

E-LETTER

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25th E-Letter

First Complete Ascent of Mazeno Ridge of Nanga Parbat

In what will undoubtedly be one of the mountaineering highlights of 2012, Sandy Allan and Rick Allen reached the summit of Nanga Parbat at around 6.00 p.m. on 15 July 2012, having made the much-coveted first complete ascent of the Mazeno ridge.

The complete west-southwest or Mazeno ridge is a monstrous undertaking: over eight summits to the junction with the 1976 Schell route, then via the upper section of this to Nanga Parbat's summit. The Mazeno is the longest arête on any 8000 m peak; a staggering 13 km from the Mazeno pass at 5377 m to where it joins the south-southwest ridge or Schell route, then another two kilometres up (via slopes on the Diamir flank) to the summit. It is a totally committing venture, as escape on either flank seems impossible until reaching the Mazeno col, where the Schell route comes up from the Rupal flank.



Mazeno Ridge (Sandy Allan).

The concept of traversing this immense crest was probably first conceived by Frenchman Louis Audoubert, famous for his long, multi-day, Alpine ridge traverses in the 1970s. Audoubert and partners reached the first summit on the ridge in 1979 (First Mazeno Peak, 6800 m) but an Alpine-style continuation along the crest looked too daunting.

It subsequently became Doug Scott's passion and with various partners he made three

expeditions to the ridge. On the last, in 1995, the strong partnership of Sandy Allan, Rick Allen, Voytek Kurtyka and Andrew Lock, on their fifth attempt (Scott had to retire due to illness), reached the third Mazeno top at around 7000 m, a little over half-way along the crest.

This proved to be the furthest point reached until 2004 when, fresh and well acclimatised from climbing in the Charakusa valley, Doug Chabot and Steve Swenson found excellent conditions and made an alpine-style traverse of all eight summits - Mazeno Peak, the sixth and highest, is 7120 m - to reach the Mazeno col (ca 6940 m). The crux had been the last section of ridge from final peak to col, the pair having to cross many pinnacles, generally descending by rappel. At this stage ominous clouds began to cover the sky and Swenson was unwell with a chest infection, so the two decided to descend the Schell route, which had probably not been climbed for 25 years.

This summer, after establishing base camp in mid June on the Rupal side of the mountain at 4900 m and going through the usual acclimatisation process, Sandy Allan and Rick Allen, with South African Cathy O'Dowd and Sherpas Lhakpa Nuru, Lhakpa Rangdu and Lhakpa Zarok set off up the ridge on July 2.

The team describes their final ascent as follows:

12 July 2012: We were ready to leave our bivi at around 1.00 a.m. Leaving our tents, sleeping bags, stoves etc at the bivi site the team chose to take a steep, technical line trying to follow the min summit ridge to the summit. We headed steeply upward, initially on snow but with some mixed climbing, once onto the rock ridge we traversed steeply up with amazing exposure over the Rupal face. In the daylight we could see that if we tried to follow along the ridge crest it would be difficult, exposed and hard climbing. We could see a couloir down and ahead and all members descended this with some difficult exposed down climbing. Lhakpa Nuru and Cathy retreated back to bivi 7160 m, arriving there by around 09.30 a.m. The remaining four climbed on, finding some difficult very exposed climbing on a steep rock wall with loose rock, we then came to a high glacier and traversed this reaching our high point. It was around 11.00 a.m. and the rock wall above was very steep and technical and still did not lead directly to the summit so we decided to abandon our attempt and return to camp 7160 m.

13 July 2012: The three Sherpas, Lhakpa Rangdu, Lhakpa Zarok and Lhakpa Nuru with Cathy O'Dowd began their descent around 10.00 a.m. There was very little food left.

14 July 2012: Sandy Allan and Rick Allen woke up early at 7160 m and set off to the col above the bivi site. It had snowed and had been windy so all the tracks from their descent of July 12 were covered. It became obvious that the summit was a long way away so on joining the line of Kinshofer route; they continued to climb and at 7720 m at 5.00 p.m. dug a snow cave to spend the night.

15 July 2012: From the snow cave at 7720 m breakfasting on the remaining one biscuit each Sandy Allan and Rick Allen continued in deep snow to the summit of Nanga Parbat. The going was very difficult. Arriving near the summit area at around 2.00 p.m. in poor visibility, they could not find the true summit. (Note: they had both summited in 2009 and knew the area). They wandered about descending and ascending several tops but could not find the actual true summit. The clouds cleared and eventually after a lot of ascent and backtracking they located the actual summit and reached there at 6.12 p.m.

(Sandy Allan)

(Courtesy: The Alpine Club, London and www.teamascent.com)

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Ladakh Marathon

Two years after devastating flash floods tore through the region leaving a trail of death and destruction, Ladakh was back and running when it hosted the Ladakh Marathon which included the Khardung La Challenge, the world's highest endurance run.

Remarkably while houses had been destroyed; valuable farming land washed away and lives lost, the spirit of the Ladakhi people remained strong.



Race day was on 9 September 2012 and about 1,500 runners took part in the inaugural event that saw four events including a full marathon around the capital of Leh at an altitude of 3524 m (11,562 feet). There was also the ultra marathon, the extreme Khardung La Challenge, where runners crossed one of the world's highest passes 5602 m (18,380 feet).

The Ladakh Marathon took place during the Ladakh Festival, a two-week long celebration of sport, culture and tradition in the predominantly Buddhist high mountain desert region that was a central stop on the historic Silk Route between Central Asia and India.

Local Ladakhis accompanied by runners from across India and foreign tourists ran their hearts out to make the event a huge success and plans are already underway to ensure next year's event is bigger and better.

The Ladakh Marathon is an opportunity for runners to run in a race like no other. For their families, it affords a chance to explore and discover a unique and ancient culture that has seen the peaceful co-existence of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, during the acclimatisation period of the runners.

The eco-friendly 'green' marathon will hopefully grow to become a fixture on the world marathon circuit and encourage the young people of Ladakh to take up running and increase awareness for the need to protect a stunningly beautiful but environmentally fragile region.



The event was organised by Leh-based Rimo Expeditions, in cooperation with the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Jammu & Kashmir Tourism.

Results of the Ladakh Marathon		
10 Kms	21 Kms	42 Kms
Men	Men	Men
Padma Thinles (0:36:24)	Stanzin Norboo (1:28:50)	Tsering Gyatso (3:36:18)
Rigzin Norboo (0.36:28)	Urgain Chonjor (1:30:46)	Tsewang Thinlas (3:40:35)
Thinlay Dorjay (0.36:38)	Jigmet Norboo (1:33:01)	Rigzin Angchuk (3:41:02)
Women	Women	Women
Tsering Angmo (0.46:42)	Jigmet Dolma (2:14:17)	Jigmet Skitzom (4:51:30)
Tsering Dolkar (0.46:47)	Stanzin Yangchan (2:15:24)	Padma Lhamo (4:57:32)
—	Tsering Chorol (2:16:46)	Tsetan Dolkar and Zainab Khatoon (5:05:01)
Khardung La Challenge : Padam Limbu (8:52:20), Konchok Namgail (8:53:57)		

Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award

The 2011 Tenzing Norgay National Awards for Adventure were conferred upon two active members of the Himalayan Club, Mandip Singh Soin and Col Anand Swaroop on 29 August 2012, by His Excellency, The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee.

Mandip Singh Soin FRGS, a.k.a. Mandy to his friends, received the ‘Tenzing Norgay Lifetime Achievement National Award’ which consists of a bronze sculpture, a scroll with a citation and a cash award of Rs 5, 00,000. The citation reads, ‘In recognition of his unmatched spirit of adventure and pioneering contribution to the field of adventure on land, water and air through expeditions spanning six continents.’



Since the age of 15, Mandip has been involved in adventures and explorations. He has 40 years of adventures in India and over 35 countries across six continents. These include treks and climbs in the Himalaya including the 400 km Lahaul ~ Zaskar trek and the first ascent of Z 1 (6400 m) in Jammu & Kashmir, Kun (7077 m) and the first Indian ascent of Meru (6180 m) in the Garhwal Himalaya.

He has made first ascents in the French, Swiss and Italian Alps and the Dolomites, was an instructor in Scotland and Wales and also trained in Mountain Rescue. He undertook an overland cycling expedition of 1500 kms from Delhi to Kathmandu; made the first crossing of the 450 kms Thar Desert on camel back; rode elephants for 101 km in the Kerala jungles and rafted down rivers like the Rogue in USA, Zaskar, Ganges and Beas in India, Padas in Borneo, Findhorn in Scotland and the Vilcanota in Peru. He has participated in an UNEP supported environmental expedition to the Arctic in 1989.

He has also led expeditions to Bhutan, Tibet, Borneo, Mongolia, Madagascar, and is presently working on a project to convert the bandits of the Chambal in Madhya Pradesh into Naturalists and propose the area as a World Heritage site.

Mandip has been nominated India's Most Versatile Adventure Person by the Limca Book of Records and is the only Indian to receive the Ness Award from the Royal Geographical Society, UK, for expeditions, explorations and encouraging youth.

During the same function, in recognition of his notable contribution towards mountaineering, **Col. Anand Swaroop SM**, was presented with Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2011 for Land Adventure. His citation reads, ' ...He is an outstanding mountaineer, who has displayed exemplary and fearless leadership, devotion to duty and conspicuous courage in the pursuit of adventure and also rendered distinguished service of the most exceptional nature.'



Col. Anand has participated in and led more than 17 mountaineering and skiing expeditions. Some of his notable exploits are Scientific and Ecological expedition to Nanda Devi, Annapurna, Cho Oyu, Mana, Panch Chuli, Satopanth to name a few. He has the distinction of scaling Everest twice and has led expeditions to the North and South Pole.

He is recipient of Sena Medal twice in the years 2001 and 2011. His name found mention in Limca Book of Records for opening a new route through Humbolt Mountain ranges in Antarctica. He is also keenly interested as well as proficient in other adventure sports such as white water rafting, scuba diving, sailing, Microlight flying and sky diving.

We congratulate both Mandip Soin and Col. Anand Swaroop for bringing these honours to the Himalayan Club.

Kekoo Naoroji Book Award for Himalayan Literature

On 26 October 2012, 5th Kekoo Naoroji Book Award (2010-11) for Himalayan Literature will be presented in Mumbai to Graham Bowley for his book *No Way Down – Life and Death on K2*.

On 1 Aug 2008, 30 climbers from 10 different national expeditions began the climb to the peak of K2, the second tallest mountain in the world. 18 climbers reached the summit. But 36 hours later, 11 were dead. Graham Bowley wrote about the 2008 climbing disaster for *The New York Times*. Over the next year, he travelled the world, interviewing the survivors and the families of those who had died. He gradually constructed the bestselling book *No Way Down*, about why people climb, and what happened during those three fateful days on K2 in August 2008.

Graham Bowley is a staff correspondent for the *New York Times*. He is currently based in Afghanistan. He was born in Britain, and is a graduate of the University of Oxford and Bristol University. He began his career as an economist at Her Majesty's Treasury, and worked for the *Financial Times* and *International Herald Tribune* in London, Frankfurt and Brussels before moving to United States, where he lives with his wife and children.



Bernadette McDonald has won the 6th Kekoo Naoroji Book Award (2011-12) for Himalayan Literature for her book *Freedom Climbers* and has created a record by becoming the recipient of the Kekoo Naoroji Book Award for the third time.

In her Book *Freedom Climbers*, Bernadette tells the story of a group of extraordinary Polish adventurers who emerged from under the blanket of oppression following the WWII to become the world's leading Himalayan climbers. Although they lived in a war-ravaged landscape, with seemingly no hope of leading a meaningful life, these curious, motivated and skilled mountaineers created their own free-market economy under the very noses of their Communist bosses and climbed their way to liberation.

The book has also won other prestigious literary awards such as '2011 Boardman-Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature' at the Kendal Mountain Festival and 'the Don and Phyllis Munday Award for Mountain Literature' at Banff Mountain Book Festival.

Details of the Presentation Ceremony of the 6th Kekoo Naoroji Book Award will be declared at a later date.

Exploration and Climbs in the Ang Tung Range

A five member team consisting of Divyesh Muni (Leader), Rajesh Gadgil, Vineeta Muni, Aditi Gadgil and Lt. Col. Shamsheer Singh made the first ascent of two peaks – Petze Kangri (6130 m) and Lugzl Pombo (6414 m) of the Ang Tung range of mountains of Koh Lungpa valley located near the Pangong lake of Ladakh in July – August 2012. Previously this valley had not been visited by any mountaineering expedition, thus we were keen to explore and climb in this unknown area.

The team, sponsored by the Himalayan Club travelled from Leh to Pangong lake with our support staff. We trekked two days from the village of Yurgo with a caravan of horses carrying ration, camping gear, ropes and technical equipment for the team.



Petze Kangri (6130 m).

On 4 August, 2012 we established our Base Camp at Vimgul (5210 m). After an initial reconnaissance, we decided to attempt Petze Kangri (6130 m). An advance Base Camp was established at 5675 m on the southern slopes of the mountain and on August 9, the team left at 7.00 a.m. for summit attempt. After climbing the east face, Divyesh and Vineeta Muni,

Rajesh Gadgil, Lt. Col. Shamsheer Singh along with Sherpas Nima Thondup and Pemba Norbu were happy to be on the summit at 11.00 a.m. On the following day, the team withdrew to Base Camp.

We established another camp at 5850 m northeast of Lugzl Pombo (6414 m) with our focus now on a peak about 6200 m. However, on August 17, just as we started up the climb, the first rays of the Sun dislodged rocks of various shapes and sizes which came shooting down towards us. We re-considered the climb since the risk of getting hit by the random rock fall was too great. It was therefore decided to shift focus to peak Lugzl Pombo (6414 m) at the head of the glacier.

The team explored the possibility of climbing this peak and fixed 350 m of rope on the northern and then the eastern slopes before finally attempting the peak.

20 August, 2012: We started off by 6.00 a.m. and made fast progress up the fixed ropes. From our earlier high point, we fixed another 300 m of rope to reach the north south summit ridge. Roped up, a steady and gradual climb of five rope lengths towards south brought Rajesh Gadgil, Nima Thondup, Pemba Norbu and Divyesh Muni to the summit by 11.50 a.m.



Lugzl Pombo (6414 m).

The views were glorious and no words can express the satisfaction and joy of standing there. It was indeed a unique spot. We were on a divide.... to one side we had the gentle peaks of the Tibetan plateau and to the other, the jagged peaks of the Karakoram. We spent some time taking pictures and enjoying the views around and then quickly started our descent.

We were back in the summit camp by 3.00 p.m., having recovered most of the fixed rope and gear.

In the next three days, we wound up our camps and were back in Leh by 23 August 2012.

(Divyesh Muni)
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Auden's Trail 2012

(The first civilian crossing from Nelang valley to Saraswati valley)

J B Auden, in his exploration of Central Himalaya (*HJ* Vol 12) in 1939 documented the Mana gad valley in Nelang (Jahnvi) watershed for the first time. On that occasion he intended to cross over the Mana Dhar at Arwa col to enter the Saraswati valley.



View towards the Saraswati valley (Ashutosh Mishra).

Due to an error in navigation he could not achieve his target and his later explorations resulted in discovery of the now famous Auden's col in the Rudragaira valley.

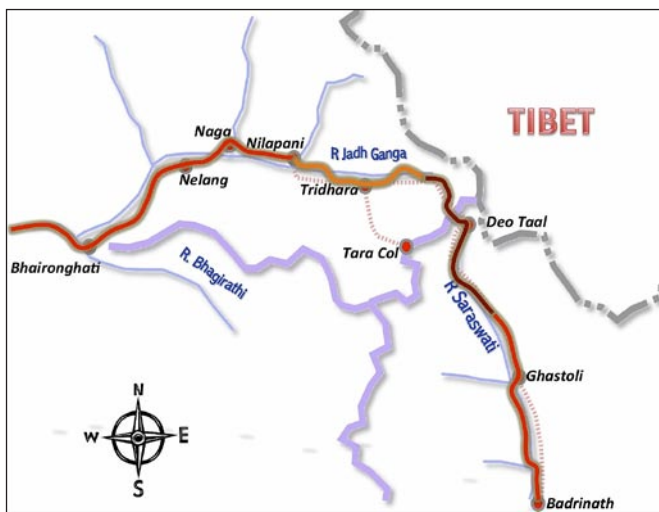
A similar route was explored by H Kapadia and team in the late 1980s during their famous exploration and attempt of the Trimukhi Parvat East. The route to Saraswati col was thus charted. However a crossing was still not possible due to problems with the route and government permission.

Following those famous footsteps, a pan-Indian team of the Himalayan Club, led by Ashutosh Mishra from Delhi successfully attempted the crossover from Mana gad valley to Saraswati valley in the early summer of 2012 following a slightly different route.

The team started off from ITBP Nilapani post in the Mana gad and followed the route of Kapadia and Auden till the Tridhara boulder fields where the Mana gad meets the Ghora gad and forms the main waters of Mana gad. From here the team charted an easterly course towards the Suraji and Basisi glaciers (A route used by the army and ITBP personnel for their occasional Long Range Patrol).

The Army LRP route typically follows the route over the Basisi East glacier, which almost touches the International Border. In order to avoid that, the HC team charted an alternate course into the Basisi West glacier and set up base camp for the cross over at a 5600 m high glacial pool and named it as Basisi Kund. The next day the team crossed over a 5900 m col (Basisi col) on the extended Mana Dhar (ridge) to enter the Saraswati valley, about 500 m south of Mana pass.

Though the Tara Peak I (6100 m) and II (6200m) could be easily attempted from the Basisi col, lack of time and bad weather did not allow this.



After establishing a high camp at 5750 m on reaching Saraswati valley, the team continued its descent to Deo Tal (lake) that gives rise to the river Saraswati. They thus managed to reach out from the extreme eastern end of Jahnvi watershed at Basisi glacier to the extreme northern end of the Alaknanda watershed at Deo Tal.

After Deo Tal, they followed a snowbound motor road till Jagraon, Rattakona and finally

Ghastoli. The team established an easy non-technical route from Gangotri - Bhairon Ghati area to Badrinath as an alternate option to the deadly Kalindi Khal.

(Ashutosh Mishra)

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Himalayan Club Activities

Delhi Section

High Passes of Garhwal by Pia Singh

On 20 January 2012, around 135 mountain lovers witnessed the grandeur of Garhwal, sitting in the chairs at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre. The Garhwal Himalaya is home to some of the most majestic mountains in the world—a range seeped in myth and legend. The Garhwal region is also known as ‘Devbhoomi’, and much in Indian scriptures and mythology suggests it to be the land of the Gods. In her talk on ‘High Passes of Garhwal’, Pia Singh focused on two treks in Garhwal that involve crossing two mountain passes, namely Kalindi khal and Auden’s col. Kalindi khal (5950 m) is a pass connecting the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda watersheds. The route commences



in Gangotri and goes along the Gangotri glacier beneath the base of the Bhagirathi and Shivling peaks, then up the Chaturangi glacier, and finishes at Badrinath. The British explorers Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman first discovered the route in 1934. Auden’s col (5400 m) is a pass, requiring technical expertise to cross, situated on the connecting ridge of the Gangotri and Jogin peaks. The trek commences in Gangotri and

finishes in Kedarnath after crossing another pass, the Mayali pass (4990 m). The col was first discovered by J. B. Auden in 1930.

Pia Singh, a businesswoman, is a keen trekker and outdoor enthusiast. She has done a mountaineering course from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering and has been trekking extensively all across the Indian Himalaya in Garhwal, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, and in Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet for over 25 years.

Icing on the Lakes by Shankar Sridhar

For six years now, Shankar Sridhar has been trekking in high-altitude deserts of Ladakh at the time of year no one else does, in the dead of winter, when snow seals the passes and temperatures plummet as low as - 40° C freezing fuel and killing car batteries within hours. Braving snowstorms, the risks presented by uncertain ice conditions on the lakes and snow conditions on passes, Sridhar has made five month long forays into this rarefied open-air freezer.



Kyun Tso (Shankar Shridhar).

He has walked across the frozen surfaces of all the great lakes – Pangong Tso, Tsomoriri, Tso Kar, Tso-Rul and Kyun Tso -- and migrated along with the Changpa nomads to some of the region's remotest places, including Kuyul and Chumur, far from the tourist circuit and uneasily close to the Indo-Tibet border.

He shared his travel experiences, survival strategies learnt from nomads and the accompanying images of landscapes, people and the lakes with 125 mountain enthusiasts all of which made for a fascinating and enjoyable evening on 27 March 2012.

High on Ganja La by Group Captain V K Sashindran

On the eve of 25 April 2012, an audience of more than 115 gathered at the Gulmohar Hall of the India Habitat Centre. The occasion was to witness the beauty and thrill of trekking in the Nepal Himalaya. The Langtang National Park lies to the north of Kathmandu adjoining the Tibetan Autonomous Region. It has two popular trekking trails, the Langtang river valley and Gosainkund ridge. The two are connected by a high pass, Ganja la (5100 m), which is not often crossed by trekkers. Gr. Capt. Sashindran's talk covered these two trails and crossing of the high pass. The aim of the talk was to familiarise trekkers about these beautiful trails and the various opportunities they offer.

Gr. Capt. V K Sashindran is a doctor in the Indian Air Force. Apart from his profession his other great passion is trekking. He has been trekking in the Himalaya for more than 25 years. He has also been involved in the exploration of Arunachal Pradesh since 2004. In 2008 he led the Indo-US expedition to look for lost WWII aircrafts in Arunachal Pradesh. He is interested in the people and living traditions of the Himalayan region. His other interest is philately and he has a large thematic collection of mountain stamps.



Small ice bridge (Gr Capt V K Sashindran).

A Long Walk in the Himalaya by Garry Weare

'A Long Walk in the Himalaya' was a reflection on the changing landscape of the Indian Himalaya. A commentary set against a backdrop of a five month trek, from the source of the Ganges to Kashmir, the narrative extended beyond descriptions of high passes and varied landscapes to include reflections on the impact of climate change, wildlife conservation and the plight of the snow leopard, development and change



Crossing Pin Parvati pass (Garry Weare).

in remote rural communities, the responsibilities of authoring trekking guidebook and the future of trekking, as well as the need to return to Kashmir. More than 130 devotees of the Himalaya enjoyed the talk on the evening of 15 July 2012.

Garry Weare has had a lifetime of experiences in the Himalaya. Since 1970 he has trekked over 25,000 km mostly in the Western Himalaya. Garry is co-founder and now Executive Director of the Australian Himalayan Foundation and is the Honorary Local Secretary (Australia) for the Himalayan Club. He is an author and acclaimed photographer and still regularly leads treks in the Western Himalaya.

Ladakh Revealed - Seminar & Exhibition

The India International Centre Library hosts the Himalayan Collection, which is a part of the Himalayan Club library comprising of rare manuscripts and books on



Petroglyphs near Tangtse gompa
(Viraf Mehta).

mountaineering and mountains. A series of three seminars have been planned to showcase this collection. The first one on Ladakh was organised on 23 August 2012 and attended by around 125 mountain lovers and scholars. The seminar had a variety of speakers who spoke on lesser known aspects of Ladakh. An exhibition of some manuscripts and rare books was also on display. The following were the speakers at the Seminar: *An Introduction to the Himalayan Collection* by William Aitken, *Ladakhi Trade Routes : A link to the Outside World* by Dr Janet Rizvi , *Hidden Petroglyphs of Ladakh* by Viraf Mehta and *Central Asian Influence on Ladakhi Art and Culture* by Dr. Chhaya Haesner.

(Maninder Kohli)

Kolkata Section

First Crossing of Yangzi Diwan Pass



At the top of Yangzi Diwan pass (Tapan Pandit).

Lingti is a little known valley in the eastern Spiti region marked with huge, spectacular fossils. Nobody (from India or abroad) with the exception of Harish Kapadia's team of 1983 and 1987 has penetrated this valley. As per records, Kapadia's team reached the pass along Parilungbi. We (Tapan Pandit and Usha Pandit), left Kolkata for the '*Fossil Museum - Lingti Valley*' expedition on 30 June 2012. The fifteen day trek commenced from Lalung on July 5, crossing Chaksachan la (5230 m) on

July 10, and Yangzi Diwan pass (5890 m) on 15 July 2012. We concluded our trek at Korzok village on the banks of the Tsomoriri Lake.

(Tapan Pandit)

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The Highest Tri-Way Beckons...

The Quest for the highest Tri-Point (Three Way Boundary) in the world has commenced on 9 September, 2012.

The Himalayan Club team from Kolkata consisting of Pradeep Sahoo, Debraj Dutta, Rajeev Kumar Mondal, Biplab Banerjee, Debabrata Ghosh, Bikram Chatterjee and their Sherpa friends has embarked on yet another fascinating journey into the desolate realm of Jongsong (7462 m), in the Janak Himalaya of Sikkim. A team of trekkers, Kiran Chavda, Kedar Doctor, Manish Patel, Dharmendra Rathod and Gaurav Pandit are accompanying the climbers. The summit of this peak (also referred to as Dinggye Rikaze by the Chinese) represents a natural tri-way boundary point between India, Nepal and Tibet. If they are successful, then this would be the third ascent of the peak, the second ascent being in 1983 by an Indian Army and the first by the International Kangchenjunga Expedition of 1930.



Jongsong 2012 team with HC members (Aniruddha Seal).

Our team was flagged off on 8 September, 2012 at the Calcutta Sports Journalists Club tent by the expedition sponsor Bengal Energy. Despite a heavy downpour in the afternoon, a large number of enthusiasts and friends had gathered to wish the team success on the mountain.

The team is following a different route to that of the 1930 International Expedition team which had approached the peak from the Lhonak glacier and ascended along the north ridge that represents the border between Tibet and India.

Latest Developments:

The team had approached the mountain along the Jongsong glacier and set up Base Camp c.5508 m on 17 September 2012. Moving up the Jongsong glacier quickly, Camp 1 c.5793 m, Camp 2 c.6128 m and C3 c.6465 m were established after moving up the eastern spur (ENE) of Jongsong peak on a new route. After the initial walk-in amidst rain and snow, the weather gods offered them a kind weather window (despite the calamity caused by the recent cloud burst in North Sikkim). Regular weather updates were conveyed to them with information from the website mountain-forecast.com that reports future weather conditions for different altitudes of major peaks. Two members of the six man team returned back due to ill health. The other four members with the sherpas remained fit and going strong, continued to take advantage of the good weather window.

Two members settled between BC and C1, while Pradeep Sahoo and Rajeev Mondal moved up with the sherpas. Since the weather forecast indicated possibility of a poor weather front approaching on September 30, they expeditiously established their C4 on September 28 at c.6869 m, without coming down to the lower camps for rest. They reached a common col between Jongsong and Dome Khang on 29 September 2012 and Rajib Mondal and Dawa Sherpa climbed Dome Khang (7260m) from this col. This was its overall second ascent (First ascent was by a Spanish team led by Carlos Soria in 2009 from the Nepal side) and first ascent from the Indian (eastern) side of the mountain.

The same night Pradeep Sahoo (Leader) with Ang Dorji Sherpa and Phurba Sherpa benighted on the col below the eastern slopes of the summit ridge of Jongsong and on the morning of 30 September 2012, all three of them reached the summit of



Jongsong 7462 m (Anindya Mukherjee).

Jongsong Peak (7462 m) at 9.30 a.m. This is overall third ascent of this high mountain and most likely a first ascent by a new route followed on the eastern (ENE) ridge of Jongsong.

(Priyadarshi Gupta)
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Editor's Note: This is one of the significant climbs in the Indian Himalaya this season. In case of both these 7000 m peaks of Jongsong and Dome Khang, new approach and new route was followed to reach the summits. It is also notable that the overall time taken for the climb (the base camp at 5508m and the summit of Jongsong at 7462 m) is not more than two weeks. Congratulations to all members.

Trans Africa on a bicycle: solo: a tribute to H. W. Tilman

[A solo bicycle journey from the Equator to Tropic of Capricorn and from East Coast (Indian Ocean) to West Coast (Atlantic Ocean) through the African continent]

H.W.Tilman's journey across Africa along the equator on a bicycle back in 1929; inspired me to get out there and begin my very own Trans African bicycle adventure. Instead of retracing or repeating Tilman's route I however preferred a route of my own. I would start from the Equator in Kenya and finish near the Tropic of Capricorn. Instead of heading down south in a straight line (as the road network would permit of course), I decided to touch the east coast of the African continent in Dar es Salaam. By doing so my route got added value of an East Coast to West Coast traverse along with the primary goal of Equator to Capricorn journey.

My route took me through the Kenyan Highlands, Great Rift Valley, the Masai Steppe, Foothills of Mt Kenya, Mt Meru and Mt Kilimanjaro, the Usambara Mountains, Coastal regions of Tanga, historical town and port of Dar es Salaam (and Zanzibar), Mikumi National Park, the Udzungwa Mountains, the great Ruaha river, forests of Sao Hill, hills of Mbeya, Lake Malawi, Livingstonia mountains, Tobacco growing regions of Kasungu, the great east road in Zambia, Luangwa river, Victoria falls, the Zambezi plains, Caprivi strip, Okavango river, Okavango flood plain, Bushman's land, Trans Kalahari Highway, the Namib desert and finally to the Atlantic coast in Walvis Bay and Swakopmund.



Starting point, Nanyuki, Kenya (Anindya Mukherjee).

Route Outline

Countries crossed: Kenya-Tanzania-Malawi-Zambia-Namibia

Total distance Covered: 5333 kms, Total distance cycled: 4500 kms,

Duration: 24 June to 2 September 2012, Total number of days: 69 No of days Cycled: 49 days. Starting point: Nanyuki, Kenya; Finishing Point: Walvis Bay, Namibia.

(Anindya Mukherjee)

The Climbing Sherpas of Darjeeling

They could be described as small steps that we have taken just yet. Fairly firm ones even if fledgling. And we already sense, with combined unerring gut feel, what a wonderful journey it will turn out eventually. How can it be anything else, given the richness and rarity of the subject of the oral history study recently announced on these pages? The Climbing Sherpas of Darjeeling.

The unheard stories of these amazing men are simply waiting to be told, the three of us realised six months ago when we undertook a recce trip to Darjeeling. Ready to leave for our second stay there for a month now, we are packed and raring to go. Prepared to meticulously record fascinating accounts of far more than the fistful of Sherpa families we introduced ourselves to in April this year. That was when we shared their lives for a memorable fortnight spent in Toong Soong basti, their bastion right from the earliest decades of Himalayan exploration and expeditions traced back to a whole century.

It is a challenge to chronicle the life and times of a pioneering people who, being unlettered for long decades, left behind virtually no accounts of themselves even as they eked out a living pitted against one of the planet's most inhospitable landscapes. But won over by their incredibly generous hospitality and innate trust reposed in our efforts we see what is ostensibly our task as the rare privilege of a lifetime to enter the Sherpa world.

Fortunately, stepping into their unique universe promises not to be restricted to the cool climes of Darjeeling alone. Quite apart from conducting actual first-person interviews on their home turf, we have the added pleasure of piecing a picture of our Darjeeling heroes through the sharp memories of a spirited old generation of mountaineers and trekkers in Mumbai. From the early 1950s onwards, these men and women indulged their passion for ascending peaks with legends no less than Tenzing Norgay, Nawang Gombu, Ang Tshering, Pasang Temba, Ang Kami, Ang Temba, Chawang Tashi, Ang Phutar, Wangdi, Gyalzen Michung and Dorjee Lhatoo. From meetings with stalwarts, including feisty freedom fighter Malatiben Jhaveri, the experienced Rekha Shroff and Girl Guides veteran Khurshid Elavia, emerge much needed, valuable insights that enhance our work.

“The mountain is their god,” as Elavia explains. “Sherpas get all their knowledge, inspiration, faith and identity from the mountain alone.” Without a doubt, it is precisely these constructs we have set out to discover and celebrate. Hoping to recreate through well remembered, fondly narrated vignettes, the little known ethos of a community which has offered too much for its contribution to go undocumented or unsung.

The road ahead may wind uphill. But that is exactly where we are headed...

So many Sherpa families still remain to be interviewed. At destinations beyond Darjeeling in further flung Katmandu, besides the villages in and around the Solu Khumbu regions of Nepal, which have witnessed a reverse migration of our brave mountain men after they hung up their climbing crampons.

Current cultural awareness of these magnificent men and their enigmatic glory years is limited. Few are really able to name Sherpas beyond Tenzing Norgay, though he was the single charismatic Sherpa who first put India on the world mountaineering map post-May 1953 once summiting Everest with Edmund Hillary.

As we resolutely continue to map this idea whose time has most certainly come, we invite mountain lovers across the globe to participate in the excitement too. Here is a request for any information, photographs and other memorabilia pertaining to the Climbing Sherpas of Darjeeling – and of course for financial contributions, however modest, to help defray at least a few of the costs of this vital project. Please do contact us at projectsherpa2012@gmail.com for further details and a full project proposal.

(Meher Marfatia)

Rebuild Ladakh: An Update

(In continuation of the previous report circulated through website and E-letter vol. 24 of June 2012).

Reconstruction of houses at Kaya and Skui

After construction of damaged houses, the villagers further needed support for painting, plumbing, wiring etc. which was estimated at (approx) Rs. 25000/- per house which the Club agreed to sanction. This work was completed this summer (2012) and the total amount is around Rs. 1,25,000/- The copies of invoices are awaited. After confirmation from the villagers and the village council (Panchayat) the amount will be transferred to the Leh account to be paid to the suppliers.

Support to Create Home Stay Facility as Alternate Means of Earning to the Affected Villagers:

The immediate needs of the villagers having been met, the Committee considered long term support measure for the villagers who had lost their source of livelihood due to the destruction of their land by the floods. The decision of the Committee was

conveyed to the villagers and a proposal was sought from them for costs involved etc. A list of twelve most deserving families has been received along with the estimate from the village panchayat. The size of the room will be approximately 12 feet x 12 feet with an attached bathroom of 6 feet x 6 feet. They will be fitted with two doors and two sets of windows. The accommodation capacity of the room will be 2 / 3 persons. We hope that most of the work will be completed before the trekking season of 2013.

Children's hostel, Leh

The hostel has started functioning routinely and presently 54 children are availing of free accommodation, food, and other facilities at the hostel. The Club had reimbursed an amount of Rs. 2,68,000/- for the completed work of cleaning the silt and construction of the compound wall.



Repaired vehicles.

The Managing Committee had also sanctioned financial assistance of Rs. 50,000/- to repair the two vehicles (One ambulance and one utility van for transportation of daily goods such as rations) that were damaged during the floods. The actual amount spent for is Rs. 67,653/- which the MC has now decided to sanction and disburse immediately.



New toilet - bathroom block under construction.

The hostel is also in process of constructing a new bathroom / toilet block for girl students for which they have requested financial support. The structure is ready and the work of plumbing and electrical fitting is in progress.

Till date the expenditure incurred for the construction totals to Rs. 2,87,602/- and the estimate for the incomplete work amounts to 1,26,000/-. The MC of the Himalayan Club has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 2,87,602/- which will be transferred to the Leh account for reimbursement of the expenses.

Our supervision and interaction

Motup Chewang, our Hon. Local Secretary and Dr. Norboo continue the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the project. Rajesh Gadgil and Divyesh Muni visited the Children's hostel on 24 August 2012 and met the new secretary of the hostel committee, David Sonam. They discussed the progress of the project and future needs. Mr. Sonam conveyed gratitude of the hostel committee and also promised to send all the necessary supporting documents. These were

received by email along with photographs of the repaired vehicles and the new toilet/bathroom block under construction.



Meeting with village council members.

On 25 August 2012, Motup, Dr. Norboo, Rajesh and Divyesh met the members of the Village Council represented by Tsering Phunchok (Councilor), Sonam Norboo (Sarpanch) and Dorjay Angdus (Council Secretary). The progress of reconstruction and the Home stay scheme was discussed in detail. The council members requested for maximum possible financial support. They presented us with the list of twelve

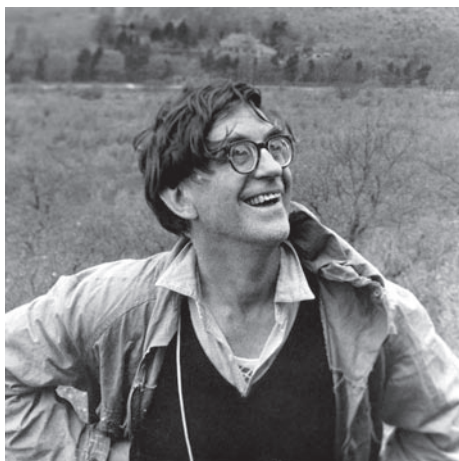
deserving families to be considered under the scheme.

(Rajesh Gadgil)

Remembrance

Michael Westmacott

(1925 – 2012)



Michael Westmacott.

When several hundred breathless people reached the summit of Everest in May this year they did so thanks in no small measure to the labour of an unsung group of Sherpas known as the 'Icefall Doctors' whose job it is to maintain a passageway through the chaos of ice cliffs and crevasses of the Khumbu Icefall. 'Mike' Westmacott was in essence the prototype Icefall Doctor. While the final assault was underway in 1953 that would see Hillary and Tenzing to the 8848 m summit, it was Mike and his team of Sherpas who were charged with keeping open the expedition's vital line of supply and return.

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

any great yen. His first rock climb was of Napes Needle in Wasdale, done in floppy tennis shoes on a cold day in December 1947.

The OUMC was on the cusp of a post-war mountaineering renaissance and together with its Cambridge counterpart would provide many of the leading climbers of the 1950s. Both George Band (Cambridge) and Mike had been president of their respective university mountaineering clubs and at the time John Hunt was selecting his Everest team, both had just enjoyed excellent alpine seasons. Mike speculated that that they might both have owed their Everest places to the good weather in the Alps in 1952.

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

Returning from the Alps he had put in his Everest application as a long shot and some weeks later was delighted to receive an invitation for an interview at the RGS. Hunt was certainly impressed by the young man's alpine record, but as an ex-Sapper, Mike had other valuable skills. He was given responsibility for structural equipment, notably the ladders needed for bridging crevasses.

Though few of the expedition members realised it at the time, the Everest experience shaped the rest of their lives. A dinner invitation to the young celebrity (though he would never have described himself as such) led to Mike's courtship of Sally Seddon, then studying at the Royal College of Music, and a long and happy marriage; together they climbed together in the Alps, North America and throughout the UK, often with other Everest friends. While working for Shell, in the USA in 1964, he and Sally joined a lightweight expedition to an untouched range of granite peaks in northern Alaska, the Arrigetch, where they made eight first ascents. In 1956 he went to Peru with a party including George Band and made the first ascent of Huagaruncho (5748m); and in 1968 he and Sally went to the Hindu Kush where with Hugh Thomlinson they made the first ascent of Wakhikah Rah (5681m).

After his retirement in 1985 the couple moved to the Lake District, close to friends and the best rock climbing in England. Mike had joined the AC in 1952, served as honorary secretary from 1967 to 71, president from 1993 to 95 and rightly became an honorary member. He was similarly active in the affairs of the Climbers' Club. He was also an honorary member of the Himalayan Club.

Mike's most public legacy to mountaineering must be the development of Himalayan Index, an initiative of the Alpine Club Library, the council of which he chaired from the early 1980s until 1993. Aided by a small team, he created a computer database that now lists more than 4,000 peaks of above 6,000 m and their climbing histories – an invaluable resource to expedition planners and available on the internet.

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

(Stephen Goodwin)

Roger Payne

(1956-2012)



Roger Payne (Jon Wigg).

On Thursday 12 July 2012, at 05.30 in the morning, there was a massive avalanche on Mont Maudit. Whilst ten climbers were more or less uninjured, nine victims were air lifted to hospital. Tragically nine persons perished among whom was well-known mountaineer and a close associate of the Himalayan Club, Roger Payne. Roger, who was guiding, lost his life and his death was a great shock to the mountaineering fraternity. Our sympathies go to his wife, Julie Ann-Clyma.

Roger's friend, Ed Douglas takes a look back on his life.

Roger Payne, who died aged 55 in the avalanche on Mont Maudit that killed eight others, was well known across many branches of world climbing. He made first ascents of routes in the Alps and climbed there every year from 1977. He took part in more than 20 expeditions to high and difficult peaks across the Karakoram and Himalaya – from K2 to little-known mountains on the borders of Sikkim, and Sichuan in China – as well as North and South America.

He was a former president of the British Mountain Guides, an avalanche instructor and held coaching badges in a range of other outdoor sports. He also had a strong interest in the mountain environment, working on projects with the United Nations on climate change, and was involved in raising awareness about the conflict on the Siachen glacier.

Roger discovered climbing through the Scouts in Hammersmith, and soon headed to the hills in Scotland, which lead to rock climbing in England and Wales. His passion for the outdoors was matched with a passion for education, the subject of his degree, and he soon developed a career both as a teacher in the Northeast and as an instructor.

Roger's expedition climbing experience was deep and broad. He went to Peru in 1986 – the first expedition he undertook with his partner, in life as well as the mountains, the New Zealand-born guide Julie-Ann Clyma. Among five peaks climbed, Roger made the first ascent of the South Face Direct of Rusac (ED+).

Over the next 25 years, Roger and Julie-Ann embarked on some of the most significant British expeditions of the last two decades, notably to the north face of Changabang in 1997 with a strong team that included Mick Fowler, Steve Sustad, Andy Cave and Brendan Murphy. He and Julie-Ann, who had tried the face previously the year before, made a strong attempt, following the successful efforts by the other two rope teams.

In 1993, he and Julie-Ann had been part of a team on K2 along with Victor Saunders, who helped in the rescue on Mont Maudit this morning, and Alan Hinkes. Typically, along with the climbing, the team had a commission from Eastern Electricity to install micro-hydroelectricity in two local villages.

In 2003, he and Julie-Ann made the first ascent of the North Face of Mount Grosvenor in Sichuan Province, China, descending via the East Ridge. It was perhaps the greatest highlight of his long career in Asia, but he had a great enthusiasm for exploration as well as technicality, becoming one of the leading experts on climbing in Sikkim.

In 1989, he was appointed National Officer at the BMC. It was a turbulent time for the BMC finances, but his dynamism and confident approach worked wonders and he revitalised his post and, later, the BMC as a whole. He became involved in the many new developments that were transforming climbing: from climbing walls and competitions to mountain tourism and technical and safety issues. He was also a champion of ski-mountaineering events and helped ice-climbing competitions become part of the UIAA. Six years later, he became general secretary of the BMC and he found his natural niche. Under his leadership, the BMC embarked on a period of strong growth in membership and reform. He also oversaw the launch of the BMC's *Summit* magazine in 1996.

Roger left the BMC in December 2001 and the following year became the first sports and development director for the UIAA. In this capacity, he was part of a movement to strengthen mountaineering's links with the Olympic movement and United Nations agencies as well as the World Conservation Union.

The overriding impression Roger leaves is of an unwavering and infectious enthusiasm for the mountain life. Wherever you were in the world – in an alpine hut, a film festival in the States or a committee meeting in Manchester, you were pleased to see him. He will be sorely missed.

(Ed Douglas)

(Courtesy British Mountaineering Council)

Sub. Amar Prakash

(1963-2012)

Sub Amar Prakash, one of the most accomplished Indian mountaineers, born in April 1963, died suddenly on 31 August 2012. He was on a UN Mission to Haiti and had returned to India due to illness. It is learnt that he was on his way home from a medical check-up near Mandi, H.P.



Sub Amar Prakash.

Sub Amar Prakash, who had climbed Everest twice, was one of the first Indian summiteers via the Kangshung Face, one of the most formidable routes on Everest. He was a dependable, skilled and leading climber during the 1980s and 90s. He was part of all major expeditions organised by India (army/civil) - Joint Indo-US Army Expedition to Mana, Multinational Army Expedition to Nilkanth, Kabru Massif Expedition, and International Army Expedition to Nanda Devi, Joint Indo-British Army Expedition to Gorichen, HMI-Argentina Expedition to Kamet, Abi Gamin

and Acancagua in Argentina. During these expeditions he reached the summits of Nanda Devi East, Kamet and Abi Gamin. He was the first person to ski from the Longstaff col. He had also successfully led expeditions to Mulkila and Indrasan.

Sub. Amar Prakash served as a skilled and respected mountaineering instructor for two national mountaineering institutes i.e. Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling and Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering & Allied Sports, Manali. He was instrumental in rescuing stranded people from an avalanche at Baralacha la and once saved lives of shepherds during flash floods in the Lahaul valley.

He was awarded Chief of the Army Staff Commendation Card in 1987 and 1995, the Shaurya Chakra in 2001 and Indian Mountaineering Foundation's Gold Medal. He was also awarded the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award in 2003. Our sympathies go to his bereaved family and friends.

(Editors)

(Courtesy Indian Mountaineering Foundation)

Edited by

Rajesh Gadgil and Nandini Purandare

Assistance: Freny Manekshaw and Group Captain V. K. Sashindran

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Himalayan Club Centre, 314, Turf Estate, Shakti Mills Lane, off Dr. E. Moses Road,
Mahalaxmi [West], Mumbai 400011, India.

Phone: [91-22] 2491 2829.

Website: www.himalayanclub.org

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