their apartment in Cannes.

It was in Provence, on the limestone pinnacles of the Calanques, towering above the Mediterranean, that Gaston made his début as a climber. His description of his feelings on that occasion will find an echo in the memories of many mountaineers:

‘Nous allons en silence. Au fond de moi-même je sens une joie, mais aussi un pincement de coeur. A ce jour-là, je n’avais jamais été encordé.’

His first Alpine climb, the traverse of the Barre des Écrins at the age of 17 was for him, as it was for myself at the same age, a revelation; there and then he resolved to make climbing his life and livelihood. At the early age of 21 he obtained his professional Guide’s certificate and became, successively, an instructor at the École d’Alpinisme (later to be enlarged as the École de Ski et d’Alpinisme) and at the École Militaire de Haute Montagne.

Then came fame through his part, with two other Chamonix guides: Louis Lachenal and Lionel Terray, as a member of Maurice Herzog’s triumphant expedition to Annapurna in 1950, which achieved the first ascent of an 8000m peak. Gaston’s performance in escorting down the mountain the summit pair in a storm, both of them badly frostbitten and suffering from exposure after spending a night in a crevasse, was nothing short of heroic.

It was at that time, while serving with the Allied forces at Fontainebleau, that I first met Gaston at Chamonix. In the following few years we often climbed together, setting off from his chalet ‘La Dy’ above the town. Some of our climbs: on the Peuterey Ridge, the Ryan-Lochmatter ridge on the Plan and an abortive ascent of Mont Blanc on skis, were dogged or frustrated by bad weather. But to Gaston it never seemed to matter. For him, being with a companion on a mountain was enough. What mattered was, in his own words:

‘L’amitié de deux êtres pour le meilleur et pour le pire.’

He was just as happy about the minor climbs which he, with my wife and myself, also did together, on the granite needles of the Clochers-Clochetons on the Brévent, and even on the sandstone boulders in the Forest of Fontainebleau. The summit was of far less importance than friendship on the steep places of the earth. For myself there was also the delight, as well as the lessons to be learnt, from watching Gaston’s lithe agility, as he moved with relaxed elegance up vertical rock, or traversed a tilted ice face on his crampon points.

He was an obvious contact for supplying equipment from French firms for



the 1953 Everest expedition. I recall that our 'Duvet' clothing, ice axes and crampons, *inter alia*, were obtained through his good offices.

Gaston was a gifted writer in the romantic tradition. Every mountain experience was for him: 'comme la première fois'; his books reflect this approach to his subject. It set quite a problem for myself and Wilfrid Noyce, who translated his first book *Étoiles et Tempêtes*, in which he recorded his experiences on six great north face climbs in the Alps, published in 1955. His other works included *Du mont Blanc à L'Himalaya* in the same year, and two instructional books: *Neige et Roc* and *Glace, Neige et Roc*, published in 1959 and 1970.

With Maurice Baquet and others as climbing companions and Georges Tairraz as photographer, he made a number of successful films, one of which *Étoiles et Tempêtes* was awarded the Grand Prix at the International Festival at Trento in 1958.

I counted myself privileged to have been invited by him to take part in another film, in which he recalled climbs with some of his many clients and companions over the years of his service as a member of the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix; he wanted me to re-enact, with him, my own climbs on the Barre des Écrins which had been the source of his own inspiration for a lifetime. Prudence, and the excuse of other engagements dictated otherwise, but I retain a lingering regret that I did not avail of this last chance to climb with one of the leading mountaineers of my times; and, more important, with a valued friend who placed the meeting of men in relation to mountains, way beyond the creation of records and the pursuit of prowess.

John Hunt

Roger Baxter Jones 1950–1985

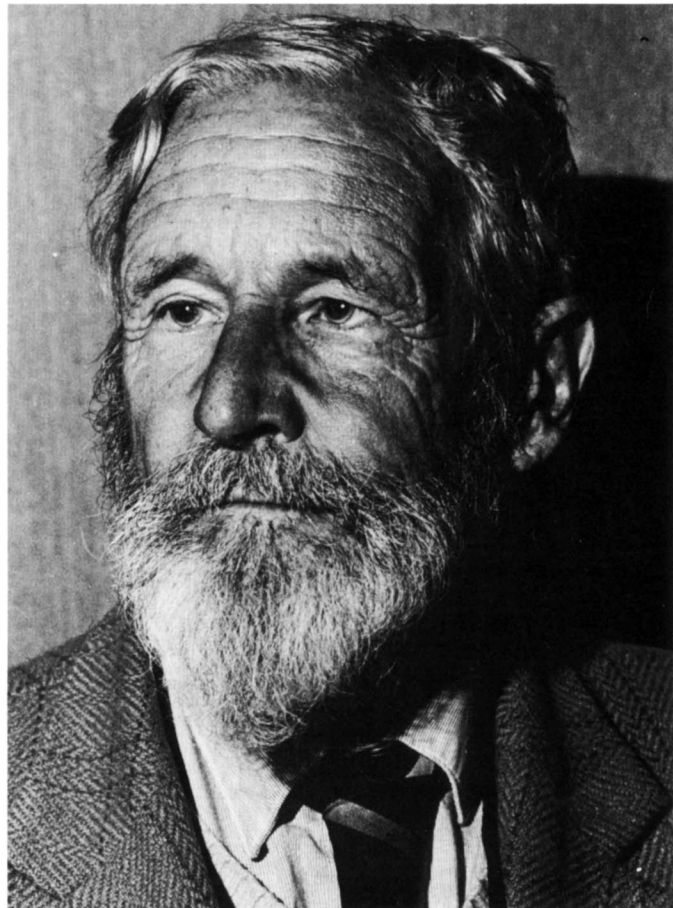
Born in London, Roger came north to Leeds in 1958 to study English at the University. It did not catch his enthusiasm, and he shifted into rock-climbing with the talented Leeds group of the day, living it up, working at Centresport and teaching dry skiing. A solid rockclimber, he knew from the extreme talent of some of his friends that he was unlikely to be tops. So he chose different ground.

After doing the major alpine routes in summer early in the 1970s, he soon turned to winter, trying the Super couloir on Mont Blanc de Tacul with Paul Braithwaite in 1972. His skiing was ever more developed, with a drive, enthusiasm and calculated risk well beyond the norm even among mountaineers. He had a practical side to his nature, securing his accommodation for three years of rather enforced mature studenthood in Sheffield by more or less completely refurbishing the old house in which he lived for its owner. He got his degree but the frustrations of study probably required such a release for volcanic energies. When he could not reach the Alps he made intense forays onto British mountains, especially in winter, where he was a formidable exponent of 'mixed' climbing. Perhaps most notable was his ascent of Red Slab on Cloggy with Paul Braithwaite in the winter of 1979, but whatever he did, he enjoyed.



92 Roger Baxter-Jones.

Photo: Doug Scott



93 E. H. 'Charles' Marriot.

John Beattie

He could hardly wait to escape from the claustrophobia of English existence, a trait which he perhaps shared with his sister, who worked for the EEC. He made the second ascent of the Whymper Spur Direct on the Grandes Jorasses with Nick Colton in the mid-seventies and in 1977 ski'd down the Vallée Blanche and across from the Dent du Requin to below the N face of the Aiguille des Grands Charmoz, made the first winter solo ascent of it, returned to Chamonix and ski'd down, again, for his skis. RBJ's hard work and talents were beginning to pay off in a field that suited his massive energies, stamina and calculated optimism.

An obvious candidate for the Himalaya, he joined Rab Carrington, Al Rouse and Brian Hall in their bold alpine style ascent of Jannu in 1978. In 1980, after trying the SE Ridge of Makalu with Doug Scott and Georges Bettembourg, almost succeeded in a solo ascent. In 1982 he played a notable part in the new route on Shisha Pangma with Scott and Alex McIntyre, again climbing in alpine style. In the following year came Broad Peak, with Jean Afanassieff as partner, climbing in two pairs with Andy Parkin and Al Rouse. He then made two attempts on K2. The first was foiled when Jean became unwell at high altitude. It was a mark of RBJ's determination that he then recruited a Spanish companion and again climbed alpine style beyond 8000m to be foiled by bad weather on the uppermost part of the route. It would have been the first alpine style ascent.

Meanwhile Roger picked off an impressive number of first winter ascents in the Mont Blanc Range and worked as an off-piste ski guide there. He picked up on inner game theories of sports performance and tried their application to skiing. One of Britain's leading mountaineers, a member of the ACG Committee for years, and certainly one of the strongest ever, he was a top off-piste skier, and a mountaineer of impeccable judgement, able to guide on routes of the highest standards with a considerable margin. He avoided the trap of expedition mania, which can prevent mountaineers from keeping up their 'bread and butter' climbing and enjoyment. In recent years he was a pillar of the Chamonix Française. The place's cosmopolitanism and endless changes delighted him and fitted his temperament. He was a major performer in its raucous modern circus. At the same time his sympathies were ever more French, in language, tastes, and attitudes. In Autumn 1983 he married Christine Devassoux and they moved into a house in Rue des Sauberands, with her daughter Melanie. He took French nationality and became a member of the Guides Bureau. He became a part of Chamonix and could stand back from the crowds. It was somehow natural that, when a friend was badly injured in Switzerland in 1984, it was Roger and Christine who were at the centre of organizing help and relaying messages in Chamonix, coordinating the concern of French and British friends, and at the same time fed, accommodated and entertained them.

Of late he had avoided the Himalaya, though for how long one always wondered. He died with a friend client on 8 July 1985, when a serac fell on the N face of the Triolet, in a classic *Mort du Guide*.

Paul Nunn

Mrs Cicely M Williams d.1985

Cicely Williams joined the Ladies' Alpine Club in 1942 and she entered fully and enthusiastically into Club events. For nearly 30 years she gave invaluable help to the Hon Secretaries of the Club by duplicating and sending out the Club notices to members. She contributed many articles to the Club Journal, and she was the last Hon Editor and so produced the 1975 Journal with its memories and highlights of the Club's activities.

From her girlhood, Cicely had had a great interest in Switzerland and in the Matterhorn in particular, and from 1927 until her death in 1985, except for the war years, she had spent several weeks there every year, generally in Zermatt. Her climbing was done mostly in the Zermatt area and included the Riffelhorn, Rimpfischhorn and Zinal Rothorn, but it was not until 1953 that she achieved her great desire and climbed the Matterhorn.

From 1946 to 1978, her husband, Ronald, was the Chaplain of the English Church in Zermatt and this led to a close contact with many of the Zermatt people. Cicely's guide was Bernard Biner and the Biner family became her personal friends.

In 1953 she was asked to give a talk on the Swiss Radio and this she did under the title of *April in Zermatt*, having spent some weeks skiing there.

Although her climbing was confined to the Alps, Cicely had travelled widely, accompanying her husband on his many official missions abroad, after he became Bishop of Leicester in 1953. She had walked and scrambled in the lower hills of many countries including Israel, Turkey, Corsica, Germany and South California. On these journeys she made contact with many foreign members of the LAC.

Cicely was also a writer. She had contributed articles to *The Times*, the *Swiss Observer*, *Queen* and *The Lady*, mostly on some aspect of Swiss life, and she wrote five books. These included *Dear Abroad* describing her travels, *Women on the Rope* and a short history of the English Church in Zermatt.

Running through her writing is her love of Zermatt and her very lively interest in everything she sees and everyone she meets. She was, in fact, full of life and enthusiasm and humour.

Mary Starkey

Michael John Harber 1948–1985

Mike was one of the principal figures of the South Wales climbing scene, where he had been active for nearly 20 years. He visited the Alps frequently and had climbed many classic routes up to *TD* standard in a variety of areas. Mike was also an active rock climber and since the late seventies he opened up scores of new climbs on the N coast of Pembrokeshire.

One of Mike's main qualities was determination, which earned him success in his job as a medical researcher and in his other interests such as playing guitar. This determination would often manifest itself on a difficult climb, as once he got his teeth into something it was not in his nature to give up, and thus he acquired a certain reputation for being benighted!

In recent years Mike's climbing ambitions were focused on the greater ranges. Perhaps his best ascent was in 1982 when he and Tim Oliver made the

first alpine-style ascent of the SW ridge of Huascaran (see AA725). His disappearance this summer whilst attempting Snow Lake Peak (6593m) in the Karakoram came as a shock to the small climbing fraternity in Cardiff, among whom he was a very prominent, enthusiastic and well-liked figure.

Pat Littlejohn

Michael George Geddes 1951–1985

I met Mike at University in 1970. We had both arrived in Cambridge from places well to the north and we both spent most of our university careers trying to hitch back to our particular brands of civilisation. He was an extraordinary enthusiast for the Scottish hills in all their forms and by the age of 17 had ascended all the Munroes and tops over 3,000ft. This experience he readily translated into ascents of the hardest snow and ice routes. He had a profound influence on my climbing, introducing me to the perverse and secret delights of the Scottish Winter Experience. His good judgement and impeccable route finding left a lasting impression on all who climbed with him.

In long weekends we hitched from Cambridge to Fort William, making second ascents, like the much feared Orion Direct. We saw through the myths a bit faster than many around us. Mike knew all of the background and carefully made plans of action while I provided added enthusiasm and a youthful long neck. We usually led through but he was the senior partner. He climbed with many other people as well, of course, completing routes like the first ascent of the modern form of Hadrian's Wall (also sometimes known at the time as Point Two Five).

He went on to climb in the Alps, completing several first British ascents, like the Zapelli-Bertone on Mont Maudit or the first winter ascent of the Rébuffat route on the Pointe du Domino. We nearly made a winter ascent of the Croz Spur in the mid seventies but were foiled by bad weather. He became a member of the ACG and went on to climb in Patagonia and Peru.

Living away from Scotland seemed to unsettle him and he returned to live in Fort William and get married to Helen, while working at the pulp mill. Here he climbed extensively with Con Higgins adding a fine series of first ascents like Galactic Hitchhiker on Ben Nevis. I occasionally joined forces for some memorable ascents, like the first ascent of Route 2 on Carn Dearg buttress. He was happy here engrossed in the culture and traditions of the Scottish hills. Perhaps my most memorable single moment was when after an 11am start on Route 2, for traditional reasons, we were caught by darkness at the end of the big traverse. A wind got up and spindrift was pouring down the uncomfortably steep looking pitch above. It was my lead but Mike asked if he could do the pitch. I agreed with a sense of relief. He smiled and said 'Let's just have a wee brew before starting.' Where-upon he delved into the depths of his well worn Tiso rucksack and produced an unexpected flask of coffee. He sipped the brew eyeing the snow covered rock above with quiet pleasure.

He died of cancer at age 34. Had he lived he would have undoubtedly carried on to become the leading authority on Scottish winter climbing.

Alan Rouse

Edward Hamilton Marriott 1906–1985

Edward Marriott, always known as Charles to his climbing friends, died in October aged 79. He had been a member of the Club since 1931, but was also a member of a number of other clubs, the Climbers' and Himalayan, but particularly the Lands End Climbing Club of which he was the first Chairman. His last known rock climb with the Lands End club was on Carn Les Boel in 1983, but his travels had taken him all over the world, most recently part way round Annapurna in 1985. Perhaps his most noteworthy exploits were the trips he made with Bill Tilman in 1955–56, 1961, 1964 and 1968. During the 1955–56 trip in 'Mischief', he crossed the Patagonian ice cap with Tilman.

Edward Charles Pyatt 1916–1985

I first met Ted Pyatt when I went to work at the National Physical Laboratory in Teddington in 1960. He was already a relatively old hand, having joined the Civil Service in 1947 after an 11 year period with the Telephone Manufacturing Company as an electronic engineer. We worked together in a newly formed Division of NPL, and I as a complete amateur so far as electronics are concerned profited considerably from his great experience in the development of a unique piece of apparatus which was to be the basis of my research work for some ten years. Later Ted moved on to assist another group, but it had not escaped his notice that I had an interest in climbing. I soon found myself gently persuaded to become the provider of area notes for North America for the Journal, on the basis of my slender experience of those regions. As a result of Ted's persuasiveness and good organizing ability, a variety of expertise and facilities available at NPL were on occasion discreetly diverted to the needs of the Journal!

Ted's love of mountains stemmed originally from a family holiday in North Wales in 1930, and was further inspired by a copy of the Abrahams' book *Rock Climbing in North Wales* found in the Islington public libraries. His rock climbing began on the Tunbridge Wells outcrops in 1936 and was followed by seasons in Skye in 1938 and '39, including a one day traverse of the Coolin Ridge. His Alpine experience was modest, consisting of two seasons in the Berner Oberland in 1946 and '47, but no doubt like many others his climbing activities were constrained by the war. He was involved in the 1960s in extensive explorations of West Country climbing, mainly on cliffs, in collaboration with K M Lawder.

He was elected to the Club in 1956, and his application shows an impressive list of sponsors, ie proposed by Bill Murray, seconded by Wilfrid Noyce and supported by Winthrop Young and Fred Pigott among others. However, prior to that he had already shown himself to be a keen club man. In 1938 he helped to found the Polaris Mountaineering Club in conjunction with Bernard Simons. He became a member of the JMCS London Section in 1940 and was its secretary during the War years and later its President. He was assistant secretary of the BMC in 1945–47 and was elected to the Climbers' Club in 1945.

A few years after joining the Club he started to make significant contributions to its affairs, becoming Honorary Librarian in 1963, a post he relin-

quished on taking over the editorship of the Journal from Alan Blackshaw in 1971. In recent times, editors of the Journal have tended to come and go with some rapidity, reflecting the heavy demands the job makes on one's time. Ted was thus unusual in undertaking the task for a period of 12 years, handing it on to John Fairley in 1982. He thereby became the second longest serving editor of the *AJ*, overtaken only by Yeld, whose 31 year period as editor is surely unlikely to be remotely approached in future. Ted always had everything well under control, with a carefully organized network of delegated responsibilities for different parts of the Journal, and in the years that I was involved as part of the system, we were usually in the happy position of having extra copy 'in the box' ready for the following year. It is some measure of his forethought in these matters that I am writing these valedictory lines with the considerable aid of a brief but detailed *curriculum vitae* which Ted had thoughtfully prepared for this purpose, apparently in 1984.

Ted's involvement with writing was of course much wider than his work for the Journal. His first guide was published in 1947, *Sandstone Climbs in South-East England*. This was soon followed by *Climbers' Guide to Cornwall* (1950) with A W Andrews, and *British Crags and Climbers* (1952) with Noyce. Then came other detailed guides and also *Mountaineering in Britain* with R W Clark (1957), and *Where to Climb in the British Isles* (1960). The latter was my personal introduction to Ted's work, being received as a gift soon after I went to NPL, and led to my first realization that my new colleague was an author of considerable experience. He also wrote extensively about walking, producing a series of books for David and Charles Ltd and an HMSO guide to the Cornish Coast Path. His final works on mountains were the *Guinness Book of Mountains and Mountaineering Facts and Feats* (1980) and *The Passage of the Alps* in 1984.

Towards the end of his time at NPL, he wrote a fascinating history of Bushy House, and also an extended history of NPL itself (*The National Physical Laboratory — A History*, 1982). Ted was also responsible for setting up a museum at NPL before he retired, which involved the bringing together, restoration and display of various historic pieces of apparatus used in high precision measurements of fundamental constants at NPL over the years.

After passing on the editorship of the Journal, Ted felt free to move out of London, and he and his wife Marguerite moved to Hungerford about three years ago, partly to be near good walking country on the Downs. Sadly, Ted was the entirely unexpected victim of a routine operation which went tragically wrong; this caused him many weeks of suffering before his strong constitution finally gave up the struggle against acute septicaemia. His death is a great loss to the Club which owes him much, and an incalculable one to his family and friends. Our sympathy goes to Marguerite and to his son and daughter, Christopher and Gillian.

Tom Connor

Christopher Russell writes:

I should like to add a short tribute to Ted Pyatt with whom I worked for many years, at first in the Alpine Club Library and later, with my brother Jeffrey, as a contributor to the *Alpine Journal*.

We soon came to know Ted quite well and were both impressed by his boundless, almost relentless energy. As Editor he was always approachable, helpful, and generous in his acknowledgements. We never ceased to wonder at the amount of detailed work he completed each year, assisted by his wife and family.

It is nice to think that a lasting reminder of Ted Pyatt will be his 12 volumes of the *Alpine Journal*, which will surely retain an important place in the Library he knew so well.

Geoff Templeman writes:

Like Tom Connor, I was another who was gently persuaded to assist in the production of the Journal, and soon found myself doing book reviews and then organizing obituaries. As the person who introduced me to the Club, I have a lot to thank Ted for and got to know him well. He gave great service to a number of clubs including, of course, this one, but was not essentially a 'clubbable' man — the idea of struggling into a dinner jacket to attend an annual dinner not being his idea of pleasure! His knowledge of mountains and mountaineering was immense. Whilst he researched the material for his many books carefully, much of it was in his head, and you only had to mention a particular climb for him to say, 'Oh yes, that was first climbed by . . .', particularly if it was one of the more obscure crags of Britain, or Europe.

In later years Ted took to walking the long distance paths of Britain, and I shall remember his anecdotes about his trips — like the night he spent in a phone box near Llanthony when caught in foul weather on the Black Mountains — usually related in his deep voice with chuckling laughter on the train home from the Club.

One thing Ted and I disagreed on was the length of obituary notices. He thought they should be very short, so I will stop here.