

To encourage and assist Himalayan travel and exploration and to extend knowledge of the Himalaya and adjoining mountain ranges through science, art, literature and sport.



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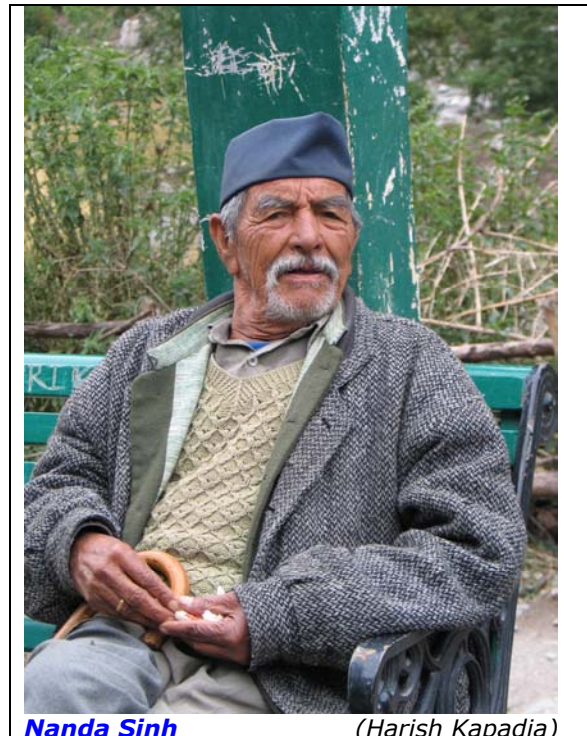
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AC 150 CELEBRATED IN GARHWAL

In 2007, The Alpine Club, London, celebrated its 150th year of foundation. To mark this milestone a trek cum climb was organized in the Garhwal with the members of the Himalayan Club. Four British climbers (Dave Wynne-Jones, Mick Cottam, Chris Astill and Mark Higton). and two Indians (Atul Rawal and Harish Kapadia, Hon. Member, the Alpine Club) participated.

Starting from Delhi they quickly reached Auli to acclimatise. The walk started on 26th May 2007 from Govindghat, the popular starting point for Hemkund and the Valley of Flowers. En route on the first day's trek we met Nanda Sinh Chauhan, now 94 years. He was with Frank Smythe in 1931 and 1937 when Smythe discovered and worked in the Bhuidhar valley, which he named as the Valley of Flowers. Nanda Sinh was with Margaret Legge, a student of Smythe who died in the valley while gathering specimens.



Nanda Sinh (Harish Kapadia)

Bifurcating from the main trail we climbed up in the Kagbhusandi valley in three days to camp at Chhaiyan Kharak (3815 m). From this camp, which acted as our base camp, the glacier was explored, pass reached and peaks were climbed. All along the mighty peaks of Hathi Parvat (6727m) and Ghori Parvat (6709m) were towering over the glacier, offering many opportunities for serious climbs.

2nd June: Peak AC 150 (5030 m)

Party all four Britishers camped little below the Kankul Pass and climbed the peak via the north ridge. The peak is situated north of the pass. Keeping in view the historic occasion it was decided to call the peak as "Peak AC 150". (Dave Wynne-Jones, Mick Cottam, Chris Astill and Mark Higton).

8th June 2007: Danesh Parvat (5490 m)

This was the only officially named peak to be climbed. After ferrying loads a day earlier two members climbed from the southern glacier establishing two camps; one on the glacier and the other at 5000 m. The summit was reached via the west ridge and the east face. The summit was a rock pinnacle which good challenges. (Dave Wynne-Jones and Mick Cottam).

9th June 2007: Kankul Peak (5081 m)

This peak rose from the Kankul Khal. After establishing one camp. The summit was reached via the northeast ridge. (Chris Astill and Mark Higton).

The Kankul Khal was reached on 30th May 2007 from the Kagbhusandi valley in the north. Even in June the pass was full of deep and loose snow which made it unsuitable for porters. Plans to cross the pass to descend towards Joshimath were given up.

A new pass was noted at the head of the valley on the shoulder of Barmal peak. We saw pug marks of a snow leopard and a huge white bear near the camp was photographed. Many ibexes, monal and other birds were seen.

A fitting way to celebrate the 150th year of the Alpine Club and strengthen its association with the Himalayan Club !



Kagbhusandi Peaks

Harish Kapadia

NILKANTH

Mt Nilkanth (6596m) lies in the Chamoli district of Uttaranchal state. It is located about 9km to the west of the holy shrine of Badrinath (3122m), where it rises vertically almost 3500m above it. Its magnificently sculpted icy spire is held in deep reverence as an embodiment of Lord Shiva, the destroyer of evil. Despite over a dozen attempts on Mt Nilkanth (till 2006), it had been ascended only four times, twice by Indian Army Expeditions and twice by foreign civilian teams led by internationally reputed mountaineers. Its avalanche ridden ramparts and sheer rock and ice faces, makes it a very difficult peak to overcome.

The Himalayan Club, Kolkatta section, in the wake of its successful ascent of Mt Kamet (7756m) in 2006, had sent a team of young mountaineers on the 18th of May 2007 on a month long expedition to Mt Nilkanth, under the able leadership of AVM (Retd) Apurba Kr. Bhattacharyya, From dispatches received the team approached Mt Nilkanth along the Panpatia glacier that lies SW to Mt Nilkanth. They established base camp at approximately 4100m on this glacier, following which the route along the steep west ridge was opened and ropes fixed along the line of ascent. Two upper camps estimated at 5200m and 5500m were established. Given the steep nature of the terrain that afforded little space for pitching tents in the higher realm of the mountain, they benighted in the open at around 5900m, before attempting to climb to the top. The summit was reached on 11th June at 14: 07 hours by Gautam Ghosh (climbing leader), Debraj Dutta, Subrata Chakraborty, Gautam Saha, G.Prasunna Kumar, Vijendra Singh, Dinesh Singh Rawat and Sherpas Mingma Norbu, Ang Nima, Rinzing and Mingma Thondup The team had to use over 2000m of rope on the steep mountain face before overcoming its challenge. The other team members were Jayanta Chattapodhyay, Debabrata Ghosh, Debajyoti Bhattacharya and Dr Susanta Bhattacharyya. This ascent represents the fifth ascent of the peak since the first attempt was made in 1937.

This remarkable climb has the unique distinction of being the first Indian civilian ascent of Mt. Nilkanth. Apart from the climb, there is much to be gained from our experiences, on Nilkath now, and our success on Kamet last year. It constitutes a management study of the vision that propels such things, of the planning, logistics involved, and the leadership and teamwork that makes it happen. The effort has been amazing, all the more, considering the shoe-string budget, for such major expeditions to be conceived and executed within the confines of Rs.3 to 4 lacs. A remarkable feature in itself. This expedition was sponsored by The Himalayan Club.

Editors: Calcutta News & Views

REPORT ON ALPINE CLUB 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN THE SWISS ALPS

Zermatt was the location for the kick off of the AC 150th celebrations held on the 22nd and 23rd of June 2007. Being a member of AC since the early 90's, I decided to attend this historic event and also hoped to catch some good climbing. I asked my climbing friend and also member of Himalayan Club, Charu Sharma to join me as my guest. Each member was allowed to invite one guest.

At 6 pm on the 22nd of June, all members and guests gathered at the new Matterhorn museum which more or less is the City Square and the ceremony started with a few welcome speeches by the Swiss Tourism Authority and other dignitaries from the Swiss Alpine club and the Swiss Mountain Rescue Association as well as the local authorities of Zermatt town.



The Square in Zermatt (Mandip Soin)

Stephen Venables, President of the AC presented the AC 150th book of the History of Alpine Club titled 'Summit' to representatives of different Alpine/Mountaineering club that were present. George Band has edited this book. Mr Nakamura from the Japan Alpine Club; John Harlin III from the American Alpine Club were presented these books.

Apart from Stephen Venables, the other leading lights that were present were Walter Bonatti from the Club Alpino Italiano and Kurt Diemberger. Whilst Peter Habeler had visited a few days ago to join some climbers led by Doug Scott and certain media persons to climb Breithorn, he had to dash off as he lost a climbing friend in an accident.

With local Zermatt musicians dressed in traditional coats and Plus fours and stockings, not to miss their alpine hats, it was an atmospheric evening with the setting sun glinting off the Matterhorn in the backdrop. Suddenly, a helicopter appeared with a long rope and hook, unveiling a special plaque and statue to commemorate the pioneers of mountaineering and the friendship between Switzerland and the UK. The plaque reads "ALPINE CLUB 1857-2007 ~ Marking 150 years of Friendship between Zermatt and the pioneers of Alpinism". In all speeches, many rich tributes were paid to Edward Whymper and other pioneers and the Swiss guides.

Appropriately, the helicopter was from the Swiss Mountain Rescue service. It was interesting to note given the high level of environmental consciousness, some members were heard muttering about the carbon

footprint of the event thanks to the usage of the chopper!!

This was followed by a buffet dinner at the Grand Hotel Zermaterhof and it was great to meet a lot of old friends such as Ian McNaught Davis and his wife, Loreto; Roger Payne and Julie Ann Clyma; Hywel and Ingram Lloyd; Richard Coatsworth; Mike Mortimer and several others who we were to subsequently raise many glasses of beer with ! Charu being a teetotaler had a tough time displaying his elbow strength and did his best with Coke and Sprite.

The following morning on 23rd June was a climbing and trekking day and this evening's sit down dinner was to be at the Riffleberg Hotel at Riffleberg. We took a train to this stunning setting and felt as if we were in the centre of a bowl with 360 degrees of major alpine summits such as Matterhorn, Pollux, Breithorn, etc. Some members joined an Alpine flower walk led by Malcom Eldridge

In order to work up a good appetite, we went climbing with Roger Payne and ended up on the same south side of Rifflehorn where Stephen Venables and John Harlin III were also doing a route next door. Since it was a new start and ended on 'Thermometer Egg', they called their new route, 'Swiss Hospitality'.

We were back in time for the evening's speech by Peter Mader, the Director of the Swiss Alpine Club who presented a magnificent oil painting of the Alps to the Alpine Club. Then, 3 persons were honoured with Honorary Memberships including Walter Bonatti who gave his speech in Italian with a translator. The dinner started with Grace and a member who was an Opera Singer read it in Latin. The dinner continued for several hours and we also met older members such as Lord Roger Chorley and his wife; George Band; and many others who despite their age, turned up and were in good cheer. There was a special train that took members down from Riffleberg to Zermatt.



On Pigne summit with the tricolor and the St Stephen's college pennant, Mandip, Charu, Julie Ann, Roger.

Over the next few days, the weather started to turn in Zermatt and like us, many went to other parts of Switzerland to continue with their treks and climbs.

Mandip Singh Soin

EVEREST IS IN THE NEWS FOR ALL THE REASONS

^ **2007 seems to be a record breaking year on Everest, since a 71-year-old Japanese** man, a climber with an artificial leg, and a teenaged boy, has reached the summit in this year's climbing season. So far in this year's mountain climbing season, more than 600 climbers have already reached the summit. An estimated 300 have already climbed the 8,850 meter summit from the Nepali side and the rest from Tibet. There are approximately 10 deaths.

^ **Everest; Beyond the Limit, a series recently aired by Discovery channel, focuses** on the stories of the 11 climbers, 24 Sherpas and camp crew, 3 professional mountain guides, 17 people on the television production team, and expedition leader Russell Brice (New Zealand). He had guided 137 clients to the summit without any casualties. However, having lost several of his closest friends on the mountain, Russell knows there are no guarantees. "In my lifetime, probably 80 percent of my mates have died from climbing," says Russell. "It's a privilege to survive this long, I suppose."

In the team there is Tim Medvetz, climber (United States), a fun-loving risk taker who designs Harley-Davidson motorcycles in Hollywood. Tim's considerable stature (he stands 6'5") puts him at a decided disadvantage for a mountaineer, as do the metal plates and pins that hold his spine, ankle and part of his skull together — the result of a near-fatal bike crash.

Another mate is New Zealand's Mark Inglis, attempting to become the first double amputee to summit Everest. In 1982, he spent 14 days trapped by a storm on New Zealand's highest peak, Mount Cook. As a result, his severely frostbitten legs were amputated just below the knees. A determined, tough and inspirational man, he has since climbed Mount Cook and won a cycling Paralympics silver medal. He is also a motivational speaker in New Zealand. "The main thing is to always know that nothing in life is too hard," says Mark. "You never know until you give it a go."

This real life thriller unfolds many ruthless truths. It is a great show and really goes into details about the preparations for the summit attempt. The best thing is that all the Sherpa's have cameras on their helmets and everyone has microphones/radios so one can hear everything that is going on. I cannot do justice merely by witting about it, to see the climbers, pushing their limits to great heights is beyond imagination.

^ **Kids Touching Upon the Base of Everest; The magnificent mountain** has attracted the old and young ones alike. This May I went for the EBC trek with my daughter Mihika, all of 7 years. Before going, came all the thoughts like from what age a child can go on the altitudes. Net surfing came handy and speaking to few doctors helped as well. Route to the Everest base camp is well trodden and well written about, however the effect of High Altitude on children is not much researched. So I just have to take one step forward and prepare for her safety with no stone unturned.

On the way up we met Sarah Arnold-Hall, 10, accompanied by her mother and her 70-year old, great uncle. They were returning from the base camp. In May 1996 Sarah's father Rob Hall, was caught 200m from the summit of the world's highest peak because he refused to abandon an ailing client, Doug Hansen as a storm blasted the mountain.

The journey was long and had to be broken with small stages as many would advise to go slow with the kids. And slowly we did reach on the top of Kala Patthar 18,298 ft. We had a prolific view of the great mountains and as Mihika said, 'Fun Came.'



Mihika on Kala Patthar

(Vinay Hegde)

We met another toddler of one and half years, from England, happily tottering up with his parents. They went till Pangboche 13,000ft. Children are very intuitive and can be encouraged with proper care for the things in which they are interested. In Mihika's case, the interest is *mountains*- which brought her a *kid pleasure*- 'the indulgence in mountaineering.'

Jasmine Hegde

^ **Chinese Road; The recent front page news** item in leading Indian newspapers states that China is building a road to Everest. It is stated as a new disaster happening to Everest. For those who have been to the Rongbuk monastery and Everest North base camp in China, this should be little surprising. There is a road till base of Everest for at least for past 10 years. It is a kuchha road, as most roads in Tibet are. But Volvo cars, huge trucks and other vehicles reach the base camp for a decade plus now. What is changing is that the Chinese are making this road a black top road.

Will making it black top will be an environmental disaster?

The old road from Tingri to Rongbuk followed across a high pass of Nara La with terrific views of Everest. There is another road from Tingri which skirts the intervening ridge and reaches Rongbuk without going up the pass. There is a barrier at Rongbuk which allows only horse-drawn tonga for tourists to go to base camp for a joy ride. The road is so good that tongas can also reach base camp easily. All expeditions are allowed to take their trucks, heavy vehicles till the base camp which also has a parking lot.

Many photos are available in mountain books, with me and many visitors of trucks and cars standing at the Everest Base Camp, and cars parked at the Rongbuk mona

stery about 5 km before Everest Base Camp. Then what is all this brouhaha about the road?



Rongbuk Monastery with cars (Harish Kapadia)



Everest Base with Cars 10 years ago
(Harish Kapadia)

At the base camp at peak of season at least 60 to 80 tents of various sizes are pitched, more than 200 persons stay there, lots of cooking fuel (mainly gas) is used, there is huge toilet block at the base camp with everything going underground. There is Chinese police post, internet connections, mobile tower (some climber spoke from the summit of Everest this year) and food packaging of many many varieties are taken there. One does not know whether they are brought back or how they are disposed. All these facilities are taken on trucks on the kuchha road with trucks heaving up the passes and emitting plenty of fumes and using great energy. With black top road possibly there may be less pollution of trucks, and garbage in various forms can be brought back.

Finally China is not going to listen and road will be made black top, as they have done with many roads: Lhasa to Shigatse - now being extended to Kailash area, and brand new road from Nathu La-Gyantse-Yamdruk Tso to Lhasa for the fresh traffic that will come from India via Sikkim. Driving on those roads on the vast Tibetan plateau is an experience.

Harish Kapadia

^ **Dipak Raj Rai a farmer won the Tenzing Hillary Everest Marathon, on Tuesday, 29th May 2007**, completing the grueling high-altitude route from Everest base camp in just less than four hours. "I am very excited to win the world's highest marathon for the second consecutive time despite a leg injury," Dipak Raj Rai said via telephone from the finish line in Namche Bazaar. "It is a very tough race and you have to be physically and mentally fit," said the 25-year-old, who finished in 3:59:24. The annual race, which started in 2003, is held to commemorate the first summit of the 8848m peak by Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary on May 29, 1953. "This is the world's highest marathon and the most challenging race in the world and we are trying to develop it as a major extreme high altitude adventure sports event," organizer Bikram Pandey said. This year 136 runners, including 53 foreigners, took part in the 42.2km race. It starts at the bottom of the spectacular Khumbu Icefall at around 5,400m next to Everest base camp and ends in Namche Bazaar, a popular trekking base at 3,446m. France's Antoine Bonafics won the foreigners' category, completing the course in 4:51:10.

^ **Khumbu Bijuli Company (KBC) completes 13 years of Service; Constructed in 1994** with the persistence, commitment as well as financial support of the Austrian government, the Small Hydropower Plant located at Thame in the Khumbu region has been providing energy to several locations in the area. The Thame plant is a run-of-the-river type with a total capacity exceeding 600 KW. The plant has greatly helped to meet the energy demand of the local population. Currently power goes to Thame (3800m), Thamo (3440m), Namche (3240m) and Khumjung (3790m). Thereby, it has helped in the reduction of consumption of other non-renewable energy sources like firewood. The plant site is within the Sagarmatha National Park is home to the highest peak in the world — which more than 25,000 mountaineers and trekkers visit every year. Eco Himal, an Austrian INGO based in Salzburg, has been taking full responsibility for the technical and financial management of the power plant. The Austrian government spent around \$5.5 million on the project.



Thame where KBC is situated (Maninder Kohli)

Maninder Kohli

ACTIVITES;

In Mumbai The Himalayan Club in association with High Places Management Pvt. Ltd. had organized a special and rare Business Presentation by, one of the most successful expedition leaders, in the History of mountaineering, legendary **Sir Chris Bonington**.

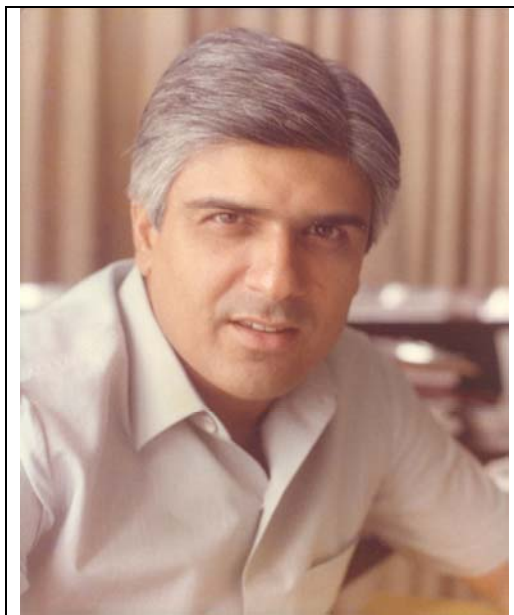
In the Presentation, **Climb Everest's South West Face** he first took the participants through the planning process and then on to the climb itself, setting the scene, giving all the relevant information and then asking the delegates for their solutions to the problems involved. The topics examined were ones of leadership and group dynamics rather than climbing tactics. This approach enabled the entire group, to participate in the climb, exploring different ways to deal with issues as they occur in his story of the expedition.

He also delivered his second management lecture, **Peak of Achievement** for the Tata Management Training Centre to various executives of the Tata Group. About 150 executives from different Tata companies attended the lecture. The presentation was well received, followed by a lively question & answer session.



Sir Chris Bonington (Harish Kapadia)

TRIBUTE



**ADITYA KASHYAP
(1946 – 2007)**

He was born in Gurudaspur, Punjab. Following upon his early education, Aditya obtained a degree in mechanical engineering from IIT, Bombay and did his MBA subsequently from IIM Calcutta before joining TATA Steel (TISCO then). He served the Company with distinction for 22 years and left it as a top executive to start his own business as Managing Director of MOBAR.

He was intelligent and I had first hand evidence of his wide range of economic and financial acumen when he had been invited with Russi to lunch in London by the then Chairman of Grindlays Bank plc., in the early eighties. He fielded most of the questions posed by hard nosed bankers and clearly impressed them, particularly in his statements, now almost prophetic, on the market and growth potential of India.

The newspapers have been full of stories of his achievements and administrative skills. They reminded us that he was President of the prestigious Bengal Club in 2006 and of the many changes he had introduced, and dwelt at length on how his death was a big loss for Indian soccer. During his days with TATA Steel he had played a major role in bringing teams like Sao Paulo, PSV Eindhoven and Bochum to India to play against national sides. His was a repeat performance when he brought Sao Paulo recently to India again, this time as IFA president, a position he was elected to in 2006. Ailing as he was, he drove himself hard to make the visit an overwhelming success. Raising funds is no mean task when one no longer has the direct access to corporate funds, yet he achieved almost single handedly a budget of Rs.4 crores to cover the last visit by Sao Paulo.

I brought him into the membership of The Himalayan Club in late 2005 and recommended him for a place on its central Managing Committee which, as it happened, he occupied for a short period of a little over three months. What is not commonly known was that he had a close affinity with mountains and looked forward to his regular visits to Darjeeling where he had a home and used to refer to Kangchenjunga as his "personal picture frame" for the view that it provided through his window. He had a natural affinity with hill people and counted the likes of Nawang Gombu and others in the Sherpa community as his friends. During his days in TATA Steel he was instrumental in making funds available to the fledgling HMI, Darjeeling.

Importantly though, it is the quality of the man that I recall most. Everything about him was gracious and he had that special quality of generosity of heart and spirit. "He was elite but modest; exacting yet tolerant; effective yet never unfair; a rare man who possessed qualities that rarely coexist." He was a magnanimous host and enjoyed the good life, but was ever mindful of the needs of the less fortunate, especially children. He was suffering from prostate gland cancer for sometime which had spread to other parts of his body. He bore his ailment and pain with stoicism, never faltered in his treatment, never complained and remained optimistic till the end. His courage and zest for life obviated any show of self pity. Those of us who were close to him knew that he was severely ill, though none of us imagined the end would come so fast, including, I guess, Aditya.

A confirmed bachelor, he is survived by his mother, his two brothers and a sister and of course Russi Mody. We wish his soul rest and his family and friends solace.

Meher H Mehta

END

