



Spirit of the Mountains

1928 - 2018

THE HIMALAYAN CLUB

Climbing and Beyond...

A 90 year Journey



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D F O Dangar



Dhiren Toolsidas



V S Risoe



R E Hotz with his wife



Smruthi Ranganathan



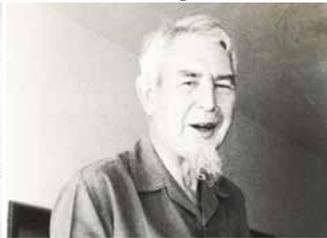
F C Badhwar



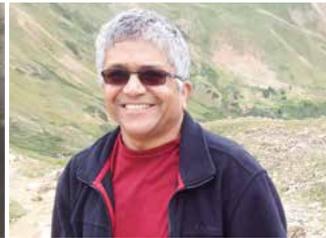
Bob Lawford



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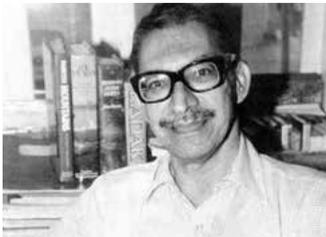
R E Hawkins



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9 DR S K Biswas - First Indian Editor (6 Vols)	19 Nandini Purandare (3 Vols and Continuing)
10 R E Hawkins was instrumental in revising and setting new high standards for the Himalayan Journal	20 J C Nanavati - President Emeritus of the Himalayan Club
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	22 Brig Ashok Abbey - Immediate Past President HC 2015-2017
	23 Suman Dubey - Former President
	24 Tanil Kilachand - Current President

Climbs and Exploration

Karakoram

British Shimshal Expedition 2017

In August 2017, four friends travelled to the Shimshal valley to look for unclimbed peaks. George, Steve, Clay and Ross had previous expedition experience but could only afford three weeks away. This was a bold and risky plan as the team would only spend a week at basecamp and be living above 4400m after 4 days. With the help of a local guide Karim Hayat, the team found a number of unclimbed mountains between 5800m - 6000m, easily accessible from the Gunj-e-Dur glacial system. The team made a three day walk in from the village of Shimshal to a basecamp site in the valley. After three further days of acclimatising, advanced base camps were established and two first ascents were made. In the First East Gunj-e-Dur Glacier, George, Ross and Karim attempted the SE face of Pk 6150.

Unfortunately, George had to descend from 5500m due to AMS. Ross and Karim carried on to reach the summit ridge. The highest peak on the ridge was unreachable with the current snow pack so they made the first ascent of the nearer peak, naming it Yad Sar (Remembrance Peak) 6015m.

View from Yad Sar. (Photo: Ross Davidson)





Topography of Peak 5585m (above) and Peak 6015m (below). (Photo: Ross Davidson)





Climbing on Yad Sar. (Photo: George Cave)

Meanwhile Steve and Clay had turned their attention to an unclimbed peak in the Second East Gunj-e Dur Glacier, summiting the day before at 5855m. The team remained in basecamp for a few more days before descending, spending time in Shimshal, Hunza and Islamabad on the return. The approach trek towards the Shimshal Pass was stunning and a highlight of the expedition.

Team Members: S. Carratt, G. Cave, C. Conlon, R. Davidson

From Alpinist

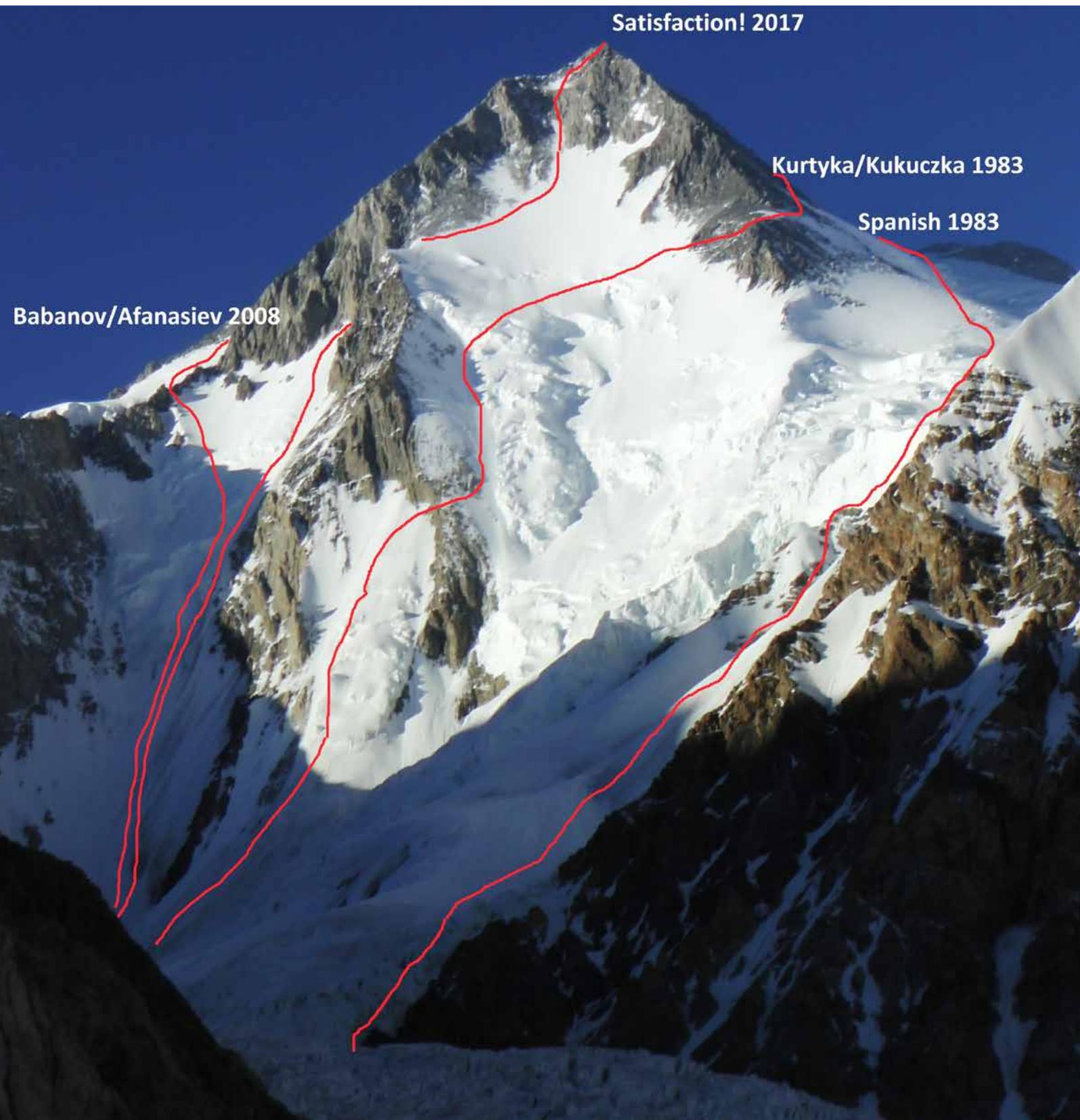
Czech climbers on Gasherbrum's Southwest Face

Marek Holecek has returned to the southwest face of Gasherbrum I (8080m) five times since 2009 in a bid to complete a route up the middle of the face through two rock-bands. After enduring multiple epics--including the death of his longtime climbing partner in 2013, and a bad case of frostbite in 2016, in addition to other close calls and harrowing descents--Holecek, 43, finished the climb to the top of the mountain with fellow Czech climber Zdenek Hak, 37, at the end of July. From July 25 to August 1, they spent six days climbing and two on the descent. They named the route Satisfaction (ED+ M7 WI5+ 70°, 3000m).

"I have never climbed with Marek before except for three short sport climbing routes during one afternoon," Hak said.

This was also Hak's first 8000-meter peak. Last year he climbed and skied down Noshaq (7492m), the highest peak in Afghanistan.

"Despite having little experience with high mountains, I spend most of the year in the Alps as a mountain guide," Hak said. "In my free time



Gasherbrum I (8080m): Satisfaction (ED+ M7 WI5+ 70°, 3000m) is the second line from the left. (Photo: Marek Holecek)



Climbing at 7900 meters. (Photo: Marek Holecek)

I specialize in speed climbs of traditional alpine climbing routes and sandstone climbing.”

“Zdenek is a very modest guy,” Holecek said. “He has a lot of winning climbing performances.... [He] was a good choice and a victory. The conditions of the route, i.e. snow and ice conditions, were not good. Even the weather was not favourable. Nonetheless, together we managed to overcome the negative conditions.”

When asked how he felt going into this trip, knowing the adversity Holecek faced on previous attempts, Hak said he didn’t hesitate.

“I was excited by Marek’s offer to join him for the expedition, so I immediately agreed without any worries,” he said.

“[This climb on Gasherbrum] has been the most distinct experience for me so far,” Hak said. “I appreciate this climb a lot and would like to follow it with [more] such climbs.”

From the Alpinist

Two Karakoram Summits Near Broad Peak

Three Chilean climbers--Andres Bosch, 29, Armando Montero, 36, and Alejandro "Jimmy" Mora, 39--set out for the Karakoram Range in mid-June to explore some unclimbed peaks directly across the Godwin-Austen Glacier from Broad Peak. On their first trip to Pakistan, over a nine-day period, they made the first ascent of a 6270-meter peak, which they dubbed Mirchi (D+, IV, 45-70°, 1000m), after the Urdu word for "chili," and Bosh and Mora then made the first ascent (TD+ M3, 50-90°, 1500m) of Praqpa Ri South (7046m).

Nancy Hansen and Ralf Dujmovits attempted Praqpa Ri last year, approaching it from the Savoia Glacier on the north side. They were turned around at 6300 meters because of dangerous snow conditions. Hansen noted in the *American Alpine Journal* that a better approach for the mountain would be from the Khalkhal Glacier on the south side.

The Chilean team heeded her advice and followed the Khalkhal Glacier from Broad Peak's base camp after doing some reconnaissance. They set up Camp 1 at a col on the south ridge of Praqpa Ri at 5600 meters,

Mirchi-Praqpa Ri South-3. (Photo: Armando Montero)





where an unnamed 6000-meter peak--which they'd investigated on Google Earth--provided an enticing goal to the east that would help the men acclimatize.

Mora wrote:

During the approach, we saw a nice rocky-snowy ridge leading directly to the summit of our peak, so we decided to climb it. We set up our tent in a very good spot in the col, and we rested one day before our push for the summit. Finally, at 3 a.m. on June 30, we left our tent.... The climb started descending 300 meters from the col to reach the ridge at approximately 5300 meters. The first part of the route was mainly rock climbing up to [Class] IV. After 500 meters, we put on our crampons and we climbed through a snow ramp with an inclination of 45-60°, which ended in a small col just 40 meters below the summit. After climbing the last pitch (ice climbing, approximately 70°) we topped out the peak, reaching the snowy summit after 12 hours of climbing from the base. The altitude of the main summit was 6270 meters and it was located beside a lower rocky point. After taking some pictures, we started to descend as quickly as possible since the weather had been unstable during the whole day. After some rappels and downclimbing most of the route, we came to the glacier late at night. Once on the glacier, we decided to keep going down towards the base camp, which we reached in the morning of the next day.

After Mirchi Peak, Montero had to leave the expedition. Mora and Bosch continued on toward their primary goal of Praqpa Ri, which has three summits--southeast, middle and northwest. Hansen's AAJ report lists the respective elevations at 7026, 7156 and 7058 meters, but Mora and Bosch's GPS indicated 7046 meters when they summited the southern peak on July 16.

Mora wrote:

After resting some days at base camp, we received a good weather forecast so we decided to attempt Praqpa Ri. With heavy backpacks, we headed up to the col (Camp 1), reaching it on July 12 after two days of walking along the glacier.... After one day of resting at Camp 1, we started to climb the south ridge from the col at 4 a.m. at July 14.

The first part of the route was a short M3 pitch followed by 300 meters of snowfields (approximately 50-70°) with three rimayes of 90° with inconsistent snow that were climbed on the left side. Fortunately, sometimes we found ice under the snow so it was possible to place ice screws. After overcoming the rimayes, we climbed other 300 meters on good ice of 60°-70° that ended in an exposed and sharp ridge that was reached, climbing also to the left to avoid an overhanging rimaye at the end of the ice ramp. The deep snow of this ridge made our ascent very slow, and after a couple of hours fighting with the bad snow conditions, at 8 p.m. we got a very nice spot to set up the tent under a big serac (Camp 2), after a first day climbing 10 pitches and simulclimbing the rest of the route. This nice spot at the end of the ridge was the first and only appropriate place we could find for our ultralight tent during this 16-hour climbing day.

They rested through the next day and set out for the summit at 11:30 p.m.



Mirchi-Praqpa Ri South-3: Armando Montero near the summit of Mirchi Peak. (Photo: Andres Bosch)

Mora wrote:

This second climbing day was less technical than the previous one, but the altitude made it especially difficult for the deep snow that slowed down our advance. From Camp 2 we traversed to the left for about 50 meters and afterwards we climbed straight up for another 150 meters, where we found a small plateau (nice place for a tent), which was traversed again to the left. After climbing another ridge, we climbed the last part of the route, which was a very long 50° ramp



of deep snow.... Finally, after 10 hours of avoiding seracs and crevasses, we topped out the south summit of Praqpa Ri at 10 a.m. July 16, with our GPS showing an altitude of 7046 meters. The weather was deteriorating by the time we reached the summit, so after one hour enjoying the view, we descended to Camp 2 following our footprints but covered by clouds.

The next morning, the bad visibility from the cloudy weather impeded our descent to Camp 1. After one day stuck at Camp 2 we could come down to Camp 1 only the next morning during a short window of good weather. Our trip ended when we reached Broad Peak base camp July 19 after nine days in the mountains.

From the Alpinist

Nanga Parbat's Mazeno Ridge Claims Two Lives

Mariano Galvan and Alberto Zerain are presumed to have died in an avalanche at around 6000 meters on Nanga Parbat (8125m). The two climbers had gone missing on June 24 while attempting the second ascent of the long, technical Mazeno Ridge.

Galvan, 37, of Argentina, and Zerain, 55, of Spain's Basque region, had a wealth of experience in the Greater Ranges. Zerain had attempted the Mazeno Ridge in 2011 with Juan Carlos "Txingu" Arrieta, but they retreated early because of weather. A team of six climbers made the first complete ascent of the ridge to the summit of Nanga Parbat the following year. As a team of two, Galvan and Zerain were attempting the second ascent of the ridge in a lighter style.

"It is arguably the longest ridge on any of the 8000-meter peaks, variously quoted as 10 to 13 kilometres," Lindsay Griffin wrote in the 2013 *American Alpine Journal*.

According to Griffin's TheBMC.co.uk report, Galvan and Zerain started shuttling supplies to the base of the ridge on June 15. They launched their attempt June 18 and climbed more than 1000 meters on June 19 to about 5600 meters. There they waited out a storm until June 23. On that day, they moved up to around 6000 meters. By then, the climbers



had reported wet snow and warm temperatures, which created more dangerous snow conditions.

Zerain was carrying a GPS tracker that indicated movement to around 6270 meters over a six-hour period on June 24.

A helicopter search was delayed by storms until July 1. On that day, Griffin reported that “a helicopter was able to make two outings along the ridge in good visibility, reaching an altitude of 7,400 meters. Unfortunately, it was clearly seen that the location of the tracker was in an area of avalanche debris, [with] the trigger point [farther] up slope towards the crest of the ridge.”

Dario Rodriguez, who took a portrait of Zerain before he left for the expedition, wrote on desnivel.com:

This morning we received the news that we all imagined but none wanted to accept: an avalanche has taken Alberto Zerain and Mariano Galvan as they ascended the Mazeno Ridge of Nanga Parbat. With them we lost two great mountaineers and, above all, two very good people: simple, close, discrete. Such were Mariano and Alberto.

From The Alpinist

Hispar Expedition 2017 Expedition

The objective of the expedition was to make the first ascent of Machu (6630m) in Hunza Region of Karakoram by the southwest and west ridges from the Machu Valley or by the southeast ridge from the Chaghuta Valley, climbing alpine style.

The height of Machu is 6630m on the Swiss map, 6612m on the Russian map and 6603m on Google Earth.

The team did not know the name of the peak they were attempting until their arrival in Hispar village. They were informed that it was called Machu and that it had not been attempted before. One option had been to attempt Machu from the Chaghuta Valley but from a viewpoint above Hispar village this valley looked difficult to get up. However, the team had



seen shepherd's huts on Google Earth at the proposed base camp in the Machu Valley. This was the case and eleven porters reached the base camp near the huts at 4442m in a day from Hispar village, with a steep 1400 metre climb up from the Hispar River.

Being above 6500m Machu required a permit and we kept a cook/guide and an assistant at base camp. The team made two carries to set up an advance base camp on the Machu Glacier at 4760m with only a short difficult section to get onto the glacier. They climbed a 700-meter couloir to get onto the southwest ridge at 5530m. Heavy snowfall enforced retreat, leaving their tent there. They returned and climbed to 5650m in poor snow conditions to find our way blocked by difficult ground to circumvent a rock peak and thus they went down. Observations from above ABC confirmed that there was no good way along the southwest ridge from where they were to join the col and the west ridge leading to the summit. However, two couloirs further up the Machu Glacier appeared to lead close to the col. Unfortunately, snow conditions were not good in these couloirs and the attempt was abandoned. It was hard to judge how narrow the west ridge is. There are a few rock steps on it and although it is mostly at a reasonable angle it steepens considerably close to the summit.

Duration: 6th June to 30th June 2017

Expedition members: Peter Thompson and Aiden Laffey Summary

Gashebrum IV (7925m)-Attempt on Unclimbed East face

The goal of the expedition was to summit Gasherbrum IV (7925m) by its unclimbed East Face.

The expedition was led by Bruce Normand (Scotland), climbing with Billy Pierson (USA). The pair were going to be accompanied by Marcos Costa (Brazil) and Don Bowie (USA), but Bowie cancelled his participation only 2 weeks before the expedition. The remaining climbers therefore worked as a team of 3 throughout.

The expedition involved very significant amounts of hard work, preparing the trail for the season through the South Gasherbrum Glacier icefall and

breaking a new trail beyond Camp 1 (5 times to C2, 4 to C3, 3 times beyond C3). C2 to C3 involved 7 pitches of low-angle but painful ice. The weather after 26th June was not stable for more than 1 day in a row. When the climbers pushed up onto their route on the East Face, they were blocked immediately (7300m) by a barely climbable polished slab, made impossible by a total lack of protection of any form. The weather did not cooperate for consolation climbs elsewhere in the G3-G4 cwm or on the (still unrepeated) 1958 Bonatti-Mauri route on the NE Ridge. A final effort on “Gasherbrum 4.5” was also closed down by dangerous snow.

Sumur Valley Expedition

Between August 31st and October 7th 2017 five members of the Alpine Club flew from the UK via Delhi to Leh (3,500m) in Ladakh where they spent several days acclimatising before crossing the 5,370m Khardung La into the Nubra Valley.

Following two additional days near Sumur the team drove to Samstanling Gompa from where they began their steep multiday trek up the Sumur Lungpa before establishing a Base Camp at 5,160m by the Sumur Lakes.

Rafal Malczyk and Drew Cook at Camp 3 with Sumur Kangri (5991m) on the left and Nya Kangri (6520m) behind. (Photo: Derek Buckle)



From there they first explored access to the south-easterly arm of the Sumur Glacier before consolidating a high camp (Camp 3) on the glacier at 5,500m on 15th September. Unstable snow conditions subsequently thwarted an attempt on the unclimbed PK5991 due south of Camp 3 the next day, although a later attempt by Buckle, Cook and Malczyk on 29th September via the 40° WNW Ridge was ultimately successful. They named the peak Sumur Kangri and graded it Alpine AD.

From a second camp (Camp 4) higher on the glacier at 5,743m, Buckle, Cook, Malczyk and Pollitt successfully made the first ascent of Pt6068m on 18th September which unfortunately turned out to be simply the point of convergence of three ridges rather than a peak per se. In recognition of this disappointment they chose to call it Deception Point, approached via its SE Face at Alpine F.

Following a short spell back at Base Camp, various teams then explored the opportunities offered by Glacial arms B and C. They ultimately decided to look at C in more detail since this also offered a potential approach to the East Rassa Col, and hence the Upper Rassa Glacier. The final high camp, Camp 5, was established at 5,680m on Glacier C on 21st September, from which further forays suggested that the twin-headed peak at the head of the glacier was a suitable unclimbed objective, since by now it was clear that any approach to the north facing East Rassa Col was avalanche prone and potentially lethal. Thus, on 25th September,

Drew & Rafal on Tsagtug Kangri South summit 6071m. (Photo: Derek Buckle)





Buckle, Cook, Malczyk and Pollitt climbed to the head of the glacial arm until it was possible to climb the steepening SE Face of the more southerly twin to reach its panoramic rocky summit (6,071m). A short traverse then led to the marginally higher northern summit (6,078m) which was reached 5h after leaving the camp.

They chose to call this Tsagtuk Kangri, the Ladakhi name for Twin Snow Peak, and graded the climb at Alpine PD.

Team Members: Derek Buckle, Drew Cook, Jamie Goodhart, Rafal Malczyk and Howard Pollitt

From the Alpine Club Report

A Traverse Across Glaciers and Mountains of the East Karakoram

When our six-member team of mountaineers from “The Himalayan Club”, accompanied by a cinematographer, set out from Rongdo, a quaint village in Ladakh, we had no idea of our final destination of where we would eventually land up. We had on a map, an audacious plan to traverse the Eastern Karakoram mountains a remote area of which there is almost no existing information. Forty-eight days after we left Mumbai on July 5, we returned to our homes, having completed more than a 100 km of the traverse that took us across pristine glaciers and mountains. We crossed three high passes (two first crossings) and ascended an unclimbed peak.

The exploratory trek started from Rongdo on the South-Eastern end of the East Karakoram range and went through the Rongdo valley, up steep and winding paths, along lush green meadows and grazing grounds, through broken glacial moraine until we established Base Camp at an altitude of 5000 meters.

From Base Camp, we explored a route to cross a high pass to allow access to the East Phunangma Glacier. Advance Base Camp was setup at 5500 m and a Camp at the high passes (now named as Rongdo La) at 5800 m. Unfortunately, while climbing towards the high camp Divyesh slipped on a loose rock and was knocked unconscious. The resulting internal bleeding on his forehead left a sizable bump. The injury required



him to trek back to Rongdo village and travel back to Leh along with some of the team members, to consult a doctor before we continued our expedition. We were back at Base Camp in a week, ready for adventures ahead.

From the Rongdo La Camp, the team made the first ascent of “Nga Kangri” (Ladakhi for “Snow Peak Five”) 6165 m.

A gradual descent from the Rongdo La brought us to the junction of the East Phunangma glacier and the South Argan Glacier. After several hours of searching, we finally found a safe route to access the South Argan Glacier through a huge icefall of the glacier.

We camped below the high pass that would allow us to cross the ridge coming down from Arganglas Peak. Fortunately, we found a safe crossing of the Argan La (5950 m), that involved a 200m climb, a traverse of a narrow ridge and a 100 m descend into the North Argan Glacier. This was the first crossing of this pass.

The North Argan Glacier started as a gentle glacier from the Argan La but then turned into a highly broken and dangerous icefall. While negotiating the glacier, the snow caved in and Divyesh was dangling over a deep crevasse. Fortunately, he could extricate himself in time. The icefall posed a challenge in route finding. Eventually a tricky but safe route was located and the team made their way to the South Shukpa Kunchang Glacier. A scenic campsite provided a much needed rest and recuperation for the night before the team started its upward journey on the giant glacier over skid prone gravel and loose boulders. It took us two days to trek up the South Shukpa Kunchang Glacier. The upper section of the glacier was broad and flat and easier to walk on. The landscape was astounding with the formidable Saser Kangri II dominating the horizon.

We now made the first crossing of the high pass we named Zamoriyon La (5860 m) across the Zamoriyon Glacier to enter the Sakang valley.

The Zamoriyon Glacier descended gradually for the first few kilometres and then suddenly turned into a maze of loose rocks and boulders down a steep slope.



After a few days of badly needed rest, the team trekked to the head of the Sakang Lungpa Glacier.

We decided to end the expedition at the high point on the glacier below Plateau Peak.

We descended the Sakang valley which proved to be the sting in the tail. The entire route was broken due to the cloudburst in the previous year and the team had to cross large sections of exposed mountainside on a non-existent trail.

By Divyesh Muni

Zanskar

Raru Mountains

Starting near the end of August, Savannah Cummins, Lindsay Fixmer and I spent 24 days climbing and exploring the remote Raru Mountains in northern India's Zanskar Range. We encountered a plethora of unclimbed 5000- to 6000-meter peaks, rock walls and spires. During our time spent on the Teteleh Glacier we were able to summit the previously unclimbed rock spire of Peak 5400, as well as attempt new routes on Peak R6 and Peak 5750. Weather was the bane of our expedition as we had a total of five days with feasible climbing conditions and 19 with rain, snow, hail and wind.

On August 20, our team arrived in Delhi ready for adventure. The next day we started the long journey north with a flight into Leh. There, we gathered last-minute supplies and loaded up a minibus that would be our chariot for the next three days. We drove endless, winding dirt roads deep into the Jammu and Kashmir mountains. We ventured to the border town of Kargil, past Rangdum, home of the epic [Shafat Fortress](#) (ca. 5944m), over the Pensi La and onto Padum, the capital of the historical Zanskar Kingdom. From Padum we finished our last leg of driving and arrived in the village of Raru on August 26.

After an overnight stay in a local resident's home, we packed up 12 horses from an adjacent village with gear and started the journey into



base camp. The site had been established by the British and Slovenian teams visiting the area in previous years, and our cook, Heera Singh, had been there the prior year. To minimize impact we utilized the same area of the moraine as the other groups had at 4600 meters.

Arriving under blue skies, I was awestruck by the shimmering granite peaks that surrounded the valley. Wanting to see more the very next day, Lindsay and I moved a load of gear up the glacier to an area we deemed fit to establish a high camp around 5000 meters. Massive, thick grey clouds soon moved in from the south, shrouding the valley, and snow started falling. We retreated to base camp and spent the next few days acclimatizing on small hikes around the area while the clouds waxed and waned throughout the days.

On September 5, we decided to try Peak R6 (6177m) a broad mountain with multiple options for new routes--to see how we were moving and acclimatizing. We took gear for a potential bivy and set out in the early morning light. Navigating steep, loose terrain we climbed approximately 400 meters before inclement weather started to form once again, and we retreated through a notch, rappelling down the southeast face of the wall. We returned to base camp just as violent winds set in.

Four days later, we pushed our high camp farther up the glacier towards Peak 5750 and the Kang La, which leads into the popular Miyar Valley. Peak 5750 is a snow-covered peak with glistening lines of ice that cover its north face. Lindsay and I climbed pitches of WI4, M4-5 to just below the summit ridge. Once again, the weather crumpled, and we retreated to high camp by rappelling the route on V-threads.

Back at base camp, we discussed our options based on the weather pattern. The three of us decided to give Peak 5400, which we dubbed "The Gem," a go. It is by far the smallest formation in the valley but we successfully made it to the summit on September 13, after climbing approximately 400 meters of unknown terrain up to technical difficulties of 5.10. There were no signs of previous climbers on the summit. We celebrated our adventure with hugs and retreated to the glacier just before sunset.



Pfaff on Peak 5750. (Photo: Lindsay Fixmer)

Four days later, we pushed our high camp farther up the glacier towards Peak 5750 and the Kang La, which leads into the popular Miyar Valley. Peak 5750 is a snow-covered

peak with glistening lines of ice that cover its north face. Lindsay and I climbed pitches of WI4, M4-5 to just below the summit ridge. Once again, the weather crumpled, and we retreated to high camp by rappelling the route on V-threads.

Back at base camp, we discussed our options based on the weather pattern. The three of us decided to give Peak 5400, which we dubbed “The Gem,” a go. It is by far the smallest formation in the valley but we successfully made it to the summit on September 13, after climbing approximately 400 meters of unknown terrain up to technical difficulties of 5.10. There were no signs of previous climbers on the summit. We celebrated our adventure with hugs and retreated to the glacier just before sunset.

With less than a week left, Lindsay and I decided to return for a second attempt on Peak 5750. We once again returned to high camp and waited out a few storms. In the early morning hours of September 17, we started back up our original route only to find conditions less than stable with all of the fresh snowfall. More than a foot of powder covered the steep ice runnels and granite crack systems. The small serac on the summit also looked more loaded than it had on the previous occasion. As we bailed and packed up our high camp, we were confident in our decision to retreat because of these objective hazards.

Team Member: Savannah Cummins, Lindsay Fixmer and Anna Pfaff

From the Alpinist as told by Anna Pfaff

First Ascent of Rungofarka by American Climbers

Climbing alpine style over five days, American alpinists Tino Villanueva and Alan Rousseau have made the first ascent of a difficult 6495 meter high peak Rungofarka in the Zaskar mountain range in the Indian Himalaya.

Having arrived in India towards the start of September, the two established Base Camp at 3900 m and then, when the first short weather window arrived, they made their first attempt via a direct line up the North Face. They bivouacked below the Bergschrund then climbed to circa 6000m before descending, exhausted, down into the night.

After four days of rest and with little time at their disposal before having to return home, Villanueva and Rousseau changed plans and opted for the North ridge. They ascended 1000 m and spent the night in their Advanced Base Camp, and the next day climbed nine pitches of AI3 ice to reach a col where the bivouacked for the night, poised for the North Ridge proper.

The next day the two mountain guides managed to climb a mere nine pitches due to the sustained nature of the climbing up to M6, fortunately



Looking south from near Gelmothungos. From left to right, Pk. 5,780, Rungofarka (6,495m), Lingsarmo. (Photo: Harish Kapadia)



though Villanueva stumbled across a small cave, hidden behind an ice curtain, big enough for their tent and enabling them to walk around and sleep without being roped up. This fortunate find at 5900 m proved “*probably key to our success*” being “*totally crazy and a welcome respite for the night.*”

On day 3 Villanueva and Rousseau continued along the ridge, rarely managing to simul-climb and dealing with 20 pitches, through “*everything from mixed chimneys to vertical finger cracks to unprotected off widths.*” At 19:00 and at circa 6100 m they chopped an exposed ledge, wide enough for only half the tent, and then spent the night taking turns to sleep as best possible.

Dawn broke on day 4 to a beautiful sunrise. The wind had died down and without a cloud in the sky, the Americans pushed on, past the final ice runnel on the headwall which, they hoped, would lead quickly to the summit. Unfortunately, this proved to be further than expected and after delicate simul-climbing along the corniced ridge they finally reached the mountain’s highest point. They took the ritual summit photos, then descended not without difficulties down the unknown West Face. The new route an overall grade of VI M6 WI4+ 1200m.

From Planet Mountain

Austrian Climbs in Zanskar

The main aim of the team composed by Michael Groher, Thomas Holler, Lorin Etzel, Timo Moser and Barbara Vigl was to climb two virgin summits nicknamed Zanskar Matterhorn and Zanskar Badile.

At the start of August, the expedition arrived at Padum, ready to make the four-day approach trek across the Poat La Pass 5500m. Unfortunately for logistical reasons - not even half of the required porters turned up - the expedition was forced to abandon its main objective and therefore opted for Plan B: a “*stunning granite monolith*” they quickly dubbed Zanskar Cerro Torre they had sighted just 30 minutes from Padum, above the village of Sani.



After acclimatising Holler and Vigl made the first ascent of *Inshallah maybe* (400m, M6, 5c, 60°) up the pillar in front of the North face of the Cerro, while Etzel, Groher and Moser climbed *North-East face* (1000 m, 55°, 4a), a new route up a 6080m summit on the righthand side of the valley.

After a short rest, a new route was established over two days through the SW Face of the Cerro. In its 500 meters *Dust. From dusk till dawn* breaches difficulties up to 6a, A1 past excellent granite and via a series of cracks, chimneys and corners. According to the locals the summit had never been reached

Shafat Fortress. (Photo: Naturfreunde)



Climbing up Shafat Fortress. (Photo: Naturfreunde)



before but the expedition found a new sling on the mountain and would therefore be interested to finding out who climbed there before them.

With seven days left the group then moved to a peak that, back at home, they discovered is called Shafat Fortress Wall and had already been ascended in the past. Holler and Moser reached the summit of Fortress peak in two days via one bivouac at 5600 m and after having climbed the obvious ice gully. Etzel, Groher and Vigl spent two days climbing the amazing pillar on the opposite side of the camp via their *My local river is a nightmare* (500 m, 18 pitches, 6a+).

Summary of the Ascents

Inschallah, maybe, Torre Fanni (5400 m)

9 pitches, 350 m, M6, 5c, 60°, 10 August 2017 (Holler, Vigl)

South-East-Face, Peak 6060 m

1000 m, 4a, 55°, 10 August 2017 (Etzel, Groher, Moser)

Dust. From dusk till dawn SW Face, Peak (5600 m), Cerro Zanskar

15 pitches, 500 m, 6a, A1, 15 - 16 August 2017 (Etzel, Groher, Holler, Moser, Vigl)

My local river is a nightmare, Rangdum's Afterwork Pillar (4500 m)

19 pitches, 500 m, 6a+ (6a obligatory), 21 - 22 August 2017 (Etzel, Groher, Vigl)

The last stand, Shafat Fortress (5630 m), probable repeat

WI 4+, 4a, 21 - 22 August 2017 (Holler, Moser)

From Planet Mountain

First Ascent of Rucho

In early 2010, the government of India opened 104 peaks in the Zanskar region. One of these was unnamed "Peak 6,000m," located above the west bank of the north Hagshu Nala. It is a little north of Lagan (5,750m), which was climbed in 2014 by a Slovenian team, prior to their ascent of the north face of Hagshu. It is also the eastern summit of a higher unnamed peak (6,019m on Russian map).



Takaaki Furuhata on the upper south ridge of Rucho, with the unnamed Peak 6095m (Russian map) behind. (Photo: Yasushi Yamanoi)

With Takaaki Furuhata, we flew to Leh on July 19. Next day we began our road journey via Kargil, over the Pensi La, to the village of Akshow, which we reached on the 22nd. On the 23rd we walked south up the north Hagshu Nala (a.k.a. Akshow Valley) for around three hours, using Google Earth printouts for maps, until we spotted the peak on the right. We established base camp (4,150m) at the foot of a grassy slope, just above the lateral moraine on the west side of the Hagshu Glacier. The peak looked nothing like its image on Google Earth. It appeared much steeper and more jagged.

Next day we went for a reconnaissance: Google Earth suggested that the best approach would be from the southeast, where a spur of moraine led directly onto the glacier. Two days later, on July 26, we established an advanced base on the rocky moraine alongside the glacier, and the next day inspected the east face of the peak, the proposed line of ascent. The following day, Furuhata and Yamanoi climbed to 5,500m on the south ridge, depositing some food and gear for their planned descent route.



Rucho from the northeast and the upper section of the Japanese route from August 2017. (Photo: Yasushi Yamanoi)



Rucho from the east. (1) Ascent via east face and south ridge (2017). (2) Descent via south ridge. (Photo: Yasushi Yamanoi)

After two days of rest at base camp, all three of us returned to advanced base under a partially cloudy sky. At 1:30 a.m. on August 1, the two Japanese left camp, crossed the glacier in 45 minutes, and began



climbing the east face. It was a clear, cold night and progress was swift, the terrain consisting of mostly hard snow with occasional ice patches (70° maximum). By the time it was getting light, at 5:30 a.m., the two were on the south ridge.

The climbers had pinned their hopes on reaching this point in one full day, but now found themselves already there at dawn with a whole day in front of them. A traverse right on exposed 70° snow led to a bottleneck where the snow was thin and the rock loose. Above this obstacle, six pitches of snow climbing led to a final 20m of loose rock and a precarious, table-sized slab on the summit. It was 9:11 a.m., about 7.5 hours since they'd left advanced base. The GPS read 5,970m and the ascent was rated TD.

After retracing their route as far as the top of the east face, they continued down the south ridge. Eleven hours after leaving advanced base, they debated stopping: They were carrying a tent and food for three days, and were now relatively tired. However, time was on their side, so they continued down to advanced base, arriving at 4:30 p.m. Their decision had been sound: During dinner, clouds began to build, and it subsequently rained all night. Next morning, we all descended to base camp.

After much discussion, the two have proposed naming the peak Rucho, which means "horns" in both local dialect and Ladakhi.

Members: Takaaki Furuhashi, Yasushi Yamanoi, *Japan*, and Sartaj Ghuman (Liaison Officer), *India*

Adapted From AAJ

Kishtwar Himalaya

New climbs in the Kishtwar Himalaya by Slovenian Alpinists

In the Indian Kishtwar Himalaya the Slovenian alpinists Aleš Česen, Marko Prezelj and Urban Novak climbed two new routes: All or nothing (6250 m) up the West Face of Arjuna (6250 m) and the North Ridge of P6013 (6038 m). Both climbs were carried out alpine style.

At the end of May the talented alpinists Aleš Česen, Marko Prezelj and Urban Novak travelled to the Kijaj Nullah valley, a relatively little-known valley.

On 29 May, they established base camp at 4008 m on the western side of the Kijaj Nullah glacier. In order to acclimatise they decided to climb nearby P6013 which would have provided a good view onto the expedition's main objective, the West Face Arjuna (6250m).

6038 m high, P6013 had only been climbed once before, in 1979 by the Polish alpinists Krzysztof Łozinski, Stanisław Gorgon, Jan Marczak, Józef Makinia and Stanisław Pelczarski.

From 2 - 4 June 2017 Česen, Prezelj and Novak proceeded along a line on the North Ridge to make the second ascent of the mountain. After a bivy on the glacier, they climbed to 5500m where they made their second bivy. From here they reached a side summit in order to scope a possible line to the main summit, which they reached the next day. From the mountain's highest point, they made out an obvious line up the West Face of Arjuna, via a gully to the right of the main summit. "We all agreed that this line deserved our full attention" explained Novak "Motivated and full of expectation for the days to come, we descended to base camp on the same day."

All or Nothing. West Face of Arjuna. (Photo: Aleš Česen, Marko Prezelj and Urban Novak)





The weather worsened but nevertheless on 10 June they stashed some gear at the base of the West Face where they planned to establish Advanced Base Camp, and then returned to Base Camp. In fine weather, they returned on 15 June and broke a trail to the base of their planned route. On 16 June they set off, at 5:00 am and not at 2:00 am as initially planned due to low lying clouds.

For the next two days, the trio climbed their 1400m outing *All or nothing*, ED+ (M7+, Wi5+, A0), which checks in as only the second ascent of the mountain, after the 1983 first ascent carried out by Mirosław Dasal, Jerzy Barszczewski, Zbigniew Skierski, and also the first in alpine style.

On day one Česen, Prezelj and Novak climbed the lower slopes unroped, encountering good snow and ice. They then roped up for another 6 pitches of mixed terrain where they dealt with some occasional avalanches of wet snow before setting up their first bivy site under they we believed would be the crux section of the entire route. The next day the successive three pitches required 8 hours, and these were followed by another ice pitch and seven snow pitches before they bivied once again, circa 3 pitches shy of the summit ridge. They continued the next morning and reached the 6250m high summit towards midday before abseiling immediately down the route and returning to ABC at midnight.

Towards midday on 19 June the trio began making their way back to base camp; only half an hour later it started to rain and it didn't stop for the next three days. On June 24, they left base camp and started their journey home

From Planet Mountain

New Route on Cerro Kishtwar

On October 14, 2017, German alpinist Thomas Huber and the Swiss men Stephan Siegrist and Julian Zanker made the first ascent of 'Har Har Mahadev', a new climb up the NW Face of Cerro Kishtwar. This is only the 4th ascent of the 6155m peak.

This October 44-year-old Swiss man Stephan Siegrist returned to Cerro Kishtwar in the Indian Himalaya in order to establish a spectacular new



Kishtwar Wand: In the Northwest face



Kishtwar Gifpel – Three man on top

route with 27-year-old Julian Zanker and 50-year-old up the virgin central buttress of the NW Face.

Huber, Siegrist and Zander reached Base Camp on 13 September and established ABC at 5050m on 18 September. A first attempt failed at circa 1/3 height and the trio returned to BC to reconsider tactics. They set off on their second attempt on

8 October and then needed 7 days to reach the summit on 14 October.

The new route initially climbs 400m of ice and mixed terrain to reach the base of the rock face, from where 600 meters split into 24 pitches lead to the summit. Some ropes were fixed on the lower section and, 4 camps were established on the wall.

Weather patterns proved remarkably similar during their stay, with clear skies in the morning followed by cloud and then snowfall in the afternoon. Apart from battling against the intense cold down to -20°C , the trio had to deal with technical difficulties up to VII, A3+, 6b, M6, 80° .



The new climb is called *Har Har Mahadev* and joins the *Yoniverse, Light before Wisdom* established in 2015 by Hayden Kennedy (USA), Urban Novak (SLO), Manu Pellissier (FRA) and Marko Prezelj (SLO), and the original route established in 1993 by Britain's Mick Fowler and Stephen Sustad. In 1992 Britain's Andy Perkins and Brendan Murphy had been forced to turn back 100m short of the summit after having endured 17 days on the mountain.

From Planet Mountain

British Arjuna Expedition 2017

A three member team led by Ben Silvestre climbed Arjuna South (6100m) in the Kishtwar Region of the Himalaya.

They spent a good 12 days exploring and acclimatising before attempting their main objective – Arjuna South.

They took five days to climb and return from the summit of Arjuna South from October 2 through 6.

A short report by Ben Silvestre

Finally, it was time to go, and we left camp early with light bags, most of our gear already at the base of the road, at 4700m. We were quite intimidated, so we brought a big rack incase we needed to help sections, or call back the road. We packed food for four days, and enough gas to melt water for six. Given the steepness of the rock and the size of the packs, we are in the process

The following morning, we left early and climbed some ramps to access steep snow ramps, leading up to a notch at 5000m. This gave rise to the real rock climbing, and we were pleasantly surprised to find excellent, featured granite, leading up to the start of the ridge. Six excellent pitches took place at a bivy site at around 5300m, and Pete fixed another distance to a large corner of Uisdean cleared the ledge of stones. A comfortable night spooning in the Rick Graham Sufferbag V3.0, left us feeling ready for what we look like the steepest, blankest section. I took the lead, and the corner provided an excellent technical exercise. From the face of the



face, it seems to be possible, but the appearance of 'chicken head' is still possible. A cross around the ridge gave access to another crack, which led to the backbone to the base of an intimidating chimney. Thankfully, this has been avoided by climbing on the right side of the wall. Above this, another crosses the ridge, in an extremely airy position, gave access to a full 60m reminiscent pitch of the Strand at Gogarth. We were all in disbelief at the quality of the climbing, but the latter had to enjoy it in their imaginations, as they struggled with jumps and big bags. The Strand Pitch Achieved Pie Weakened Easier and Uisdean led a few long pitches to a good site near the top of the pillar at around 5800m. This was avoided by climbing a chicken heads on the right wall, in a fairly stable position, to gain a grip and strenuous hand crack. Above this, another crosses the ridge, in an extremely airy position, gave access to a full 60m reminiscent pitch of the Strand at Gogarth. We were all in disbelief at the quality of the climbing, but the latter had to enjoy it in their imaginations, as they struggled with jumps and big bags. The Strand Pitch Achieved Pie Weakened Easier and Uisdean led a few long pitches to a good site near the top of the pillar at around 5800m. This was avoided by climbing a chicken heads on the right wall, in a fairly stable position, to gain a grip and strenuous hand crack. Above this, another crosses the ridge, in an extremely airy position, gave access to a full 60m reminiscent pitch of the Strand at Gogarth. We were all in disbelief at the quality of the climbing, but the latter had to enjoy it in their imaginations, as they struggled with jumps and big bags. The Strand Pitch Achieved Pie Weakened Easier and Uisdean led a few long pitches to a good site near the top of the pillar at around 5800m. Gained access to a full 60m reminiscent pitch of the Strand at Gogarth. We were all in disbelief at the quality of the climbing, but the latter had to enjoy it in their imaginations, as they struggled with jumps and big bags. The Strand Pitch Achieved Pie Weakened Easier and Uisdean led a few long pitches to a good site near the top of the pillar at around 5800m. Gained access to a full 60m reminiscent pitch of the Strand at Gogarth. We were all in disbelief at the quality of the climbing, but the latter had to enjoy it in their imaginations, as they struggled with jumps and big bags. The Strand Pitch Achieved Pie Weakened Easier and Uisdean led a few long pitches to a good site near the top of the pillar at around 5800m. Gained access to a full 60m reminiscent pitch of the Strand at Gogarth. We were all in disbelief at the quality of the climbing, but the latter had to enjoy it in their imaginations, as they struggled with jumps and big bags. The Strand Pitch Achieved Pie Weakened Easier and Uisdean led a few long pitches to a good site near the top of the pillar at around 5800m.



Fortunately, this bivy site was exposed to some wind, and we had to spoon with it. We left camp slowly following the morning, with Pete leading us to the top of the pillar in three pitches. From here we had to abseil 30m into a notch, and we wondered for a leave to leave a rope fixed. Pete and I used this tactic in Alaska a couple of years ago, which reduces the commitment, but needs a descent by the same road. Eventually we decided that we should probably climb up by aiding some thin cracks, if absolutely necessary, so we pulled the ropes and committed. Above a headwall loomed, with some roofs I took over and did a 30m pitch on excellent chicken heads. There seemed to be a notch in the roofs which pulling through on huge holds, with all the exposure one could ask for. I stopped above to haul up my bag, change into my big boots, and catch my breath since we were entering the 6000m mark. A long pitch on steep snow took us to a small, but sheltered bivy. The night was a lot warmer, and the tiredness of the day seemed quite insignificant.

We rose early and Uisdean did a couple of big cross pitches to land, which dominated the summit of the mountain. A steep and extremely strenuous mixed step guarded entry to the gully, which gives great ice climbing to the summit ridge, and then the summit, in a further three pitches. We were there an unusually long time (20mins?) And then began to go down the back. About 12 abseils down an obvious icy gully landed us on a glacier, which we walked down in the moonlight, until a request was made to further 5 abseils. Arriving in a notch above a continuation gully, we stopped to brew up, we decided to be too tired to blindly stumble down the gully in the dark. We stopped for a deep sleep, and we were woken neither by the dawn, nor the Nalgene bottle, which we did not sleep properly. We rose before the sun hit the gully, however, and further afield (and much gratitude in our decision to wait for the light) we reached the snow cone we had ascended to, and arrived straight back at our tent. A frenzy of eating, and extreme satisfaction in the balmy temperatures.

A full photo blog of Uisdean's can be found at: <https://www.uisdeanhawthorn.com/arjuna/k2ppinubszuwa00k4vf016ab85s2q7>

Team Members: Ben Silvestre (Leader), Pete Graham, Uisdean Hawthorn



Garhwal Himalaya

New Route on Shivling

In October Simon Gietl and Vittorio Messini made the first ascent of Shiva's Ice, a beautiful new route up Shivling (6543m).

Shivling is without a doubt one of the most striking mountains in the world. First ascended in 1974 via the West Ridge by a Hindu-Tibetan team led by Hukam Singh which included Ang Tharhay, Pemba Tharkay, Laxman Singh and Pasang Sherpa, over the years a handful of difficult routes have been added to this 6543m pyramid. One of these is the *North Pillar*, climbed by South Tyrol's Christoph Hainz and Hans Kammerlander in 1993, while *Shiva's Line* was forged by Germany's Thomas Huber and Switzerland's Iwan Wolf in 2000 and recognised the prestigious 10th Piolet d'or the following year.

Italy's Simon Gietl and Austria's Vittorio Messini have now established an interesting new route that winds its way up between these two routes to join up with the 1980 *Japanese route* (Fujita-Kubo-Yamamoto).

Gietl and Messini travelled to the Himalayas at the end of September. Abundant snowfalls in the Garhwal made approaching the mountain hard work, but also resulted in a line of snow and ice to the left of Shiva's Line. After climbing a 50° gully and stashing gear at 5500m, the mountain guides

Climbing Shiva's Ice. (Photo: Simon Gietl)





Shivling: Shiva's Ice on Shivling. (Photo: Simon Gietl)

returned to the base camp at 4300m to rest, then over two days they climbed up to 5900m and fixed ropes on the steepest sections before descending to base camp and resting once again.

On October 9, the two left base camp for their summit bid. After spending a night at 5500m they climbed up the fixed ropes and at circa 6000m they joined the North Pillar climbed by Hainz and Kammerlander, where they bivied a second time. The original idea was to climb the steep headwall tackled by *Shiva's Line*, but due to the biting cold they headed off right and later joined the *Japanese route*. Shortly after midday on 11 October they reached the summit, then descended via the line of ascent. After spending a third night on the mountain, at 6000m, they descended to base camp the next day. The new route is called *Shiva's Ice*, is 1500m high in total, deals with difficulties up to WI5, M6.

From Planet Mountain

that were ideal. Millerioux's arm was injured on the descent by a falling rock while he was belaying at 7100 meters, and he had to make do with only one functioning arm the rest of the way down.

In a simple, by-the-numbers report, Degoulet lists a total of at least 11 pitches of WI5 in addition to the first pitch of WI6, with several more technical pitches at slightly easier grades. There were also long stretches of soloing or simulclimbing on snow. Besides the hard climbing, a lot of time and energy was consumed with finding and constructing suitable bivy sites.

Fred approaching towards Camp 5.
(Photo: Hélias Millerioux, Benjamin Guignonnet and Frédéric Degoulet)



Ben scrutinizes the route. (Photo: Hélias Millerioux, Benjamin Guignonnet and Frédéric Degoulet)

Upon returning to Camp 2, the three sat on the ledge they'd excavated days before and waited six hours for the temperature to drop and freeze the snow and rock "for the most treacherous passage of the descent." While they waited they made a satellite phone call to a doctor in France to address Millerioux's injury. They arrived back at advance base camp (5400m) at 3 a.m. October 21 after 16 rappels and three hours of walking on the glacier and moraine on a moonless night.

Nuptse's south face has received quite a bit of attention from bold



Sunset from Camp 2. (Photo: Hélias Millerioux, Benjamin Guignonnet and Frédéric Degoulet)

alpinists ever since the peak's first ascent in 1961, which followed a snowy buttress up the middle of the face. But many talented climbers have been turned around. After attempting a few different lines in 2014 with Jason Kruk, Ian Welsted authored a report for Alpinist.com in which he wrote:

For Himalayan alpinists the face does not require an introduction. The southeast pillar is legendary. Jeff Lowe, Mark Twight, Jim Elzinga, Pete Arbic, Barry Blanchard, Steve House, Marko Prezelj, have all tried it. Early attempts on the pillar employed alpine-style climbing tactics. After his two failed attempts, solo in 2002 and with Vladimir Suviga in 2003, Valeriy Babanov theorized that, on a face of this size and technical nature, climbers would almost inevitably run out of steam before summiting....

At the end of the article, Welsted outlined two potential routes to the mountain's western peak (7742m)—one of lines drawn on the photo follows the same approximate line as the French team's new route.

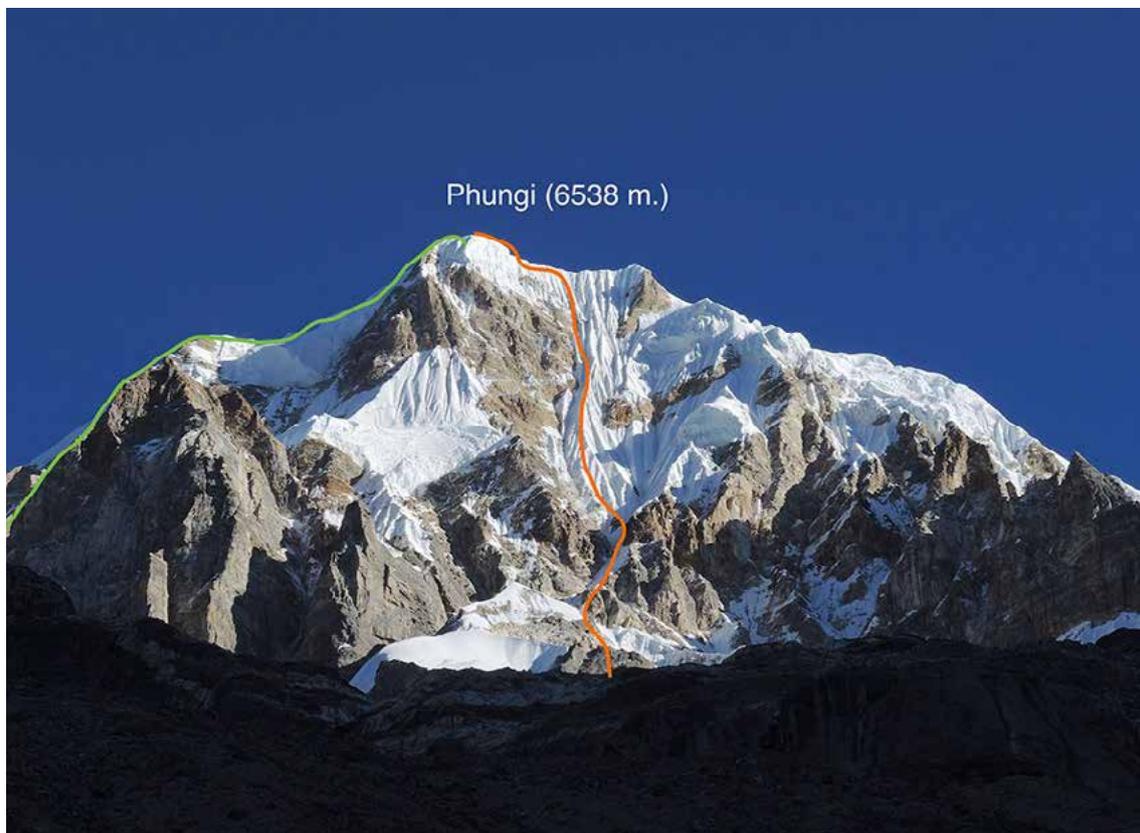
From the Alpinist

Phungi Peak, First Ascent

On October 28, 2017, Russian mountaineers Yury Koshelenko and Aleksei Lonchinskii completed the first ascent of Phungi Peak (6538m) in the Nepal Himalaya. Climbing in alpine style, the two required five days to forge their route up the mountain's SW Face. The mountain is situated to the west of Manaslu.

Setting off on 26 October, the duo climbed a fairly direct line up the 1500 m high SW Face in alpine style, requiring three days to reach the summit. During their climb, the Russians breached up ice up to 80° and after the second bivy, a mere five pitches below the summit, the weather reportedly worsened, becoming extremely cold and windy. The summit was reached not without difficulties via the exposed ridge at 16:30 on October 28 and after spending a night just below the highest point Koshelenko and Lonchinskii needed another two days to descend not via the ascent route, but down the unknown West Ridge.

The line of the first ascent of Phungi Peak (6538 m). (Photo: Yury Koshelenko, Aleksei Lonchinskii)





54-year-old Koshelenko and 35-year-old Lonchinskiy belong to the élite of Russian alpinism. In the past both mountaineers have been awarded with the Piolet d'Or for their exceptional ascents. Koshelenko received the prize in 2004 for the first ascent of the South Pillar of Nuptse East (7804 m) climbed in November 2003 with Valeri Babanov, while a golden ice axe was awarded to Lonchinskii for the first ascent of the SW Face of Thamserku (6623 m), carried out in spring 2014 with Alexander Gukov.

From Planet Mountain

Larkya Main, First Ascent

Georgian mountaineers Giorgi Tepnadze, Bakar Gelashvili and Archil Badriashvili have established a new route up the SE Face of Larkya Main. It is also the first ascent of this 6425m high mountain in the Himalaya.

In making the first ascent of the SE Face of Larkya Main in the Manaslu area, the trio have completed what they describe as being “the first Georgian route in Himalayas.”

Archil Badriashvili explained: “First the Himalaya was hidden to us behind the Iron curtain, then it was followed by the first decades of independency and hard times... Taking a rare chance to travel to Himalayas we chose this unclimbed mountain and stunning wall, clearly visible from the Manaslu camps as you look north. The project was ambitious, as it would be a first Georgian route in Himalayas. We had little information about this valley and the mountain, we only knew for certain that the weather can be tricky.

After 5 days of walking, over the Larkya La pass (5100 m) we reached our base camp at 4550 meters, established ABC and ascended to 5200 meters to observe the face and then descend. The next day we started our ascent to ABC, carrying really heavy bags and climbing to 5200 meters again, past some icy sections before reaching a labyrinth of crevasses on the Larkya plateau to establish Camp 2 at around 5600 meters. There we waited for the weather to improve slightly, and the next day we climbed three pitches before rappelling back down, wet and cold, to the base.

The route we chose turned out to be very different from the pictures, but the line was clear from objective hazards; the main reason we chose the



central wall was that it looked steep, safe and logical. We needed six days of climbing, past rock of differing quality and difficulties up to 6a, M4 and pitches of continuous A3+. Overhanging, the route got harder the higher we climbed. We stood on the summit of Larkya Main in the morning of September 27, 2017, nine days after having left ABC. We descended via the same route and returned to BC two days and nights later. In the same restless tempo, we soon completed the beautiful Manaslu trek and 150km long walk; our journey lasted 38 days in total.”

The mountain climbed by the Georgian alpinists should not be confused with the mountain which goes by the same name situated in the same area. According to all research, the Georgian route is also the first ascent of Larkya Main 6,425m. Unaware of the Georgian climb, circa 20 days later a group of Ecuadorian alpinists established a new climb up the same SE Face, slightly to the right of the Georgian route.

Georgian Line

1700m (from ABC), Wall 700. 6A, ED1, 6a/5.10b M4 A3+ (one pitch up to A4). 80° snow

From Planet Mountain

French climb new route up Pangbuk North in Nepal

In the Lunag Massif (Khumbu region) the French mountaineers Max Bonniot and Pierre Sancier climbed *Tolérance Zero*, a new 1100m route described as elegant, logical and technical up the North Face of Pangbuk North (6589 m).

In mid-October French mountaineers Max Bonniot and Pierre Sancier peered out onto Everest, Cho Oyu, Lhotse and Makalu to make the first ascent of *Tolérance Zero*, a 1100 m high mixed climb up Pangbuk North, the 6589m peak in the northwestern region of Khumbu in Nepal also referred to as Jobo Le Coultre.

The initial aim of the French expedition was to ascend virgin Lunag Ri, a 6907m peak attempted in 2015 by Austria's David Lama and America's Conrad Anker. After establishing base camp at 5100 meters,

the mountaineers realised though that the mountain was not in ideal conditions, hence they opted for “plan B”, namely the North Face of Pangbuk North.

Bonniot and Sancier crossed the Bergschrund at 5 am on October 18 and started their ascent, past difficulties estimated at ED, WI5, 80°. Before night fell they fixed one pitch then descended to the exposed col at circa 6150 meters, where they bivouacked for the night. The next morning, they ascended the fixed rope and after “*crossing a beautiful snow crest*” they reached the summit at 9am.

The new route is described as “*élégante, logique et technique*” and the French climb is only the second, perhaps the third, ascent of the mountain. In 2013 the Americans Christopher Wright and Scott Adamson forged their *Purgation* (VI WI6 + M6 1100m) up the NE Face of the mountain, while the first ascent, attributed to a 2009 international team led by Switzerland’s Stéphane Schaffer, has been questioned by some.

From Planet Mountain

On the final ridge below the summit of Pangbuk North (6589m). (Photo: Groupe militaire de haute montagne Chamonix)





Club Activities

90th Year Celebrations

Annual Seminar

This year's annual seminar will be held on February 17-18, 2018 at Veer Savarkar Auditorium, Shivaji Park Mumbai. This year we have some awesome speakers talking about their experiences. The program for the seminar is:

Saturday, 17th February 2018

3.30 pm	Registration
4.00 pm	Inauguration and Lighting of lamp by Mr Adi Godrej, Chairman, Godrej Group
4.15 pm	Jagdish Nanavati Award Ceremony Jagdish C. Nanavati (1928-2011) was President Emeritus of the Himalayan Club. The Chief Guest will present the JCN Award for Mountaineering Excellence and the Garud Gold Medal for Sterling Support Staff.
4.30 pm	Inauguration of the Book Legendary Maps of The Himalayan Club by Chief Guest
4.40 pm	Inaugural Address by Chief Guest
4.50 pm	90 Years of The Himalayan Club Harish Kapadia (Editor Emeritus, The Himalayan Club)
5.15 pm	Kaivan Mistry Memorial Lecture: The Tribulations of Mick and Vic - Mick Fowler Mick Fowler is one of Britain's best known British mountaineers and authors. He will talk about the first ascent of the North Face of Sersank that he made with his friend and reminisce about his climbs.
6.00 pm	Tea
6.30 pm	Kekoo Naoroji Book Award Far Out: Counterculture Seekers and the Tourist Encounter in Nepal - Mark Lechty This book has won the Mountain Literature Award 2018 for the best book on the Himalaya in memory of Kekoo Naoroji (1915-2003) set up by the Himalayan Club in association with Naoroji and Godrej family.



6.40 pm	The Himalayas in the Western Imagination - Mark Leichty Mark's argument is that much of Himalayan/Nepal tourism is driven by a long history of western projections onto the Himalayas with people coming in search of things they hope to find, as much as for what is actually there.
8.30 pm	The Himalayan Club Annual Dinner - Mr Tanil Kilachand

Sunday, 18th February 2018

10:15 am	Tea
10.30 am	Climbing in the Himalaya - Maya Sherpa Maya Sherpa, from Nepal, has climbed Everest three times and has summited K2, Cho Oyu, Ama Dablam, Pumori and several others. She will talk on her quest for the high peaks.
11.15 am	David Breashears He is an accomplished filmmaker, explorer, author, mountaineer and professional speaker; he is also founder of Glacier Works, a non- profit that uses art, science and adventure to raise public awareness about the consequences of climate change in the Greater Himalayan Region.
12.00 pm	Tea
12.15 pm	A Life of Adventure - Vineeta Muni Vineeta, one of India's leading mountaineers, has traversed the Himalayan range from west to east. She will talk on growing up in the lap of the Sahyadris and delve into her fascinating adventure lasting over 35 years and going.
1.00 pm	Lunch
2:15 pm	The Himalayan Club Facebook Page Honouring administrators and presenting them with Mementos
2.30 pm	Ups and Downs of Himalayan Climbing - Mick Fowler In this talk, Mick will contrast the dismal failure of his first Himalayan trip with the elation experienced when it all goes right - his successful climb of the Prow of Shiva
3:15 pm	Tea



3.30 pm	Film Screening and Talk - Catherine Destivelle Catherine Destivelle is Europe's most adventurous and exciting female rock climber and mountaineer. Her daring accomplishments as a solo climber in scaling the most difficult and dangerous peaks without the use of safety ropes, support or back-up, are legendary.
5.00 pm	Panel discussion / Q&A
5.30 pm	Vote of Thanks

Sherpa Gathering at Darjeeling on January 26, 2018

To celebrate the 90th Year the Himalayan Club, a gathering of many climbing Sherpas living in Darjeeling was organised.

Exactly 15 years ago, such a gathering was organised at Darjeeling for the 75th Anniversary of the Club. Many famous and legendary Sherpas attended the same including three 'Tiger Badge' holders, Nawang Gombu, Ang Tsering and Topgay Sherpa. In the last decade, all of them have passed on including many other famous names.

Harish Kapadia, who was instrumental in organising the first gathering, suggested a get-together so that current Sherpa climbers are made aware of the historic linkage of the Club with the Sherpa community. Over nine decades, the Club has been associated with Sherpa community and Lhatoo, the senior-most Sherpa representing the club today.

Sherpa Gathering in Darjeeling. (Photo: Harish Kapadia)



On a cold afternoon about 40 climbing Sherpas arrived at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, many with their spouses. The gathering included Jamling Tensing, son of the great Tensing Sherpa and a leading climber in his own right and Phursumba Sherpa, now looking after the local Sherpa associations and the welfare of the community. Sons of Ajeeba Sherpa and Ang Tsering, now in middle ages, were present.

A brief introduction was provided by Dorjee Lhatoo followed by an address by Wing Commander Devidutta Panda, current Vice-Principal of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, who elaborated the role of HMI and offered all help to the Sherpa community. Harish Kapadia, Editor Emeritus of the HC, gave a brief pictorial presentation showing the historical links of the Club and the Sherpas and the position of the HC today. Deepa Balsavar narrated about the “Sherpa Project” which is compiling Sherpa History with Nandini Purandare and sought cooperation from the present batch of Sherpas.

And then it was over to fun and food (of course with beer) with bonhomie between the young Sherpas, Sherpanis and guests from Mumbai. This event firmly re-established the long association of the Himalayan Club with a new generation of the Sherpa community.

We are very grateful to the HMI for allowing us to use the premises and participating in the event.

Dorjee Lhatoo – Darjeeling – January 26, 2018



Awards

The Piolets d'Or Award (Asia) for Life Time Achievement

The editor – emeritus of the Himalayan Club, Mr Harish Kapadia received this prestigious award on November 3, 2017 in Seoul Korea.

Harish Kapadia is the first Indian to be honoured with the Piolets d'Or Award (Asia) for Life Time Achievement at a ceremony held at Seoul, Korea. This award is sometimes called “Oscar” for mountaineering!



Harish Kapadia receiving the Piolet's d'Or Award.

Harish Kapadia, a senior climber and explorer from India received the Piolets d'Or Asia for Lifetime Achievement of exploring the range for 55 years and writing 17 books about these explorations.

Piolets d'Or Award Asia is the official award for Asian mountaineers and under UAAA the world mountaineering body. Started by a mountain magazine in France it got its name which means "Golden Ice axe". The Korean magazine 'Man and Mountain' picked up the idea and in association with the world body awards Asian mountaineers. Of many awards, the award for the "Best Climb" of the year by Asian and the Life Time Achievement award for Asian mountaineer are the highest awards. The award of 'Golden Shoe' is given to best Asian sport climber (Wall climbing and boulder climbing").



Piolet's d'Or Award Ceremony.

The ceremony was held in a large hall with more than 300 invitees attending the ceremony and a sit-down dinner. Many senior Korean mountaineers were present and gave away awards to younger climbers. Some young climbers were 17-18 years and were regularly climbing in Korean mountains.

During his acceptance speech Mr. Kapadia said...

"It is indeed a great honour to receive this award from the world mountaineering body and be a part of Asian climbers. I hope it will encourage me to trek and explore further in the Himalaya and write about



it. One lifetime is not enough to see all the Himalayan ranges.”

A glimpse of what motivates him is beautifully narrated by him in ‘*Cartography of Prayers:Pemako*’

<http://www.alpinist.com/doc/web17f/wfeature-a54-pemako>

published in the Alpinist. His passion for exploration is best summarized through the line of the poet James Elroy Flecker

“Always a little further; it may be /Beyond that last blue mountain, barred with snow.”



Golden Toe and Pioletts d’Or awards

Book Alpen Club Seoul, Korea, Honorary Membership

Tomatsu Nakamura (Japan-Hon. Member of the Himalayan Club) and Harish Kapadia (India) were made Honorary Members of BOOK ALPEN CLUB, one of the oldest book societies in the world. The ceremony was held on 6th November 2017 at Seoul, South Korea.

In its long history, only two Honorary Member were made; Reinhold Messner and Bernadette MacDonald. Harish Kapadia is first from India and Nakamura first from Japan to be honoured with this membership. Both Asians join the select group.

The Book Society is unique that it is formed to appreciate mountain literature about all ranges. Members meet every month and discuss a mountain book- in English, Korean



Hon Membership of Book Alpen Club Awardees-Nakamura and Kapadia.



or any language, which members have read or translated. This unique movement has introduced many Koreans to mountain literature, to read and translate books.

Harish Kapadia has published 17 books and was editor of the renowned Himalayan Journal for 37 years.

Legendary Maps from The Himalayan Club

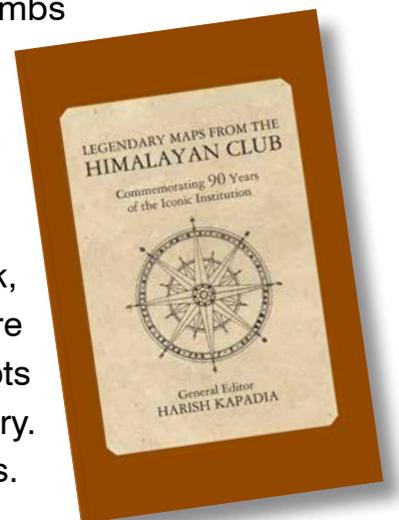
Book Published to Celebrate 90 Years of The Club.

Edited by Harish Kapadia, M H Contractor and Smruthi Ranganathan

The book contains 55 maps from the Himalayan Journals since last 90 years. They have been carefully selected to represent many areas and to cover many stories of an expedition. The writing is edited from originals by famous authors retains their flavour of writing. There are several historic pictures spread in between. Some of the routes and climbs documented in this book are yet to be repeated. The human stories presented with the maps are in some ways even more interesting. A true tribute to the rich history of exploration and a treasure trove for aficionados.

The sketch-maps in this collection depict the route of a trek, the face or ridge of a mountain climbed, the places where camps were established or view from the summit or spots where accident occurred. But above all, they narrate history. One sketch-map, like a picture, is worth a thousand words.

The book is published by Roli Books and is available freely to purchase on www.rolibooks.com



Mumbai Section

The Arun Samant Memorial Lecture was held in Mumbai on January 13, 2018 at Sathy College Auditorium, Ville Parle, Mumbai. There talks were organised for this lecture series in memory of Arun Samant.

Anindya Mukharjee talked about Alps, Himalaya and the quest for Alpinism.



Prashant 'Kiki' Mathawan talked about the history and legacy of the various kingdoms of the Punjab Himalayas from the state of Jammu and Kashmir with an area of 222,236 sq. km to small states in the Shimla Hills only a few sq. km in area. These Kingdoms and the inter relationships between them shaped the history as well as the culture of the Western Himalayas and the people who live amongst them. The series ended with Mr Divyesh Muni talking about his exploits in the Eastern Karakoram.

Kolkata Section

90th Anniversary celebration by The Himalayan Club, Kolkata Section

By Dr. Kallol Das, Vice-President

Since the Curtain Raiser programme for the 90th Year of The Himalayan Club, in March 2017, Kolkata section of the club has been organising different events one after another like, Seminar on Mountain Medicine, Cleaning expedition in Sandakphu-Phalut area and at last the Adventure extravaganza on January 20 and 21, 2018.

This was a mega show in Kolkata, first of its kind from the platform of the Himalayan Club that gathered more than 400 delegates from different walks of life.



Dr. Das addressing the gathering.

During these two days, there were many lectures with slide shows, couple of documentary movies, a panel discussion on “changing patterns of adventure hazards” and most colourful addition was an exhibition of mountaineering equipment manufacturers, travel organisers, Indian tourism department, trekking agencies etc.

During these two days, there was an atmosphere of mountaineering festival cum fair in the venue of Historical Indian Museum. There were all together twelve



An august crowd for the 90th year celebration in Kolkata.



Panel Discussion.

speakers from Kolkata, other parts of the country and from abroad, to grace this occasion and make the whole show spectacular.

To name a few Subhuman Ghosh (Pune), Aparna Kumar IPS (Dehradun), Anup Sah(Nainital), Suvik Paul (Sydney), Harish Kapadia (Mumbai), Anna Okopinska (Poland), Dhritiman Mukherjee, Dr. Tilak Ranjan Bera, and Porimol Bhattachrya from Kolkata talked at the celebrations.

There was an Anniversary Publication enriched with variety of articles written by famous mountaineers and explorers of India and abroad on this day which was given to all delegates along with two days full refreshments including lunch and high tea during these two days.



News and Views

IMF

Expeditions in Indian Himalaya

IMF received booking for 54 International and 106 Indian Mountaineering expeditions, however, only 43 and 96 expeditions respectively materialized in 2016.

Inclusion of more peaks as Open Area

A comprehensive proposal giving details of the 266 new peaks has been forwarded to the Ministry of Defence (MoD). So far MoD has cleared 137 peaks and forwarded it to the Ministry of Home Affairs for clearance/notification.

World Cup Bouldering

The world Cup Bouldering was conducted at Navi Mumbai in association with Girivihar on 24 & 25 June, 2017. 94 athletes (17 Indian Members) from 20 countries took part.

Asian Youth Championship- Singapore

Master Maibam Chighkheiganba from Manipur secured Gold in Speed Climbing discipline at the Asian Youth Championship 2017 held at Singapore from 05-09 Jul 17. The IMF team comprised of 7 athletes and 1 coach. Approx. 300 participants from 14 Countries took part in the Championship.

Bangalore Bouldering Championship

Bangalore Bouldering Championship was held on September 1 and 2, 2017 at Bangalore in association with Youth Services and Sports and Tourism Departments, Govt. of Karnataka. The event was coordinated by Shri Keerthi Pais. 60 participants from 10 Asian Countries participated in the event. During the event, more than 700 amateur sport climbing enthusiasts were exposed to speed climbing.

Youth Olympics Games 2018

Based on the performance of Master Bharath Pareira in the Asian Youth Championship 2017, he has qualified for Youth World Games to be held at Argentina in October, 2018.

Awards

Nain Singh-Kishan Singh Lifetime Achievement Award and IMF Gold Medal

Veteran mountaineers Manik Banerjee and Lt col RS Jamwal were presented with Nain Singh-Kishan Singh Life Time Achievement Award and the IMF Gold Medal respectively, by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF).

Banerjee was presented the Life Time Achievement award in recognition of his achievements in mountaineering over a period of four decades and invaluable contribution in promotion of mountaineering. Apart from making first ascent of Kaburu Dome in Sikkim Himalaya and Jogin Two, Banerjee is the first Indian to make the ascent of Uja Tirche.

Lt. Col Jamwal has the distinction of reaching the top of Mt. Everest thrice (in 2013, 2016 and 2017) beside climbing many other peaks in Indian Himalaya.

Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award

The award for the year 2016 was given to the following by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt of India:

Brig Ahok Abbey, IMF - Life Time Achievement
Ms. Premlata Aggarwal- Land Adventure

New Films and Good Reads

Annapurna III Unclimbed

The David Lama, Hansjörg Auer and Alex Blümel climbing documentary
<http://www.planetmountain.com/en/news/alpinism/annapurna-iii-unclimbed-the-david-lama-hansjorg-auer-and-alex-blumel-climbing-documentary.html>

Searching for the Abominable: Is It a Man? Is It an Ape? It's a... Bear?

<https://thewire.in/205779/searching-abominable-man-ape-bear/>



Snow Leopard

The elusive snow leopards are very shy animals. In the last few years, many attempts have been made to site them and conduct a census of them in the Himalaya. Here are two short films about them. Worth a watch.

<https://www.facebook.com/HunzaaValley/videos/818066761711252/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj0EVT-Ekog>

Global Warming and Asia's glaciers – A threat to water supply of millions

Asia's mountain glaciers will lose at least a third of their mass through global warming by the century's end, with dire consequences for millions of people who rely on them for fresh water, researchers have said.

This is a best-case scenario, based on the assumption that the world manages to limit average global warming to 1.5C (2.7F) over pre-industrial levels, a team wrote in the journal Nature...

Here is an alarming report on global warming and how it would affect the glaciers in Asia.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/14/asia-glaciers-shrink-threatening-water-supply>

The Miniature Climbs of Alex Legos

Last year, a little climber made a big impact on social media. Alex Legos gained a fast following for his impressive ascents in all climbing disciplines. What's more impressive is that he's only 1.5 inches tall.

A really pleasant story and a new twist ..

<https://www.climbing.com/photos/the-miniature-climbs-of-alex-legos/>

Obituaries

Dr Pravin Shah



Dr. Pravin Shah. (Photo: Harish Kapadia)

Dr Pravin Shah passed away on 16 November 2017. He was 80 and a Life Member of the Himalayan Club. To friends, he was known as “Masiha” – literally meaning “Doctor”. We trekked to many mountains in the local hills of the Western Ghats, “The Sahyadris”, around Mumbai. We knew each other for 47 years and trekked a lot together. A thorough gentleman, he enjoyed the Himalaya too with me on several treks. He was an

avid reader of the Himalayan Journal and of mountain books.

When I suffered a serious hip dislocation in 1974, Dr Shah as Senior Homoeopath treated me for two years and I recovered fully, which allopathy had declared to be impossible. I owe last 30 years of my climbing and trekking to him. When I was confined to bed Dr Shah came over every day to have lunch with me and cheer me. He initiated us into Yoga and treated us lifelong with his medicines. I and many others have lost a good friend and long-standing companion.

Rest in peace my friend Masiha.

By Harish Kapadia

Norman Hardie

Christchurch mountaineer Norman Hardie has died at the age of 92.

Hardie was in the first team to climb Kangchenjunga, the third-highest mountain in the world, lying between Nepal and India, and more difficult to climb than Everest.



Norman Hardie (Photo: Harish Kapadia)

New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) president John Palmer described Hardie as a “mountaineering great”.

“Norman was a kaumatua of the New Zealand mountaineering scene and will be sadly missed. As one of the pioneers of his time he made numerous first ascents both in New Zealand and the Himalaya, capped by the expedition success on Kangchenjunga in 1955,” he said.

Hardie was NZAC president from 1973 to 1975 and served on its committees for 20 years.

He served on the boards of the Arthur’s Pass National Park and the Cragieburn Forest Park committee, and Sir Edmund Hillary’s Himalayan Trust New Zealand.

In the foreword to Hardie’s 2006 memoir, *On My Own Two Feet*, Hillary called him “a skilled mountaineer and a formidable explorer . . . renowned for his considerable determination and refusal to accept defeat”.

He was a peer of Hillary’s, joining him on several expeditions, including one to Antarctica to make the first ascent of Mt Herschel. He and Hillary honed their climbing skills in the Southern Alps and knew each other well – then rivals and friends.

In 2013, Hardie travelled to London to mark the 60th anniversary of Hillary’s greatest achievement.”I never thought I would be there. It has great meaning to me. There are not many of the whole group left, “ Hardie said at the time.

Hardie also spent five months as leader of Scott Base. He was a civil engineer and provided structural advice for buildings damaged in Nepal’s deadly 2015 earthquakes. Hardie was a proponent of new ways to produce hydroelectric power, once pitching an idea to run a tunnel under the Southern Alps that would bring water from the West Coast to Canterbury and Otago.



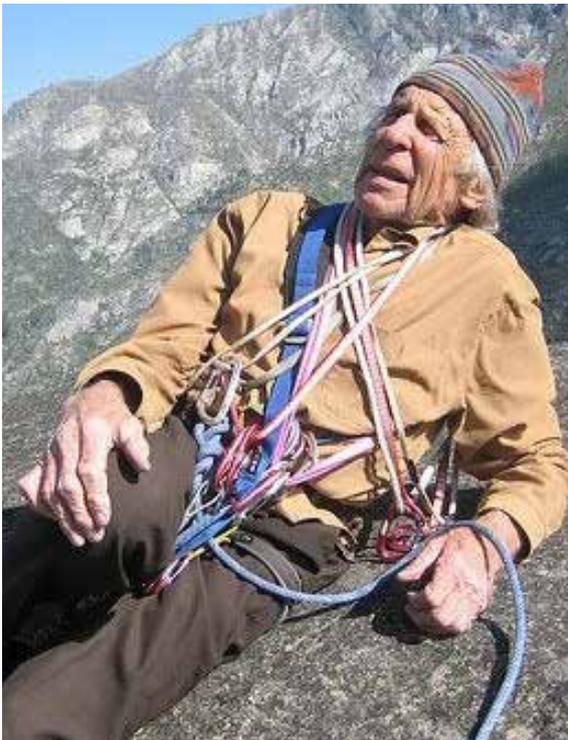
Hardie is survived by his wife Enid Hardie, two daughters Sarah Jane Hardie and Ruth Wells, and grandchildren Henry, Tamar and Roslyn Wells, and David Turton.

He spent his final years in the suburb of Spreydon and died peacefully on Tuesday night October 31, 2017.

From the Press

FRED BECKY

In November 1996 I was speaking at the annual gathering of the American Alpine Club in New York. At midday, I escaped the conference room to find some food, and found myself in a Manhattan sandwich bar chatting with another speaker at the conference – a grizzled, wiry, septuagenarian with a stubbly face as deeply furrowed as the canyons of the wild west. Dreaming aloud in a gravelly croak, he reeled off names of all the Himalayan mountains and valleys he still hoped to visit. Then, pulling out a wad of grubby greenbacks, he paid for my lunch and beer. It was only afterwards that it dawned on me just how privileged I had been. This was the man who never had any money – the original climbing bum, the mountain tramp who had spent seventy years on the road,



Fred Becky

scrounging and making do, living out of the back of cars, stacking odds and ends of possessions at friends' houses all over the USA. This was also the man who had made more first ascents than anyone else in America. In fact, he had probably made more first ascents, than anyone, anywhere in the world. And he had bought me lunch!

Fred Beckey was born in Düsseldorf in 1923. When he was three his parents emigrated to America and settled in Seattle. From an early age Fred and his younger brother Helmey were drawn to the wild



mountains of the Northwest – particularly their local North Cascades. At their parents' request, they joined the Boy Scouts and later the august local climbing club, The Mountaineers, but they quickly outgrew their tutors, forging home-made gear out of scrap metal to pioneer new climbs.

One of their earliest first ascents, in 1940, was of the appropriately named Forbidden Peak. No one knows how many first ascents Fred Beckey has subsequently made in the North Cascades of Oregon; they run into hundreds, and now, in his eighties, he is still exploring new ground. However, Beckey is known best for what he achieved in the bigger, wilder mountains north of Oregon. Ambitious from the start, in 1942 he and Helmey made the second ascent of Mount Waddington. This difficult, complex peak in the remote Coastal Ranges of British Columbia had been one of the great mountaineering prizes, first climbed in 1936 by Bill House and Fritz Wiessner. Wiessner was one of the best climbers in the world and almost reached the top of K2 in 1938. Now a couple of unknown young lads from Seattle had repeated his greatest climb. Perhaps it was the common German origin, but Wiessner and Beckey hit it off, and Wiessner suggested that the brothers head further north to the BC/Alaska border to try a spectacular ice-smear tower called the Devil's Thumb. In 1946, they did it, making the first ascent of the hardest peak yet to be climbed in Alaska.

By now Fred Beckey had graduated from the University of Washington, but had opted for part time work as a truck driver, leaving plenty of free time for climbing and starting work on the first of several historical guidebooks to the mountains of Oregon and Washington. In 1954, he returned to Alaska to pull off an extraordinary hat trick. First, with the German climber Henry Meybohm and a team from the University of Alaska, he climbed a new route up the North Peak of Denali. Not content with that, Beckey and Meybohm then went on to the untrodden Mount Deborah. On the way, in Fairbanks, they bumped into Heinrich Harrer, the Austrian veteran of the first ascent of the Eigerwand, so they invited him along too.

Deborah, with its summit of 3,822 metres, had none of the giant scale and altitude of Denali; but it was still a big, wild, heavily glaciated



mountain, with similar problems of cold and bad weather. The final half-mile section along the South Ridge gave the party the most sensational ice climbing they had ever done, climbing up and down of a series of cornices – overhanging turrets of snow and ice – with no possibility of evasion on the steep slopes below. The German-American threesome then travelled back to the Denali region to make the first ascent of the immense Mount Hunter.

With that kind of record, Fred Beckey would have seemed an obvious choice for the American Everest expedition of 1963, but he was turned down and, instead of achieving glory in Nepal followed by a hero's welcome at the White House, he consoled himself by making 26 first ascents in Oregon. He just wasn't the kind of biddable team player they were looking for. Now, still climbing in his eighties, he remains an awkward, cussed original with a legacy of exploration probably unequalled in the history of mountaineering.

By Stephen Venables

Elizabeth Hawley

The keeper of the Mountains passes away

Elizabeth Hawley, who died in Kathmandu on 26 January 2018



Elizabeth Hawley

aged 94 years, was an American journalist living in Nepal since 1960, regarded as the undisputed authority on mountaineering in Nepal. Born 9 November 1923 in Chicago, Illinois and educated at the University of Michigan, she was famed worldwide as a “one-woman mountaineering institution”, systematically compiling a detailed Himalayan database of expeditions still maintained today by her team of volunteers, and published by the American Alpine Club.



Respected for her astute political antennae and famously formidable, Miss Hawley represented Time Life then Reuters since 1960 as Nepal correspondent for 25 years. She is credited with mentoring reporters and setting journalistic standards in Nepal, competing to file stories from the communications-challenged Nepal of the 1960s. She worked with the pioneer adventure tourism operators, Tiger Tops, from its inception in 1965 with John Copeman, until she retired as AV Jim Edward's trusted advisor in 2007.

For Sir Edmund Hillary, she managed the Himalayan Trust since it started in the mid-1960s, dispensing funds to build hospitals, schools, bridges, forest nurseries and scholarships for the people of the Everest region. Generations of Sherpas remember being overawed by the rigor of Miss Hawley's interviews, and quake at the memory of her cross-examinations when collecting their scholarship funds. Sir Edmund Hillary described Elizabeth Hawley as "a most remarkable person" and "a woman of great courage and determination." She served as New Zealand Honorary Consul to Nepal for 20 years until retiring in 2010.

Elizabeth first came to Nepal via India for a couple of weeks in February 1959. She was on a two-year round the world trip that took her to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. Bored with her job as researcher-reporter with Fortune magazine in New York, she had cashed her savings to travel as long as they lasted. Nepal had been on her mind since reading a 1955 New York Times article about the first tourists who visited the then-Kingdom.

Because of her media contacts, the Time Life Delhi bureau chief asked her to report on Nepal's politics. It was an interesting time - as one of only four foreign journalists, she was present when King Mahendra handed over the first parliamentary constitution, which paved the way for democracy in Nepal. Fascinated by Nepal's politics and the idea of an isolated country emerging into the modern 20th century, she returned in 1960 and never left, living in the same Dilli Bazaar apartment, the same powder blue Volkswagen beetle car, and generations of faithful retainers.

A diminutive figure of slight build with a keen look, Elizabeth was bemused at the universal attention she received. Her Himalayan Database



expedition records are trusted by mountaineers, newswires, scholars, and climbing publications worldwide, published by Richard Salisbury and the American Alpine Club. She was one of only 25 honorary members of the Alpine Club of London, and has been formally recognized by the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Nepal Mountaineering Association. In 2004, she received the Queen's Service Medal for Public Services for her work as New Zealand honorary consul and executive officer of Sir Edmund Hillary's Himalayan Trust. She was awarded the King Albert I Memorial Foundation medal and was the first recipient of the Sagarmatha National Award from the Government of Nepal.

Elizabeth's career in the collection of mountaineering data started by accident: "I've never climbed a mountain, or even done much trekking." As part of her Reuters' job, she began to report on mountaineering activities and in those pioneering days of first ascents and mountain exploration, there was strong media interest in Himalayan expeditions. She relied heavily on the knowledge of mountaineer Col Jimmy Roberts, founder of Mountain Travel.

Since 1963 she has met every expedition to the Nepal Himalaya both before and after their ascents, including those who climbed from Tibet. Her records contain detailed information about more than 20,000 ascents of about 460 Nepali peaks, including those that border with China and India. Over the course of some 7,000 expedition interviews, her research work has sparked and resolved controversies. Elizabeth has seen the Nepal mountaineering scene transformed from an exclusive club to a mainstream obsession.

Elizabeth did not suffer fools gladly. Though some mountaineers were intimidated by her interrogations - sometimes jokingly referred to as an expedition's "second summit," - serious alpinists greatly admired her. "If I need information about climbing 8,000-meter peaks, I used to go to her," says Italian climbing legend Reinhold Messner. Nepali trek operator and environmentalist Dawa Steven Sherpa underlines the point: "Although it's the authorities that should have been doing this, they're not as strict or accurate as Miss Hawley. One of her biggest contributions is keeping mountaineers honest."



Elizabeth applied her trademark scrupulous precision to summarizing the political and development events in Nepal in her monthly diary, published in 2015 in two volumes as “The Nepal Scene: Chronicles of Elizabeth Hawley 1988-2007”. They stand as a faithful and unique historical record of the extraordinary changes that took place in Nepal over nearly two decades.

Her enviable journalistic sources were based on long friendships with the political, panchayat and Rana elite. She had the confidence of a wide range of prominent Nepalis, and shared a hairdresser with the (then) Queen. Educated as an historian, Elizabeth regarded herself as a reporter not a writer, stringently recording Nepal’s political and mountaineering facts with minimal opinion or analysis.

Although there is no disguising her liberal bent and her admiration for the force of democracy. Former American Ambassador Peter Bodde said, Elizabeth Hawley was one of Nepal’s “living treasures” and “her contribution to the depth of knowledge and understanding between Nepal and the US was immense.”

Elizabeth Hawley’s achievements have featured in many books and articles about Nepal, and her biography by Bernadette McDonald, *I’ll Call You in Kathmandu*, was published in 2005, then updated and reprinted as *Keeper of the Mountains*. In 2013, to mark the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Everest, Elizabeth was featured in the award-winning US television documentary of the same name, produced by Allison Otto. On screen in *Keeper of the Mountains*, her straightforward manner and fearless modesty made her something of a cult classic. In 2014 the Nepal government named a 6,182 meter (20,330 feet) peak in honour of her contribution to mountaineering. Elizabeth was not impressed: “I thought it was just a joke. Mountains should not be named after people.”

Miss Elizabeth Hawley is the last of the first generation of foreigners who made their life in Nepal, single and determinedly independent. She is survived by her nephew Michael Hawley Leonard and has bequeathed her library and records to the American Alpine Club. As both a successful woman in a man’s world and a highly visible



foreigner recording Nepal's history, we are all in her debt. She defied the conventions of her time, and determined to live life on her own terms and in her own incomparable style.

Lisa Choegyal - Kathmandu Nepal

Franček Knez, Slovenia's silent climber

62-year-old Slovenian mountaineer Franček Knez died on 6 October 2017. Reserved and modest, Knez was considered by many as one of the strongest alpinists of his generation. Published below is a profile written by Slovenian journalist Urban Golob in 2010 when, together with Silvo Karo, Knez was conferred the Order of Merit for his contributions to mountaineering.

Franček Knez began climbing back in 1973. Since then he has climbed more than 5000 routes and by the year 2005 he carried out 730 first ascents. He has climbed in the Slovenian Alps, the Himalaya, Patagonia, Yosemite and Andes and is one of only a handful of climbers who made first ascents in all "Three Problems of Alps" the Eiger, Matterhorn, and Grandes Jorasses.

He played an important role in forging the well-known Yugoslavian route on Trango Tower in Karakorum, as well as for two other routes on the steep rock face of Meru and one of Bhagirathi II in alpine style, both in India. He even established a new route on Broad Peak while descending from Camp II to Base camp. Francek was also – together with Vanja Matijevc – the only man to reach the SW ridge of Lhotse after climbing the South Face of this mountain with a big Yugoslavian expedition back in 1981. During the course of the '80's Francek Knez, the silent climber, made a name for himself among Slovenian alpinists for his new approach to alpinism and especially to rock climbing, and Silvo Karo once described Francek as the guru of modern climbing in Slovenia. He was certainly far ahead of his time and many of his hardest routes, despite numerous attempts, still remain unrepeated.

The Order of Merit has provided national and international recognition to one of the most powerful climbers who, interestingly, has never searched for media attention and has never promoted himself. Exactly the opposite

is true. He has always been a silent, modest, hardworking man with a regular factory job even while carrying out his unbelievable alpine ascents. Despite the regular job and two expeditions in 1983, still managed to make 315 alpine ascents, of which 107 were first ascents. And he never, even to this day, owned his own car or had a driving licence...

Thirteen years ago Francek was involved in a climbing accident due to his belayer at his local crag. He broke his back, but thanks to his determination and positive thinking he completely recovered and he still keeps on climbing new routes in some of his secret places in the Slovenian Alps. After a long period of gentle persuasion Francek Knez finally wrote his book “Ožarjeni Kamen” a couple of years ago. It has not been translated.

From Planet Mountain



Team on the Argan La (First Crossing). Peak in the background is Argan Kangri.
(Photo: Divyesh Muni)

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Exploring the South Argan Glacier. Sagtogpa Kangri seen on the horizon (on the right).
(Photo: Divyesh Muni)

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