Obituaries

Plate 20. *'Jumnotree [Yamunotri], the source of the river Jumna [Yamuna]'*

In Memoriam

The Alpine Club Obituary	**Year of Election** (including to ACG)
Al Alvarez	1986
Trevor Braham	1951
Richard Brooke	1950
Joe Brown	1954 (Hon 1995)
Mike Bullock	Assoc 2010
Julian Davey	2003
Claude Davis	1985
Yvonne Holland	1996
Jeff Lowe	Hon 2009
Martin Moran	1985
Peter Page	1980
Alan Pope	Asp 2003
Robin Richards	1976
Anne Sauvy	1975
Ernst Sondheimer	1974

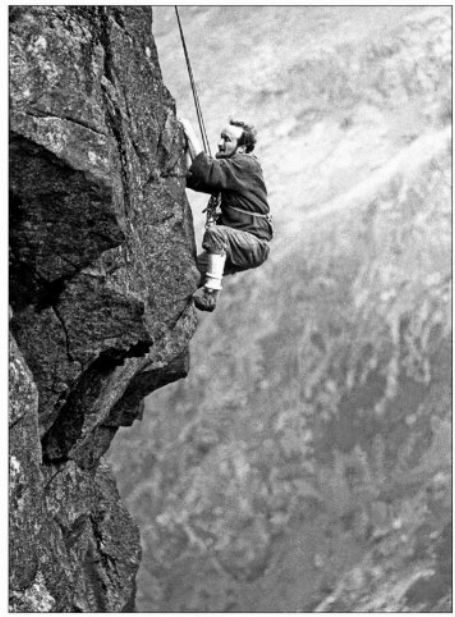
As usual, the editor will be pleased to receive obituaries for any of those above not included in the following pages.

Alfred Alvarez
1929 - 2019

It was early morning when we drove off the ferry at Zeebrugge.

'You drive,' Al said. 'I'm going to sleep. Don't go over the red mark on the rev counter. Oh, and by the way, the brake cylinder's leaking. You've got only one big stab on the brakes then you'll have to pull over and top it up. There's a can of brake fluid in the trunk.'

Then he stretched out on the passenger seat of the Lotus Elite and was soon fast asleep. Having explored the controls I set off apprehensively on the long drive down the autobahn towards the Brenner pass. The Lotus was Al's pride and joy and I'd never driven such a hot sport car before. This was trust. But that was Alvarez: stimulating company but laid back when appropriate, a gentle guy who enjoyed life and encouraged others to do the same.



'Climbing was part of who I was.' Al Alvarez follows Pete Crew on the second ascent of *MPP*, Dinas Mot. *(John Cleare)*

Frequently seen at Harrisons, Ynys Ettws or the Bosigran Count House, Al was a popular figure in 1960s and 1970s climbing circles, often in the company of his close buddy and Hampstead neighbour, that larger-than-life character Ian McNaught-Davis. With a shared sense of humour, each proved a foil for the antics of the other. Indeed, in their younger, wilder days when both owned distinctive white Mini Coopers, it was said that on Welsh mountain roads they would delight when approaching each other from opposite directions in passing on the wrong side or the road. Al certainly enjoyed driving fast and owned a sequence of performance motors including a Cooper Climax, giving rise to the quip among his literary friends: 'Have you seen Al's climax?' He also had an E-Type Jaguar before family responsibilities demanded less exuberant transport, although no less classy.

Al Alvarez was that rare person, a genuine intellectual, although it was said that thanks to his time spent in America, his mode was more affable gunslinger than stuffy Oxbridge academic. By profession a man-of-letters, he was a poet, essayist, author, novelist and critic; by inclination he was a rock climber, poker player and lover of classical music. He looked the part too, with his high forehead, broken nose and moustache, his neat beard and kindly eyes.

He was proud of being 'a Londoner heart and soul – if not quite an Englishman' for his ancestors, Sephardic Jews from Spain, had settled in London merely four centuries before. Born in 1929 into a well-heeled family living in some style in Hampstead, he was reared by a strict nanny before being sent off to school at Oundle, which he hated. Initially a persistent rule-breaker and something of a weedy boy with a damaged leg, he held his own by playing good rugby and learning to box and meanwhile enjoying his first rock climb. Just missing wartime conscription, Al killed time teaching at a prep school before going up to Oxford in 1949 to read English at Corpus Christi where he took a rare first – and joined the Climbers' Club. Now a research fellow but still a rebel, he declared that English, as currently studied at university level, was 'a discipline for the clever rather than the brilliant', while his antipathy for convention and 'high-table chat' caused something of a rumpus in the staid fields of poetry and literary criticism. He was attracting attention.

The big break came when he was invited to present a series of seminars at Princeton, where he immediately took to the more laid-back American scene and made much of the opportunity to climb with university colleagues in the Shawangunks. Following the publication of his first two books, dealing respectively with Elizabethan and modern British and American poetry, he took up a D H Lawrence Fellowship at the University of New Mexico. As it happened, Al had become a keen disciple of Lawrence's work and in 1956 he married Frieda Lawrence's granddaughter Ursula Barr but their union was short-lived and their son Adam died in 2016. Al abandoned academe for Hampstead, and via an enjoyable stint on the North Sea oilrigs, he settled into the uncertain career of a freelance writer.

He soon met with success, editing Penguin's Modern European Poets series and becoming the poetry and film critic for the *Observer* during that paper's great days, while doing much to establish the reputation of his friends Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath and of the American poets John Berryman and Robert Lowell. He wrote regularly for top-flight British and American journals and magazines and over the years published more than 20 books, among them *The Savage God,* a meditation on suicide – he had once tried it himself – and in due course an engaging autobiography *Where Did It All Go Right?* In 1966 he married Anne Adams, a Canadian child psychotherapist, to become, as his friend John le Carré wrote 'an impassioned husband and a family man', meanwhile keeping fit by swimming in all weathers in the nearby Hampstead Heath ponds, insisting that 'cold water delays the ageing process.'

Al's interest in poker had been kindled during his time in America; the game intrigued him, he became an adept and in London he played regularly, often for high stakes, claiming that poker taught him patience. Chris Bonington, himself a keen poker player, wrote that playing with Alvarez, though very exciting, could be quite terrifying. An assignment on poker in Las Vegas for the *New Yorker* became the nucleus for his book *The Biggest Game in Town,* and periodically Vegas lured him back for a session. True

to form, Al asserted 'serious poker is no more about gambling than rock climbing is about taking risks.'

As a climber his interest was in rock rather than snow, ice or high mountains. A self-confessed adrenaline junkie, being close to danger was important; a climb, Alvarez wrote, 'is like playing chess with your body ... every move has to be worked out by a kind of physical strategy in terms of effort, balance and consciousness.' If not the most elegant climber, he was very capable, strong and moved with a purposeful muscularity, happily following the best leaders in the game – he knew most of them – on many of the harder routes.

Alvarez had been enlisted to help host the 1960 Russian party, the first to climb in Wales. Both he and one of the guests broke bones in bad falls but at Bangor Al's ankle had been badly set, thereafter giving gradually worsening trouble that by his sixties was seriously curtailing his climbing.

In 1964 I had invited Al to contribute the text to *Rock Climbers in Action in Snowdonia,* just commissioned by Secker & Warburg, but the paltry advance was dwarfed by the fee offered for a *New Yorker* article and he reluctantly declined. But a year later the *Observer Magazine* commissioned us to produce a major feature on the current climbing ace, the computer wizard Pete Crew. Al made the second ascent of *MPP* with him, then considered one of the more fearsome routes in the Llanberis Pass, though not without liberal use of the f-word, a favourite expletive for which Al was well known.

Bosigran was his favourite cliff where he often climbed with his close friends Pete and Barrie Biven and the artist Cliff Fishwick. With Pete he made the second ascent of Pete's intimidating *Moonraker* on Torbay's Berry Head, and also with Pete, the first ascent of the superb *Last Exit to Torquay:* Al had appeared as a defence witness during the obscenity trial of *Last Exit to Brooklyn.*

His first serious mountain had been in 1958, an early ascent with American friends of the spectacular Shiprock in the Four Corners desert of New Mexico. But as something of an Italophile, Al's happiest hunting ground became the Dolomites. On a first visit in 1962 with the London climber Graham Hughes, he ticked off the regular Lavaredo classics, the *Preuss Chimney* and the *Dibona Ridge* on the Cima Grande, returning the following year to the Sella Towers where he climbed his first grade VI. In 1964 we drove out to Cortina together, shredding the Lotus' silencer on the mule track to the Lavaredo hut, to meet up with John Wharton, a fellow Princeton alumni and his Ogwen Cottage colleague Mo Anthoine.

Al had set his heart on the *Comici* route on the north face of the Grande, but Wharton and I had both done the route previously so after warming up on the Spigolo Giallo, Al set off with Mo up the *Comici* despite rather dubious weather. They were still climbing the overhanging section when a storm arrived and eventually reaching the merely vertical wall above, now plastered in wet snow, they were forced to bivouac with neither sustenance nor extra clothing. In the early hours the sky cleared, the snow melted and

their ledge became a waterfall. Then it froze. Later Al wrote: 'I concluded that our luck had run out and that we too would soon be frozen.'

At dawn Wharton and I climbed the regular route to the summit with dry clothing, hot drinks and food to offer what support we could. When they emerged Mo casually described the night as 'a bit parky' and although both were exhausted and frostbitten, they were none the worse for the experience. Indeed, Al was exuberant. It was the epic he had long desired and would never forget, and it had a profound influence on both his climbing and his writing. In his 1988 book *Feeding the Rat* in which he profiled his rope-mate Mo, Al declared: 'My own preference for warm rock, warm food and a warm bed – as well as my plain lack of ability – ensured that I would never make the big time in mountaineering.'

Not to be put off, Al climbed on the Civetta the following season with Gunn Clark and Tony Smythe, while in 1966 he enjoyed a long holiday in Yosemite during which he partnered Chuck Pratt on El Cap's *East Buttress* (5.10, A2). Subsequently warm limestone won the day and for the next decade Al climbed regularly in the Apuan Alps, an Apennines sub-range in Tuscany, sometimes with Mo but usually with local Italian climbers, being especially proud of his ascent in 1983 of the intimidating 2,500ft north face of Pizza d'Ucello with Damasco Pinelli. Al returned to cold northern climes in 1985 when Mo Anthoine led him with George Band and party up the Old Man of Hoy. Now, feeling perhaps that it was time to recall epics rather than face them, Al was proposed by Roger Chorley and elected to the AC. But Hoy was hardly a swansong: he continued climbing for almost a further decade, albeit hobbling to the foot of lesser crags such as Harrisons Rocks. As he was later to write 'climbing was part of who I was.'

Eventually, in 2008, there was a stroke and now wheelchair-bound but still full of humour, Al remained at home in Hampstead. A last book, *Pondlife: A Swimmer's Journal* was published in 2013. He died on 23 September 2019, from viral pneumonia, aged 90. He leaves Anne, his son Luke – a CC member for many years – a daughter Kate and two grandsons who are learning to climb.

John Cleare

Trevor H Braham
1922 - 2020

To most of the present generation of climbers, Trevor Braham, who died on 2 March 2020 shortly before his 98th birthday, is largely unknown. Reference works such as George Band's *Summit: 150 Years of the Alpine Club* only mentions Braham as the author of an Alpine history book. Colin Wells' *Who's Who* is a blank. Yet Braham was a leading British Himalayan explorer and significant mountaineer, most active during the third quarter of the 20th century including the post-Everest Himalayan 'Golden Age'. He had a wide knowledge of mountaineering history, which he shared in three major

Braham and his guide Arthur Lochmattter on the summit of Monte Rosa in 1951. *(Trevor Braham)*

Trevor Braham in Sikkim, 1949. To his left is Ang Tharkay, to his right Sonam and Ajeeba. *(Trevor Braham)*

Trevor Braham in Switzerland. *(Swissinfo)*

books and many articles in mountaineering journals. He organised and took part in 15 Himalayan expeditions and many more 'small trips' to largely unknown areas. His preferred modus operandi was based on independent small-scale expeditions, very much in the style of Tilman and Shipton.

Braham spent much of his boyhood in India, during the fading years of the British Raj, alternating between Calcutta and Darjeeling, where, in the mid 1930s, he attended St Joseph's as a boarder for four years. Living within sight of the magnificent spectacle of Kangchenjunga and its satellite peaks exerted a strong influence upon him, arousing later ambitions: 'The view [from Observatory Hill] never failed to arouse a mixture of excitement and desire: from Nepal in the west across Tibet and Bhutan in the east, 200 miles of snow-covered ranges, filled the horizon with Kangchenjunga as the centrepiece.' By chance, in April 1942 and just turned 20, Braham joined a short trip making up a party of four from Darjeeling to the Singalila range. The seed was sown. He later recalled he knew he had discovered something permanent and he would have to return.

In his first book, *Himalayan Odyssey* (Allen & Unwin, 1974), Braham shared with his readers 30 years of personal involvement with the wider Himalayan ranges extending from Afghanistan in the west to Assam in the east that separate the Indian subcontinent from the great central Asian land-

mass to the north. He claimed that the book was neither a biography or about mountaineering, but was about his personal involvement with mountains. Furthermore, and perhaps too modestly, he laid no claim to respectability by the criterion of some singular achievement or success.

> *The day seems to have passed when the amateur or the idealist practised his pastime in his own individual way. Mountain climbing, like most other activities, is becoming increasingly professional, demanding, whether we like it or not, many of the symbols of professionalism. I have approached the mountains with the amateur's undemanding indulgence. There was never a question why: I simply had to.*

Over these 30 years we are taken from Sikkim to Kangchenjunga, Kumaon and Garhwal, Kullu and Spiti, to the Karakoram, Swat and Indus Kohistan, Nepal, Chitral and Kaghan. The 1949 trek to Sikkim was notable because it included a Czech skier, Miroslav Hruska, who had no previous mountaineering experience. Hruska's photographs and memories are archived (and available) at Athabasca University, with rare images of Braham and also the Sherpa Ang Tharkay of whom Braham had a high opinion, not least for his hot buttered scones. The magnificent peak of Chombu (6362m) was distantly observed, a peak still unclimbed despite attempts in 1993 by a Japanese party and in 1996 Doug Scott who described it as 'the Matterhorn of Sikkim', and, as described in this edition of the *Alpine Journal,* two attempts in 2019 by Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders.

The Kangchenjunga reconnaissance occurred in 1954, when John Kempe led a party comprising Tucker, Jackson, Lewis, Braham and medical officer, Mathews. They explored the upper Yalung glacier with the intention to discover a practicable route to the great ice-shelf that runs across the south-west face of Kangchenjunga. This reconnaissance (*HJ* 19, 1956) led to the route used by the successful 1955 expedition, when Band and Brown made the first ascent.

Together with Peter Holmes, a young Cambridge University geologist, he made the second ascent of Guan Nelda (6303m) from the barren plateau of Spiti in 1955. Rinzing, a 20-year-old Ladakhi, 'a natural leader' was edged to the front for the final steps to the summit.

In 1958 Braham joined a small group, Warr, the leader, Hoyle and Shipley to attempt Minipin peak, now called Diran (7257m) in the Karakoram. Travellers familiar with the upper Indus and Gilgit would not be surprised by the trials and tribulations Braham encountered: the bureaucracy, uncomfortable travel, dangerous roads, even more dangerous vehicles and drivers, spectacular flights, recalcitrant porters, the oasis charm of Hunza and the magnificent peaks on both sides of the valley now traversed by the Karakoram Highway as it climbs to the Khunjerab pass on the Chinese border. Although later in the expedition, and after Braham had left early due to work constraints, two members were killed, their route pointed the way to eventual success by an Austrian party in 1968, following three more failed

attempts in the intervening years. It is worth noting that during the 1958 Minapin attempt, Rakaposhi finally succumbed to Banks and Patey of the British Pakistani Forces Expedition. In 1996 an ice axe was found high on Minapin by Japanese climbers. The story of its identification and how it was eventually reunited with the daughter of Warr, one of the climbers lost, was told by Shigeharu Inouje *(AJ* 1996, pp190-9), an account that also included notes by Braham on the 1958 expedition.

Throughout this period, Braham lived and worked in India, first with his father in Calcutta, then in Pakistan in the employ of a cotton company. He joined the Himalayan Club in 1946, becoming its regional secretary based in Calcutta in March 1949, the Swiss Alpine Club in 1948 and the Alpine Club in 1951. He was vice president of the Himalayan Club (1958-65), honorary editor of the *Himalayan Journal* (1957-9) and in 1980 an honorary member of the Himalayan Club. He spent many seasons in the Alps. In 1947 he visited Geoffrey Winthrop Young in London to ask for advice on Alpine climbing. He recalled 'a sombre room, bookshelves, a table scattered with mountain magazines in several languages, and a distinguished-looking white-haired man seated in an armchair with a stick at his side – he had lost his left leg during World War I ...' and his advice: 'Whatever you do, don't climb the ordinary Swiss route on the Matterhorn. The Z'mutt ridge is much more interesting.'

In 1971, at the somewhat mature ago of 49, he married Elizabeth Höflin before moving to Switzerland with his wife and sons Anthony and Michael in 1974. Shortly after *Himalayan Odyssey* was published. There followed a career in commodity trading based in Lausanne, many trips in the Alps and after retirement in 1997 he published his remarkable second book: *When the Alps Cast Their Spell: Mountaineers of the Alpine Golden Age* (In Pinn, 2004).

In his review for the *Alpine Journal,* Stephen Venables had no doubts *(AJ* 2005, pp371-2): 'We have had quite a few new books recently on our Victorian climbing ancestors. The trouble with these overviews is that they often tend towards the facile, regurgitating second-hand preconceptions, with the odd inaccuracy thrown in for good measure. So – what a joy to open Trevor Braham's treasure box of glittering surprises and correct some of my *own* preconceptions.' In the *American Alpine Journal,* Clinch agreed: 'When the judges gave the 2004 Boardman-Tasker Award for the best mountain literature to *When the Alps Cast Their Spell,* they knew what they were doing. It is a gold mine of scholarship about a critical period in the history of mountaineering.'

Braham starts with a succinct but thorough chapter on the beginnings of mountaineering but the heart of the book are chapters on seven mountaineers, five of whom epitomised the Golden Age: Alfred Wills, John Tyndall, Leslie Stephen, A W Moore and Edward Whymper. Braham then reviews subsequent developments through chapters on A F Mummery and Emmanuel Boileau. Braham covers alpinists who may have otherwise been omitted in the chapter 'There Were Many Others', which includes leading ladies, eminent Europeans, and great guides. There is also an excellent bibliography

and a thorough, accurate list of Alpine first ascents from the 13th to the 19th centuries. If this is not enough, one can read the chapter endnotes, a treasure trove of obscure but fascinating information.

Those familiar with this history will recognise many of Braham's stories but he combined well-known material with original research, making this an important book even for those who think they know the history and an invaluable one for climbers unfamiliar with our rich traditions. The book is infused with Braham's acute observations and judgments. 'Whatever might be the future of mountaineering,' he concludes, 'it is to be hoped that certain essentials will remain. Such as the first spellbound moment of a youthful spirit stepping across the threshold into an awareness of the mountain world, and the birth of a desire to preserve what it has discovered."

Braham third's book, *Himalayan Playground: Adventures on the Roof of the World, 1942-72,* appeared in 2008. 'Having crossed the Rubicon of my eighth decade, I find myself out of harmony with some aspects of the evolution of mountaineering. Boundary lines, re-drawn about three decades ago, are now devoid of limits as to what is feasible and admissible technically, ethically, and physically. Clearly, advancing age has distanced me from practices now considered to be perfectly acceptable. Also, alas, diminishing capacity has begun to deprive me of the pleasures of wandering freely across cherished mountain regions. I have no doubt that a direct relationship exists between the two.' These thoughts are condensed from 'The Effects of Change on Mountaineering Ethics' *(AJ* 1997, pp161-8).

Doug Scott provided an enthusiastic, sympathetic and insightful foreword:

How wonderfully fresh and adventurous it must have been for the 20-year-old Braham travelling through the Himalaya in 1942 as a young soldier on leave during the Second World War and how wonderful to have Sherpa companions whom he had read about in the pre-war Everest expedition books. It is reassuring to find a climbing author not entirely consumed with himself while acknowledging not only whom he was with but also the vital contributions played by those who went before. … He has the gift to be able to evoke images of Himalayan landscape and bring the people therein to life. Trevor Braham found himself in association with such luminaries as Hillary, Lowe and Riddiford from New Zealand, got to climb with the leading Swiss climbers of the day René Dittert, André Roch and Alexander Graven climbing Kedarnath Dome in the Gangotri. He also travelled and climbed with the Sherpas and Bhotias – Tenzing, Ang Tharkay and other indigenous climbers who had become almost as well known to the British public as the sahibs on whose expeditions they greatly assisted. In fact one of the strengths of the book stems from the time Trevor Braham spent with the local people. He reminds us just how important the Sherpas were to Himalayan exploration and climbing – men like Pasang Dawa Sherpa who climbed Chomolhari in 1937 with Spencer Chapman and later reached a high point with Wiessner of 8,385 metres on K2 in 1939. In the footsteps of Dr A M Kellas he spent long periods with the Darjeeling Sherpas throughout Sikkim and beyond. Trevor Braham had the capacity to spend long

periods happy with his own company as well as that of local people. … He was right there at a time of great change in the region and was actually in the holy town of Badrinath on the day when 'with pride and joy India's independence was being colourfully celebrated'. He looks back to those times 60 years later with deep appreciation for all that the mountains have given him. He went to the mountains not to seek material objectives or accolades but for those 'rewards that only mountains possess the power to grant ... free from the clamour and complexities of everyday life'. The vast majority, if not all mountaineers to some extent, will readily identify with this wellspring to adventure, even those pushing out beyond the limits that Trevor Braham set for himself.

Braham continued to have an active life until at the age of 95, when a bad fall at home followed by pneumonia left him unable to walk and hardly able to speak. His last couple of years were spent in a nursing home in Gimel. His room overlooked the Alps with, on a clear day, a magnificent view of Mont Blanc. At his memorial service, constrained by Covid-19 restrictions, tributes were read from the Himalayan Club, a representative of the Alpine Club attended and a video conferencing link enabled his many family and friends in the UK to participate.

During his oration at the service his son Anthony, said of his father, 'He has been described as an icon, a legend and even a hero by people who knew him from his mountaineering days. Those who knew him socially in his later years described as the quintessential English gentleman. Of course, to me he was just Daddy, and the only hint at his mountaineering time were the rows of mountaineering books in his study – and occasionally, the visits to our home by those I realised afterwards were 'famous' mountaineers. His modesty – not just to his family – was a trait that was I think rather typical of his generation.'

Roderick A Smith

Richard Brooke
1927 - 2020

In the mid 1950s, Richard Brooke completed a unique hat-trick of landmark expeditions to both north and south polar regions and to the Himalaya, including the British North Greenland Expedition, the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition led by Vivian Fuchs and the Combined Services Expedition that made the first ascent of Rakaposhi in 1958.

Richard first went to the Alps in 1947 on leave from the navy and had three more seasons, quickly building his experience and climbing many routes, including the *Kuffner* on Mont Maudit and the *Ryan-Lochmatter* on the Plan, both big undertakings at the time. He was one of the last surviving British climbers from this post-war period, having climbed in the 1950s with such brilliant mountaineers as Wilf Noyce, Geoff Sutton, Tom Patey, Mike Westmacott and Mike Banks. This group started to repeat the harder

Richard Brooke.

existing Alpine climbs; Richard and Mike Banks for example climbed *Route Major* on Mont Blanc in 1951, the first guideless ascent since its first ascent in 1928 by Frank Smythe and T Graham Brown. They climbed it by moonlight, an experience well described in Mike's book *Commando Climber.* In August 1955 Richard climbed the Couturier couloir on the Aiguille Verte with Noyce and Sutton. This was before the days of curved-pick axes when the route was still an undertaking. He described his traverse in April 1956 of the Bernese Oberland with Chris Stocken in *AJ* 1956 pp334-9. Around this time Richard was elected as a leading alpinist to the Alpine Climbing Group. And he spanned the generations, taking a very young Nick Estcourt up the Marinelli couloir of Monte Rosa.

Richard had gone to Dartmouth Naval College during the Second World War at the tender age of 13 because, as he said, 'the magic of the sea inspired me and there was a sense of adventure.' He joined the battleship Warspite about a month before D-Day, seeing action manning a four-inch gun off the landing beaches. In 1948 he joined the ship John Biscoe, taking stores from the Falklands to bases in Graham Land. Three years later he joined a naval reconnaissance expedition to Greenland, a precursor to the major British North Greenland Expedition of 1952-4, which Richard joined and where he made his first dogsled journeys. He was away for two years and awarded the Polar Medal. Mike Banks was on the same expedition, described in his account *High Arctic,* and they became lifelong friends. It was on this expedition that Mike saved Richard's life after spilt fuel from a petrol-stove set their tent alight. Mike rescued Richard by cutting open their tent with an ice axe. Later, under the pretext of surveying, Richard and Mike Banks climbed five virgin peaks in the Barth Mountains, including a Greenland Matterhorn.

In 1956 Richard joined the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, which finally achieved Shackleton's goal of crossing the frozen continent via the South Pole, but mainly by using motorised vehicles *(The Crossing of Antarctica,* Fuchs and Hillary, 1958). Richard was attached to the New Zealand dog teams laying depots, spending much time on remote dogsled journeys surveying and climbing mountains to make survey stations. He even had a mountain named after him, Mount Brooke, climbed with Murray Douglas at the head of the Mackay glacier. Another achievement was the first ascent of Mt Huggins (3800m) during a 1,000-mile dogsled trip.

Many years later Bernie Gunn, who was a fellow expedition member, wrote of Richard: 'he was prepared to travel hard, perhaps harder than any Polar explorer before or since.'

Richard had been away for 16 months yet somehow persuaded the navy that he should join the Combined Services Expedition to attempt the unclimbed Rakaposhi (7790m) in the Karakoram. Richard joined the expedition via New Zealand on his way home from Antarctica. Tom Patey and Mike Banks reached the summit with Richard and Dicky Grant carrying supplies to the high camp at 7,300m. An old and unreliable tent thwarted Richard's own summit attempt a few days later *(AJ* 1958, pp159-68). Patey recalled how during the course of the expedition they narrowly avoided disaster when a wind-slab avalanche swept down the face he and Brooke were climbing. Richard, with typical sangfroid, simply said: 'this place is distinctly dangerous. I propose that we turn back.'

Richard married Valerie in 1965, later having two sons, David and Patrick. He finally left the navy, having been passed over for promotion to commander, probably due to his many expeditions. He briefly took over the Mountaineering Association, a training body that used some well-known instructors like Hamish MacInnes and Ian Clough. Richard realised the MA was in financial trouble so left to take up a post with the Electricity Council, where he remained until retirement. His responsibilities never came between Richard and the hills. Before an important board meeting in South Wales, Richard took the opportunity to do a long run over the Brecon Beacons but during the meeting got cramp, leaping up with a howl of pain. 'Been up mountains again, Brooke?' his CEO drily inquired.

I first met Richard in 1974 after expressing an interest in joining the Club. In those days the AC was still regarded as rather elitist, full of men with Oxbridge accents wearing suits. We met at the Wyndcliffe, a steep crag in the Wye valley where a lean and fit-looking Richard greeted me warmly: he was then 47 and 22 years older than I was. We did some great climbs around the VS level and I must have passed muster. Richard and I subsequently climbed together in the Alps and the UK for many more years, remaining friends until he died. Richard always wrote wonderful detailed letters that I still have, after every Alpine, climbing or walking trip, often analysing our performance. He was a kind, modest man and never boasted about his incredible achievements.

After our first meeting Richard asked if I would join him and Mike Banks on a winter climbing trip to Scotland in early 1975. I brought my friend Dave Viggers and we had a fantastic week that included *Observatory Ridge, Comb Gully* and *NE Buttress* in a fast time allowing the oldies Richard and Mike, with a combined age of 100 years, to descend *Tower Ridge,* an impressive effort. Later that year, the same party, but with Jeremy Whitehead replacing Mike Banks, went to the Alps. Richard wanted to attempt the Hirondelles ridge (D+) on the Grandes Jorasses. After acclimatising with the north ridge of the Grivola, we based ourselves at the Gervasutti bivouac hut above Courmayeur from where we climbed the Petites Jorasses (TD) and

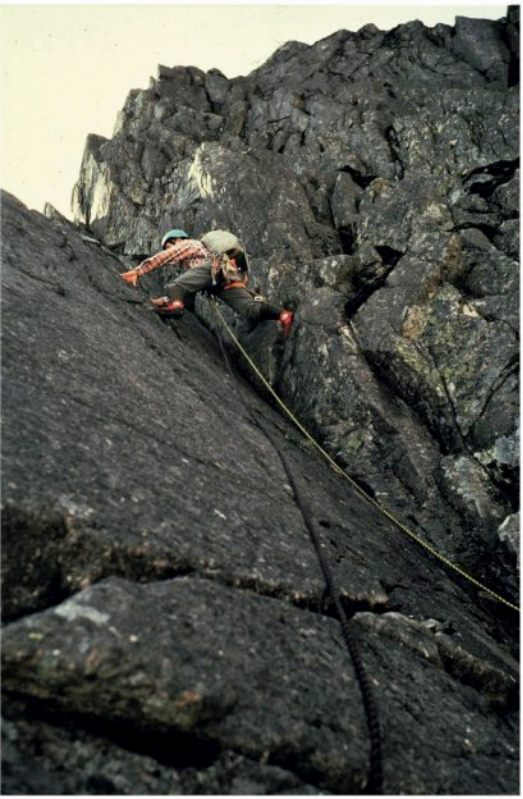
two days later the Hirondelles after two attempts. We reached the summit in an electrical storm, gear and axes buzzing, and started the unfamiliar, long and complex descent, staggering into the Boccolatte hut exhausted after more than 20 hours of climbing. This route in particular reinforced my impression of Richard's steely determination, fitness, steadiness and good decision-making *(AJ* 1976 pp196-203).

In the following years we climbed together in the Scottish winter, including classics like *Crowberry Gully* and *Glovers Chimney.* In the 1960s, Richard had climbed with Tom Patey, including first ascents of *South Post Direct, Last Post* and *Post Horn Gallop* on Creag Meagaidh, all done cutting steps. The pair also made a spirited attempt to traverse the Cuillin ridge in winter. Richard was also a solid leader on rock, always modest but capable of leading at HVS and above. His footwork was a joy to watch, probably because he had started climbing in nailed boots when careful footwork was a necessity. We climbed together on rock for 20 years visiting virtually every climbing area in Britain.

We had an excellent Alpine season in 1979, warming up on the *Frendo Spur* of the Aiguille du Midi and then attempting the two-day traverse of the Rochefort Arête and west ridge of the Grandes Jorasses via the Canzio bivouac. All went well until after the Aiguille Rochefort and the Dôme de Rochefort. Descending towards the Canzio we followed the wrong line of abseils, too far to the west. Totally committed, we had no option but to continue down steep ice into France with only one axe each and no ice screws. At the bergschrund I watched terrified with no belay as Richard downclimbed carefully towards me. His calm competence under difficult circumstances was always impressive.

Despite this failure, and only two days later, we felt ready to try Richard's long-held ambition of another major climb on Mont Blanc. Richard was now well into his second half-century and felt this was his last chance for a really big route. We chose the Peuterey ridge of Mont Blanc via the Aiguille Blanche (D+), described in the guidebook as 'the epitome of all Alpine routes'. Intending to make only one bivouac, we left the valley in the afternoon, crossed the chaotic Freney glacier and bivouacked near the top of the Schneider ledges. After a cold night with little sleep we traversed Pointe Gugliermina along loose ledges on the Brenva flank. The weather looked superb and as the sun rose, it turned the rocks a magnificent red colour. Having miraculously reached the ridge at the correct spot, we traversed snow ridges across the summits of the Aiguille Blanche until we overlooked the Col Peuterey. Having abseiled down, we followed the rocky edge of the Eckpfeiler towards Mont Blanc de Courmayeur but progress was slow: it was not until after 5pm that we reached the foot of the final snow ridge leading to the summit of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur. Richard led, while I was just glad to follow in his steps.

Over the cornice it was a different world: wind, snow and swirling cloud with a dark and threatening sky to the west but Richard was pleased as punch, holding out his hand in congratulation. The desperate cold brought



Richard Brooke climbing Eagle Ridge on Lochnagar.

us back to reality. We found our way over Mont Blanc to the Vallot hut in poor visibility, arriving at 8.30pm. We had taken 16.5 hours from our bivouac. At last in the hut we could relax and in a euphoric mood fell into a deep sleep despite the storm raging outside. Richard wrote how the Peuterey 'gave me more pleasure to look back on than any other climb I have done and that includes *Route Major (AJ* 1980, pp16-21).' In subsequent years, instead of the Alps, we had several summer trips to Scotland climbing most of the routes in Ken Wilson's *Classic Rock.*

Richard continued to enjoy ski-mountaineering expeditions, traversing the Jura in 1983 with Mike Banks. He went twice with Alan Blackshaw and others to Sweden and Norway, writing: 'I am completely hooked on this type of ski touring which reminds me strongly of the Polar regions.' He went on four more such trips with David Ford, quite often in epic weather conditions and covering large distances. In 1985 Richard decided to show me the joys of Nordic skiing in a snowy north Wales. The A5 was blocked before Corwen so we bivouacked in the car, digging it out in the morning. The road was deserted and we skied along it, stopping at the Berwyn Arms before heading into the hills. Richard thought he would ask the landlord if he would serve us coffee. From an upstairs window he told us to bugger off. 'I think coffee is off,' Richard said. We soon discovered the strong wind was blowing snow off the Berwyns' tracks so we moved south to the Long Mynd, getting some odd looks skiing up High Street in Church Stretton with large rucksacks. It was desperately cold and windy when we camped on the ridge: even our camping gas froze. In the morning we struggled on to the north edge and I noticed Richard's nose had turned white. Richard mumbled he had last suffered this in Greenland.

Aside from climbing and ski touring, Richard's other great talent was for fast long-distance walking, relying on his phenomenal stamina and perseverance. For example, in an organised 47-mile walk over the Brecon Beacons in 1981, he finished an hour ahead of the field. Similarly, he soloed

the round of Lake District 3,000ers in 16 hours in 1984 and later ran the Dorset Doddle, 33 miles along the Jurassic coast in five and a half hours.

In 1985 Richard completed his first 100-mile nonstop walk organised by the Long Distance Walkers Association and including the highest peaks in Yorkshire. The weather was atrocious but Richard finished in 37 hours, albeit with trench foot. He did two more 100-mile walks, one covering most of south Wales and the last when he was 60, through much of north Wales from Llanrwst to Porthmadog, Harlech, Ffestiniog and back to Llanrwst. This included 3,700m of ascent achieved in 32 and a half hours. Richard also enjoyed mountain marathon events, competing in the Saunders Marathon in 1988 with David Ford when they finished 12th in the expert class. With John Daniels, Richard competed in six Karrimor Mountain Marathons between 1981 and 1988, winning the veteran race in Snowdonia in 1987.

In 1989 Richard, John and myself had another Alpine holiday, Richard, now 62, leading his son David and a friend. We climbed Mont Dolent from Courmayeur, followed by Ciarforon and the Gran Paradiso, with Richard still climbing strongly. Richard's last Alpine season was in 1990 with his old friend Mike Banks, when they climbed several mountains around Arolla. In 1991, despite reservations, Richard joined a 'golden oldies' Himalayan expedition to Jaonli (6630m) in the Garhwal, sponsored by Saga. It included Mike Banks, Mike Westmacott, Jim Milledge, Joss Lynam and Paddy O'Leary, all aged well over 60. Their high point was around 6,100m when they stopped following a huge earthquake that made their mountain unstable (*AJ* 1996, pp103-107).

In 1993 I was surprised to get letter from Richard, now 66, to say he was giving up serious rock and ice climbing. His reasons were many but he felt he was not as fit and had various back, knee and shoulder injuries. He was more conscious of the dangers and felt he owed it to Val, his wife, to spend more time together. He was also deeply committed to his local church, studying to become a lay reader. He wrote: 'I find this difficult to write because inside I am torn both ways. The urge to climb is no longer there and other things have taken precedence in my life.' We had climbed together for almost 20 years so I was deeply saddened but understood his reasons.

Despite this, Richard continued walking in the hills for many more years with John Daniels and less frequently myself. Richard and John also enjoyed several weeklong mountain holidays in Scotland, still with some strenuous days. Even in his 90s Richard continued walking around his home in Bath and the local hills. Only a few months before he died, we enjoyed a slideshow of our earlier Alpine holidays, rekindling old memories.

Richard died on 29 June following a stroke. He leaves his wife Val and sons David and Patrick and their families. After 46 years of friendship it seems almost inconceivable that he is no longer here. I will miss him deeply.

Colin Beechey

Richard Brooke with John Harding in April 1969 on the Haute Route overlooking the Plateau de Trient.

John Harding writes: As befitted a former Royal Navy lieutenant commander, Richard Brooke had a heart of oak and an equally durable physique. Whether on or off a mountain, he was courageous, imperturbable and utterly dependable. A devout Christian who in his later years became a lay reader, his innate modesty (though his climbs were anything but) and blameless character mirrored a faith that was as unflinching as it was lightly worn.

I first met Richard in the late 1960s when we did some of the classic rock routes in north Wales together. In April 1969, after a two-day ridge-hopping traverse of the Brecon Beacons to get ourselves fit, we set off from Chamonix bound for Zermatt by the Haute Route. Our start had been delayed by three days owing to an injury I had sustained while skiing the Vallée Blanche. It was typical of Richard to insist that we should carry on to do at least part of the route, even though I would inevitably have to bow out early as my leave had run out. At the Col du Chardonnet, we paused for a moment to glance back at the tremendous sight of the sunlit Aiguille Verte, with the Couturier couloir a dark-shadowed gash splitting the face, which Richard had done in 1955 with the peerless Noyce and Sutton. After summiting, they were descending the Whymper couloir when a pair of French climbers, who had been following them throughout, slipped on the ice and fell to their deaths.

We had seen no other ski tourers all day, but that evening at the Trient hut we were joined by a bumptious group of young Frenchmen. Knowing that I would have to return home after reaching the next staging point at Orsières, I suggested to the Frenchmen that Richard might join them to enable him to finish the course. Staring askance at the weatherworn Richard, they shrugged off the idea with Gallic disdain. Had they known anything about Richard's mountaineering record, their attitude might have been different but it changed radically early next morning when we were hit by a tremendous storm when descending the key passage down the Combe d'Ornay. The French had started long before us but were now in disarray and only too glad to be ferried down to Orsières where they implored Richard to join them. He did so with characteristic grace, but two days later their bid to reach Zermatt had to be abandoned when an avalanche shattered Richard's skis and French morale.

Richard generally regarded ski mountaineering as essentially a means to climb mountains. However, he was a sound skier and always generous in sharing his mountaineering expertise and experience that extended from the Alps, New Zealand, Antarctica to the Himalayas. In 1978, when the recently widowed Beryl Wilberforce Smith was looking for a couple of experienced ski mountaineers to lead the ninth and final stage of the historic ski traverse of the Alps that she and her recently deceased husband Peter had started eight years earlier, Richard and another AC stalwart Fred Jenkins volunteered to lead what turned out to be a demanding but successful stage taking in the Zillertal, Venediger and Gross Glockner ranges. This was typical of Richard and I remain indebted to him not only for his staunch companionship but also for putting me in touch with New Zealand's climbing fraternity and for his suggestion that the traverse of Mont Blanc via the Aiguilles de la Bérangère and Bionassay was a worthwhile expedition.

Over the years, Richard and I had done a good many tramps together in the hills of south Wales, but his last few were spent selflessly nursing his sick wife Valerie who survives him with their two sons David and Patrick. I will always revere the memory of this exceptional man.

Joe Brown CBE
1930 - 2020

He's like a Human Spider
Clinging to the wall
Suction, Faith and Friction
And nothing else at all
But the secret of his success
Is his most amazing knack
Of hanging from a hand-jam
In an overhanging crack.

So wrote Joe Brown's close friend Tom Patey. Tom died in 1970 *(AJ* 1971, pp331-6), the year that Joe turned 40, and his complete 'Ballad of Joe Brown', of which this is just one of many verses, is essentially the early story of the most significant climber Britain has ever produced. For many years it rang out on Saturday nights in climbing pubs all around Britain. The refrain runs:

We've sung it once, we've sung it twice
He's the hardest man in the Rock & Ice
He's marvellous – he's fabulous
He's a wonder man is Joe!

By 1970 and for long after Joe was indeed the icon of every climber in the country and had gained an international reputation. He was already 'The Master' or 'The Baron', acknowledged as among the world's leading rock climbers, well known to Fleet Street, the BBC and the general public. Not surprisingly a letter once reached him in Llanberis addressed simply to 'The Human Fly, North Wales'.

Rock climbing was then an esoteric game that had always evaded public attention. However, in the early 1950s rumours circulated in climbing circles that two young Manchester fellows with baboon-like arms, steel fingers and prodigious talent were sweeping through Derbyshire and Snowdonia putting up dozens of routes of such difficulty that they were unrepeatable. The mist cleared in 1954 when the same pair reached the Alps to amaze the Alpine establishment with their speed and ability. Brown and Whillans had arrived.

He crossed the sea to Chamonix
And to show what he could do,
He knocked three days off the record time
For the west face of the Dru –
On the unclimbed face of the Blaitière
The crux had tumbled down –
But he cracked the crux by the crucial crack
Now known as the fissure Brown

The Fissure Brown was for some years considered to be the hardest rock pitch in the Alps.

No wonder the Alpine Club took notice. Charles Evans was organising a reconnaissance expedition to the still unclimbed Kangchenjunga and invited Joe, the more urbane of the duo, to join the team, most of them already Himalayan veterans.

'Twas young Joe Brown that hurried down
To rally to the call

John Cleare's iconic photo of Joe Brown on Spider's Web, Gogarth.

But when Evans mentioned that while all expenses would be paid, £20 pocket money might be useful for the voyage, Joe was taken aback. That sort of ready cash was beyond his reach. Nevertheless he soon found his feet and with his rope-mate George Band, an Everest 1953 climber, he made the first ascent of the mountain, having himself led the crux rock pitch immediately below the summit. Coming so soon after the Everest success, the ascent of the world's third-highest peak was a national event and like it or not, Joe – an ordinary working man – became a public figure.

In the cold, cold Karakoram
Where crags are five miles high,
The best in France had seen the chance
To pass us on the sly.
You may talk of Keller, Contamine,
Magnone, Paragot
But the man of the hour on the Mustagh Tower
Was known by the name of Joe.

Now self-employed with his own property repair business and still living with his mother, Joe was invited in 1956 to join a four-man, shoestring attempt on the Mustagh Tower: 'built on the lines of the Matterhorn but infinitely more grand' according to Charles Bruce. Ian McNaught-Davis and Tom Patey were prominent ACG members while the organiser John Hartog had been fixated on the peak since childhood. After a difficult climb up the north-west ridge, Joe and Mac reached the summit, Tom and John, the latter badly frostbitten, followed next day. Six days later the crack French team Tom sung about summited via the south-east ridge.

With Colonel Hunt on the Russian Front
He paved the Paths of Peace
And helped to bridge the gulf that lay
Between the West and East
That Climbers all might Brothers be
In the Kingdom of the Snow

In 1962 a joint AC and SMC expedition led by John Hunt and Malcolm Slesser was invited to the Pamirs, then in Soviet Tajikistan. It was not a happy expedition. Wilf Noyce and Robin Smith were killed descending Pik Garmo while Joe and McNaught-Davis made an epic if ultimately successful ascent of Communism Peak (now Ismoil Somoni Peak).

The British found Russian bureaucracy tiresome, the weather frustrating and the rock dangerous, while the Russian climbers continually berated their guests for smoking and for their lackadaisical unfitness. Later Joe told how descending the tedious moraines on the long Garmo glacier with Mac, tired and suffering from piles, they located by luck a particular glacial trough giving easy going. Their fitness-freak Russian counterparts mean-

while, having stumbled their way down a different and more gruelling route, were amazed to find their guests stretched out in the sun and smoking. After the second such occurrence the bemused Russians demanded to know how fast Joe could travel when he was fit.

Joseph Brown was born into a poor but respectable family in a poor part of Manchester where his widowed mother worked hard to support seven children, of whom he was the youngest. Bombed out, his home destroyed in the Manchester blitz of 1940, bored by organised games and expelled from the Scouts for refusing to attend church parade, he was something of a rebel as a youth and happiest messing about outdoors with a small group of other adventurous youngsters: fishing, hiking, camping and scrambling around on the craggy moorland where the fringes of the Peak District approach the city.

Apprenticed to a builder at 14, he was paid 10 shillings (50p) a week but his generous boss allowed him time off when not busy and paid for his first hiking boots. Joe had devoured Colin Kirkus' seminal book *Let's Go Climbing* and realised that climbers used ropes – but how? Attempting to climb up Kinder Downfall with his chums one day equipped with his mother's legendary washing line, the lads encountered a real climber who showed them a proper hemp climbing rope, how to use it, and most importantly how to belay.

He first laid hand upon a crag
In the year of Forty-nine
He'd nowt but pluck, beginners' luck
And his mother's washing line.
He scaled the gritstone classics
With unprecedented skill –
His fame soon reached the Gwryd,
Likewise the Dungeon Ghyll.

In due course it certainly did, but not quite yet. Joe soon fell in with other young Peak District climbers, making his first visit to Wales at Christmas 1947 and climbing the regular routes on the Idwal Slabs. John Barford's classic paperback *Climbing in Britain* inspired hitch-hiking to Ben Nevis at Easter 1948, to No3 Gully and a blizzard, while that summer he tried harder Welsh climbs, notably notorious *Lot's Groove* on Glyder Fach – still Hard VS today – which he sailed up using hand jams, a technique which came to him naturally but in those days was rarely exploited. Back on gritstone new routes fell to him thick and fast, including the long feared *Right Unconquerable* on Stanage Edge which Joe led in 1949 shortly before national service caught up with him; two years as an Royal Army Ordnance Corps storeman in Singapore proved rather tame.

Back home again, the small group of lads with whom he now climbed dubbed themselves the Rock and Ice Club. It wouldn't become properly recognised as a club for some years but its antics and achievements, especially

The 'team of all talents' on Hoy in 1967. From left to right: Joe Brown, Dougal Haston, Chris Bonington, Ian McNaught-Davis, Tom Patey and Pete Crew. *(John Cleare)*

those of Joe and his now frequent rope-mate Don Whillans, soon gathered a legendary reputation. Joe was creative, not only with routes but with names, and when in 1952 he and Don climbed *Cemetery Gates* on Dinas Cromlech, the destination seen on a Chester bus that evening seemed an appropriate name for this desperate line between *Cenotaph Corner* and *Ivy Sepulchre;* it was another year before Joe climbed the famous corner itself, four years after his first abortive attempt, and in socks. Normally Joe climbed in nails or plimsolls, but socks where sometimes necessary. He first used Vibrams on Kangchenjunga.

Not content with the Three Cliffs in Llanberis, the Rock and Ice boys dominated Clogwyn Du'r Arddu for nearly a decade, Joe himself making six hard new routes in six weeks in 1952. It was a similar picture some 12 years later when Craig Gogarth was discovered; Joe had married Valerie Gray in 1957, fathered two daughters and by now had settled in Llanberis where he opened his mountain emporium in 1966 and could go climbing whenever he wished. Often now partnered by Peter Crew, he played a major part in developing this huge sea cliff, pioneering nearly 50 new routes in the ensuing three years. His autobiography *The Hard Years,* authored with Crew and Robin Collomb, was published by Livia Gollancz in 1967, rather prematurely given that Joe was still in his prime.

It was film and television that endeared Joe to the general public. Recruited to work on a climbing documentary, Joe horrified the BBC crew by sliding at speed down the Snowdon railway tracks on a conveniently shaped stone, a Rock and Ice stunt originally employed by railway navvies using shovels during track construction in the 1890s. Tom Stobart, the 1953

Joe Brown on *Creagh Dhu Wall* at Craig y Castell with Julie Collins. The climb was 'training' for a filmed ascent of Vector, brainchild of Ned Kelly, then a senior producer at TWW TV in Bristol, who had done a previous broadcast of Coronation Street. *(John Cleare)*

Everest film maker, cast Joe for his now classic steel industry information film *Safety,* shot mostly on the Spigolo Giallo in the Dolomites, which gave Joe an opportunity to make a second attempt on the *Cassin* route on the Cima Grande with Don Roscoe. They failed, frustrated by a fierce storm, but managed to make the first successful descent down the overhanging face. In fact, Joe never really liked the Dolomites, writing later after a more successful season: 'I'd had enough of the Dollies, I was fed up with the similarity of the climbing. I longed to return to Chamonix and some snow and ice.'

Elected to the elite ACG in 1954, Joe returned to Chamonix frequently, notably the next year to the Dru again, also with Whillans, only to retreat in a storm from the very route that a few days later was to become the *Bonatti Pillar.* Then with Tom Patey in the 1960s he climbed several fine new lines including the *Central Pillar* on the Plan's west face – via the Fissure Brown-Patey – and the north-west spur of the Aiguille sans Nom.

Joe worked with Stobart again in 1961 in the remote Valley of the Assassins in Iran's Elbruz mountains where he climbed crumbling conglomerate rock and used complex rope techniques to reach otherwise inaccessible caves, unfortunately missing a large gold horde which archaeologists uncovered nearby just months later. The next year in Petra the rock was better and

the climbing as difficult. Even more complex rope-work was necessary to reach hidden tombs and discover old skeletons and pottery shards but by then Joe had started a formal job as an instructor under Eric Langmuir at Derbyshire's White Hall Outdoor Pursuits Centre and such irregular jaunts were not welcomed.

Nevertheless teaching climbing at White Hall provided Joe a useful opportunity to analyse his own climbing technique and also to master canoeing and skiing, but one particular incident is worth recording from when the British gymnastics squad for the 1964 Olympics came to White Hall to train. The gymnasts were taken aback to discover that whereas Joe could easily repeat much of their routine, they were unable to match some of his informal 'gymnastic' feats. Indeed, their coach remarked to Langmuir that should Joe take up proper gymnastics he was a potential Olympic medallist.

In 1963 Joe had featured with McNaught-Davis, Whillans and the French climber Paragot in a disappointing BBC live broadcast in poor weather from Clogwyn d'ur Arddu, a return match for a French broadcast from the Aiguille du Midi aborted in a snowstorm. However, by 1966 the BBC had managed to master the difficult art of televising live climbing, having realised that a difficult climb amid dramatic scenery was not enough: decent weather was axiomatic, climbers were essentially actors and humorous repartee was obligatory. Joe's smooth, unflustered movement, his ability to be climbing the right move at the right moment and his wicked sense of humour, especially when teamed with such an ebullient character as his frequent rope-mate McNaught-Davis, made Joe a must-have performer for live television. Good weather was more likely on a sea cliff and a live broadcast from Craig Gogarth in 1966 with Joe leading *Red Wall* proved a great success. Following the now historic two-day broadcast the following year from the awesome Old Man of Hoy, during which he led the first ascent of the south face after 'training' on the curious Castle of Yesnaby sea stack, Joe was known to every television viewer, and when colour TV arrived in 1970, the spectacular live broadcast from *Spider's Web,* a great natural arch on Craig Gogarth, assured his public fame.

About this time the BBC became interested in the possibilities of a climb on St Kilda and in the height of winter Joe, Tom Patey, Pete Crew and I were storm-bound on the island for many days: most of the time Joe and Pete were content to remain indoors playing poker while Tom and I felt compelled to brave the snow and thoroughly explore the island. Eventually rescued by an intrepid Harris fisherman, the wild 10-hour voyage back to civilisation was mitigated with fresh lobster, good malt whisky and Joe's tall stories.

Thereafter, whenever a climber was required, Joe was the man: on television, in films or stills. He climbed so smoothly, always relaxed, flowing up the pitch to make every move appear straightforward, but while this was perfect for moving pictures, when shooting stills it was not always easy to portray a climb to be as desperate as I knew it really was.

On one educational film I shot with him the script called for a demonstration of the qualities of a good climbing helmet. Joe produced an ancient,

battered continental helmet, and explaining to camera that such gear was actually dangerous, proceed to thwack it with a peg hammer, expecting it to shatter immediately. The hammer bounced simply off. We shot take after take, Joe thwacking the helmet harder and harder to no effect. Though humorous at first, the situation soon became frustrating and the invective rich. We stopped, re-hung the script and proceeded to the next shot, to demonstrate how a modern helmet, one of the new Joe Brown brand, really did protect the head. One tap and the thing shattered. In fact, only the outer coloured fibreglass layer had shattered, but on film this was enough to suggest total failure. We scrubbed the entire sequence and stalked off to the Padarn pub.

By the 1970s, the BBC had tired of live climbing broadcasts on a national scale. 'No more jockstrap television!' as one London BBC executive was heard to declare. But there was still film work. Several times Joe found himself doubling for celebrity actors on major feature films, in Fred Zinnemann's last film *Five Days One Summer* and Roland Joffé's *The Mission.*

You should see him grin where the holds are thin
On an overhanging wall
He's known to everybody
As the Man who'll Never Fall.

Actually Joe did have his share of mishaps and fighting retreats and survived two major falls, one on Cloggy during an early Rock and Ice attempt on *Vember* (named for the daughter of Mrs Williams at the Halfway House) when his hemp rope was all but severed, and then on the Ben when shattered ice and a failed belay resulted in a major fall from *Point Five Gully,* leaving Joe shaken badly enough for his wife to declare 'Joe Brown, you're a dud on ice!' He also broke a leg while scree running in Wales.

Some say Joe Brown is sinking down
To mediocrity
He even climbs with useless types
Like Dennis Gray and me

Now more relaxed as he faded gradually from the public eye, but still hard as nails and more active than ever, Joe was always happiest exploring and climbing something new, although he did take special pleasure in plying his original profession during frequent forays to Hamish MacInnes' bolt-hole in Torridon. With MacInnes and other chums he was now regularly enjoying small, low-key expeditions, most of which escaped publicity, among them a trip to climb the grotesque Drongs sea stacks off Shetland, but the 1973 ascent of the Nose of Roraima, a 17-day tropical epic on Guyana's bizarre 'Lost World', did attract considerable media attention.

Most noteworthy was the first ascent with three friends of the Nameless Tower of Trango (6240m) in 1976, probably the most difficult technical rock

climb then accomplished at that altitude. But success was not as important as the climbing itself, as being involved. There were forays to Everest's north-east ridge, to Cho Oyu and to interesting peaks in the Andes, and in the 1980s to Thalay Sagar in Garhwal with Mo Anthoine. More esoteric perhaps were trips with chums such as MacInnes, the American climber Yvon Chouinard and others 'nosing' around the Andes, prospecting in the Amazon, or yeti hunting in remote Nepal. Well into his mid seventies, Joe took annual winter holidays making new routes in the Moroccan Anti-Atlas, while at home he continued to enjoy steep rock until arthritis finally closed in and the AC elected him to honorary membership and the Queen invested him CBE for services to mountaineering.

Although by the 1980s a younger generation of gifted climbers had entered the lists, and even harder routes were being climbed, Joe's eye for a line and his uncanny rock sense remained exceptional. But the game and how it was played were changing. Ethics and style were important to him. He'd made his name in the days when protection was minimal and long runouts the norm, and he believed that if one couldn't climb a route cleanly, it should be left for someone who could. An unassuming man, never courting publicity – though it arrived willy-nilly – he was always good for a laugh or a game of darts, and with his natural courtesy and big, slow smile, Joe Brown was known in Llanberis as a good neighbour.

He had been ill for a while and died on 15 April, leaving his wife, Valerie, two daughters Helen and Zoe, herself a climber, four grandchildren and a host of legends, in Patey's phrase, 'the Last of the Grand Old Masters'.

John Cleare

Mike Bullock
1939 - 2020

I first met Mike in 1962 when he participated in a Yeti Club meet in Snowdonia with a group from our Midlands section. He was a strong walker and we rapidly became close friends. Mike's love of the mountains was principally expressed through fell and hillwalking although in our early days he climbed with me on a number of rock routes and snow gullies in both north Wales and the Lake District. There always seemed to be plenty of snow, back in the days before the effects of climate change became apparent.

He invited me on a walking weekend with a number of friends at Wasdale Head in January 1965. In all there was 13 of us. The Saturday was a classic Lakeland wet winter day but we crossed via Sty Head to Borrowdale, returning up Honister, Ennerdale and Black Sail. After dinner and an interesting evening in the bar we still managed to walk over Burnmoor to the Boot Inn Eskdale the following day. Thus began our informal walking group the 'Wasdale 13' which has met annually in January ever since. Between us, Mike and I attended more than a hundred meets and it was a consequence of our visits that I became the owner of the Wasdale Head Inn for 26 years.

I remain indebted to Mike for his original invitation, though there were times when I quietly cursed him.

Mike also organised a number of hillwalking trips mainly in Scotland, bagging a number of Munros including those on the Cuillin Ridge. For more than 25 years he and his wife Frances normally took two weeks walking holiday in the Pennine Alps area of Switzerland, where they my wife often joined them.

Mike grew up in Rutland, his family having evacuated from Birmingham in the early part of the war. He won a scholarship to Oakham School from where he joined Barclays Bank before being called up for national service, commissioned into the Royal Corps of Signals. He then returned to his career with Barclays in the Midlands region. By 1962 he was security clerk in the Chapel Ash branch, before progressing rapidly through the ranks of management to become a senior local director in the international section. After taking early retirement he had more time for his beloved mountains and travel.

He studied for an MLitt from Birmingham University and then wrote two books: *Missed Signals on the Western Front,* co-authored with an American, Larry Lyons, which detailed the prejudice of the army against wireless communications in the First World War; and *Priestley's Progress,* a biography of Sir Raymond Priestley who went with Shackleton and Scott on the *Nimrod* and *Terra Nova* expeditions to Antarctica. Both books he researched in depth. Surprisingly, this was the first biography of Priestley, who in Cambridge after the First World War played a leading role in the establishment of the Scott Polar Research Institute, followed by appointments as vice chancellor of the Universities of Melbourne and then Birmingham.

Mike also sang in the Worcester Cathedral choir. He was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and attended many of the London lectures. In 1965 he married Frances Cubitt. Fran and their three children, Helen, David and Robin all survive him.

Ed Hammond

Julian Davey
1946 - 2020

I met Julian Davey in the late 1990s on an ice-climbing trip. We were matched together by Victor Saunders, beginning over twenty years of friendship and adventure. I cannot remember too much about that trip, other than we climbed in Chamonix and then did some ice routes in the Aosta valley. In the couple of decades that followed we were fortunate enough to build joint memories during summer and winter trips to the Alps, and outings in the Lake District and Scotland. Looking back, our current Club president had set us up on an amazing 'blind date'.

Julian was born after the war and introduced to the British hills on family holidays. He went to school in Kingston upon Thames, then after a gap year

Julian Davey in the Julian Alps, Slovenia.

with Voluntary Service Overseas went up to Selwyn College, Cambridge. There he joined a Commonwealth expedition (Comex) and drove a bus to India. Julian was also the expedition banker and tasked with exchanging currencies as they drove through Europe and Asia. He put his analytical mind to the task of getting the most optimal exchange rates, even when this included using the black market.

After university he joined the British Council; his first posting was to Ethiopia. Julian also served for many years in Malaysia, where his lifelong involvement with the Hash House Harriers began. Ultimately he became regional director for finance in the Far East, based in Hong Kong. When he left the British Council he was able to spend more of his time mountaineering, skiing and rock climbing.

In retirement Julian joined several expeditions to the Greater Ranges, including a trip to Island Peak with Community Action Nepal. After qualifying as a European Mountain Leader he began to lead school expeditions. These trips provided young people with rewarding challenges, and personal development in adventurous environments. Julian was a staunch advocate for expanding educational opportunities, and he was especially proud when his daughter Julia entered the teaching profession.

Julian also enjoyed skiing and mountaineering trips with his wife Kate, and together they visited places as far afield as Greenland and Antarctica. I think that during one of our many late night génépi sessions he told me that he was most proud of his winter ski ascent of Mont Blanc. Julian had a broad range of interests outside of mountaineering that included potholing, wild swimming, classical music, singing and furniture making. He was

a trustee of the Theatre By The Lake in Keswick, founding chairman of Hesket Newmarket Brewery Cooperative, and a volunteer adviser at Penrith Citizens Advice Bureau. In recent years Julian delighted in introducing his granddaughter to the outdoors, and built her a customised Wendy house cum indoor climbing wall.

Julian was an interesting conversationalist and great company. A self-confessed turophile (cheese lover), on climbing trips he was always on the lookout for a truckle of something obscure. It is right and proper that Julian should be remembered for his achievements and for his zeal and alacrity, but he should also be remembered for his generosity and kindness.

Vernon Gayle

Yvonne Holland
1957 - 2020

Yvonne Holland was born in north Wales and no doubt developed an early taste for the mountains through her parents being for a short while guardians of the Idwal Cottage Youth Hostel. I met her when we were both students at Manchester University and we were almost inseparable for the next 12 years. It was climbing and particularly mountaineering that was our great passion.

We had such great adventures, driven by Yvonne's tireless enthusiasm. Like many young and relatively poor climbers at that time, every summer we caught the climber's coach from Victoria coach station to Chamonix. One summer we went too early and the Chamonix valley was still in post-ski season shutdown, the lifts and the Saint Gervais tramway were not operating and the trails were still buried in snow. But we wanted to climb Mont Blanc, so set off anyway, up the trails from the valley floor, struggling through deep snow and getting to the Tête Rousse hut, where we finally gave up. Six weeks later, undeterred, we caught the coach from London again and this time the weather was glorious. We went straight up to the Goûter hut and the day after to the summit, with throbbing headaches and retching from our lack of acclimatisation.

There were many other great trips climbing Alpine peaks: Mont Dolent, Tour Ronde, Aiguille d'Argentière, Monte Rosa, Castor and Pollux, Alphubel, Weisshorn, Dent Blanche, Mont Blanc (again) and many, many others. Then we set our sights on the Himalaya, going first to Mera in Khumbu, back in the day when commercial ascents of trekking peaks was just starting out, and we then organised our own expedition, to Baruntse (7162m). On that trip, soon after our arrival in Kathmandu, we went to the Mountain Travel compound to meet our sirdar and check on our equipment to find that their other major client that season was one Reinhold Messner, who had a huge mountain of equipment taking up most of the compound, whereas our tiny pile of gear was under a tarpaulin way off to one side.

Yvonne Holland mid flight on a river crossing in northern Pakistan. *(A Wigley)*

We had an enjoyable expedition but failed to summit and back in Kathmandu, Yvonne had big plans for more travel and mountain adventures. She wrote home about the hair-raising journey that followed: "We arranged a bus and train journey to Delhi and boarded a bus in Kathmandu at about 7pm. At about midnight our 'luxury' bus had broken down in the middle of nowhere along the sun Khosi river valley. There are many buses travelling that way every night, so it was a case of trying to get on another one. Of course, all the busses are packed like sardines so we ended up travelling on the roof of one with about 20 other people and all the baggage! We were just all heaped up in a big pile. I was sitting at the edge with my feet braced under a bar to stop me falling off. Although it was dark I could just see the river roaring below a precipitous drop – I was terrified." But we made it to Delhi and then made our way back into the mountains, to the Indian Himalaya this time, up to Srinagar and over the passes to Ladakh and Zanskar for more climbing and exploratory adventures.

And we carried on around the world, climbing in the Sierra Nevada in California and walking the John Muir trail, and then bought a car and drove to Mexico where we climbed Popocatépetl, Iztaccíhuatl and Pico de Orizaba. It was a fantastic trip that epitomised Yvonne's love for adventure, for travel and her passion for the mountains. Yvonne went on to ever-greater exploits and adventures in the mountains, summiting Khan Tengri and Denali and many others, and an attempt on Everest.

Yvonne will be remembered for her strong character and her independent spirit, but there was another side to her also. A loving, caring person who was happy sharing good food and a glass of wine with friends or spending time with family. During the last 10 years or so Yvonne organised and took her non-climbing sister Louise and her husband on no less than six long-distance treks: two to the Pyrenees, one to the Dolomites, a trek in the Maritime Alps and a trip to Peru to visit Machu Picchu followed immediately by a second Peruvian trek. As Yvonne put it: 'Well, if you're going to Peru you may as well do two treks while you're there!' That was typical of her enthusiasm. Yvonne made the treks more appealing for her little sister by booking refuges along the route and they travelled to places they never would have dreamt of going to without Yvonne's suggestion.

Thank you, Yvonne, for inspiring us all with your endless enthusiasm and inexhaustible sense of adventure. You are sorely missed.

Andy Wigley

Yvonne had a love of all mountains but had a special fondness for the Scottish Highlands and the Pyrenees. We had two trips to the Pyrenees together, the first about 10 years ago and the second in 2017. Towards the end of the first trip, which had been very successful, I managed to get my arm broken by a loose boulder while ascending a gully. I will always be grateful that Yvonne was there to go down to the nearest hut to raise the alarm.

Yvonne was close to completing her second round of Munros as well as doing the Corbetts and Grahams. While she was in remission, one very memorable trip was based at a bunkhouse near Inverlael. We did the Beinn Dearg 'four' one day and then three of the Fannichs the next day. The weather was glorious and the views stunning, I was hard pushed to keep up. Happy memories.

Jeff Harris

In the 15 years I knew her, Yvonne talked almost exclusively of mountains, music (mostly the Neil Young variety), food (vegetarianism), Buddhism and men: usually in that order. Almost every weekend or holiday was a trip to some mountain region or other, whether in the UK or abroad. Yvonne loved walking in the company of friends, but if no one was available she was just as happy to go on her own, often camping in the wild along the way. She prided herself on her fitness, speed and competence, all of which were outstanding.

One of the best days we had together was traversing Striding Edge to Helvellyn one snowy November. Yvonne was recovering from an operation to remove the cancer and was determined to regain her mountain fitness. It was a relief to me that she was a little slower than usual as it gave me a chance to keep up. Stragglers were not tolerated well. It was a perfect winter's day and, at the time, she felt full of hope for a future that, sadly as it turned out, was not to be.

Several years earlier Yvonne and I had been on expeditions to Bolivia and then to Peru. It was on these trips that I experienced first-hand her ease in the mountains. Many lasting mountain memories are full of drama and intrigue, but my memories of climbing with Yvonne are of her calm confidence. She was also pretty determined and able to dig deep to achieve her goals, which included some serious mountain summits. On my trips with her in the Alps and Greater Ranges she climbed Monte Viso, Pequeño Alpamayo, Illimani, Ishinca and Yanapacha. These were but a few of her considerable achievements.

I can't really say I knew what drew Yvonne to the mountains. It just seemed to be a necessity. A sort of life force. I think I can say that Yvonne was a 'true' mountaineer and should be remembered as one of the best.

Adèle Long

Martin Moran
1955 - 2019

On 26 May 2019, Martin Moran died in an accident on unclimbed Peak 6447m in the Nanda Devi region, together with his six clients and their Indian liaison officer. It was a tragic end to an exceptional life in the mountains.

Martin was born in 1955 and was brought up on North Tyneside. His parents had a love for the hills and holidays were taken in the Scottish Highlands and the Lake District. Martin spent his teenage years exploring the Cheviots and camping with the Scouts. He studied geography at St Catherine's College, Cambridge and became a chartered accountant, but the hills and mountains continued to draw him. He made his first winter visit to the Scottish mountains in December 1978 and three years later he had climbed the north face of the Eiger. Martin was always a fast learner. His mind was now made up: he would become a mountain guide. In 1982 Martin joined the British Mountain Guides training scheme having negotiated three months leave of absence from his accountancy job.

During the winter of 1984-5 Martin put himself on the map with the first winter round of the Scottish Munros. Supported by his wife Joy, Martin walked over 1,000 miles over 83 days and made 150,000m of ascent to complete the 277 summits. Apart from the Cuillin on Skye, the Munros do not involve technical climbing, but in winter they are a serious mountaineering proposition. To put the achievement into context, a winter Munro round has only been completed twice since.

Martin qualified as a British and IFMGA mountain guide in March 1985 and six months later he set up his guiding business with Joy in Lochcarron, in the north-west Highlands. The winter Munros had caught the public imagination and he immediately attracted clients. Guiding in the north-west Highlands was tough with longer approaches than Glen Coe or the northern Cairngorms, but Martin was interested in attracting a more adventurous brand of client. His brochure advertised 'visits to remote corries with potential for new routes' and that promise was fulfilled with the first ascent of *Crown Jewel* (IV,5) on Beinn Alligin with Nigel Adey and Mick Guest in March 1986. Martin went on to record dozens of new routes with other course attendees.

In the mid 1980s the north-west Highlands had not been thoroughly explored as a winter climbing venue and there were countless opportunities for new routes. As Martin's business grew he took on other guides and mountaineering instructors. Not surprisingly, Andy Nisbet, the most prolific Scottish winter climber of all time, took the remit of exploring new ground to heart, making many first ascents with clients on Martin's courses. I first met Martin on his local mountain Fuar Tholl one glorious Saturday afternoon in February 1994. Dave Hesleden and I had just completed a new ice climb on the rarely in condition South-East Cliff and bumped into Martin on the summit. Martin introduced himself and asked what we had just climbed. He knew the line, of course, but said he'd 'forbidden' Andy to climb it,

Martin on the summit of Panwali Dwar (6663m) in Garhwal, with Nanda Devi in the background, on the first guide and first alpine-style ascent in 1993.

intending to have a go himself later in the week. For many climbers having a line plucked from their home ground would have been a considerable disappointment but Martin acted with grace and charm and warmly congratulated us on our ascent.

Martin's contribution to Scottish winter climbing was enormous. He climbed well over a hundred new routes, many at the highest grades. 'There are many impressive winter cliffs in the Torridon Highlands,' he wrote, 'but only three can be described as truly awesome: Fuar Tholl's Mainreachan Buttress, the West Central Wall on Beinn Eighe and the Giant's Wall on Beinn Bhan. All are places where a significant grip factor is added to the intrinsic difficulties of the climbs.'

It is on these three walls that Martin's most celebrated Scottish new routes lie. In 1989 he climbed *Reach For the Sky* (VII,6) on Fuar Tholl, and in 1993 succeeded on *Blood, Sweat and Frozen Tears* (VII,8) on Beinn Eighe. But a new line on Beinn Bhan's huge Giant's Wall on the left side of Coire nan Fhamhair eluded him until March 2002, when he breached the impressive unclimbed terrain between *Gully of the Gods* and *Great Overhanging Gully* with Paul Tattersall. Moran first spotted the great corner splitting the upper section of the cliff thirty years before when he visited the corrie as a 17-year-old scout on a camping trip. *The Godfather* (VIII,8) provided a huge

struggle, especially when both headtorches failed as they were climbing into the night, but it has now seen several repeats and has become one of the most prized routes in the northern Highlands.

A notable aspect of Martin's new routing was his creativity. In March 1989 he soloed *Das Rheingold,* a girdle traverse across Beinn Bhan's four corries. With over 2.8km of sustained climbing up to grade V across poorly understood terrain, it was a bold step into the unknown. Other notable successes include the first ascent of *Storvegen* (VI,8), a spectacular 200m ramp-line on the big cliff behind the Old Man of Storr on Skye, and the first winter ascent of the continuously overhanging *Hung Drawn and Quartered* (VIII,8) on the north face of Am Basteir.

Martin's winter climbing showed no sign of slowing down with age. In late 2010 he had a superb run of routes resulting in two new VIIIs and a IX. His campaign started with the first ascent of *Omerta* (VIII,9) in Coire an t-Sneachda with Pete Macpherson. Soon after, the pair made the fifth ascent of *The Secret* on Ben Nevis (VIII,9) before making the second ascent of *The God Delusion* (IX,9) on Beinn Bhan, widely regarded as the hardest route in the northern Highlands. Later that December he teamed up with Murdoch Jamieson and Francis Blunt to make the first winter ascent of *Feast of The East* (VIII,9), a summer E1 on the Eastern Ramparts of Beinn Eighe. A few days later he was with Jamieson again to climb *The Wailing Wall* (IX,9) on the awe-inspiring left side of Haystack Gully on An Teallach. This was one of the first Scottish grade IX first ascents to be climbed on sight.

Martin moved with extraordinary speed in the mountains. In June 1990 he set a new 3h 33m record for the Cuillin Ridge, beating the previous time by an astonishing 17 minutes. This fitness translated to the Alps where he climbed many *grandes courses* like the *American Direct* on the Dru, the north face of Les Droites and a very fast 36-hour ascent of the *Peuterey Integrale.* He climbed several routes alone notching up solo ascents of the Nant Blanc face of the Aiguille Verte, the *Gervasutti Pillar* on Mont Blanc du Tacul, the *Cordier Pillar-Roc-Grepon* enchainment and the *Cassin* on the Badile. In July 1985, he added a new route *Échec et Mat* (TD+), to the steep north-west face of the Peigne.

Without doubt, Martin's outstanding Alpine achievement took place in the summer of 1993, when he climbed the 75 major 4,000m peaks in a single journey with Simon Jenkins. They covered over 1,000km on bike and foot and made over 70,000m of ascent in 52 days. In my view this is one of the greatest British achievements in the Alps. Think Whymper on the Matterhorn, or Bonington, Whillans and Clough on the Central Pillar of Frêney, for undertakings of comparable significance. On his return, Martin wrote to say that he had seen my name in the Canzio bivouac hut log book where Guy Muhlemann and I had spent the night whilst traversing the Jorasses and Rochefort after climbing the Walker Spur. This was so typical of Martin. Our achievement was insignificant compared to his, yet he still found time to congratulate us.

Martin's guiding operations extended to the Alps and he ran summer Alpine mountaineering courses initially based in Argentière and then in Evolène. Many British guides broadened their experience and enhanced their craft instructing on these courses and benefitted immensely from Martin's knowledge and tactical awareness of where to go for the best conditions. Many tributes paid to Martin are from British guides who deeply valued his friendship and his role as a mentor.

In 2005 Martin started running ice-climbing courses in Hemsedal in Norway. Martin had noted that the flight from Aberdeen to Bergen took only an hour, which meant that Norwegian icefalls could be reached in less time than it takes to get to the foot of Ben Nevis. Guiding big ice climbs is exacting, but inevitably Martin was drawn to the biggest challenges. One day off in 2010 he made an early repeat of the legendary 275m Vettifossen, Europe's highest single-drop waterfall, with Martin Welch. Further north, Martin took groups to Lofoten and the Lyngen Alps, not for the easy option of summer rock climbing and ski touring but for serious mountaineering on challenging peaks such as Rulten and Jiehkkevarri. Reading between the lines, one senses that these mountains were amongst the most challenging of Martin's guiding career.

In 1983, Martin made his first visit to the Indian Himalaya where he made the first ascent of the west ridge of Bhagirathi I (6854m) in the Garhwal with Charlie Heard and John Mothersele. Tragically Heard died whilst descending this magnificent and elegant 2,000m route when an abseil anchor failed. His death overshadowed a line compared to the *Peuterey Integrale.*

The following year Martin retuned to make the first ascent of the 600m *Sunrise Pillar* (TD) on Kedarnath Dome's east flank. These two trips ignited a passion for the Indian Himalaya, and Martin visited over 20 times, often with clients, resulting in dozens of first ascents. Highlights in India included the first ascents of the south face of Nanda Kot (6861m) in 1995, and the west ridge of Nilkanth (6596m) in 2000. In 2009 he attempted Nanda Devi East (7434m) and returned to try a new route on the same mountain in 2015 with Mark Thomas, where they reached a high point of 6,865m on the spectacular and unclimbed 2,000m north-east ridge.

Martin wrote in a fluid and entertaining style and authored several books. His magnum opus was *Scotland's Winter Mountains,* a thoroughly researched treatise on how to survive, walk, climb and ski in the Scottish mountains in winter. He also wrote an excellent Alpine Club guidebook to climbing the 4,000m peaks, where his detailed knowledge shines through on every page, and *Higher Ground,* an account of his life as a mountain guide. I suspect that *The Munros in Winter* is his most popular book, but I continually return to *Alps 4000,* the account of his 4,000m Alpine odyssey. Any single chapter, such as the western Zermatt skyline (Bishorn-Weisshorn-Zinal Rothorn-Obergabelhorn-Dent Blanche-Dent d'Hérens-Matterhorn), is the stuff of dreams. To achieve just one of the many link ups described in the book would be the culmination of an Alpine career.

In 2016 Martin and Ian Dring made the first ascent of the *North Spur* (ED) of Marikula Killa in the upper Miyar valley. This 1,300m route is the

Martin Moran and Simon Jenkins during their epic round of the Alpine 4,000ers during the summer of 1993. They climbed 75 peaks and 70,000m in 52 days, covering 1,000km on foot and by bike.

Indian Himalaya's version of the Walker and took seven days to climb. It was a remarkable achievement for a man now into his seventh decade and Martin modestly likened it to an extended *Gervasutti Pillar,* commenting that a faster team could do it in three or four days now the bivouac ledges were in place. Martin was still setting the pace just months before his accident: in February 2019 he made the first ascent of *Scarred for Life* (VIII,9) on Beinn Eighe with Robin Thomas. This route lies on the rarely visited north face of Sgurr Ban and was arguably the most adventurous pioneering climb of the Scottish winter season.

Martin's achievements, whether hill walking, fell running, winter climbing or as an alpinist, were ground breaking and inspirational. Nobody will ever know exactly what happened on that fateful day on Peak 6447m, but it is possible that a cornice collapse triggered the massive avalanche that swept away Martin and his seven companions. One thing is for certain: the world had lost one of its most influential mountaineers, a man of huge enthusiasm, wisdom and drive.

Martin is survived by his wife Joy, their son Alex and their daughter Hazel.

Simon Richardson

Alan Pope
1943 - 2019

Alan enjoyed a life of mountaineering in his native Ireland, the Alps and the Greater Ranges. Born in Dublin, he attended the High School. When he left school, he went into articles and became a chartered accountant. Amongst his friends were members of Dublin University Climbing Club and he joined them on climbing trips. His appetite whetted, he joined the Irish Mountaineering Club where he made lifelong friends.

He got married in 1969 and three daughters came along in due course. He dabbled in rock climbing and often climbed with Frank Winder in Dalkey. Frank (1928-2007) was an Irish professor of biochemistry, a naturalist, and one of Ireland's leading rock climbers in the 1950s and 1960s with many quality first ascents to his credit.

Alan Pope.

Alan visited the Alps on many occasions. In 2003 he experienced a major rockfall, triggered by a heat wave, on the descent from the Matterhorn. Ninety climbers had to be taken off the mountain by helicopter, which Alan photographed as he descended. In the same year he was elected to the AC as an aspirant member.

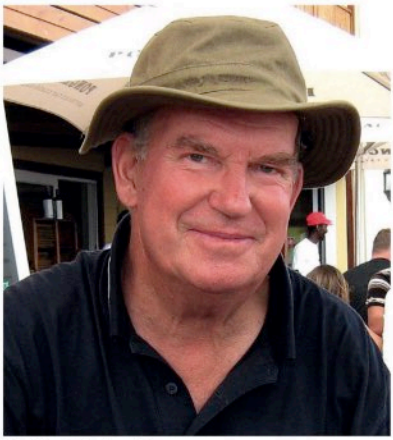
He climbed Mont Blanc, the Mittellegi ridge on the Eiger and the north ridge of the Piz Badile. He also had forays to Bolivia and Peru, climbing in the Cordillera Real and the Cordillera Blanca. He had an interest in ski touring and went on various trips including the Haute Route. In later years he went on several solo trips to via ferrata in the Dolomites and to the Picos de Europa. Further afield he went to Meru and Mount Kilimanjaro. He had an understated steely determination to keep on going to the places that he loved and was always acutely aware of the finite time we are given.

He had a collection of climbing books from the 1950s and 1960s to which he added modern books from time to time. He gave several lectures on alpine climbing, using his library for historical context. He was a keen sailor for 42 years, taking part in races 'round the cans' in Dublin Bay as well as offshore events. When he gave up racing, he took up cruising. He painted in oils, a talent inherited from his mother. The main subject matter was mountains and getting it just right caused him endless frustration. He was an excellent cook and loved cooking for special events.

Quiet and self-effacing, throughout his life Alan accomplished a great deal but did not parade his achievements. A great, much loved human being, he died suddenly of a heart attack in his beloved Wicklow mountains in March 2019.

Thelma Pope & Roderick A Smith

Robin Henry Lister Richards
1938 - 2019



Robin Richards.

Robin Richards was born in Cape Town in 1938 and spent his early years in Zimbabwe. After leaving Diocesan College School in Cape Town, he spent two years as a national serviceman in the Royal Navy before gaining a degree in natural sciences at Worcester College, Oxford. He then joined Dublin brewers Arthur Guinness, working there for many years before returning to South Africa where he founded a Cape Town-based asset management company.

Yet Robin was always at heart a mountaineer. He climbed many of the major peaks in the Alps and participated in five Himalayan expeditions. His love affair with the Alps started in Hochsholden, which in 1956 had only one lift. Robin's first ski lessons therefore led to a tour across to the Braunschweiger hut and, since the guide surprisingly saw fit to include this inexperienced youngster in his party, the first Alpine peak Robin climbed was the Wildspitze. This was followed a month later by an ascent of the Olperer and others in that area.

While Robin and Alan Wedgwood were national servicemen together, they journeyed to Scotland whenever possible to explore the mountains there, and from time to time Robin managed leave from his ship to climb in the Lake District. Once established at Oxford, long vacations allowed more climbing opportunities. He hired a guide to attempt the Dreiherrnspitze above the Zillertal and was intrigued to find the guide taking altimeter readings all the way up a very crevassed glacier. The weather had appeared perfect, but within minutes of reaching the Zsigmondyspitze, heavy snow started to fall. They began to retreat and Robin never forgot the guide's foresight in marking his route by spot heights. He subsequently always regarded his altimeter as more important than his compass in high mountains.

Many Alpine adventures followed, some with guides, some with Alan and Janet Wedgwood, and Colin and Jane Taylor. The Bernese Oberland was a favourite area of his. Robin made his first visit to Zermatt in 1960, climbing the Rimpfischhorn and Alphubel with two university friends. In those days he stayed at the Hotel Bahnhof, hosted by Bernhard Biner and his sister Paula, well known to so many climbers. It was a thrill for him to return in 2007 for the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Club and to book for the occasion at the prestigious Monte Rosa Hotel. He had

joined in 1976 and deeply appreciated that the organisation to which he now belonged had the same ideals and love for mountains as he did.

Robin was particularly proud of his ascent of the Cresta Santa Caterina on the Monte Rosa by the Marinelli couloir above Macugnaga on July 20th 1969, the very same day that Neil Armstrong first walked on the moon. A 12-day, self-guided Haute Route tour in April 1971 was another highlight of Robin's mountaineering days. The route from Chamonix to Saas Fee ran through Zermatt so the travellers, Robert West, Angela Faller, Dick Sykes and Robin enjoyed the comfort of a night at the Bahnhof, warmly welcomed by Paula Biner. Their next focus would be to climb Castor and spend a night at the Monte Rosa hut.

Robin managed another few Alpine seasons: in Chamonix, with ascents of Mont Blanc, the Aiguilles du Chardonnet, du Géant and Verte; the Silvretta group and the Monte Rosa group. But family life and the world of work were beginning to curtail his opportunities for mountaineering. After the family moved to the southern hemisphere, the Mountain Club of South Africa introduced Robin to the joys of rock climbing on Table Mountain. And the Ski Club of South Africa had a hut on the Matroosberg, only three hours way from home, where all the family learnt to ski among the boulders.

It was to mark the Mountain Club of South Africa's centenary that Robin first found himself in the Karakoram. The mountains were certainly high and challenging enough and he relished the isolation and the remoteness of the areas he visited, but he acknowledged they could never replace the Alps in his heart. Occasionally, Robin was able to join Pam and Alastair Andrews' ABMSAC meets at Madonna di Campiglio and other venues. He then became a regular skier in the Trois Vallées and other Alpine resorts, which, up to a point, satisfied the lure of the high mountains.

Robin only very recently retired from the ski slopes and resigned himself to taking holidays at sea level. But the snow still drew him and his favourite cruise was to Spitzbergen, Greenland and the Arctic fiords. His retirement in Hermanus was enhanced by the friendships shared on mountain walks and the intellectual stimulus of the Hermanus U3A. He leaves his wife Deirdre, three children and six grandchildren.

Deirdre Richards

Ernst Helmut Sondheimer
1923 - 2019

In his outlook towards mountains my friend Ernst was a traditionalist. With a love of every aspect of the world's high places, he was a peaks, passes and glaciers man, as happy when crossing a grassy alp in search of an elusive flower, as he was when plodding up the final snow slope to a 4,000m summit.

He made no first ascents but was content to follow established routes; the majority of his climbs in the Alps were guideless, several of which were made

The endlessly curious, 'gentle, generous and modestly wise' Ernst Sondheimer on Maderia. *(K Reynolds)*

with his son Julian, and he often claimed that his ascent of Piz Badile's north ridge was the slowest on record. Not that it mattered, of course; it was being among the mountains that counted. Sadly I never saw him in his physical prime, nor did we ever share a rope, but to spend a day in his company discussing mountains (or any other of his passions) was one of life's joys, and he retained a boyish enthusiasm for them well into late old age.

Ernst Sondheimer was something of a polymath, a man of high intellect and broad interests, knowledgeable about everything from the art of Emil Nolde to classical German literature via bridge, opera and the Himalayan plant hunters. Widely read, his bookshelves groaned beneath heavyweight biographies, scientific tomes, books on art and exploration, collections of poetry and a splendid library of mountaineering books too. Beyond the cerebral he was gentle, generous and modestly wise; a man who grabbed life with both hands, whose presence could light a room, and who had the ability to relate to anyone, no matter what their background, education, culture or creed, as I discovered on our very first meeting.

Maya Angelou once remarked that people may forget what you said, they may forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel. Ernst made those who knew him feel blessed.

Ernst Sondheimer was born into a comfortable middle-class Jewish family in Stuttgart, where his father Max ran the family glue factory, founded in Oberdorf by his paternal grandfather. His other grandfather was a banker in Wertheim am Main. The family were not observant Jews, although Ernst once confessed that he'd had his bar mitzvah because he knew he'd receive lots of presents. His father was a good patriot who had fought on the Western Front in the First World War, and in its wake thought that 'this Nazi nonsense' would not last long. But in 1935, after he and his wife were detained and interrogated by the Gestapo, he rightly saw this as a warning of things to come and began to look for a place of safety for his family. The following year he sent the 13-year-old Ernst to a small boarding school in Bournemouth, where he was extremely homesick for a while. Returning to Stuttgart in 1937 for what he thought was a family holiday, Ernst and his younger brother Franz were taken by their parents to Switzerland. Once safely within Swiss borders they discovered there would be no return to Germany. Instead, the whole family came to England, thereby avoiding Kristallnacht and the ensuing Holocaust.

Although he had no English when he first arrived as a refugee, Ernst learned quickly and after sitting for his higher certificate at University

College School in Highgate, he went up to Cambridge in 1941, intending to study chemistry. However the director of studies told him the country needed physicists, so he changed course and after passing his final exams in December 1943, was taken on by John Rendall to work in a reserved occupation, before returning to his studies in theoretical physics under Alan Wilson.

Thankful that he and his family had escaped the horrors of Auschwitz, after the war Ernst became naturalised as a British citizen, taking an oath of allegiance to King George VI. 'If you have had good fortune such as mine you must be grateful,' he said. 'Being British means a lot to me, more than if I just happened to be born into it.'

It was during his time at Cambridge that he met Janet Matthews across the bridge table. The Anglican niece of the Bishop of Truro, Janet was a fellow of Girton College where she'd gained her PhD in history. She and Ernst married in 1950, spent their honeymoon in the Dolomites, raised two children and continued to play bridge together until Janet died in 2007.

The newly married Ernst was offered a lectureship at Imperial College in 1951 then became a reader in applied mathematics at Queen Mary College before accepting the post of professor of mathematics at Westfield College in 1960. And there he stayed for more than 20 years. By his own admission he enjoyed teaching and maintained contact with former colleagues and some of his students long after he took retirement in 1982.

His love of mountains had taken root on pre-war family ski holidays in the Black Forest and the Jura, and was revived during his Dolomites honeymoon when his enthusiasm for the Alps really took off. It led to ascents of such peaks as the Gran Paradiso, Monte Rosa (when he made the classic error of stabbing himself in the calf with one of his crampons), the Weissmies, Zermatt Breithorn and Nadelhorn, a failed attempt on the Zinalrothorn, but successes on Piz Cengalo and Badile (twice), the graceful Monte Disgrazia, two routes on Piz Bernina, the Spallagrat and Biancograt, as well as such lesser-known peaks as the Rheinwaldhorn and Piz Terri.

As you can see, his climbing was not restricted to the honeypot areas, for he found equal pleasure among the mountains of Ticino, the Glarus and Uri Alps, the Graians, Silvretta and Alpstein massifs. He also climbed in Norway with Fred Jenkins, added Kilimanjaro to his list, went to the Atlas and Corsica with Hamish Brown's parties, and frequently joined Hamish's famous Hogmanay gatherings where he developed a love of Skye and claimed the In Pinn as his first Munro.

Ernst was elected to the Club in 1974 giving a list of his climbs dating from 1963, his proposer being Mike Baker. He became a committee member in 1984 and from 1987-92 edited the *Alpine Journal.* Thanks to his editorship, his net of contacts was cast ever wider, which was a great boon to me when researching a variety of writing projects. Through him a number of mutual friendships developed. Did I need information about the Carpathians or Caucasus? Ernst knew just the man. Norway? Ditto. The Julian Alps? Ernst had a friend in Ljubljana. He'd pick up the telephone or send a note abroad and back would come a response. Everyone wanted to help him.

He was everyone's friend. And his knowledge of mountains worldwide grew, especially the Alps, which he knew so well from the numerous journeys he'd made among them.

Ever inquisitive about the wider world, he loved to travel, and for a year or two after Janet died it seemed he was barely at home. He rode the trans-Siberian railway from Moscow to Vladivostok, visited South Africa and Italy, went to Spitzbergen and Greenland.

Some years earlier he had bought a copy of John Cleare's *Trekking: Great Walks of the World* in which Colin Monteath had contributed a chapter on New Zealand's Routeburn Track. That was it. His appetite was whetted. Ernst being Ernst, he flew to New Zealand, spent four days walking the route in the Southern Alps north-west of Queenstown then flew home again. He was gone for just over a week.

Although we never shared a rope and for the first 20 years of our friendship we never even looked at a mountain together (other than on film, in books or via the thousands of dusty slides projected across his cluttered study), every few weeks throughout the year we'd go walking among the hills of Kent or Sussex. I'd meet him off the train and he'd be on the last carriage, taking forever to make his way along the platform. There'd be a wave of the hand, a bright smile on his face and a rucksack on his back big enough for a month in the Himalaya. What did he have in it? Well, waterproofs, I guess, and a book or two, his camera and a gift for my wife – and his predictable picnic food: it was always boiled eggs and bagels. Then we'd spend the day wandering. Those walks were sedate rambles, for Ernst had – how shall I put it? – an unhurried, thoughtful pace that never varied. Uphill or down. And there were so many distractions: a fox breaking cover, a deer, a rabbit or a squirrel to capture his attention. Most likely it'd be a flower. Ernst loved wild flowers. Especially alpines.

He explained this in an article he wrote for the *Himalayan Journal:* 'As my climbing powers, such as they were, diminish with advancing age, my interests have turned more and more to the mountain flora.' So he became a member of the Alpine Garden Society, and with the expert help of Jeannie Simmons, created a splendid alpine garden on the steep terraces behind his house in Highgate. It attracted visitors from as far away as Japan and Sweden, and for several years he opened it to the public under the National Gardens Scheme. Livia Gollancz, who lived in a house opposite Ernst for half a century – and was no slouch of a gardener herself – would sometimes wander over to offer sage advice.

Combined with his love of mountains, his passion for alpines led to his joining plant-hunting parties to the Spanish Pyrenees and the Picos de Europa. He went to Ireland and Croatia, and my wife and I once accompanied him to Madeira. Most notable were his visits to the Himalaya, to the mountains of Bhutan in 1993 and twice to south-east Tibet, Namche Barwa in the late spring of 1996 and the remote and now forbidden Tsari region three years later.

At the age of 72 on the Namche Barwa trip, he crossed the Doshong La in foul weather and was excited to discover plant hunter Kingdon-Ward's

fabled 'daffodil primula' that is endemic there. Once over the pass the rain was relentless, but such was the party's devotion to their task that they continued to botanise regardless. Meanwhile a lot of fresh snow had fallen on the pass. When it was time to return, had it not been for the assistance of his young Tibetan guide, Ernst doubted he would have made it. 'I still wonder,' he wrote some time later, 'what would have happened to me if I got stuck down there on the far side – we had no permission to travel further south, and no provisions either.'

Such concerns soon fade from memory and in 1999 and now 75 years old he returned to Tibet where he fell in love with the rich flora of Tsari. The Tsari valley lies close to the Indian border and, being a politically sensitive area, permission to go there was not easy to obtain. Furthermore, once in Tibet a series of 5,000m passes had to be crossed to reach what Ernst referred to as 'the promised land, with its streams, flowers, forests … [all] framed by mountains – a beautiful place indeed.'

After four nights the party set out for the Bimbi La where they discovered countless alpine gems before descending through hillsides ablaze with yellow and pink rhododendrons, followed by a walk alongside the Bimbi chu where they found clumps of a beautiful blue member of the buttercup family growing among cliffs close to the track.

It was his Himalayan swansong and writing about it later in the *Himalayan Journal,* his sense of wonder and delight shone through. He wrote of Tsari's 'incredible beauty, its gentle, friendly people, the religion which shows no signs of being exterminated and, of course, what we had really come for, the wonderful plants, alpines, rhododendrons and the rest. Those primula meadows below the Bimbi La – can there be anything more beautiful on our planet?'

These are the words of a true enthusiast: a man who lived life at full pitch. A man who loved the wild places in all their rich diversity. And they echo his first editorial for the *AJ* all those years ago:

'Whilst men and women are preoccupied with their puny doings, the hills remain, in their infinite variety and the richness of their offering – if we let them speak to us with humility and a receptive heart.'

Ernst Sondheimer did just that.

Following a botched hospital procedure in 2011 Ernst became virtually housebound but was lovingly cared for by Jan Ronnenbergh heading a team of other helpers. She encouraged his bridge playing and would often take him to the theatre and to Sunday concerts at the Wigmore Hall, feeding his interests and extending his life with a fresh vitality. My wife and I would make regular visits, and the hour we'd spend with him every four or five weeks was guaranteed to be uplifting. Even when his memory had faded to little more than a fog, he was a delight to be with, for he radiated a glow of serenity. Knowing much of his life story, we were able to light some of the dark corners of his mind from which distant climbs, journeys and faces of friends long gone would emerge, if only for a few brief minutes. But those moments were priceless.

Ernst died peacefully on 9 June 2019 at the home in Highgate in which he'd lived for over 60 years. He is survived by son Julian and daughter Judith, three grandchildren and one great grand-daughter.

Kev Reynolds