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Harry Haig



Wilfrid Noyce



HW Tobin



A 90 year Journey

THE HIMALAYAN CLUB E-LETTER

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Narration for Cover Page

A 90 year Journey. The Himalayan Club was established in 1928. The foundations of it were laid strongly by a number of people who were devoted and passionate about the Himalaya. The president and the editor of the Himalayan Club served as the two strong pillars of the Club. In the issues of this year, we celebrating their contribution to make the Club strong and vibrant.

Presidents : W.R. Birdwood (1928-30), W.M. Hailey (1931-32), Kenneth Wigram (1933), Sir Herbert Emerson (not on Cover Page1934-35), Harry Haig (1936-38), Roger Wilson (1939-40), M.W. Yeatts (not on Cover Page1946-47)

Editors of HJ : Kenneth Mason (1928-40), Wilfred Noyce (1946), H.W. Tobin (1947-57)

Ninety Year of The Himalayan Club – Celebrations and New Beginnings

The Himalayan Club Logo for the 90th Year Celebrations

The large community of the HC was used to crowd source a logo design. The final design was selected through a voting process. The final design by Mr. Rohit Anand was the winning entry. The design will be used for our communication, website and other Merchandise to be made for the year.

The final design is



The Himalayan Club Logo for the year

An Overwhelming Annual Seminar

This year annual seminar was held on February 18 and 19, 2017 to an overwhelming crowd. The well publicised announcement and a stellar line up of speakers ensured a large gathering. The venue was accordingly chosen to be the K.C. College Hall at Churchgate Mumbai, which can seat 900 people. We almost felt short of seats as the number of people attending it was large.

Mr Tanil Kilachand welcoming the chief guest Mrs Godrej. [Photo: Alka Kedia]



The seminar was inaugurated by Mrs Pheroza Godrej. Then Leo Houlding delivered the Kaivan Mistry Memorial Lecture – His highs and lows in the life on the vertical. It was mesmerising to hear his ordeals and achievements all around the world. He is a person to watch out for the new adventures.



Inauguration of the Annual Function.
L to R: Mr Kilachand, Mrs Godrej, Nandini Purandare,
Doug Scott, Malik. [Photo: Alka Kedia]



Mrs Godrej addressing
[Photo: Alka Kedia]

Leo performing theatrics
off the mountains!
[Photo: Alka Kedia]



A full house
enjoying the talks.
[Photo: Alka Kedia]





Doug Scott receiving the Kekoo Naoroji Book award from Mr Rishad Naoroji [Photo: Alka Kedia]

Subsequently Doug Scott the veteran climber from England received the Kekoo Naoroji Book award for his Book Up and About – The Hard Road to Everest and talked about the Everest Adventure by the SW face route a daunting effort of its time.

Next day saw even greater crowds to see, meet and hear the Malik Twins about their adventure – Explorer’s Grand Slam. It was followed by a film by Leo Houlding on his climb of Everest in the foot steps of Irvin and Mallory. The Seminar ended with Dough Scott talking about his adventure on the Ogre – A crawl down the Ogre. Ogre still attracts lots of climbers.



The Malik twins enjoying the function. [Photo: Alka Kedia]

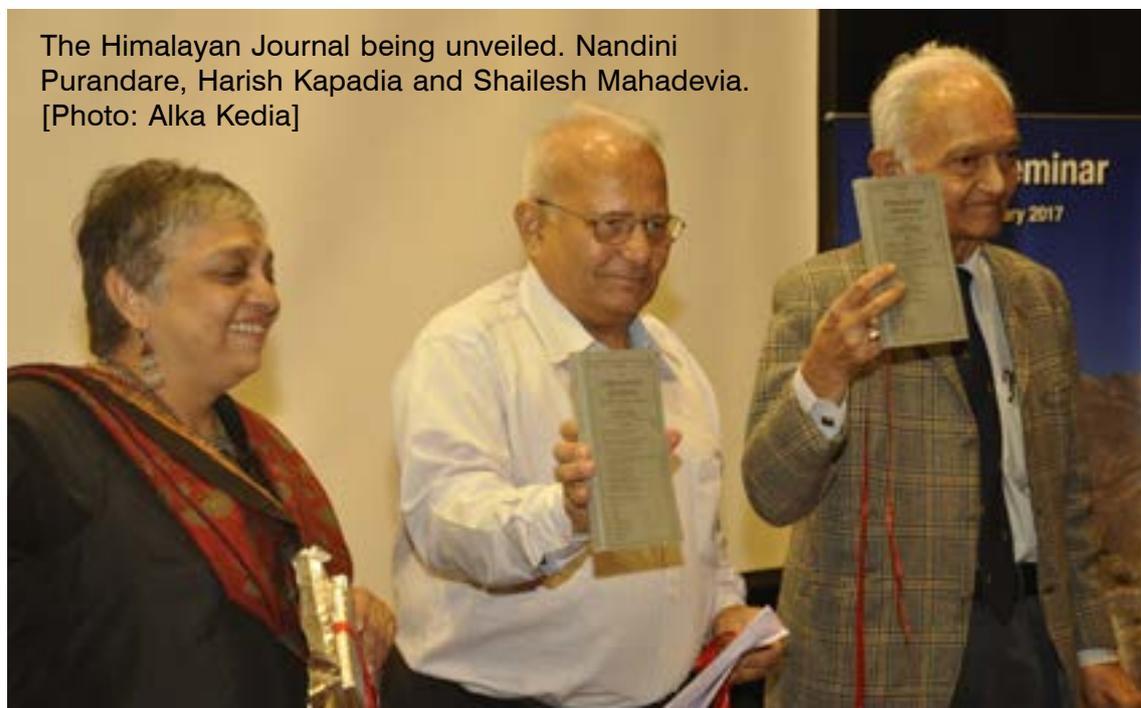


The speakers. L to R Doug, his wife, Leo with the Malik twins and Rigzin.
[Photo: Alka Kedia]

Launch of Commemorative Himalayan Journal Issue

The commemorative issue of the Himalayan Journal was launched during the Annual Seminar. It is produced in the classic style with Articles from Volume I thru XIV covering up to 1947 - The golden age of the Himalayan Exploration. Ms. Nandini Purandare, our Hon. Editor of the journal talks about the motivation in the introduction. Our Editor Emeritus Harish Kapadia traces the journey of the Journal.

Please contact the Himalayan Club office to get your copy. It is a collector's copy so please order it now.



The Himalayan Journal being unveiled. Nandini Purandare, Harish Kapadia and Shailesh Mahadevia.
[Photo: Alka Kedia]

Kekoo Naoroji Book Award

Doug Scott was the recipient of this years Kekoo Naoroji Book Award for Himalayan Literature. He received the award for his book Up and About – The Hard Road to Everest. The book talks about the South West Face Everest Expeditions and eventually he was one of the summiteer in the successful British Expedition.

Jagdish Nanavati Award for Excellence in Mountaineering

Award for excellence in mountaineering was not awarded due to lack of appropriate entries.

Jagdish Nanavati Garud Medal

Skalzan Rigzin was awarded the Garud medal this year for his support to the numerous expeditions to the Himalaya. Rigzin is an old friend of the HC community. We are very proud of him for the achievement.



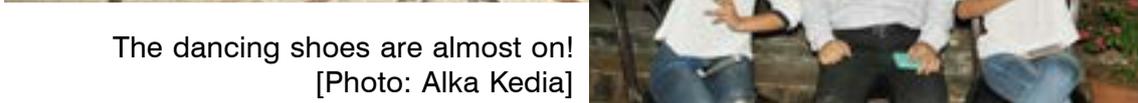
Rigzin receiving the JCN award from Sachin Nanavati.

Annual Dinner

The annual dinner of the Club was held at Mr Tanil Kilachand's residence in the tony Nepean Sea Road area of Mumbai to a full house. The generous hospitality and an excellent Gujrati meal ensured a lively gathering with with great stories from the mountains.



Harish Kapadia enjoys the company of the beautiful ladies at the dinner.
[Photo: Alka Kedia] Annual Dinner.



The dancing shoes are almost on!
[Photo: Alka Kedia]



The crowd joins the party! [Photo: Alka Kedia]



Banff Film Festival

The Banff Film Festival has a busy and a pan India schedule.

It has been screened or will be screened in Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Surat, Nashik, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Leh, Nagpur, Mussoorie, Asansol and Ahmedabad.

Visit the HC site for dates and details.

Arun Samant Memorial Lecture

The Arun Samant Memorial Lecture was held to a record full house on April 22, 2017 in Mumbai. The five inspiring talks were

1. *Crossing Ralam Dhura in the footsteps of W. H. Murray* by Rohit Bhat
2. *Indian Army Mt Thalay Sagar (6940m) Expedition 2016* by Maj Jay Prakash Kumar (Leader)
3. *My quest for the snow leopard: ten years of explorations in the Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh* by Kulbushansingh Suryawanshi
4. *Our trek to Auden's Col, Sep 2016* by Sonali Bhatia & Kersi Dastur
5. *White Vision: A Journey from Imagination to Exploration* by Anindya Mukherjee

The talks went on until 10 pm with a full house and lively discussions after the talk.

Visit to Dharamsala

As a part of the 90th year celebration, the HC planned a visit to Dharamsala to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Forty members and friends joined for a four day visit from April 23 to 26, 2017 to Dharamsala.

Members from Japan to UK and Ladakh to Bengaluru joined the trip. Apart from meeting His Holiness, members trekked for a day to Triund on the fringe of Dhauladhar range.



Arriving at Dharamsala [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



The lectures don't stop! [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



Ravi Mariwala, Motup Chewang and Paula Mariwala
[Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



Geeta Kapadia and Paula Mariwala at Norbulingka.
[Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



On the way to see the His Holiness Dalai Lama [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



The Himalayan Club members with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Himalayan Club entourage.





Norbulingka [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



Waiting patiently. [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



Start of the trek. [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]

Stephen contemplating to become a 'Guru'. [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



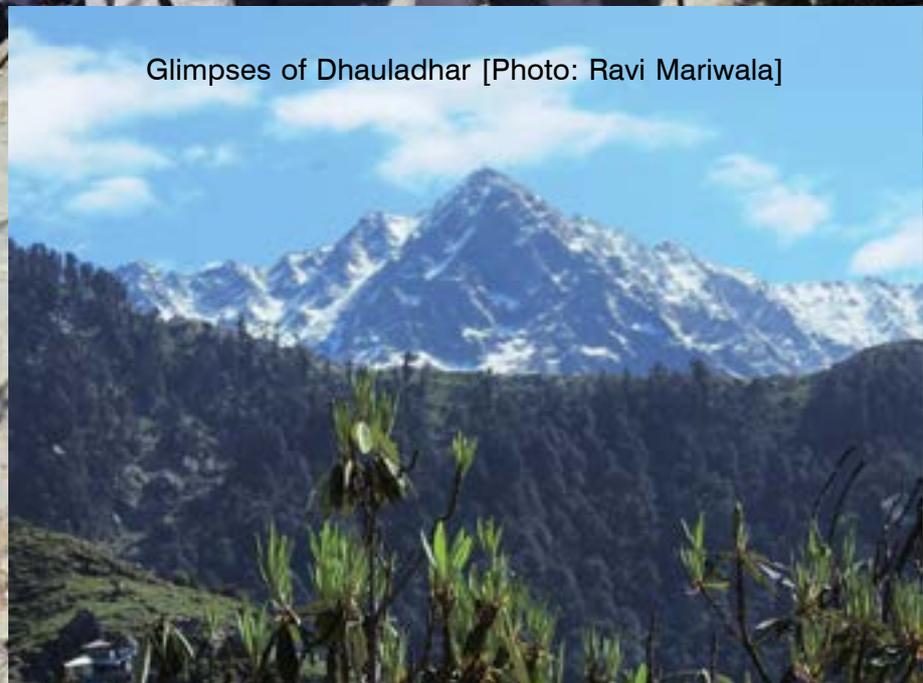
Divyesh Muni talking him out of it.
[Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



Enroute. L to R Stephen Goodwin, Monesh Devjani, Sonal Jain, Rajesh Gadgil and Paula Mariwala. [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



Glimpses of Dhauladhar [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



An easy path. [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]



Enjoying lunch at the top. [Photo: Ravi Mariwala]





Here is a short report from Stephen Goodwin

A short Sojourn with the Himalayan Club

A short sojourn with the Himalayan Club... too short... the four days in Dharamsala akin to the house party of an extended family, and one to which I, the stranger, was admitted unconditionally, with affection and generosity. Many thanks to you all for that.

Of course my abiding memory will be of the 90 minutes we spent in the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He does not speak in sound-bites and I did not come away with some simple mantra to guide future conduct. The effect of the audience is more that of a spiritual infusion, a refreshment, and a resolve to adhere to that pervading goodness I think we all felt.

Maybe that positivity was picked up by the weather as next day a score of us straggled up the hillside from Galu Devi to the ridge-top meadow at Triund. A lovely day, a mix of sunshine and dappled shade where pines and rhododendrons overhang the trail. "Magic View" was the rightly-named chai house looking out over forest and Dharamsala to the hazy plain: doubly "magic" though the moment on cresting the ridge at Triund and the snow-mantled Dhauladhar mountains materialise as if from nowhere, filling one's vision.

Seated on a rock, close by a Shiva shrine, it is not long before the climber starts to trace fancied lines up the ridges of Moon Peak and its Dhauladhar neighbours. But the messages of His Holiness were playing in my mind too: his emphasis on the universality of human beings; that nationality, race, creed or caste are merely secondary identities; that if he thought of himself as the sole Dalai Lama among seven billion human beings rather than a brother to all, he would be a "very lonely" person.

Teasing out that thought, and HH's rejection of nationalism, it struck me how well (though probably fortuitously) our two clubs are named: the Himalayan Club and the Alpine Club, named not after a state or similar artificial stockade but simply after magnificent mountains, the common inheritance of us all.

Stephen Goodwin

Vice-president, the Alpine Club



New Beginnings with the Digital Age

The Himalayan Club has also launched a social media site last year. It has garnered a membership of more than 290,000 members. A truly remarkable achievement in a short span of time. Do join the group. It is open to all. The group can be joined at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheHimalayanClub/>

and share your views and news.

Activities of the Delhi Section

The Delhi section of the Club organised three talks since last November. A brief report by Rama Goyal.

The Lure of Everest – December 4, 2016

Illustrated Talk by Sujoy Das

Ever since the disappearance of George Mallory and Sandy Irvine high on the slopes of Mount Everest in 1924, the mountain has continued to draw climbers, trekkers, photographers and scientists to the Solo Khumbu—the high valleys around Everest, the home of the sherpas. Seasoned trekker and photographer Sujoy Das portrayed the lure of the Everest region through a series of photo essays and a video presentation. Sujoy's latest book titled 'Nepal Himalaya: A Journey Through Time', an outcome of several trips to Nepal over the years, was also released after his presentation. Founder of South Col Expeditions, Sujoy's images and accompanying essays have featured in The Washington Post, APA Publications, Outdoor Journal, Outlook Traveller, and several other prestigious publications. He has co-authored and photographed 'Sikkim: A Travellers Guide' with Arundhati Ray and Lonely Planet's 'Nepal for the Indian Traveller'.

Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour – November 11, 2016

Nine award-winning films were screened as part of the 2015 Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre. The screening witnessed a packed auditorium and was highly appreciated by the attendees. Collaboration: Cox & Kings and Mountain Dew



The Call of Denali – November 2, 2016

Illustrated talk by Prerna Dangi

Prerna Dangi shared the unique experience of climbing in Alaska and the challenges faced by a two-woman team in their attempt to climb Denali, the highest mountain in North America unguided. Prerna Dangi is an aspiring young alpinist and a National-level rock climber. She was introduced to climbing through the St. Stephen's College Hiking Club during which time she completed her basic and advance mountaineering courses from the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS) and Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM), respectively. In 2013, she participated in the first edition of Climbathon, an alpine leadership course organised by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), which led her to explore the alpine approach as opposed to the classic expedition style of climbing. She has since been on several expeditions including Mt. CB 13 (6242m), Mt. Khang Shiling (6360m), Mt. McKinley (6190 m), Mt. Bhagirathi II (6510m), and recently attempted a virgin peak T13 (6431m) in the relatively remote Zaskar Valley. She has represented India at international climbing meets in Russia and Scotland and continues to push the limits for Indian women in the outdoors.

Climbs and Explorations

Tibet

Exploration of Southern Tibet

Exploration of Southern Tibet and remote peaks, valleys and passes of it is synonymous with Tamotsu 'Tom' Nakamura. The 82-year-old explorer has devoted his life to exploration of one of the most remote and difficult to reach areas of Tibet. His youthful energy at 82 years does not stop him from publishing and enjoying what he likes the most – exploration, peaks and valleys. He has conducted 38 expeditions to the region and documented them through beautiful maps and photographs. He also edits the Asian Alpine E-News. These are worth looking at for the photographs of the previously undocumented peaks. These can be reached at

<http://asian-alpine-e-news.com/>



Nakamura San has recently published the book *East of the Himalaya – Alps of Tibet and Beyond*. He considers this as his life's work. The book is worth looking at especially the photographs and the golden flying route.

This exploration no wonder has led to an increased interest in climbing of the peaks in this region. Here we have three reports of climbs in southern Tibet.

International team climbs in Genyen massif, Sichuan - Mt. Hutsa & Peak 5912m

On September 17th, 2016, an international team of climbers from Italy, UK, Ireland and New Zealand assembled in Litang, in the Tibetan Plateau in China's Sichuan Province. Luca Vallata and Tito Arosio (IT), James Money Penny and Peter Linney (UK & EIRE), Tom Nichols and Rob Partridge (UK and NZ). Heather Swift (UK) was poised to join us half way through the trip. They were all linked through the expedition mastermind, James Money Penny.

James and Peter had arrived in Litang three weeks earlier. They made use of a short weather windows in the Sichuan monsoon season, which runs through August and September. They managed various ascents of some stunning granite pillars in the Jarjinjabo Massif, accessing them from Litang on hired motorbikes. The rest of the team (excluding Heather) flew into Chengdu and took two days to bus to Litang. They packed the 4x4s and a five hour drive took them to the Rengo Monastery, built at the foot of sacred mountain Genyen/Genie.

Their hired horsemen arrived with 250cc "horses". They then strapped 60kgs plus to each motorbike and drove up the narrow, rough and sometimes steep valley path to establish basecamp at 4200m.

That night the team was struck by a magnitude 5.2 earthquake. This filled camp with thoughts of being on an exposed section of climb during an aftershock. The team felt the aftershocks for a few nights afterwards, but nothing during the day. After walking down to the old monastery to check if there was any damage, the team packed for their first trip to advanced basecamp (ABC) and recce of Husta. The weather was not ideal, but most days had a few hours of clear skies and sunshine.

Tito and Luca decided to spend another day at BC to allow for some mild altitude sickness. The rest of the team spent a day walking to ABC, seeing Hutsa for the first time on the final approach. Hidden in the centre of the Genyen Massif

After two days, no rains were expected which was their first window for a summit attempt. The team recced the Hutsa area next day for a line of ascent. They found a steep ice line in a hidden couloir on the E/SE face,



Mt. Hutsa, climbed by James Monypenny and Peter Linney [Photo:Robert Partridge]

and some more approachable lines accessible from the top of snow cones on the south face. They decided on the right of the two obvious options: the steeper of the two, leading directly to a snow slope that they hoped would take us to the summit ridge.

They approached the first pitch as two pairs, but confidence waned in one of each pair, due to a lack of recent mixed climbing or hypoglycaemic compulsions which had caused all the Snickers bars to be eaten before even tying in. This left James and Rob to attempt the line and see where it went. With no real expectations of summiting, they pushed on, swinging leads with some simul climbing sections up the 500m couloir, tending away from leading blocks as neither of them had really acclimatised yet.



They made the snow ramp, which led to the summit ridge. Four long pitches with some interesting steep but short mixed sections led to the summit from there. They rappelled the last four pitches, and a slightly more direct line back into the initial couloir, returning to ABC in a round trip of 17 hours. They considered the line to be 800m with multiple pitches up to Scottish 6 / M5, and named it *Yak Attack*.

At the dawn of the 1st of October, the monsoon season was clearly over. The wind changed to the north, the summit of Genyen was now visible for the rest of the time there, and the forecast good. Tito and Luca were back at BC having recced an unclimbed 6000m peak further up the same valley approach to Hutsa. They had left kit to return for a summit attempt in the next window.

Having acclimatised by now, and with a better idea of the climbing and conditions on Hutsa, psyche was restored, so they headed back to Hutsa ABC for a second round of attempts in our original pairs.

Tom and I attempted our line from days earlier, but found the snow slope warm, steep and unappealing. We rapped the couloir and returned to camp. James and Peter made an incredible ascent of the steep ice line in their hidden couloir. They summited long after midnight, returning to ABC after almost 30 hours, much to the relief of Heather, our latest team member who had walked into ABC to meet them. James and Pete gave the line WI6, M6 and named it *Holographic Jesus* after buying a holographic wall hanging of Jesus' Last Supper from the monastery shop!

Meanwhile Tito and Luca had managed to summit their objective: the unclimbed and unnamed 5912m peak S-E from Hutsa. Three days and two bivouacs were needed due to uncertain weather on the first day.

They climbed the west face via a system of snow fields and ridges on the southern side of the wall. One piton remained on the crux rocky section. They descended through the north part of the wall. Overall difficulties: D, M4 70deg snow (30 Sept - 2nd Oct).



Peter, Tito and Luca left as they had limited time. Strapping their bags to porters' bikes they headed out of the massif for Litang.

James, Heather, Tom and Rob remained at the basecamp. Inspired by the splitter cracks in Dave Anderson's photos, and with a clear weather window for the remainder of the trip, they headed up a huge hanging valley with an epic boulder field towards "sharp beaked" Shachun. Tom and Rob made the first attempt, getting to half height on the left skyline ridge. The next day James, Heather and Rob climbed the same line, leading in blocks through mixed ground, snow slopes and initial granite cracks for seven pitches. James took over and climbed six splitter pitches up to E2 / 6b, taking the team to the snow cap and last spires of the summit. Pulling all the tricks out of the bag, James climbed the final two pitches to "chevaux" the summit spire via some very bold climbing, followed by lassoing of the summit spires.

They returned to ABC, slept, and descended to BC, to find Tom amidst the packing up of a seven-person, 20-day campsite. They tied the remaining food and kit to the back of our friendly monks' bikes and started our journey home.

The trip was sponsored by Rab & Vango/Force Ten, the BMC with an expedition grant and individual sponsors; Tom, Rob, Peter & James - DMM, Luca Vallata - Scarpa, Grivel, Salewa, Tutto Sport Longarone and Cousin Trestec, Tito Arosio - Grivel, Kayland, Cousin Trestec and WildClimb, Heather Swift - Mountain Hardwear

From the report by Robert Partridge

Small Australian-Chinese team explores new ground in Tibet

A team of three Australian and two Chinese climbers rendezvoused in late October to make the first ascent of the previously undocumented 5678-meter peak they named Xialongrezha to the west of the Genyen massif in the Shaluli Range, Sichuan, China.

The expedition consisted of Zhang Jiyue, and Alex Tang, both from China, and climbers Mitch Murray, Rob Baker and Ed Hannam, from Australia.



Xialongrezha: The red line shows the approximate route of Standing Room Only on the West Face of Xialongrezha (5678m). The first four pitches are obscured below the fin of rock. [Photo: Rob Baker]

They climbed Xialongrezha in 12 pitches with some simul climbing and simul soloing. Some of the pitches were notably run out, and they stopped about 20 meters short of the summit because of snow conditions on the smooth rock slabs that didn't offer any protection, and also "out of respect for local Tibetan lore." They called their route Standing Room Only (Russian Alpine Grade 5a, Scottish IV, M4, 650m).

Hannam wrote the following report on their ascent:

Relatively well known, the eastern and central areas of Genyen have been visited regularly for over a decade, including ascents by Sarah Hueniken, Dave Anderson and Joe Puryear," Hannam wrote. "Mt. Genyen itself was first climbed in the 1990s by a Japanese team. It wasn't lost on us that our trip coincided exactly with the tenth anniversary of the deaths of Charlie Fowler and Christine Boskoff.



The western side of the Genyen mountains is accessed via four days travel along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway from Chengdu via Kangding, Xinduqiao, the 'Tibetan Disneyland' town of Litang and the border town of Batang, then a small road over a 5000-meter pass almost unknown even to the locals," Hannam continued. "Twenty-five kilometres from the upper Yangtze that forms the administrative border, Xialongrezha is prominently visible from the small hamlet at the end of the road, the name translating as 'place of big-horned animals and large boulders.'

We planned to do a first ascent with no additional support, something developed over many previous trips to western Sichuan/eastern Tibet. Going into undocumented terrain completely self-sufficient, our only limitation was the loads we could carry, acclimation and the weather, having banked on the dependable early winter window directly after the last squall of the south Asian monsoon and before the first snows arrived. This year didn't disappoint, with an unbroken string of fifteen days without any form of precipitation.

Base Camp was several kilometres from the village through a beautiful pine and lichen forest to a sunny vale at 4200 meters. A pastoral delight, with clear aquamarine rushing streams, flocks of pheasants and lazy yaks, we did sorties higher up and after three nights, to consolidate, we decided to move the entire BC up to 4900 meters rather than just a light 'assault bivvy.' This involved heavy carries up several kilometres of marsh, boulder fields and scree.

Base Camp II was a true high Tibetan location; stark and lunar. By a small glacially fed lake, the high moraine and room-sized boulders showed no signs of visitation aside from thirsty antelope and small, colourful birds. The difference between direct sun and shade was a +20 Celsius and -10 Celsius differential that bookended each day.

From vantage points along the approach, it was clear the premium route on the west face was the jilted central couloir. We juggled thoughts about various other route alternatives but confirmed the central couloir after a reconnaissance day onto the glacier beneath.

As the route was steep, our acclimation at threshold and the amazing weather window getting on, we led in blocks, seconding together for speed. With good teamwork, good rock and solid snow this worked efficiently.



After soloing the 90-meter glacial snout to the couloir's base cone, Mitch powered us through the next three pitches, then Ed led up to and around where the couloir changed direction, including a long double pitch with a vigorous traverse. This was followed by Rob launching up five run out pitches on lessening snow quality that ended in a pitch dug through to the slab below the cornice on the summit ridge. A further half-pitch by [me] confirmed the sketchy snow and serious fall potential, leaving the bizarre summit formation unclimbed out of respect for sanity and local Tibetan lore.

The couloir presented no good options for bivies so all 12 pitches were climbed in a single push, nonstop effort on new terrain.

Experience from previous trips had us carrying an array of alpine pro, but we ended up using a time-proven rack of small- to mid-sized cams and wires, beaks and pitons and an occasional screw. Aside from the upper two pitches the snow was excellent, with a mix of glacial and alpine ice. Rock in the western cluster is grade-A granite, fissured with finger- to hand-width cracks splitting contiguous slabs and faces topped wild gendarmes, gargoyles and features.

Chopping through the cornice we could see eastward into the main Genyen area, with 6200-meter Mt. Genyen and other 5500-meter-plus peaks clearly visible. Westward, in the other direction, we could make out long ranges of robust peaks over 6000 meters beyond the closed Tibetan border.

At 4 p.m. we began the many rappels that would get us back to camp at 10 p.m.

Continuing the good weather streak, we spent the following day laying on sun-warmed granite boulders and eating before starting the heavily loaded return to the village. Upon returning to Batang we consumed the hotel's entire supply of roast duck.

The trip was entirely self-funded.

From The Alpinist



Tibet's Jang Tsang Go climbed

On 20 September 2016 Domen Kastelic, Olov Isaksson and Marcus Palm made what is likely to be the first ascent of Jang Tsang Go (6300m) in Tibet. The route is called Dom and graded AI4 M5.

Slovenia's Domen Kastelic and Sweden's Olov Isaksson and Marcus Palm have made what they believe is the first ascent of Jang Tsang Go, a 6300m high peak in the West Nyenchen Tanglha mountain range in Tibet.

Base camp was established on a pleasant meadow close to a stream at roughly 5000m. The next two days were used to acclimatize further and observe the mountain. They hiked to the 5800m summit of a mountain on the opposite side of the valley that provided interesting views onto Jang Tsang Go. Poor conditions forced them to wait patiently in base camp, and just before having to leave the area they received the three-day weather window they had been waiting for.

The trio departed on the 18th of September for the NE Face and after four hours reached a point on the glacier where they pitched their tent and established their advanced base camp. A short, restless night followed and they woke to clouds and wind. They ascended a lower snowfield in the dark and reached the steepest section of the route at the first light. Spindrift hampered progress on the first pitches but then they made smooth progress, climbing for 12 hours. The line they chose offered them some steep mixed and ice pitches, scratching on the slabs, exposed ridge climbing and even some wading through deep snow. Close to the summit but unsure how long the final stretch might take, they decided to bivvy somewhere on the upper section of the East face, below a rocky overhang. The next morning they were in no rush and so they waiting for the sunshine to hit the face before continuing. After the first pitch they realized they were just below the top, and two pitches later they summited. Ritual photos were taken and then they descended down the North side of the mountain; initial abseils led to terrain which they scrambled down to reach the glacier and return to BC.

The next day they packed up base camp and then made their way to the Suge La pass, but due to bureaucratic visa problems they initially



failed to reach the Tibetan valley they hoped to explore. They eventually established base camp close to the village Ji Ma Gang at 4600m but mountain they hoped to climb remained shrouded in clouds and, with only four days left, they started their return home.

From Planetmountain

South Face of Shisha Pangma in 13 hours

On May 21, 2017, Hervé Barmasse from Italy and David Göttler from Germany climbed the 2200m southwest face of Shisha Pangma (Tibet, Himalaya) in just 13 hours and in pure alpine style.

They started out from 5,850 meters at 4:45 on Sunday morning. They reached 8,024 meters at 5:45 pm the same day. 13 hours precisely to ascend the southwest face of Shisha Pangma without supplementary oxygen, without fixed ropes, without pre-installed camps and of course without the help of high-altitude porters. In short, a 2200 meters “sprint” in pure alpine style.

Sikkim and Nepal Himalaya

Kangchenjunga Skyline Project

After having reached 7200m, Simone Moro and Tamara Lunger decided to end their Skyline Project aimed at traversing the long ridgeline of Kangchenjunga. The two Italian alpinists were safely back at Base Camp.

Simone Moro and Tamara Lunger’s attempt at Kangchenjunga ended at 7200m but with important experience gained. The two Italian mountaineers had planned on traversing along the long and difficult ridge of the third highest mountain in the world.

The Italians broke the news themselves via Facebook, directly from the Base Camp. Moro and Lunger had reached Camp 3 at 6600m and next day they climbed on up to 7200m. Unfortunately Moro felt weak due to stomach illness that had been troubling him throughout the expedition, and the two took the wise decision to descend to Base Camp.

New Catalan climbs in Nepal

In a three week trip, Catalan mountaineers Oriol Baró, Roger Cararach and Santiago Padrós climbed two new routes on Nepal's 6000m peaks: 'Pilar Dudh Khunda' up the SSW arete of Karyolung (6511m) and 'Nepali Sun' which terminates at 6900m on the South Face of Numbur (6959m).

The three mountaineers reached Lake Dudh Khunda, situated to the south of the Sagarmatha National Park, in mid-October and immediately began observing the three main summits that surround this sacred lake: Numbur (6959m), Khatang (6853m) and Karyolung (6511m).



Lake Dudh Khunda and the mountains Numbur, Khatang and Karyolung [Photo: Oriol Baró, Roger Cararach, Santi Padrós]

On 29 October, 2016, within a couple of days of establishing Base Camp at 4600m, the trio began climbing up the SSW spur of Karyolung which, after the initial rocky pedestal, leads to a central section of snow and rock, before finishing up ramps of snow, ice and mixed terrain. The trio required two bivouacs and three days overall to establish their Pilar Dudh Khunda. 1400m long, it breaches difficulties up to VI/6a, AI4, M4. The



descent was initially carried out along the North Ridge, before heading down via a series of abseils onto the glacier below. Base Camp was reached late in the evening on 31 October.

After resting for a day the Catalans slowly ascend the glacier once again towards the base of Numbur. At 4:00 am on 4 November Baro and Padros began climbing up the south face; the idea was to climb the 1100m that separated their tent from the summit in a single day but towards 14:30 and at circa 6900, they decided to retreat due to poor snow conditions. Abseiling down the line of ascent, in less than three hours they returned to their tent. The attempt has been called Nepali Sun and the 1000m line has been graded VI/ 5, M4.

From Planetmountain

Three new routes in Nepal's Rolwaling Valley

In autumn of 2016, Nik Mirhashemi and Mark Pugliese climbed two potential new routes and one confirmed new route on three different peaks on their first trip to the Himalaya.

The two Americans arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal, Oct. 10, and spent a week getting their permits in order before traveling to the village of Na, which was their hub for the rest of the trip.

"After a few acclimatization hikes and some really fun bouldering we slept up at Yalung Ri basecamp (4800m)," Mirhashemi said. Yalung Ri (5647m) is a popular trekking peak. The next day, October 23, the two men headed up what they thought was a new route on Yalung Ri.

"We climbed snowy slabs through a few small rock bands (M4) on the north face and then corkscrewed around the east ridge to the south side after a failed attempt to reach the west ridge," Mirhashemi said. "From there low fifth-class [climbing] led to the tiny rock summit."

That's when they realized they were not on top of Yalung Ri but something else. They had apparently climbed a peak to the north of Yalung Ri known locally as Norbu Peak (5634m). They descended the way they came and named their potential new route Wrong Way Bud (5.6 M4, 500m).



The pair returned to Na for two days of rest and then set up an advance basecamp under the west face of Chugimago North (5945m) on the Yalung Glacier. On October 28 the men climbed “through steep flutings and a few short mixed sections (M4) on the northwest face to reach the north ridge.” Mirhashemi said. “Unfortunately, a corniced section of ridgeline prevented us from reaching the true summit and we stopped 100 meters short. We followed tracks from another party down the north ridge, rappelling and down climbing to a notch in the ridge. From there we [rappelled] an 800-foot wall in the dark to the glacier below and descended to [basecamp].”

They dubbed the potential new route Witness the Sickness (M4 AI4, 75 degrees, 500m).

Following two more rest days in Na the men set up under the West Face of Chugimago (6258m). The next day, November 1, they started up a line to the right of the 2014 Slovenian route (M4 90 degrees 900 meters) and on the right side of a “major rock buttress.”

“The lower route consisted of steep snow and neve up to 70 degrees with some short sections of AI3 and M4, most of which we soloed,” Mirhashemi reported. “A leftward traverse brought us to the base of a 1,000-foot headwall that we climbed in six pitches up to AI5 M6 with one wild pitch of 80- to 90-degree snow. Once on the north ridge darkness hit us and we found an excellent bivy site at 6100 meters next to a prominent gendarme. With the long nights this time of year we endured a long, cold night. Electing to go light we had left our sleeping bags and brought the tent and [puffy jackets]. The next morning, we continued up the north ridge past a short rock step to the summit.”

Eight rappels and much down climbing returned the pair to basecamp and they were back in Na that evening. They titled this confirmed new route Mixed Emotions (M6 AI5, 80 degrees, 900m).

In retrospect, Mirhashemi said that sleeping in a tent with puff jackets and no sleeping bags “might be a better technique for short nights in the Alaskan summer” than in the Himalaya.

The trip was partially funded by the American Alpine Club Live Your Dream Grant.

From The Alpinist

First alpine style ascent of Gimmigela East's North Face

On November 8-10 Austrians Hansjorg Auer and Alex Blumel climbed the previously untouched North Face (M4, 85-degree ice, 1200m) of Gimmigela East (7005m), the sub-peak of Gimmigela Chuli (7350m) in Nepal. It was only the third ascent of Gimmigela East after Japanese teams climbed the peak's east ridge in 1993 and 1994.

"I guess we were also the first people to reach this mountain from the Nepal side," Auer said, citing past records in the American Alpine Journal and the Himalayan Database.

They trekked for five days through the jungle along the Tamar River, following up the higher plateaus of Ghunsa Valley. The BC was placed a little further up from Pangpema Base Camp.

The pair started the acclimatizing trips on Drohmo's South Ridge (6850m) and after three nights at 5900 meters, they started up on November 8.

Gimmigela East: This photo shows Gimmigela East (7005m) from a vantage point above the team's base camp. [Photo: Elias Holzkenecht]





Due to a wet monsoon with high precipitation they found the 1200-meter high face in perfect conditions. After two bivies with the second one on the final summit ridge they reached the summit on November 10, at 7.30 a.m. A cold, windy but clear morning allowed the duo to see far into the great mountain range of Sikkim and to the unexplored East Face of Kangchenjunga (8586m).

“It was one of those expeditions where it all came together perfectly. A great project, an even greater friendship, a fast and light alpine-style first ascent, and a ‘King Line’ on a 7000-meter peak in one of the most remote places of the Himalayas,” said [Auer].

From The Alpinist

Everest - Hillary Step collapsed

The Hillary Step, the famous rock barrier located shortly below the summit of Everest, seems to have collapsed, probably due to the terrible earthquake that shook Nepal in 2015. British mountaineer and commercial expedition leader Tim Mosedale broke the news after having reached the summit of the highest mountain in the world on 16 May 2017.

Kumaun and Garhwal Himalaya

Direct route up Thalay Sagar North Face(6904m)

In September 2016 Russian mountaineers Dmitry Golovchenko, Dmitry Grigoriev and Sergey Nilov made the first ascent of Moveable Feast (1400m), a difficult new climb the North Face of Thalay Sagar (6904m) in the Indian Himalayas.

Over a ten day period in mid-September Dmitry Golovchenko, Dmitry Grigoriev and Sergey Nilov climbed a stunning route up the North Face of Thalay Sagar in the Garhwal Himalaya. The new route tackles a line up the huge buttress to the left of the obvious Central Couloir, to the right *One Way Ticket* established in 2003 by Frenchmen Stéphane Benoist and Patrice Glairon-Rappaz. On the upper section it crosses *Attraverso lo specchio*, the impressive attempt up the NE Ridge carried out in 1994 by the Italians and also the 1983 *Polish - Norwegian* route.



Thalay Sagar North Face: The red line marks the route and camps of Moveable Feast on Thalay Sagar (6904m), India. [Photo: Dmitry Golovchenko]

Golovchenko, Grigoriev and Nilov started up their *Moveable Feast* on 9 September and, in a remarkable single push, reached the summit on 17 September. They descended via the original route up the mountain, climbed in 1979 and returned to base camp on 19 September. The overall grade for the 1400m outing is estimated at Russian 6B (the most difficult on the Russian scale), or ED2, and this breaks down into M7, WI5, 5c free climbing and A3 aid.

Golovchenko stated: “Our route starts from a crevasse, between ice and rock. The first 500-600 meters climb a steep slope of ice and snow. Then you deal with the first bastion, vertical rock with sets of cracks all filled with ice. It took us 2 days to climb 200 meters. Due to the wind and weather conditions even the vertical sections were covered in snow and ice. And if you see rock, it most probably means that it is both steep and smooth. Further up, mixed climbing begins up the 300-400m high, 70-80° rock barrier. One of the ledges for our tent was under the overhanging rock (we had to chop some ice to build it) and we found some equipment there: ropes and some aid climbing gear. We assume it was left by the

1994 Italian expedition. One pitch further leads to the summit bastion: black and quite loose rock, overhanging at 110 degrees. We tried to bypass this, however we were unsuccessful and eventually decided to climb it straight up. After the bastion, the final section starts and a snow slope leads you straight to the summit. Here we took some pictures and later we found some Indian fixed ropes and used them for the descent.”

Himachal Pradesh

Shiv Shankar – 6050m – First ascent of the North Buttress

After twenty-nine years apart, the fabled duo of Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders reunited for another first ascent--the North Buttress (ED 1100m) of Sersank Peak, aka Shiv Shankar (6050m) in the Indian Himalaya on

N Face of Sersank: The red line shows Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders' line of ascent on Sersank Peak (6050m) via the North Buttress (ED 1100m).
[Photo: Fowler/Saunders collection]

Fowler on N Buttress of Sersank: Fowler climbing on the North Buttress of Sersank Peak.
[Photo: Victor Saunders]





Descent on Sersank: This photo shows the descent route. “[The way down] was very complex and satisfying glacial terrain involving several abseils from abalakovs,” said Mick Fowler. [Photo: Fowler/Saunders collection]

October 3, 2016.

The pair set off up the face September 28 and returned to base camp after eight days on the go.

“The technical difficulties were exciting, varied and challenging,” Fowler said. “It was a brilliant and memorable outing. The first day was crossing the Sersank La to the foot of the face. The second day was slow going with powder on steep rock. The third day was mainly a sharp, exposed crest with powder and rock challenges (crampons removed at one point) and the fourth, fifth and sixth days were fantastic ice/mixed climbing. Day 7 was mixed/snow climbing to the summit followed by glacial terrain in descent. Day 8 was very complex and satisfying glacial terrain involving several abseils from abalakovs.”

Fowler’s interest in Sersank began from a report he read several years ago. It was the British mountaineer Martin Moran who really prompted our interest in Sersank. Moran had led a trek across the Sersank La in



2011 and wrote that the north side presented a ‘tremendous north face of linked White Spiders’

A Japanese team credited with the first ascent of the mountain in 2008 stopped 40-meters shy of the true summit after climbing there from the west side.

“The 150-meter-high rocky summit pyramid was previously unclimbed,” Fowler said. “The Japanese reported that the local people asked them not to climb to the summit for religious reasons. We asked about this on our way through the last village but the locals there said they had no objections to our climbing to the true summit. And so we did.”

Kishtwar Himalaya

A new Route on South face of Brammah II

Kishtwar National Park in the Kashmir region of Northern India recently reopened in 2012 after a nearly twenty-year hiatus.

After thirty hours of air travel and three days of driving Jeff Shapiro and Chris Gibisch found themselves standing on the side of the Chenab River wondering how to cross. A hired local guide pointed out a cable trolley, which they utilized to ferry loads across with the help of porters. Once on the other side, a six-mile hike to the foot of the glacier led to the base camp a few miles beyond. Three days later, they found themselves with a base camp four miles from where they had planned. Once camp was set, Jeff and Chris set out to explore the area, checking conditions and searching for possible approaches. Each day, they hiked more than ten miles trying to acclimatize while searching for access to the peaks. It was warm and the lower portions of the mountains were dry. They focused their attention on the South Face of Brammah II since its base was at a higher elevation.

Eventually the cloudless skies gave way to rain. After three patient days in camp, they began the push for Brammah II. After two days on the move, they reached the base of the South Face and were able to finally lay eyes on it for the first time. There were two obvious lines, but the



The South Face of Brammah II (6425) with Chris Gibisch and Jeff Shapiro's route. Bivy site is marked in red. [Photo: Chris Gibisch]

warm temperatures negated their initially chosen path. Rock fall and wet slides obliterated the line, so the attention shifted left to a less objectively hazardous route.

They woke up at two in the morning, and by three, they were on the go. They needed to get through the initial lower mixed section before the sun came out, and the mountain started coming apart. Conditions were favourable with the night time freeze and made quick work of the lower face while a dramatic lightning storm illuminated the sky. By the time the sun reached them, they had a straightforward route of mixed snow, ice and rock above. As the day progressed, the distant glacier below faded, so did their clothing. Under the bright sunlight they were down to fleeces. After 13 hours on the go, Chris climbed to the southwest ridge and found a great bivy site.

The next morning, they were up early, beginning to climb before sunrise. With less elevation to gain, a shorter day was anticipated. The climbing progressed as it did the previous day and early on, they reached the



crux; the shallow corner of ice and rock turned out to be far more enjoyable than difficult. Some barehanded rock climbing and dry tooling kept them smiling as they climbed through the rock band. Jeff and Chris were now near the top of the South Face proper with what appeared to be only a few long pitches to go. With the increased altitude, the snow conditions worsened, and their pace slowed. Chris looked at my watch and anticipated a summit time of around 5 or 6 p.m. They continued to simul climb through the snow and ice, inching the way to the summit. Finally, Chris grabbed the rack and climbed on. Sixty meters later, Chris was sitting within inches of the corniced summit tethered to the rock at his feet. Jeff reached by 6:30 p.m., and they enjoyed the spectacular summit view as the sun dipped to the horizon.

They made approximately five rappels to get off the upper South Face and onto the lower ice slope. Without a suitable flat spot to bivy, they chopped seats in the ice and settled in for the night. The next morning, they threaded their way down the lower face, reaching the glacial basin before the high temperatures could catch them in the danger zone up high. It took another day and a half to reach the base camp.

The expedition was financed through the Mugs Stump award and Copp-Dash Inspire award committees.

News & Views

IMF News

Indian Mountaineering Foundation lowers 2017 permit fees to promote select peaks

The Indian Mountaineering Foundation recently announced that it is offering reduced permit fees for 81 select mountains in the Indian Himalaya. The “promotional scheme” is for this year only.

“The aim of the campaign is to create more interest and awareness about the vast potential of climbing in the Indian Himalayas,” said Mayank Vyas-Singh, Honorary Editor for the IMF newsletter, Apex, who was relaying the information from Wing Commander S.K. Kutty, Honorary Secretary of



the IMF. “Compared to the number of open peaks above 6000 meters, the number of foreign expeditions visiting India [is much] less.... There is no decline [in visitors], but [there isn’t] much growth either. Also a majority of these expeditions go to just a few popular peaks. Hence the aim was also to attract expeditions to some of the lesser-known peaks within the Indian Himalaya.”

[More information is available at the IMF website.](#)

Augmented Climbing Wall

A NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY WAY TO PRACTICE, LEARN & HAVE FUN

Fun Climbing for Everyone

Augmented Climbing Wall combines projected graphics and proprietary body tracking to create interactive games and training applications. The games and applications make the training fun, motivate kids to move and give feedback to help you become a better climber. Augmented reality climbing is suitable for any skill level and age.

Benefits of Augmented Climbing Wall

Interactive graphics and games maximize the capacity of any wall. Even small walls can have hundreds of distinct routes and games that create new fun challenges for climbers. The highly visual wall is also entertaining to spectators and can be used for displaying logos and ads.

Useful in Different Locations

It can be installed on existing walls at climbing centres or on new ones at indoor entertainment centres and playgrounds. A smaller but versatile wall is also ideal for fitness gyms with strict space requirements. The setup can even be used at events or on mobile walls.

Time Trial is a new interactive rock climbing video game produced by Randori, and hosted at Brooklyn Boulders Somerville twice each month.



Players are given the opportunity to compete in a dynamic setting featuring augmented reality on a climbing wall. You have never seen anything quite like this before.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol7kLrpoqMs>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwticv9ai_Q

Dirtbag: The Legend of Fred Beckey

Hailed as one of the most influential climbers of all time, Fred Beckey is the original American dirtbag—one who abandons societal norms and material comforts in pursuit of a nomadic mountaineering lifestyle.

This rebel athlete's lifetime of accomplishments set the bar for the entire sport. He shattered records with an unparalleled string of superhuman first ascents, bushwhacking trails, and pioneering direct routes thought previously impassable.

Beckey burned bridges, eschewed fame and thrived as a loner so that his only obligation would remain conquering the next summit. He kept meticulous personal journals where he mused on everything from arcane geology to his romantic life, to the myriad sunrises he witnessed from vantages not seen by anyone else on Earth. An environmentalist before there was such a term, Beckey's legacy includes 13 essential books that act as blueprints for new generations. He is still defiantly climbing today at age 94.

The videos are worth a watch!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05RiYBruHpU>

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/dirtbagmovie/dirtbag-the-legend-of-fred-beckey-a-feature-docume>

Piolets d'Or Awards – 2017

Jeff Lowe is the recipient of the 2017 Life Time Achievement Award.

The honoured Ascents for 2017 are received by Paul Ramsden and Nick Bullock from UK for their ascent of Nyachen Tanglah (7046m) in Tibet and the Russian team of Dmitry Golovchenko, Dmitry Grigoriev, and Sergey Nilov for their ascent of Thalay Sagar (6904m) in India.



Obituaries

Warwick Deacock

Warwick Deacock was the Hon. Local Secretary of the Himalayan Club in Australia for 27 years. He will be dearly missed by the club.

Warwick Deacock, who has died aged 90, was a mountaineer, entrepreneur, conservationist and roving adventurer; after serving as a marine during the war, he became an experienced alpinist, emigrated to Australia, where he set up the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and later introduced camel trekking to the Australian outback.



He was born in London on December 23 1926 Warwick and Antonia Deacock and educated at Stamford

School, Lincolnshire. He developed an early love of adventure, serving as a bicycle messenger during the Blitz, but his passion for wild places was sparked when his school was evacuated to Wales.

In 1943 he ran away from school to join the Royal Marines, where he gained his Commando Green Beret. He was later commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant and sent to the Far East at the end of the war. After being appointed OIC at Stanley Prison, Hong Kong, where suspected Japanese war criminals were interrogated, he commanded a motor launch assigned to hunt opium smugglers.

Having learnt to climb as a commando, after demobilisation in 1947 he spent three years interspersing mountaineering and sailing trips with various jobs, including long distance lorry driving. In 1950, however, he decided to join up again, as a regular officer in the Middlesex Regiment.



For most of the next decade his adventuring took place within the Army; he had attachments to the Parachute Regiment (during which period he climbed two virgin peaks in Alaska) and to the Foreign Legion in Indo-China. He served a tour as CO of the British Forces Ski and Mountain School in the Austrian Alps and helped to set up Adventure Training as part of the military curriculum of all three services.

In 1956 he joined the SAS and was involved in missions in the Malayan jungle during the communist insurgency before being sent to Oman. He was a leading member, in 1958, of the Joint Service Expedition which made the first ascent of Rakaposhi, in the Nagar Valley, Pakistan.

In 1959, by now having reached the rank of major, Deacock resigned his commission and, accompanied by his South African wife Antonia and his infant daughter, he emigrated to Australia. There he started the first Australian Outward Bound School on the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales, and introduced, with much success, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

With his young family Deacock then spent a year travelling around Australia in a VW van and worked as a grave digger in Queensland, a biscuit-creamer in Melbourne and a pub bouncer. He also continued his climbing, attempting, in 1963, to conquer Big Ben, the active volcano that dominates Heard Island in the southern Indian Ocean. The attempt was unsuccessful and Deacock and his companions only just escaped with their lives, having at one stage been reduced to eating raw penguin.

Undaunted, two years later he organised another expedition, and persuaded the explorer and mountaineer Major Bill Tilman to accompany him as sailing master of Patanela, the 63ft. schooner Deacock had chartered for the eight week approach voyage. When the five man climbing team attempted to land on the island's lava beach their inflatable capsized three times before they were able to get ashore. None the less, they reached the summit, due, in no small measure, to Deacock's leadership skills.

Deacock's next project was to set up Ausventure, a specialised travel agency, in conjunction with Mountain Travel, the firm his old friend



the Gurkha Colonel Jimmy Roberts was creating in Nepal. In 1967 Ausventure organised the first ever holiday trek to Everest Base Camp. It was a great success, and pioneered the kind of adventuring for which Australian backpackers would become well known. Deacock went on to make numerous trips to Nepal, India and South America, and led two Australian mountaineering trips in the Himalayas in the 1970s. In 1988 he and his wife spent eight months trekking the length of the Nepalese and Indian Himalaya. He was Honorary Nepalese Consul General in Australia for 10 years.

Having first encountered camel travel during his time in Oman, Deacock became intrigued by possibility of doing the same in Australia. Afghan camels had been used for transport in the outback until replaced by trucks the 1920s, but they still roam wild in the Australian deserts. With the help of Rex Ellis, who was re-domesticating the camels, Deacock organised desert camel treks. Deacock himself crossed the Gibson desert and the Simpson Desert by camel and in 1997 he made the first camel crossing of the Great Victoria Desert.

The same year he was awarded the Order of Australia for his services to conservation and the environment.

In later life, Deacock and Antonia, an architect, moved from the Sydney area to a house she had designed at Maleny, overlooking the Glass House Mountains. After her death in 2012 he returned to the south, often staying in a yurt in the bush at Chakola.

He is survived by a son and a daughter.

From the Telegraph

Ueli Steck

The renowned mountaineer Ueli Steck, known for his rapid ascents of the Alps which earned him the nickname the “Swiss Machine”, died in an accident in Nepal near Mount Everest.

Steck, who was 40 and one of the most celebrated climbers of his generation, was killed after falling to the foot of Nuptse, according to

Mingma Sherpa of the Seven Summit Treks company that had organised the expedition.

Sherpa told Reuters that Steck's body had been recovered and was being taken to Kathmandu.

Kamal Prasad Parajuli, an official with Nepal's department of tourism, confirmed Steck had died while climbing Nuptse and that he had planned an ascent of Everest.

Parajuli said Steck, who climbed Everest in 2012, had slipped and fallen 1,000 metres (3,300 feet) in the Western Cwm along the normal route to Everest.



Ueli Steck

In a statement, the climber's family said the circumstances surrounding his death were still unclear. "The family is infinitely sad and asks that the media refrain from speculating about his death out of respect for Ueli," they said. "As soon as reliable information becomes available, the media will be informed."

His death prompted tributes from the climbing community.

The British Mountaineering Council tweeted: "RIP Ueli Steck: legendary mountaineer and all-round great guy."

The writer and climber Ed Douglas also said Steck's nickname had failed to capture the essence of the

man. "One thing Ueli Steck wasn't and that's a machine," he tweeted. "Warm and at times surprisingly fragile. But not a machine."

Steck was the first casualty in the spring mountaineering season in Nepal that began in March and will end in May. Hundreds of foreign climbers are on the mountains to attempt to scale Himalayan peaks in May when there are a few windows of favourable weather.



He was best known for his speed-climbing, including setting several records for ascending the north face of the Eiger, a classic mountaineering peak in the Bernese Alps that he climbed in two hours and 47 minutes without using a rope.

In 2013, he achieved Nepal after almost dying in a fall there in 2007.

For that he received the Piolet d'Or, the following year.

In 2015, Steck decided to climb all 82 peaks in the Alps higher than 4,000m, travelling between mountains by foot, bike and paraglider only. He completed the feat in 62 days, helping cement his reputation.

Steck once said he considered himself an outsider on the mountaineering scene because athletic achievement was more important to him than adventure.

In a recent post on his website, he reflected on the transience of success in mountaineering and the inevitable decline that comes with age. "A record is broken again and again, and the world keeps on turning," he wrote. "You are getting older and there comes a time when you have to adjust your projects to your age."

He suffered a setback during his last trip to Everest, in 2013, when he became involved in a violent altercation with a group of local guides. On his return this year, he aimed to perform a quick climb of Everest and nearby Mount Lhotse, including an overnight stop at more than 8,000m, an altitude known as the "death zone" because the human body's performance is reduced to 20% of its normal rate.

Speaking to the Swiss daily Tages-Anzeiger last month about his expedition, he said: "When I'm on Everest I can stop at any point. The risk is therefore quite small. For me it's primarily a physical project. Either I get through, or I don't have the strength for the whole traversal."

Asked about how he measured success, Steck told the paper: "Of course I want to climb Everest and Lhotse. But that's a very high goal. Failure for me would be to die and not come home."

From The Guardian



The man to remember

The side of Ueli not mentioned in the press

The latest controversy about the ascents' proofs of Ueli's saddened me immensely. Particularly as there seemed to be a self-selected tribunal set up at the Piolets d'Or, the very event that I chose to award Ueli and a team of climbers for their amazing feat at the attempt to save Inaki Ochoa's life in 2008.

I have always advocated to leave the benefit of the doubt if there is no physical proof of an ascent. What are the consequences of one climber falsely claiming that he made an ascent? Whose business is it to judge whether a claim is true or not? Ah, here comes the word : business. Could it be that the sponsors of the other sponsored climbers might try and align the false exploits and pressure their sponsored climbers to do the same or better? Could it be the jealousy of other sponsored climbers not getting as such a rich sponsoring package as the so-called liar climber?

There are no serious consequences to humanity of a summit is falsely claimed by a rogue climber. No one is going to die from it. If a scientist claims a false result, the consequences can be more serious. But mountaineering is a game of no gain whatsoever for humanity. And please do not quote the so-called scientific expeditions. I know them and they are mostly an excuse for some climbers to get a grant to collect some samples. The only gain is very personal: ego and sponsorship.

Which brings me to what can mountaineering bring to humanity? One aspect it can highlight and we have tried to do it by setting up the high altitude mountain rescue award, Spirit of Mountaineering, is morality, a big word, maybe not too fashionable in the current political climate. There is a sense in rewarding ethics when they are played out in an increasingly mediatised World as an example of good behaviour. Nothing beats acts. And that is exactly what Ueli did in 2008 when he risked his life and jeopardised his own summit attempt to try and save Inaki Ochoa's life. He went up solo to reach Inaki, without proper equipment. Inaki died in his arms.

This is the man I would like to celebrate.

Françoise Call
Trustee, Spirit of Mountaineering
Ex Hon. Sec. The Alpine Club



Erich Abram, the last Italian K2 mountaineer

South Tyrolean mountaineer Erich Abram passed away on Monday 16 January 2017 at Bozen aged 95. The talented mountaineer and climber played an important role in the 1954 Italian expedition that made the first ascent of K2.

Born in 1922 in Sterzing, South Tyrol, Abram died on Monday aged 95 having led an intense and adventurous life. His love for climbing and mountaineering began at an early age, and as a youngster he quickly distinguished himself as one of the most accomplished grade VI climbers of his generation. It comes as no surprise that his most famous first ascents are in the nearby Dolomites. These include the famous Abram - Führe up the SE Face of Piz Ciavazes in the Sella group, as well as routes up the West Face of Sass Pordoi and up the North Face of Cima Grande di Lavaredo.

Abram however is known above all for the fundamental role he played in the famous 1954 expedition to K2. Apart from having been one of the most active during the initial phases of the climb, preparing both camps and the route, it was Abram who gave Walter Bonatti and hunza Amir Mahdi a fundamental hand in transporting the oxygen bottles above Camp VIII. The next day these enabled Lino Lacedelli and Achille Compagnoni to climb to the summit. On that Friday 30 July 1954 Abram stopped, absolutely exhausted and completely spent, at 8000m, leaving his two climbing partners with the task of breaching those final 100m to reach the agreed meeting point with Compagnoni and Lacedelli, who had preceded them. Before descending to Camp VIII Abram and his two partners had been in voice contact with the other two leaders. In short, there was no way of knowing how events would then unfold: the two groups failed to meet, and Bonatti's and Mahdi's endured a terrible bivouac out in the open at 8100m. This episode narrowly, miraculously missed transformed into tragedy and proved highly controversial in the years that followed. In the official reconstruction of the turn of events Abram was on the main witnesses also because, thanks to his specialization in refrigeration, he had also been responsible for the oxygen bottles.

But K2 aside, Erich Abram's life proved to be truly intense and special. It is recounted in the book "Erich Abram, un alpinista bolzanino - an alpinist from Bolzano" written by Augusto Golin which, with previously unpublished material, recounts the thousands of adventures of the South Tyrolean: from the war in Russia to becoming a prisoner of war, his climbs in the Dolomites, his first flights and rescues as a pilot, his love for exploration and climbing mountains. Yes, Erich Abram was the last mountaineer of that legendary K2 of the Italians, but he was also a protagonist and player of an era that no longer exists.

From Planetmountain



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Saunders following a ridge to summit: Saunders follows a ridge en route to the summit. [Photo: Mick Fowler]

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