

A high-altitude mountain landscape. In the background, a large, snow-capped mountain peak rises against a clear blue sky. The mountain's slopes are rugged, with patches of snow and exposed dark rock. In the foreground, a hiker wearing a dark jacket, a yellow backpack, and red boots stands on a rocky, gravelly ground. The hiker is using trekking poles. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day in a high-altitude environment.

# The Alpine Club

July 2010

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www.alpine-club.org.uk  
admin@alpine-club.org.uk

# Alpine Club

2/2010



## NEWSLETTER

### July 2010

#### AC Officers

President P Braithwaite  
Vice-Presidents RM Scott  
DR Buckle  
Hon Sec F Call  
Hon Treasurer RNK Baron  
Hon Ed of AJ SJ Goodwin  
Hon Librarian DJ Lovatt

#### AC Library

Chairman HR Lloyd  
Secretary MJ Hewson  
Librarian T Hudowski

Administrator Iwonna Hudowski

#### AREA NOTES

Editor ~ Paul Knott

The Alps - Lindsay Griffin

Russia & Central Asia -

Paul Knott

Greenland - Derek Fordham

Scottish Winter - Simon

Richardson

Ethiopia - Pat Littlejohn

India - Harish Kapadia

Nepal - Dick Isherwood

China & Tibet - John Town

North America - Ade Miller

Cordilleras Blanca and

Huayhuash

- Antonio Gomez Bohorquez

New Zealand - Mark Watson

Antarctica - Nick Lewis

AC Climbing Fund is  
supported by

FIRST ASCENT

Dear All,

I'm pleased to announce that **Peter Habeler** (Austria) and **Erhard Loretan** (Switzerland) have accepted the clubs offer of Hon Membership. Congratulations and welcome onboard.

Sad news - **Chris Walker**, a member since 2006, was killed in an avalanche on Buachaille Etive Mor on the 24th February 2010. More recently **John Kempe** aged 92, a member since 1952, passed away on the 10th May. **Bob Robinson**, a member since 1968 died on the 17th May and **John Moss**, a member since 1972, died on the 31st May. Our condolences go out to their family and friends. Full obituaries will appear in the next AJ.

I am desperately trying to get myself into some sort of shape for a trip to the Alps with a few committee members to attempt Mt Disgrazia, 3678m, first climbed 148 years ago by AC past President **Leslie Stephen** with **E.S.Kennedy** and **Thomas Cox** and Guide **Melchoir Anderegg**. Apparently there will be a get together in 2012 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its first ascent and the next AC President will be invited.

It would appear we are attempting it in true old fashioned Alpine Club style. See **Martin Scott's** reply to Giuseppe Miotti re: Ponti Hut availability for June (normally only the winter quarters are open)

*"Firstly, thank you for your kind offer of help - if the hut manager is able to open the hut for us that will be very helpful, we certainly do not expect any great comfort, but dinner and breakfast would be wonderful - have you had any news yet?"*

A far cry from my old days of sleeping outside huts under polysheets to help keep the costs down!

I first cast my eyes on the peak over 30 years ago whilst climbing on the South Face of Piz Badile. Always thought I would like to climb it but never imagined it would take so long.

After our Disgrazia climb, we join other AC friends to climb and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the 1st Ascent of the Grande Casse, 3855m, first climbed by past AC President **William Mathews** with Guides **Michel Croz** and **E.Favre**.

I hope my fragile ageing knees will stand the rigours of attempting 2 peaks from valley to top within a few days of each other. Oh, the pleasures of getting older! Ibuprofen (*commonly known amongst climbers of a certain age as 'vitamin i'*) and ski poles to assist the descents!

Australian mountaineer **Tim Macartney-Snape**, has agreed to be our main guest speaker at the annual dinner, Dec 4th (London venue details). To quote **Tim**, 'I will be pleased and highly honoured to represent the southern hemisphere at your annual Dinner'. **Tim** will be in the UK to take part in **Doug Scott's** one day get together of some of the world's leading Everest pioneers, presenting their accounts of **'Firsts on Everest' at the RGS 17th November 2010**. Tickets are available now. It will be a truly historic occasion, possibly never repeated. Cast to include **Reinhold Messner, Tom Hornbein, George Band, Mike Westmacott, Hildegard Diemberger, Rebecca Stephens, Julie Summers and Mike Searle**, all introduced by **Michael Palin** and possibly a good opportunity to present **Peter and Erhard** with their AC Hon Membership Certs as they are also appearing. All profits to **Community Action Nepal**.

**Tim** first climbed Everest in 1982 by the North Face, then completed an amazing journey from sea to summit, solo and without oxygen. He attempted the West Ridge but due to bad weather was forced to abandon that route and instead he eventually managed to complete the normal South East Ridge. A truly amazing journey by one of those "remarkable Australians on Everest".

Also at the RGS Wed 4th November 2010, **Henry Day** and **Chris Bonington** talk of their respective ascents of Annapurna in 1970.

**Henry's** expedition climbed the 2nd Ascent of the original French route, whilst **Chris** was the



Cover: Andy Houseman approaching the north face of Chang Himal. Photo: Nick Bullock

leader of the 1st Ascent of the South Face expedition. Also attending is **Maurice Herzog**, leader of the epic 1st ascent in 1950. I would say this is an event not to be missed.

Thanks to an extremely pro-active Hon Members Sec, **Stuart Worsfold**. Our membership is growing at a steady rate. **Well done Stuart**.

For members and friends who are climbing in Zermatt this summer, there is an opportunity to attend celebrations at **St Peter's Church**. "The parish church of the Alpine Club". The intercontinental Church Society is celebrating 140 years since the opening of St Peter's. Special services are to be held at St. Peter's, Zermatt 11th July at 10.00am. It would be wonderful if we had a good attendance.

**Stop press! As I hasten to keep the dreaded Editor happy, news has arrived of Chris' further honour. Good effort!**



**Congratulations**

Our very own **Sir Chris Bonington** has been appointed a **Commander of the Royal Victorian Order** by the Queen in the 2010 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

And finally, **John Town** assisted by **Steven Goodwin** are well on the way with a truly grand objective in getting the AC Journals digitalised. A formidable undertaking. Many thanks from all of us.

Well, that's it for now.

Have a good summer and good climbing.

**Paul Braithwaite**  
**President of the Alpine Club**

**London Venue**  
55/56 Charlotte Road  
General and Informal meetings  
Lectures start at 7.30pm

**Tuesday 13th July 2010. Derek Buckle: Cheated in China - Yangmolog Revisited**  
In the Autumn of 2009 four AC members travelled to Sichuan in an endeavour to make the first ascent of Yangmolog, 6,060m. Apart from the obvious difficulties involved in climbing this impressive mountain they had to contend with capricious weather and dishonest locals who, in addition to their exorbitant charges, stole vital equipment from the team's base camp.

**Tuesday 14th September. Mike Hale & John Rushby: An Account of the 2010 AC Expedition to Chile**  
Sixteen AC members and their guests visited the Tupungato area of the Chilean Andes where they made the first ascent of two unnamed peaks of 5,908m & 4,958m on or near the Argentinean border. They also climbed Sierra Bella South, 5,223m, and Tupungatito, 5,388m. In an area characterised by penitentes and steep boulder fields, Tupungato is rarely visited relative to its close neighbour, Aconcagua.

**Tuesday 12th October. Mike Binnie in the Cordillera Carabaya 50 years ago**  
An account of the Oxford University Peru Expedition 1960 which made seven first ascents in the hitherto unexplored Cordillera Carabaya of Southern Peru, including the the principal summit, the spectacular 5780m Allinccapac. An expedition during the tweed breeches, long wooden axes and pipe smoking era of mountaineering.

**Tuesday 26th October 2010. Paul Cherry and Dennis Gray: Open Mike at the Alpine Club**  
Click here for Preliminary Announcement

**Tuesday 9th November 2010. Johnny Dawes: Full of Myself**  
Johnny Dawes, often referred to as a living legend, first starting climbing when he was 14 and soon established a reputation as an innovative and bold climber. In 1986 he introduced the first E8 and E9 climbs to the UK with Indian Face and Gaia, respectively. These and Quarryman (E8, 7a/b) are iconic masterpieces. In this lecture Johnny will be showing video clips and describing passages from his forthcoming autobiography 'Full of Myself', which will be available for purchase on the night.

**Tuesday 23rd November 2010. Julie Summers: Everest Needs You, Mr Irvine**  
Julie, an author and historian, is a great niece of Sandy Irvine and the author of his biography 'Fearless on Everest' which was published in 2000. This promises to be a fun talk with photographs and even some moving footage of Irvine from the boat race of 1923.

**Saturday 4th December. Annual Dinner and AGM**  
At Church House, Westminster. Details to be confirmed.

**Northern Venue**

The Outside Cafe  
Hathersage

Lectures start at 7.30pm

**NORTHERN LECTURE VENUE:**

'Outside Cafe', Hathersage, Derbyshire on Wednesdays at 7.30pm  
Anyone who has an interesting trip that they are prepared to lecture on is invited to contact Edward Douglas

A small contribution is requested to cover costs.

The prospective dates for Hathersage are:

- 2010
- 12 October
- 9 November
- 8 December
- 2011
- 12 January
- 16 February
- 16 March.

**SW Venue**

Upper room of the Nova Scotia, Hotwells, Bristol, BS1 6XJ

Lectures start at 7.30pm

**SOUTH WEST VENUE:-**

Upper Room of the Nova Scotia, Cumberland Basin, Hotwells, Bristol, BS1 6XJ

The Nova Scotia Hotel is a well-known Bristol landmark, situated at the western end of the Floating Harbour, with ample local parking and good beer. Lectures start at 7.30pm.

The AC SW Regional organisers are Colin Knowles, Tony Westcott and Craig Cook

The prospective dates for the Nova Scotia are:

- 16 November 2010
- 18 January 2011
- 15 February 2011
- 15 March 2011

Hopefully the programme will include a lecture by Dave Wynne-Jones, Richard Nadin, Dave Hamilton, hopefully a Cheddar history by Martin Crocker and Martin Moran's 4000ers film, but dates up are yet to be confirmed.

**ACL in France**

Jerry Lovatt and the AC Library team is participating in the International Fair in Passy - for anyone interested who happens to be in Chamonix early August.

**Don't forget to check the Club Website**

to receive up-to-date information on AC lectures. London Lectures (General Meetings of the Alpine Club!) are normally held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at Charlotte Road.

# AC CLIMBING FUND

## Sponsored by First Ascent

The Climbing Fund supports private expeditions, provided that all participants are AC Members . . . Your future private expedition could be on this list! Details and an application form can be found on the AC web site at [www.alpine-club.org.uk](http://www.alpine-club.org.uk). The awarding committee plans to review applications twice yearly, in March and September, although there is no specific deadline for their receipt. At least three months in advance is advisable. It should be noted that successful recipients will be ineligible for consideration for additional awards for a period of three years.

### BUNKROOM IN THE CLUBHOUSE NOW OPEN!

The Club has a small bunkroom in the club house basement containing four bunks for the use of members, aspirants and associates. There are no cooking facilities however there are several restaurants and cafes nearby. The Bunkroom is normally open except when the office is closed for the long Christmas and summer breaks. We cannot accept bookings from members for Friday and Saturday nights if they would be occupying the bunkhouse alone as the Club cannot provide any emergency response over weekends. There is currently no heating in the bunkhouse at night but there are a few blankets. Users must bring a sheet sleeping bag and are advised to bring a warm sleeping bag in winter.

**Bookings must be made with the Club Administrator, 0207 613 0755( Administrator).**

As the Office is only manned on Tuesdays and Thursdays, bookings need to be made well in advance so that arrangements can be made for users to obtain a set of keys and instructions. There is no charge for the bunkroom. However, an advance deposit of twenty pounds is required for the keys.

Keys must be returned within five working days of use. Regular users may apply for a set of keys to retain for their own use.

While in occupation, members are responsible for the security of the building and have an obligation to familiarize themselves with evacuation instructions and Health and Safety requirements. Users, particularly sleeping alone, must not suffer any hearing, visual, or mobility impairments that might affect their ability to recognize an alarm signal and delay their exit from the building in an emergency.

## Help! Volunteers Needed

The AC needs volunteers to assist with the running of 55 Charlotte Road. Volunteers need to live within reach of the office and be willing to get their hands dirty with odd jobs such as decoration, moves of furniture and minor repairs, oversee small refurbishment projects as well as deal with the occasional emergency and ensure that everything is functioning properly.

We would also welcome anyone who has electrical, plumbing and carpentry skills who is prepared to help with the occasional small job. Charlotte Road is an old building is quite expensive to run and maintain. This is a way to help the club in a very direct way to keep running costs down.

Please contact Judi in the club office.

**This is important  
so please respond  
if you can.**

## November Newsletter

### Deadline

October 17th 2010

The Newsletter needs

# YOU!

The AC wants to know what it's members get up to! Your alpine and climbing adventures are of great interest. Don't be shy!

Please send (preferably by email) your contribution to the Newsletter Editor:

**Dick Turnbull,**

**Tel: 01433 630970**

**Email:**

**newsletter@  
alpine-  
club.org.uk**

"Canoeing around the  
Farne Islands?  
Birdwatching on the Fairisle?  
Ice Climbing in the Tatras?  
Rock Climbing in China?  
Alpinism in Chile?  
New Routeing in Nepal?"

### What meets would you like the Club to be running?

If you have any ideas about where and when you would like meets or what kind of meet you would like to see, please get in touch with

**Dave Wynne-Jones, Meets Secretary**

(Contact details in the handbook & email on alpinet).

Start thinking about 2010 now.

### AND... perhaps you'd like to run one?

Club meets depend on members stepping forward as meet co-ordinators. This need not be onerous & can be a lot of fun, and the club recognises the efforts of meet co-ordinators by making a contribution towards their expenses. Details can be found about the current rates on the AC website, as well as information about the whole process of co-ordinating meets.

**Don't forget the more exploratory open expeditions also attract grants from the AC Climbing Fund**

**Important**

### E-Mail ADDRESSES

If you have an e-mail address, please send it to Iwonna at

**[admin@alpine-club.org.uk](mailto:admin@alpine-club.org.uk)**

We already have them for most members, but there're quite a few missing. And remember that you can also register for Alpinet at the Club website and can then look up the latest addresses of members and change your own details, sign on to circulation lists etc.

## AC MEETS 2010-2011

Meet co-ordinators can be contacted by email using details in the members handbook or available on Alpinet, while further detailed information is available from them or by clicking on "Details" links in the Meets listing on the AC website.

**15th-29th July - Caucasus Rock Climbing Meet CANCELLED because of lack of interest.**

**17th – 24th July-Mandarfen, Pitztal (joint ABMSAC/AC)**

Hotel based meet, D,B&B from 40.5 euros pppn. Co-ordinator - [Alasdair Andrews tel 0131 667 1529](mailto:Alasdair.Andrews@alpinet.co.uk).

**24 July to 31 July-Neustift, Stubaital (joint ABMSAC/AC)**

Hotel based meet, D,B&B from 41 euros pppn. Co-ordinator - [Alasdair Andrews tel 0131 667 1529](mailto:Alasdair.Andrews@alpinet.co.uk).

**24th July to 8th August - 2010 Joint Alpine Meet: AC/CC/FRCC/ABMSAC. Bregaglia/Bernina, Vicosoprano.**

Arranged jointly for the Alpine Club, ABMSAC, Climbers Club & FRCC and their guests, for whom members accept responsibility. In addition to climbs and walks from Val Bregaglia, it is an easy journey via the Maloja pass into the Bernina.

The campsite is Camping Mulina CH-7603 Vicosoprano which is about 1 km NE of the centre of the village and is sign posted from the main road. We used this site for our last meet in the area. . [www.camping-vicosoprano.ch](http://www.camping-vicosoprano.ch). For local information see

[www.bregaglia.ch](http://www.bregaglia.ch)..For further details contact the co-ordinator, [Mike Pinney on 01935 428131](mailto:Mike.Pinney@alpinet.co.uk) or e-mail -address in handbook.

**7th August - 2010 YRC trip to Bolivia's Quimsa Cruz** –three or four weeks

We have received an invitation to join a Yorkshire Ramblers Club meet in the Quimsa Cruz.

The YRC intends about 10 days tourism/acclimatisation trek in to the area before a week or two in an area with considerable new route potential. Google Imperial Quimsa Cruz Report for an impression of the intended climbing area.

Anyone who didn't manage last year's AC Andean meet would be welcome to join the party.[Michael Smith \( 07814010165 or email\)](mailto:Michael.Smith@alpinet.co.uk)

**28th August - 11th Sept. - Rocking in the Dolomites!**

Joint meet AC/CC/ABMSAC/FRCC based in Cortina. Co-ordinator [Jeff Harris 07816459235](mailto:Jeff.Harris@alpinet.co.uk) (NB new address & home phone no. from end Feb.)

**4th - 12th September – Cornwall – Joint AC/CC meet at the Count House, Bosigran**

Contact [Ron or Ruth Chambers - 07890 782636](mailto:Ron.Chambers@alpinet.co.uk)

**September – Scottish dinner meet - dates tbc - co-ordinator needed.**

**22nd & 23rd October - Reunion Meet - George Starkey Hut, Patterdale**

An opportunity for all participants in 2010 meets to share memories, slides and data projections as well as getting out on the hill together again. [Mike Pinney 01935 428131](mailto:Mike.Pinney@alpinet.co.uk).

**24 September to 22 October 2010. Indian Himalaya Jiwa Nala 2010 Expedition.**

This will be an exploratory mountaineering expedition to the Jiwa Nala valley of the Great Himalayan National Park. After flying to Delhi we shall travel by train to Chandigarh followed by road to Neuli to the south of the National Park. From here it will be a 4 day trek to our proposed base camp within a cirque of 5000m peaks at the head of the valley. We hope to attempt some of these mountains which we believe have not been hitherto climbed. Initial estimates are that it will be around £500 for the flight from London to Delhi plus a further £1150 for in country costs. Those interested should contact either [Martin Scott or Derek Buckle](mailto:Martin.Scott@alpinet.co.uk) (Alpinet or Handbook email address) for further details.

**November - Cheddar and the Mendips - details to be confirmed - contact [Stuart Worsfold by e-mail or Alpinet](mailto:Stuart.Worsfold@alpinet.co.uk).**

**22nd November – 22nd December 2010 – Alpine Club Expedition to the Antarctic Peninsula**

A sail, ski & climbing expedition open to AC members with suitable background experience. Co-ordinator - [Phil Wickens](mailto:Phil.Wickens@alpinet.co.uk).

### 2011

**15th to 23rd January - Ice Climbing Meet in Slovenia**

The meet will be organised with the participation of the Slovenian Alpine Club and local luminaries. Come and discover this part of Europe. Ice climbing, mixed climbing and ski touring are excellent. [Contact Francoise Call, 0033 683 772319 - francoise@alpinet.co.uk](mailto:Francoise.Call@alpinet.co.uk)

**16th to 30th July - 2011 Joint Alpine Meet: AC/CC/FRCC/ABMSAC Ecrins, Ailefroide Co-ordinator Mike Pinney**

**2nd -24th July 2011 - Russian Caucasus**

A three week Alpine Club expedition to the Russian Caucasus is currently being planned. We shall to fly via Moscow to Mineralnyje Vody and from there go by road to the Bezingi Valley where we shall be based at the Russian camp. This camp provides easy access to the Bezingi Basin which offers superb mountaineering opportunities in an impressive alpine environment on peaks rising to 5200m. Shkhara, Jangi-tau, Gestola and Dych-tau are just some of the well-known peaks accessible from the Bezingi Basin and Friedrich Bender's Classic Climbs in the Caucasus illustrates these and many others. Please contact [Derek Buckle](mailto:Derek.Buckle@alpinet.co.uk) if you are interested in joining this meet.

### SOUTH GEORGIA 2010 SALVESEN TRAVERSE

This is just to bring everyone up to date my plans for this winter's trip to South Georgia.

#### TEAM

Ian Calder  
Alan Scowcroft  
Ian Searle  
Stephen Venables

*'The plan is to visit the southern end of South Georgia, traversing the Salvesen Range from Royal Bay to the spectacular anchorage of Larsen Harbour. If time, weather, and general inclination of the party allow, we may attempt a peak on the way. There will also, of course, be plenty of opportunities for penguin-watching.'*

On board Pelagic Australis there will also be four or five additional paying passengers, whose main interest is to see some of the heritage and wildlife sites. Our skipper will be Miles Wise and the First Mate is his wife Laura Miles.

#### DATES

We board Pelagic Australis in Port Stanley on Saturday, November 13, and we return to Port Stanley on Saturday, December 11.

**There is still a possibility of a fifth person on the skiing team.**  
**If interested please contact Stephen Venables.**  
[stephen@venables.ndo.co.uk](mailto:stephen@venables.ndo.co.uk)



## AC Operating a "Long Grass Policy"? or "Charlotte Road Omerta, OK"

Like most members I would as a rule prefer to read about other folks' climbing trips, so to prove my bona fides will say that already this year I have enjoyed my usual month-long winter outing to Norway's Jotunheimen for a big dose of telemark-style ski mountaineering and touring ( which included another ascent of the Besseggen ridge, Norway's version of across between Aonach Eagach and Striding Edge) and by the time of this newsletter I will have been on expedition again to Paul Stern Land in NE Greenland where there is some unfinished first ascent business left over from my trip in 2008. So I am not just given to writing to the newsletter re AC arcana.

BUT - some of you will recall that I have tried to draw attention to a few matters where I feel that the Club needs to try to modernise its approach. The membership card idea was a success, but sadly to date the other issues I have spotlighted have resulted in precisely zero response , so I am left wondering if the Committee have even considered them or simply regarded them as nuisance items and booted them into the long grass hoping that I wouldn't notice, or just go climbing instead (see above).

My first area of concern was based on the possibility of the Club operating a system of either postal or proxy voting at AGMs to try to involve more members in decisions of importance to the Club. No matter where the AGM might be held there will always be a significant proportion of the membership (Majority?) who can't or won't attend and they have no mechanism for their views to be taken into account. Voting systems are not entirely easy to devise but surely there is a sufficient brain cell count in AC to come up with a workable method. Response to date on this suggestion - zero! At the last AGM I tried to raise the matter of a review of Rules for the Club. Insufficient time was allowed for this matter to be adequately discussed ( I remember the Hon Treas droning on about stuff that could have just been in the accounts, and there was the lengthy going round in circles about BMC affiliation). I passed my concerns to the President and was promised that the Committee would consider my points. Response to date - zero, again! The nub of my concern was that nowhere in the present Rules is there any provision for a Quorum to validate a general meeting, so it is my contention that AC has probably NEVER had a meeting which truly reflects the membership as a whole. There is a provision in the Rules for conduct of Committee where the figure of a measly 7 persons can constitute a quorum for the purposes of transacting Club business. As we never see any figures for attendance at Committee, a cynic might be tempted to believe that a very small tail is at times wagging a much bigger dog. Maybe this is what has happened over the BMC affiliation issue? - despite the round robin newsletter consultation and the airing at AGM 2009, which appeared to be contradictory in outcome. Now we read that there has been an approach to BMC for some other form of link between the Club and BMC. How was that decision arrived at? Was it possibly made by the magic 7, or maybe more people were involved? How are we to know? Omerta OK?

In my view the Club needs to have a good look at how it runs its own internal affairs and move quite a bit to get itself onto a much more modern, democratic footing. Will it? I don't know. Setting itself apart from all other clubs currently affiliated to BMC will not, I feel, result in AC having any greater influence in the climbing world or on the BMC, but will probably reinforce the view that AC is in a rarified world of its own somewhat apart from the rest of British mountaineering, which will not generate a recruitment rush from younger climbers.

Well, that's enough for now. What next - cat, pigeons; shit , fan? That could be up to the rest of you. Got to go; my expedition kit needs packing. Good climbing to all.

**Jim Gregson**

**Hi Dick,**

Can't believe its almost a year since your piece on Ben Nevis. I've at last dug out the attached photo of the 'transport party' of an LSEMC meet in March 1949, with provisions for a week's stay for 6 members at the CIC hut. I seem to have drawn the short straw with an un-ergonomic load of 80lb on an 'Everest carrier', though I think we must have swapped it around. The others were **Peter Robson** (on left, now a member of the AC) and **Peb Bradforth**. We left McBraynes yard at 4.30pm and took five hideous hours to reach the hut. The Allt a Mhuillinn was a trackless, boggy, undulating glen, through which we heaved, staggered and fell; when darkness came at 8 p.m. time stood still. Then we saw the hut, a speck of light which appeared and went, like some maddening, seductive will-o'-the-wisp, as we stumbled among the hummocks. And so we arrived, completely knackered, and eventually regained consciousness, and forced ourselves to talk to the bods inside.

The rewards came later - a week of glorious Alpine weather - we climbed every day and knocked off some of the classics of the time, in true Murray style - a brilliant introduction to snow and ice. **Denis Greenald**



# Alpine Club team effort at the Piolets d'Or

The AC logo appears on the Piolets d'or website. But it is only the tip of the iceberg of the AC's involvement in the event. A team of us were working in various roles in the events.

**Lindsay Griffin** was dispensing his wisdom as a member of the jury. **Andy Houseman** was one of the nominees. **Luca Signorelli** was our photographer and organised some well earned relaxing warm rock climbing after the event. **Stuart Worsfold** and **Jamie Goodhart** thought they were coming for a holiday in my chalet but were drafted to attend some of the presentations. **Gus Morton** manned a successful bookstall selling guidebooks at the event. **Stephen Venables and his son Ed** kindly transported the books from the UK to Chamonix and then were also on duty at some of the Piolets d'or events. They still managed to complete the Haute Route. Well done to the father and son team! Yours truly was primarily concerned with keeping the Spirit of Mountaineering commendation alive. Since we did not find a suitable team or individual for the award this year, we commissioned a short film clip featuring **Norman Croucher** and **Uli Steck** as a reminder of the objectives of the commendation. This can be viewed by a link on the AC website. I also gave as much support as I could to a charming Spanish film production team which is at present producing a feature documentary on the rescue of **Inaki Ochoa** which was the object of our last commendation. **Denis Urubko**, one of the team who received the Spirit of Mountaineering commendation last year, a nominee and eventually a recipient of a Piolet d'or this year, was also giving his full support to the film project. We were able to show their trailer at the event - after some negotiation as every minute is counted! They are passionate about their project so watch this space!



Messner, with an admiring Italian presenter, acknowledging his Career Piolet d'Or. Ph: L Griffin



Denis Urubko (R) with members of the Spanish film crew. Photo: Luca Signorelli

The ashes from Iceland then threw some more challenges. A number of nominees, jury members and guests could not fly home. My climbing partner could not fly in either so there was an impromptu group formed camping at my place. Of course we used our time efficiently on the local rock! There are worse places to be stuck. **Lindsay** had the opportunity to explore intimately Frankfurt airport for several days!

During this week a number of us were generously wined and dined by the Chamonix and Courmayeur townhalls. It was a pleasure to work again with the



Normand, Dempster and Brown on stage. Photo: Luca Signorelli



Italian legends Bonatti and Messner, and the Golden Ice Axe. Photo: Luca Signorelli

Piolets d'or teams on both sides of the Mont Blanc tunnel.

Remember to let us know if you hear of any rescue effort that you think should be considered for the Spirit of Mountaineering commendation. They have to be at high altitude and the rescuers have to have forsaken their objectives.

**PS:** I noticed people passing each other a well thumbed copy of the 2009 AJ. The 2009 AJ was clearly THE reference for last year's account of the Piolets d'or, thanks to a very comprehensive reporting from **Stephen Goodwin**.

**Francoise Call** (for more info see [www.pioletsdor.com](http://www.pioletsdor.com))



The Piolet d'or jury on stage in Chamonix. From left to right: Andrej Stremfelj, Kei Taniguchi, Anna Piunova, Lindsay Griffin, Robert Schauer and Jordi Corominas. Photo: Luca Signorelli



On stage at the Majestic. From left to right (standing) Bullock - looking bemused at the whole affair, Houseman, Gorilek, Sokolov, Normand, Dempster; (below) Ruchkin, Dedeshko, Urubko, Brown. photo: Lindsay Griffin

## UK Alpine Reunion 2009

This was held at Patterdale on the 17th to 19th October. The early birds, missing the worst of the delays of the M6 met at Castle Rock Thirlmere on the Friday morning. Out of the sun it was quite cool, so they started on routes at the right hand of the crag, then as the sun moved round progressed leftwards, finishing on routes on the North crag. The evening was then spent preparing the spag bol for the following evening. On Saturday it was another sunny day. Whilst many headed for Raven crag Langdale to catch the sun others ventured out onto the fells or climbed more locally at Gowbarrow. 26 sat down to dinner followed by a slide show covering most of the clubs Alpine and Greater ranges meets. This did not leave much time for the meet co-ordinators meeting! On the Sunday it was drizzling so a day on the fells was the order of the day, a large team ascending 2nd pinnacle rib on St Sundays crag.

I am taking booking for the 2010 meet, 22nd to 24th October, again in Patterdale. **Mike Pinney**

# The Walker Spur

## The North Face of the Grandes Jorasses

My Alpine season this year almost ended before it had hardly begun just thirty or so miles from home in Wensleydale on route for the A1. My bike front wheel hit a large stone the size of a football that had unexpectedly appeared from beneath a bus I was travelling behind leaving me no time to take evasive action. The collision put me into an involuntary wheelie which, I luckily managed to control, however when the wheel came back into contact with the road it had ceased to be perfectly round. The ride to Chamonix was therefore at a slower rate of knots than I had hoped for and I arrived with a version of vibration white arm! So instead of pushing the boat out on some fine alpine face, my first day in the Alps was spent in search of a garage that could re-true my wobbly wheel.

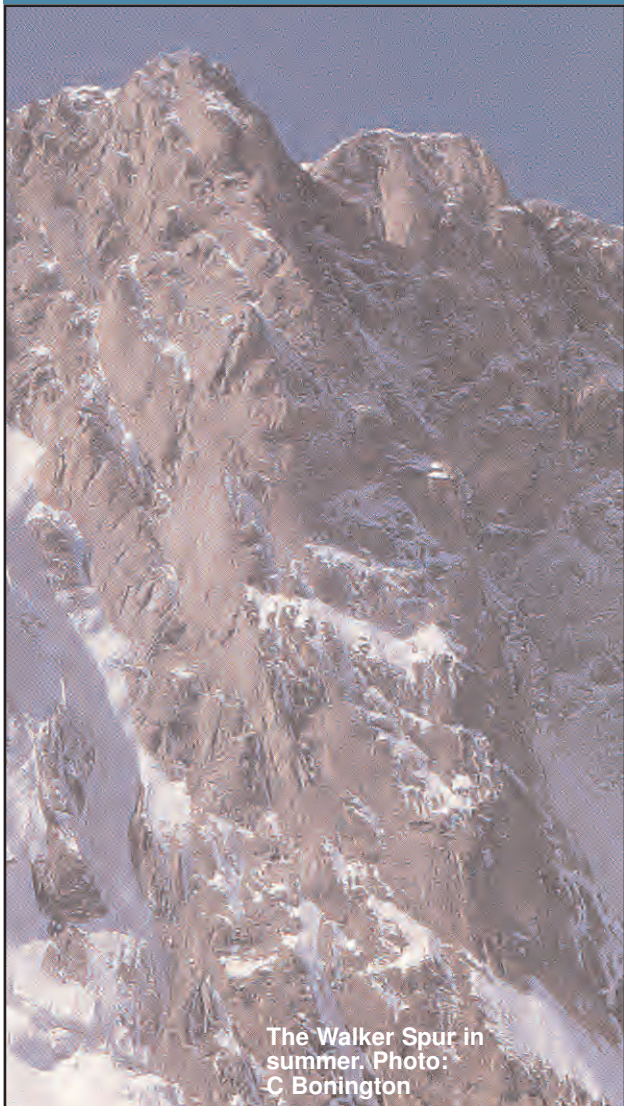
This years aim was to climb the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses by way of the Walker Spur, a route I have desired for many years. We were a four-man team, Yuki Fujita and Paul Cleary were to make one rope and Jamie Gartside had the dubious honour of tying on the other end of mine.

Jamie is a very experienced rock climber but over the years the Alps had somehow managed to elude him, this was to be Jamie's first Alpine climb and the first time he had climbed with axe and crampons or even been on a glacier. At 61 years of age Yuki is just past the prime of his youth whilst unfortunately I'm only a little way behind him, Paul and Jamie in their mid forties represented the youth in our set up, a bit of an old folks outing really. I had decided that I would need an additional week climbing solo to acclimatise, build my fitness and get my head into gear before the others turned up. Over the past months I had suffered some health problems which included

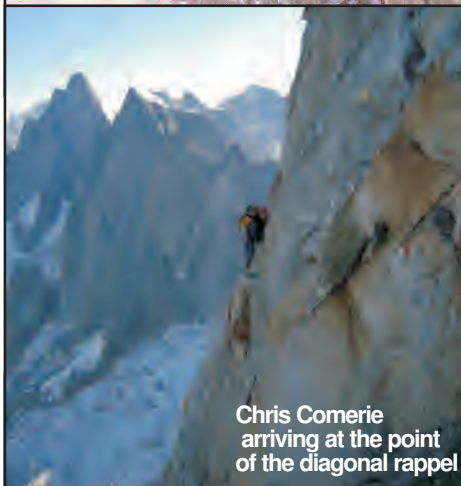
surgery that had not gone particularly well, this would be my test to see if I still had what it takes, I also harboured a sense of loyalty not to let the lads down by under performing. My plan was a grand traverse which was to include three bivouacs (no huts) of the Domes de Miage - Col de Miage - Aig de Bionnassay - Dome du Gouter - Mont Blanc - Mont Maudit - Mont Blanc du Tacul to finish at Aiguille du Midi. I have attempted this route on two previous occasions, both of which had to be aborted because of bad weather. So there I am sat in my tent contemplating this plan, the gentle percussion of rain pattering away on the faded orange fabric of my not so waterproof

old Force Ten, unable to see the other side of the valley let alone the mountains. It was not looking good, but then I got to thinking that maybe this was a little bit too much of a warm up and maybe leave me acclimatised but knackered! An alternative plan was hatched, I would walk from my base camp at les Chosalets, Argentiere, climb the North Face Direct of Le Portalet with a couple of high bivouacs thrown in for good measure. The weather forecast promised to improve with only showers forecast for tomorrow so off I went. Up above the Albert Premier Hut I set myself down at a suitable looking bivi spot just as the heavens opened, I got soaked through and tried desperately to find an overhanging rock to crawl under but it just kept coming. I became more and more soaked over the next two hours until I thought 'sod this', packed up and walked all the back down to my leaky old Force Ten.

Two days later, this time with a decent weather forecast, I'm occupying a rather salubrious snow cave dug into the Vallee Blanche. By first light the following morning I'm standing beneath



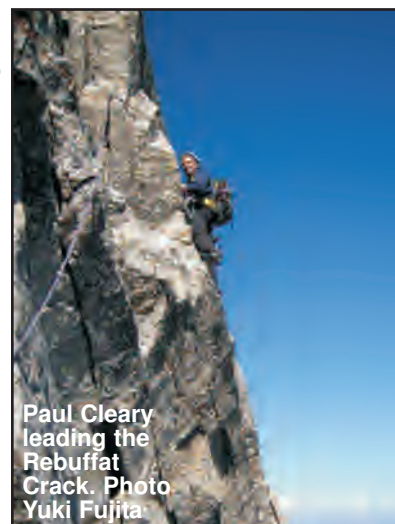
The Walker Spur in summer. Photo: C Bonington



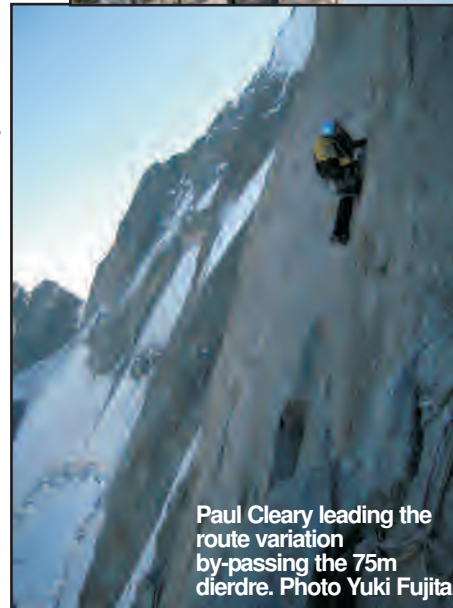
Chris Comerie arriving at the point of the diagonal rappel



Jamie Gartside climbing the black overhang just after the diagonal rappel. Photo Chris Comerie



Paul Cleary leading the Rebuffat Crack. Photo Yuki Fujita



Paul Cleary leading the route variation by-passing the 75m diedre. Photo Yuki Fujita.

## THE WALKER SPUR

the hanging glacier to the left of the North Face Triangle of Mont Blanc du Tacul. Steady front pointing on decent neve soon dispatched the first 100m or so of the North Couloir until I was forced into a narrow section of ice sandwiched between a large serac and the rock face triangle. Ahead the underlying rock appeared to be covered in a rather dubious looking layer of ice that appeared hollow and thin. As an avoidance tactic I therefore opted for a traverse out left amongst the increasingly steep seracs. My chosen line crossed over some worrying slots until my progress was blocked in roughly the centre of the face by a large overhanging wall of ice possibly some 30m in height. 'Damn it', I had climbed myself into a bit of a tricky situation, having no rope, harness or gear other than my axes, I had no choice but to down-climb back to the dodgy looking ice which was by now some way below me way over to the right. I arrived back at my previous impasse in a high state of concentration! and proceeded to tackle the narrow band of ice which was indeed thin in parts and pretty hard, allowing only minimal penetration from my points which, on occasion squeaked and grated on the underlying rock. A reversal of this section was not an option, fully committed I made careful but positive progress until the narrowing opened out and lead back onto decent conditions. A steady rhythm soon dispatched the remainder of the route followed by a very enjoyable romp to the summit affording great views down the north face to the Vallee Blanche.

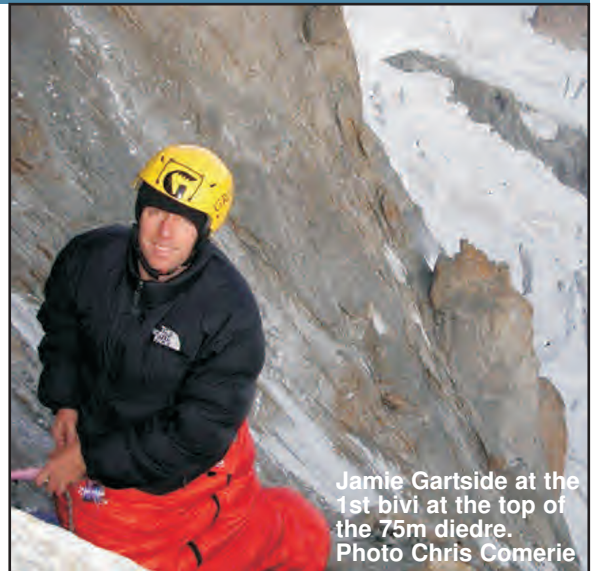
That afternoon I cleared out my snow cave and decided to avoid the slog back up the snow slopes to the Aiguille du Midi by climbing the Arete des Cosmiques. It felt quite strenuous with my sack laden down with bivi gear, however this prepared me well for the ensuing climb of the following week.

Yuki arrived from America followed a day later by Paul and Jamie from the UK. Despite the risk of thunderstorms over the next couple of days it was unanimously decided that we should set off for the Leschaux hut. The lack of acclimatisation particularly took its toll on Yuki and soon after arrival at the hut it was decided to spend an extra night, the decision easily being arrived at with minimal discussion helped by the very pleasurable comfortable surroundings and excellent food. During the course of our rest day we wandered up to the foot of the spur to recheck the start and dump our sacks before heading off back down to the hut for more good food and rest.

We began climbing at a not particularly early hour but made steady progress moving together over the broken rock of the lower part of the spur. We soon lost sight of Paul and Yuki and proceeded to climb straight past the right trending traverse leading to the Rebuffat crack. After two more pitches we realised our mistake and had to down climb to get back on line. The Rebuffat crack seemed hard work with a heavy rucksack, my progress hindered further by my right hand cramping up into a painful claw, rendering it useless. Luckily for me Jamie had the pleasure of leading this pitch and was able to give me the luxury of a tight rope. From there on we made steady progress to the foot of the 75m Diedre which we immediately set about climbing. At the top we caught sight of Paul and Yuki who abseiled down to join us, they had appeared above from over to the left having climbed a new variation of the route bypassing the 75m Deirdre. On the final pitch the leading rope of six fast moving guides overtook us. Climbing in the absence of clients, we had no idea what the occasion was but it was clearly a testosterone fuelled outing with lots of shouting and risk taking. It seemed as though they were trying to out-climb each other to prove who was best, unfortunately their antics resulted in us being showered with stones, Paul took a hit in the chest and I took one on the shoulder which for a moment I thought had been broken. That same shoulder had been previously broken several years ago only a couple of miles from this very spot, but on this occasion we both luckily got away with bruising. By now the day was drawing to a close so we decided to bivi on a collection of small ledges allowing sitting room only, scattered at the top of the Diedre.

The next morning the guides began as they had ended the previous day with lots of shouting and bombarding us with stones, we constantly ducked and cowered while we waited for their departure before we dare risk resuming the climbing. During the antics one of their members managed to drop a boot which thudded in a series of bouncing arcs as it disappeared down the face to oblivion, it was 9:30 before we were finally able to get moving which was far too late. We had hoped to reach the top on this day but the late start had seriously diminished the opportunity of doing so, we were therefore obliged to spend another delightful night sitting on small ledges on the very crest of the spur affording stunning views both ahead and down both sides. We sat in our down cocoons in the gathering gloom watching and willing the approaching thunderstorms to pass us by. Paul and Yuki found a suitable bivi spot out of sight roughly one pitch above us. I felt relaxed but uncomfortable on my perch, there was however some annoyance caused by regular visits of rescue helicopters cruising the ridge looking for business. If ones resolve weakened they could very well pick up climbers that may well have completed the route successfully in the absence of such an intrusion. The hut guardian had said only days earlier that their had been a high rate of rescue on the spur which, under these circumstances I thought hardly surprising.

Today should be summit day, this time starting at a reasonably early hour without the bombardment of stones. After fairly easy ground over some broken rock we arrived at the triangular snowfield which proved to be icy. However we soon found ourselves at the



Jamie Gartside at the 1st bivi at the top of the 75m diedre. Photo Chris Comerie



Paul Cleary climbing the Grey Slabs Photo Yuki Fujita



Chris Comerie on the crest of the arete above the grey slabs. Photo Jamie Gartside



Chris Comerie at the ledge below the Tour Rousse just before the icy groove. Photo Jamie Gartside

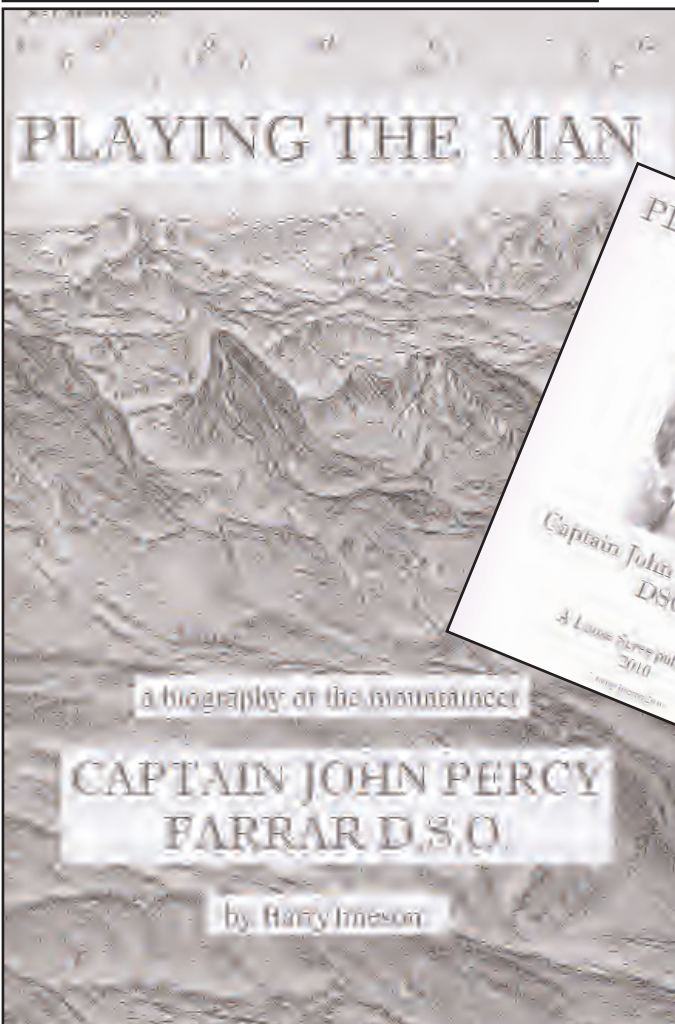
foot of the Red Chimney which was choked with ice obscuring most of the insitu protection. It was midway through the first pitch when it suddenly occurred to me that this was quite serious climbing, my left crampon front points had little penetration in the steep ice whilst in a bridging manoeuvre my points squeaked in cracks and small holds on the rock face bounding my right. My only axe was very gently tapped into a thin runnel of ice round about 100mm wide and the last protection was some 10 metres below me. My adrenaline was pumping, this game is at its peak, stirring stuff. Whilst belaying Jamie a German guide gracefully and efficiently glided past me, set up a belay a short distance away and proceeded to light up a cigarette which he calmly puffed on using one hand whilst belaying his clients with the other. He was a superb climber exuding great confidence but his clients alas were not of the same calibre, slipping, scrabbling and raining down debris, they were literally dragged up. It was my desire to climb cleanly and safely unhindered by falling rocks and ice so I decided to allow them to pass before resuming.



The team at the Gite after returning from the Grandes Jorasses

And so in the gathering gloom we eventually arrived at the summit, the view, which was to be our prize, unfortunately obliterated by poor visibility. With the day drawing to an end and the prospect of a long and complex descent, we opted for another bivvi just off the summit on the connecting ridge of point Walker and Point Whympier. It proved to be a cold miserable bivvi in hollowed out snow and ice. But the route was in the bag and tomorrow we would descend into the Italian Val Ferret. This had not been a quick ascent of the Walker Spur by any stretch of the imagination. The sum total of the various delays had pushed us inexorably into another day resulting in an additional bivouac, but nonetheless success was sweet and I felt relaxed and happy that we had completed this adventure together in good spirits and good shape. And for Jamie what a first Alpine route, he's gotta go some to better this.

I pulled out of Chamonix on the old Guzzi expecting nothing more than a long uneventful ride home. During the journey whilst doing around 70mph during an overtaking manoeuvre, the tail of the bike suddenly went into a slew, forcing me to make a quick dodge across the bumper of a car onto the safety of the grass verge. Miles from anywhere I had picked up a nail in my back tyre and it was now as flat as a pancake. Oh, Bugger. **Chris Comerie.**



## PLAYING THE MAN

a biography of the mountaineer, President of the Alpine Club and joint-editor of the AJ,  
**Captain John Percy Farrar DSO**

by Barry Imeson

*“he was climbing in Japan when the 2nd Anglo-Boer War erupted in 1899 and hurried back to South Africa to serve ... and was later seriously wounded at Quaggafontein.”*

*This masterly and exhaustively researched book charts the life of a remarkable man whose life epitomises our image of a Victorian/Edwardian English gentleman active in fighting for his country, in business at home and in the Empire and in his greatest passion, mountaineering. He was involved in many of the great alpine climbs of the ‘golden age of mountaineering’ and was also a prominent member and President of the AC.*

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# Adams Reilly and the Alpine Club archives

There was something not quite right about some notebooks and diaries in the archives, which were ascribed in the catalogue to **Arnold Mumm**. It could just be that Mumm would have been only two years old when the first diary was written! One of the notebooks was dated 1865, and showed the author visiting Zermatt immediately after the Matterhorn accident, and gives the dates when the author arrived in and left Zermatt. The definitive work on the accident, 'The First Descent of the Matterhorn' by our member Alan Lyall, gives details of the movements of those present at the time, and the dates match those for **Adams Reilly**. The notebooks include Reilly's sketches, and in particular one of the Matterhorn. The diaries are very different in style, being detailed accounts of an alpine season in 1861, and it is not immediately obvious that they are from the same author. However they describe the hiring of guides Peter Michel and Peter Inabnit, and reference to their fuhrerbucher in the archive (we have the original of Michel's, and a copy of Inabnit's) confirmed that these also were Reilly's. The notebooks and diaries were given to the Club in about 1917, but disappeared soon after, presumed lost. They were not lost, but simply mis-catalogued, and I am happy to confirm that they are safe and sound and now available for research.



The Chain of Mont Blanc 1863-4

**Adams Reilly** was a fine mountaineer who climbed with Stephen, Birkbeck, Whymper, Matthews and others. However he is best remembered for his maps of the Alps. J D Forbes had published his map of the Mer de Glace in 1842, probably the first map to accurately represent glaciation. Earlier maps of mountain regions might show the positions and heights of peaks with good accuracy, but as they were usually surveyed from below the snowline they were rather vague as far as glaciation was concerned. Forbes persuaded Reilly to carry out a survey of the Mont Blanc Range, and he did this in 1863 and 1864, setting up chains of survey stations above the snowline. His map was published by the Alpine Club in 1865, and we have his beautiful original hand-drawn copy in the archives. Reilly then carried out a similar project in the Monte Rosa range, and this map was published in 1866. **Glyn Hughes**

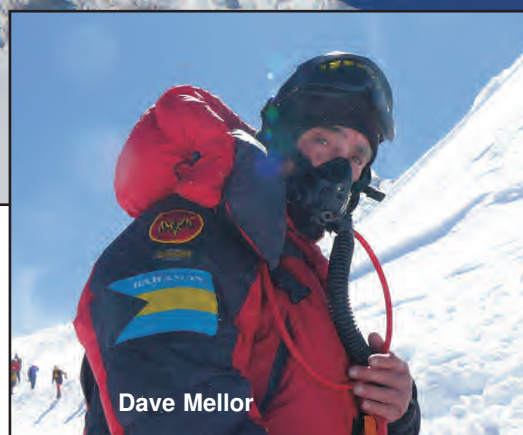
**Glyn** is the Club's Honorary Archivist and will be contributing regularly to the newsletter as he winkles out interesting stories and conundrums from the Club's fantastic and extensive archives. Glyn is a long standing member of the AC and was Hon Sec for many years before he was released into the archive!

## SECOND-HAND BOOKS AT THE CLUB LIBRARY

**DONATIONS:** Please donate any unwanted mountain books to the Club Library. We check all donations, selecting those needed to fill gaps or provide duplicates (triplicates or quads) for lending. The remainders are recycled by sale to members at very reasonable prices and they provide library funds. Virtually every remainder is desired by a new owner so this is a great system for us all to increase our mountaineering knowledge. Bring any donations to **Tadeusz** in the Library or contact **Hywel Lloyd** for collection. Also, a big "Thank you" to **Mike Banks**, **John Peacock** and the family of **John Blacker** for recent donations of collections.

**TO BUY:** A selection is for sale in the Library; also watch for emails of our latest full lists. **Mike Hewson** is ill with a chest problem and we wish him a speedy recovery. Meanwhile **Barbara Grigor-Taylor**, Library Trustee, is compiling new lists and Jerry Lovatt, Hon Librarian, is conducting the sales. If you cannot receive emails please send a note to **Barbara** who will post new lists to you from time to time.

# Manaslu 8156m



**"I think we're getting a bit old for this game youth"! ..... I gasped , as I crawled into our tent.** The "youth" I was speaking to was Himalayan Legend Henry Todd who at 65 was three years my junior. The "game" was our climb to the main summit of Manaslu, the 8th highest mountain in the world earlier that day.

Our expedition was a combined effort between Henry's company Himalayan Guides and Dream Guides represented by Dr. Guy Willett and five times Everest summiter Dr. Rob Casserley. We had been really successful with 90% of our members actually summiting that same day without mishap.

Manaslu (also known as Kutang) is a beautifully remote mountain adjacent to the Annapurna region of Nepal and it took a group of us five days to trek in from the road head at Arughat to the tiny village of Samaguan. The route is absolutely spectacular winding through river gorges with fabulous waterfalls hundreds of feet high crashing into them. It was the tail end of the Monsoon Season in Nepal so we were battling Leeches for the first couple of days with the blood sucking little devils lurking under the leaves of passing bushes ready to help themselves to the odd free pint along the way. As we gained altitude we passed through the various areas of rice paddies, corn fields and huge cannabis plantations ( the leeches vanished at this level , probably too stoned to exist any higher and were replaced by rock throwing monkey's). It rained every day so instead of camping we opted for the local "Tea Houses" which sound quaint and homely but are probably like 18th Century TB Wards with wood and dung fires and a variety of exotic bed bugs, lice and spiders to share the bunks with.

On September 9th we hiked up to Base Camp which was situated about five hours above Samaguan on the edge of the Manaslu Glacier and was the home for a number of expeditions from the USA, Switzerland, Slovenia, China etc. and also a large International group led by Russell Brice of HIMEX. Over the next ten days we made a couple of forays up to Camp 1 and beyond and then after receiving a clear weather forecast on September 20th for eight days, decided to work our way up through Camps 2,3 and 4 for our summit attempt.

The principal danger spot is between Camp one and the headwall leading up to Camp Two. . . a traverse below a huge crumbling serac band that had been the scene of numerous fatalities and accidents including one of the worst ever in the Himalayas when fifteen members of a Korean expedition were killed in a massive avalanche in 1972. I called this place "avalanche alley" and although we never got caught there was always fresh debris scattered across it every time we crossed.

Camp Two is reached via a steepish headwall and a couple of hairy crevasse crossings. Camp Three is a more gentle plod but with some more big crevasses and the route to Camp Four was a bit of a gasper. It turned out to be steep and unrelenting and I was feeling a quite fragile by the time I crawled into the tent at Camp Four.

Summit day was great, cold but sunny and Henry and myself were standing at 8,163m on the tiny main summit of Manaslu by 9.30am on September 28th. . . it felt like we were on top of the world! Not bad when you consider that we were sharing an age handicap on 133 years between us. We met 21 year old Bonita Norris on her way down from just below the top after becoming the youngest British girl to climb the mountain.

At this point Guy Willett and Emma Jacks stepped into their skis and zipped back down to Base Camp making the first ever ski descent of the whole mountain. . . they were relaxing in the Dining tent by 4pm that same afternoon.

As always. . .the summit is only half of the climb and we didn't stay for very long. Going down was tiring and by the time I made it to Camp Three my body was starting to complain. Henry and myself and another member of our group, Doug Allen, crammed into one of the two remaining tents and after a nights rest made our way slowly down to Base Camp the next day. The track across "Avalanche Alley" had been swept away by a large ice avalanche so we didn't hang about in that area and the final trudge down the glacier was littered with newly opened crevasses .

The weather broke during the night and the "jet stream" started hammering the upper slopes putting an end to any more summit attempts. Sadly the following day a Slovenian climber was killed by falling ice in the same "Avalanche Alley" so Manaslu's dangerous reputation hasn't changed.

Henry managed to arrange an Army M14 Helicopter to carry us back to Kathmandu - a 45 minute flight compared to a six day journey on the way in.

It was a particularly satisfying expedition for me since I have not attempted anything really high since I had a heart pacemaker and a defibrillator installed about three years ago. . . Everything was fine and I felt great so I reckon I'm good for another 50,000 miles at least ! **Dave Mellor**

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The Mount Everest Foundation  
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by the North and South Faces

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by

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Leader of Annapurna South Face Expedition

and

**Colonel Henry Day**

Summit climber and climbing leader of British-Nepalese Army Annapurna Expedition

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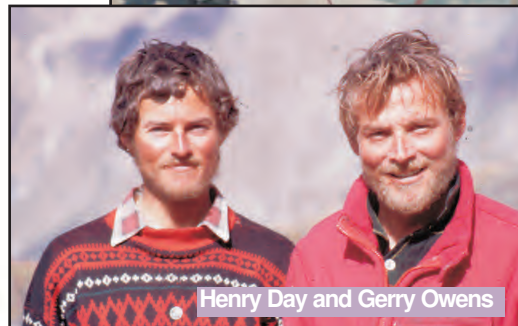
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Gerry Owens on the summit



Pertemba on the front cover of the ILNews.



Henry Day and Gerry Owens

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# — CROZ SPUR —

## A WINTER DESCENT

Somehow, unnoticed, the storm had been slowly and stealthily coalescing about us for the last 4 hours. I was wearing a fleece balaclava with a small (and annoying!) peak visor lined on the underside with blue fabric. This may sound idiotic but every time I looked up - the sky looked blue. So it was 'Yeah, everything's fine - get on with it!' Then Frank asked what I thought of the gathering weather. Suddenly a violent gust of wind whipped the snow around us and I looked up with a start at the reality of the wild weather around me. There was no blue sky and there was no mountain either as sudden squalls of snow heralded the onset of a full-blown storm wildly surging around us. It was late in the February day and we were tired and ready for the relative warmth and rest of our third bivi so it took all of two seconds for the decision to be taken and Frank and I were vainly casting around for somewhere to scrape clean and perch on.

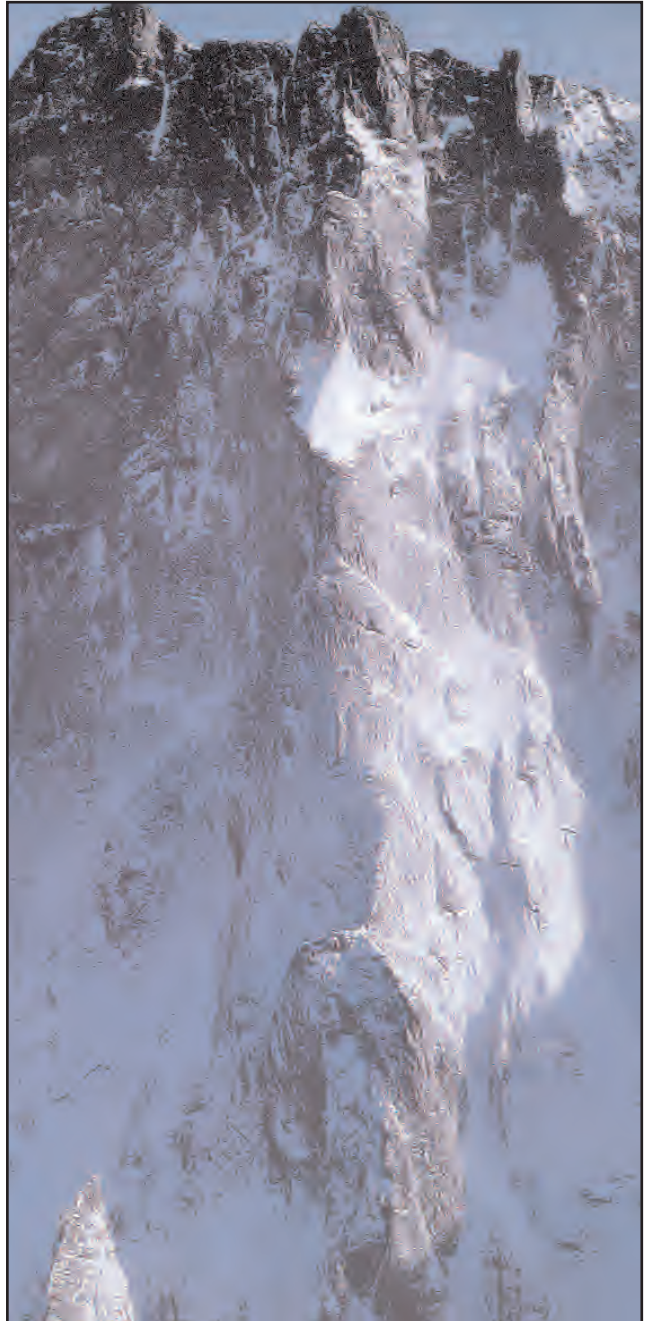
It was day three on the Croz Spur and we were two short pitches from the top. We had had great conditions with mainly dry rock, good ice and absolutely brilliant modern mixed climbing in the solitude of a great alpine face in winter and we were happy with the route being so nearly in the bag. The stealthy arrival of this unheralded storm shocked us and the totally unsuitable nature of our surroundings for bivvi-ing were unnerving as we settled down on two pathetic lumps of shifting rubble for what was going to be a long, cold and sleepless night. This was Frank's first big alpine route in winter and his sleeping bag was not really up to it. I had a specially made Goretex covered Mountain Equipment bag complete with bivi hood which allowed me to retreat from the now howling night. The fact that I slept fitfully in between sliding from my perch was testament firstly to my exhaustion and secondly to Mountain Equipment. Frank was not so lucky as his pit was wet and flat inside his bivi bag.

Eventually morning came with the storm still rampaging around us. After a brief attempt to climb the remaining two pitches it became worryingly obvious that Frank was not really up to risking another high night out. It had to be down! I was terrified of the thought of 4,000ft of abseiling but even more scared of another night out at high altitude with an already shivering Frank. The final decision maker was the now lethal state of the notorious descent from the Grandes Jorasses with up to two feet of new snow ready to sweep the unwary into the Val Ferret.

We packed up - stuffing wet bags straight into our packs. No brew was possible in the wind and anyway the urgency of our position forced us to get on with it. With the first anchor set up and the rope thrown hard downwards into the blast, Frank's chilled fingers promptly dropped his belay brake! *Shit!* One second of fumbling and he was consigned to a long nightmare of precarious descending on a carabiner brake. I shouted the question to Frank 'Have you ever used a carabiner brake?' 'A what?' was his reply! As I had used one before I passed him my brake only for me to watch horrified as he took the brake, juggled with it like he had the eponymous hot potato in his hands, and then clutch vainly as it spun out of reach and joined his other brake somewhere 4,000ft below.

We would have stood together in stunned silence if the wind had allowed us to. No time for recriminations as I switched straight into instructor mode and showed Frank how to fit the carabiner brake puzzle around the rope before he set off into the swirling snow. This was to be the first of 27 long and desperately anxious abseils. The wind took exception to our efforts, clawing at the ropes as if trying to rip them away and wrap them round the smallest spike. It was imperative that we waited for any lulls in the roaring blast before we either hurled the writhing snakes down into the swirling mist or dragged them down praying for their safe delivery at our feet. The ropes themselves behaved impeccably! They were new Everdry Edelrid's and repayed their investment handsomely as they stayed supple and compliant throughout the descent unlike every account of climbers fighting icy hawsers in the tales from the Golden Age of mountaineering!

Things were going fine. Our heart rates had stabilised with periodic spikes of high anxiety when the ropes had to be pulled. We were getting through our rack, mainly nuts and slings with the expensive Friends being kept to the last! The further down we went, the quieter it became - spookily quiet - with a new noise now - the insidious slithering hissing of rivers of spindrift. Frank had mastered the complexities of the treacherous 'biner brake and we began to think that we were going to get away with it. After 24 abseils were were back in the steep groove/corner where the initial couloir steepens and runs up into the Croz Spur proper. Here it was like a waterfall with the entire spur venting spindrift into a chaotic, atmospheric plunge pool. The ropes ended halfway down this cascade and all we had to belay on was a single peg and nut in the same crack. With two of us hooked up to this belay-cum-anchor half suffocated and blinded by chilling spindrift, our growing composure evaporated. It made being in Point Five Gully on the Ben in a storm seem like an idyllic memory! The only relief was the pulsing nature of this icy torrent. Every two minutes we would get a 30 second pause were visibility returned and you could breathe normally and shake the massive piles of spindrift from your back, arms



## CROZ SPUR - A RETREAT



Great mixed climbing on the lower slabs before the storm.



and shoulders. We pulled the ropes and they came - reluctantly, slowly but they ran - one rope down then the other coming and then - stop. No movement - panic started to swell - both of us now hauling on the recalcitrant rope - nothing! It was stuck.

So, this was our payment for a smooth ride so far, was it! Paranoia surged through us as we half drowned in the inexorable stream and verged on panic. I shouted to Frank - he no more than 2 feet away - that we should somehow toss for who would go back up the rope as it was too dangerous to volunteer for. We had a knife but it was deep in a pack and there was no way we could get it out without risking losing a pack and sleeping bags etc. Frank immediately shouted that he would go back up. *'No you can't'* I shouted *'it is has to be fair.'* *'No, I'll go'* he shouted again - so, like the cynic I am, I let him go! With a loose bight hastily clipped to his waist Frank waited for a lull and began hooking his way desperately up the steep mixed corner, Scottish 5/6 on the way up in good weather. Inevitably he couldn't make it time before the next onslaught and immediately he disappeared into the raging maelstrom pouring down the whole mountainside. All we could do was get your head down, squeeze into the groove, fight for breath and hang on. Frank was trying to climb safely putting in runners etc but repeated waves of spindrift proved too much for this responsible approach and somewhere over the roar of the avalanches I heard *"\*\*\*\* it! I'm going for it up the rope!"*

Suddenly the rope ran out fast. The next pause in the spindrift saw Frank up at the top of the groove 30ft out from his last runner making steep moves pulling on the rope into a small alcove where the angle dropped back. He just made it as the next express train roared by and in the following pause he released the jammed rope and covered back into his recess and managed to fix a proper anchor that would keep the rope free from hazards. Instantly he was coming down rapidly passing me and swooping away into the gathering gloom. Then an age later the rope went slack and I was quickly sliding down out of the tumult and onto the long steep snow/ice slope at the start of the climb.

The surge of relief on getting out of the heart of the maelstrom was quickly tempered by the realisation that we had 3-400ft of steep snow/ice to descend, find our skis, ski down through 2ft of new snow, not fall into the myriad of crevasses and then find (and reach!) the hut - all in the gathering dark. Suddenly we stumbled onto a brand new fixed rope stretching off into the gloom. Where it had come from we had no idea but we grabbed this 7mm washing line lifeline and shot off into the unknown, skipping over a nicely full bergschrund and landing head first in the morass of soft snow at the bottom. Miraculously our upright skis loomed up in our head torch beams and we plunged off down through thigh deep snow. So desperate were we that we kept our skins on our skis rather than lose control and career off into one of the now treacherously covered slots that were all around us. After struggling to slide/walk down we eventually emerged onto the flat and weirdly came across recent tracks stretching away into the now quiet night. More ominously these tracks were haphazardly punctuated by man-sized black holes! Soon the unfortunate creators of this trail of tears appeared in our torch beams. Marek and Barek, young Polish lads, had come up the Spur behind us and had retreated before us leaving the mysterious 7mm washing line over the bergschrund. Their eyes were staring out of ice-encrusted balaclavas full of fear and now relief that someone else was around to help them through (and out of!) the crevasses. So far they had gone into half a dozen slots up to their waists with their legs kicking, which we had avoided by being on skis. *'Stay with us, stay with us'* they pleaded, so we did until we judged ourselves out of the main crevasse

zone, when the slowness of our progress and the growing awareness of how cold Frank was forced us to push on to try and find the hut as quickly as possible. Somehow we did manage not only find the hut but also to reach it up the now worryingly full slopes that lead up to the Leschaux. Once there we managed to dig out the door with manic energy and stumble in accompanied by drifts of accumulated spindrift. Alive and safe at last.

### Postscript:

Marek and Barek eventually turned up 3 hours later to find us under mounds of blankets. The next day dawned fine except there was no Croz Spur on view as the remnants of the storm lingered on. At 9am we heard a chopper racing up the Leschaux glacier. The small red rescue helicopter zoomed past below the hut and straight for the Croz. We watched it begin to work the spur, zigzagging up the buttress occasionally disappearing into the cloud. It took us awhile to click to the fact that it was looking for us but then we were away and down the slope running to be visible on the glacier. It took  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour for the chopper to go up the Spur, over the back into Italy and return carefully down the Spur and back down the glacier towards us. We were visible; we were jumping up and down! The chopper screamed to a halt hovering 30 yards away while megaphone appeared out of the window and boomed at us - *'Monsieur Turnboule?'* What service! We nodded inanely; they shouted 'OK,' waggled their tail and shot off for coffee and croissants in the valley while we just had the long cold trudge back to normality.

For the record it was Andy Cave that picked up the gear bonanza from our descent on an early summer ascent. He reckoned it was a good enough haul for a full day out on Cloggy! **Dick Turnbull** (First published in the Climber's Club Journal.)



**View from Bertol Hut to the Matterhorn, Glacier du Mont Mine**



**Walking on dry Glacier du Tour in Summer**

University in Philadelphia Pennsylvania, and earned a Master's degree in painting from Villa Schifanoia, Rosary College Graduate School of Fine Art, in Florence. The lure of the Alps, and a love of skiing brought her back to Europe. In St Anton, Austria Janet met her future English husband, also a keen ski mountaineer. As a resident in the UK for the last 25 years, Janet has shown in a number of group shows in London, and in solo exhibitions at Morley Gallery, The Orangery in Holland Park, and a large exhibition in the offices of the Boston Consulting Group.

Janet's artwork has been inspired by the UK's changeable weather (including rain and snow), the superb walking paths, the mountains and the sea, as well as sporting activities like jump racing, especially the Liverpool Grand National.

For the walkers haute route Janet had to rely on taking mental photographs after leaving her camera in the very first hut. This early morning oversight influenced the style of the large watercolours, as they evoke the most memorable scene from pared down visual memories. The artwork for the exhibition of the skiing haute route will aim to highlight the different beauty and challenges of the winter traverse.

Both trips were guided by Brian Farquharson, an international mountain guide based in Zermatt.

## **Janet Johnson** **skiing haute route,** **high level walking haute route**

**Janet Johnson** will be showing artwork inspired by the classic Haute Route from Argentiere to Zermatt. Janet completed the walking haute route in 7 days, in August 2008, crossing the Glacier du Tour, Plateau du Trient and the Glacier du Mont Mine. In April 2010 Janet made it all the way to Zermatt once again in 7 days at the first attempt on the classic skiing haute route starting with the Col du Chardonnet, and finishing on the last day



**Walking by Seracs on the way to the Albert Premier Hut**

with the classic journey from the Vignettes hut including the climb up the Col du Mont Brule' and the final skin up to the Col de Valpelline.

Janet is originally from the USA. The first time Janet visited Europe was to ski in Zermatt, and at the age of 14 the moguls on the Stockhorn area seemed huge compared to those formed on the ski slopes of Pennsylvania. In subsequent years Janet studied fine art at Tyler School of Art, Temple



**Janet Johnson showing how it's done!**

**The exhibition previews on Tuesday 12th October 2010 at Charlotte Road.**  
**Everybody welcome.**  
**The exhibition continues until the New Year.**

## Jean Slee-Smith ARCA

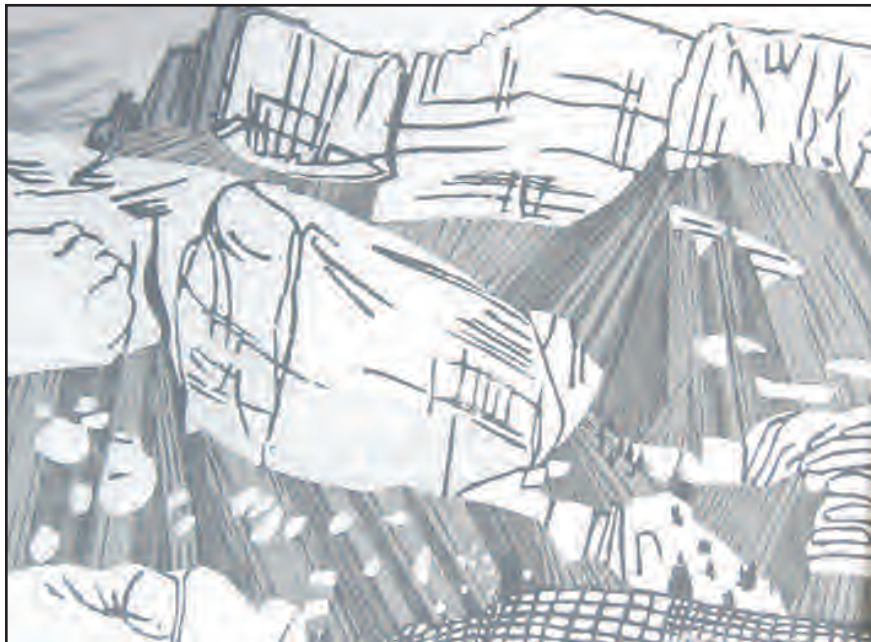
In my late childhood my friends and I spent our spare time walking, cycling, camping, scrambling and rock climbing in the Southern Lake District. We had a lot of freedom in the years following the war.

Then I took a degree at the Royal College of Art, an education strong on design. I have had a long interest in geology, its history, its substance and its erosion. Both with, and without my Alpine Club husband, I have visited many wild places which have given me much pleasure and the subjects for my work.

### WHY LINO?

Most rocks have distinctive colours and textures and repetitive joints and layering. All of these can easily be reproduced by a single colour printed on the picture. It is also possible by grading the tone to make the rocks more solid and three dimensional. The hard edges are more precise than they would be if painted.

The prints to be exhibited are from the Maritime Alps, the Pyrenees, Crete and many from Iceland, Scotland and England. Some are among the oldest rocks in the world and others as in Iceland are the youngest. I hope some of the images will be familiar.



## Membership News

### New Members:

Name	Membership type	Address
Paul Edwards	Full	Andover, Hants
Hannah Baker	Asp	-----
Steve Berry	Full	London
Will Sim	Full	-----
Natasha Geere	Full	Leeds
Jonathan Halliday	Full	Wintzenheim, France
Alex Palmer	Full	London
Micheal Bullock	Associate	Alceste,r Warwickshire
Alexandra Buisse	Asp	London

### Deaths

We have been told of the deaths of **Bob Robinson**, who died 17th May, & **John Moss**, who died 31st May. We also have to report the death on 10th May of **John Kempe** aged 92, member since 1952. **Chris Walker**, a member since 2006, was killed in an avalanche on Buachaille Etive Mor on the 24th February 2010. Our sympathy goes out to their families and friends.



Members from the Metropolitan Police Force Mountaineering Club who came to the HQ for a visit. Glyn Hughes spoke to them about our archives and Jerry Lovatt showed some of the treasures in the library and artifacts in the cellar. They stayed for the evening lecture and were able to meet some of our still living treasures!



In March, AC members Tracey Quine and David Jakulis were married part way up Ben Nevis. I hope the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team are impressed with the up-to-date selection of AC members' ice axes!



Who is this illustrious member of the AC? No- it couldn't be that this fine equestrian figure is former wild man of British alpinism Aid Burgess! Ah - perhaps with age comes respectability!

The old Guzzi groaning under the weight of climbing gear. Chris Comrie 'expecting nothing more than a long uneventful ride home'. Oh yeah!  
Photo by Yuki Fujita



Icefjord from right of Sermermiut



Rowan painting in big coat Sermermiut March 2010

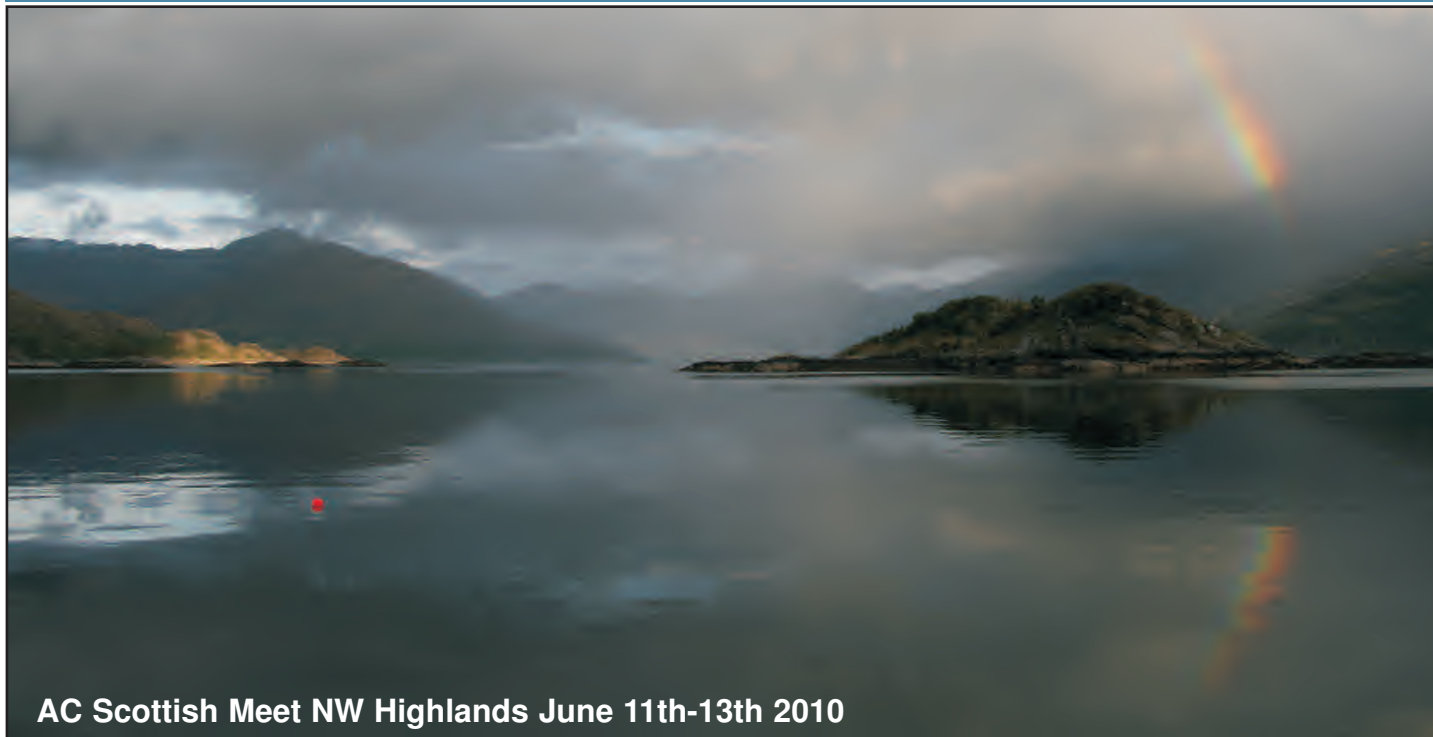
**An Arctic Painting Odyssey**

AC associate Rowan Huntley took her paint brushes to Ilulissat, western Greenland this summer in a trip supported by the Gino Watkins Memorial Fund/ Edward Wilson Fund and the Andrew Croft Memorial Fund. The following is an extract from her expedition report, the full account can be found at [www.rowanhuntley.co.uk](http://www.rowanhuntley.co.uk)

*"The colourful flashes of aqua and pale lime were startling.....As were the booming thunder cracks from beneath a cloudless sky. The ice field was alive, its constant movement creating friction and collapse within; the periodic loud creaking....punctuated only by the whistling breeze and the tuneful melodies of snow buntings. In the dazzling sunshine it was difficult to 'see' colour.....but I mixed my palette to contain an array of warm and cool hues: blues, violets, turquoise, greys, whites and that pale lime green of the ice which sits just below the water line."*

Rowan says: *"I was able to get up close and personal to some serious ice bergs, both day and night, on land and at sea. The Ilulissat icefjord is stunningly beautiful, a most spectacular place to paint and one fully deserving of its UNESCO World Heritage status. I was fortunate to also visit Ice Camp Eqi, a remote camp sited opposite the immense Eqip Sermia glacier and from where the British 1934 Trans-Greenland Expedition made a start. The expedition was to encounter many hardships but, having experienced the tranquility of Eqi for myself, it was easy to see why their brief stop there had set them up in good spirits."*

Rowan's trip south to Antarctica with HMS Endurance, postponed last year due to flooding of the ship, has been rescheduled to take place this winter onboard HMS Scott. Operational duties and flooding permitting that is....fingers crossed



AC Scottish Meet NW Highlands June 11th-13th 2010

After some attrition to the forecast number, some five AC members and one guest made it to Dundonnell on Friday night. This is a stunning part of the UK, with fantastic climbs in amazing scenery, and we were all looking forward to getting some more routes ticked. Unfortunately, the weather had other ideas, and relegated us to hill-walking on the Saturday (Sail Mhor by some, Beinn Ghobhlach by others). A bar meal in the nearby hotel occupied Saturday evening, with much good food and ale consumed. A large contingent of local musicians kept us, plus the ubiquitous coach-load of enthusiastic Dutch tourists, well entertained. Sunday also dawned wet, some potted gently home, others stayed put, content in the knowledge that they had the whole week ahead in the Highlands, with a big ridge of high pressure forecast. Many thanks to all those who attended and made it enjoyable despite the weather, we will hope for better next year. **Jonty Mills** (photo: Loch Hourn 6/6/10 somewhat similar conditions to the AC W/E. D Turnbull)

## Availability of World Maps

**New Service**

The Alpine Club has access to a variety of detailed world maps that are available to Members to help plan their expeditions to the wider ranges. Typically we have numerous Russian 1:50,000 to 1:200,000 maps available in electronic format that can be emailed free to interested parties on request. Please provide either the map reference number or the specific location and possibly name of the mountain(s) of interest. The following regions are available: Himalaya, Karakorum; Hindu Kush; China - Tibet; China - Central; China - Xinjiang; Pamirs; Fann Mountains; Tien Shan; Altai; Sayan; Kamchatka; Iran; Caucasus; Turkey; Morocco; Ethiopia and South America.

Available in paper format are a number of 1:50,000 maps of the Indian Himalaya.

These are only available for use in the AC Library, but may be copied.

Requests for electronic maps should be made to [climbing.fund@alpine-club.org.uk](mailto:climbing.fund@alpine-club.org.uk) and to our Librarian, Tadeusz, at [library@alpine-club.org.uk](mailto:library@alpine-club.org.uk) for information concerning the collection of hard copy maps.

## Members - don't forget your own 'Member's Area' in the AC website!

If you still have not done so, do register for Alpinet at <http://www.alpine-club.org.uk/alpinet/index.php> you can look up the latest addresses of members and change your own details, sign on to circulation lists etc.

**ALSO** - send in your email address to ensure you get kept up to date with our regular AC Email Bulletins.

Send it to [admin@alpine-club.org.uk](mailto:admin@alpine-club.org.uk) and Amber will include you on the list.

Francoise Call, AC Hon Sec.

## INDEX TO ALPINE JOURNAL 1988-2007

A new index for the years 1988 to 2007, produced by combining the indices for each volume, is available in pdf form to download from the website. Use the link under Notices on the Home Page. The index is also available as an Excel database for those who want to play - contact John Town at [j.m.town@mac.com](mailto:j.m.town@mac.com).

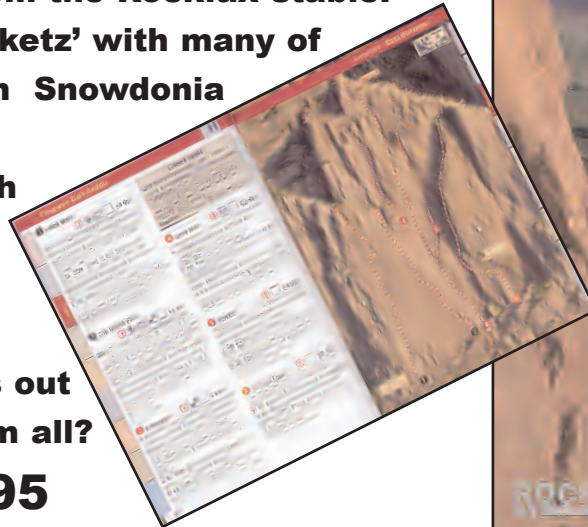
# North Wales Classics

More trad routes from the Rockfax stable.

North Wales in your 'pokketz' with many of the most popular routes in Snowdonia now available in an area mini-guide. There's enough classics here (and more) for first time and occasional visitors.

Are there any AC heroes out there who have done them all?

**Price £16.95**



## Issue dates for the AC Newsletter

There are now only

**3 issues of the AC newsletter per year.**

**March 15th, July 15th, November 10th**

## **Second Hand Books Sales:**

From time to time the Library offers a list of surplus books that are for sale to members. To save costs and delay, we will now do this by e-mail. If you cannot receive e-mail, then please give **Mike Hewson** at the AC Library a note of your name and current address and we will post any new lists to you.

# **AC Guidebooks**

Dolomites (2 Vols)	£28.00
Mont Blanc Vol. 1	£15.00
Mont Blanc Vol. 2	£15.00
Bernese Oberland	£19.50
Bernina and Bregalia	£18.50
Valais West	£19.50
Valais East	£18.50
Ecrins	£17.50
The 4000m Peaks of the Alps	£23.00

Don't forget to visit the AC website:

**[www.alpine-club.org.uk](http://www.alpine-club.org.uk)**