



E-LETTER

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Expeditions and Explorations

First Ascent of Chamshen (7017 m)

The Indian British Exploration Expedition (IBEX)

The aim of the expedition was to explore unclimbed peaks of the Saser Group, located in the Nubra valley of the East Karakoram range, particularly Plateau Peak (7300 m) and Chamshen (7017 m). The team members were Divyesh Muni, Vineeta Muni, Andy Parkin, Susan Jensen and Victor Saunders. There was a support team of six Sherpas (Samgyal, Mingma, Ang Dorji, Chedar, Dawa and Karma) with Hav. /AEC Raj Kumar as LO.

The expedition was in the field from 22nd July to 29th August 2013. The plan involved the first crossing of Sakang Col (6150 m) as a means of access to Chamshen Peak and the west side of Plateau Peak, from the North Shukpa Kunchang glacier. Sakang Col was crossed on 10th August after a long reconnaissance and several attempts.

The col proved to be the key to the expedition and involved steep climbing and exposure to rock fall during the heat of the day. Nearly 1000 m of rope was fixed to secure the route across the Col to facilitate the safe return of the team and the



Chamshen Peak, route of ascent.



Route from Sakang col.

movement of members and Sherpas with heavy loads. The entire supply of food and equipment was lowered from the Col using a zip line devised from the fixed ropes. On crossing the col, the team found itself in a valley between Saser Kangri II and Saser Kangri III, both 7000 m peaks with high faces and seracs overhanging the valley.

The next few days were spent exploring approaches to Chamshen Peak from Chamshen Base Camp (c. 5600 m). On 14 August the British members were planning to re-cross the Sakang Col to re-supply. They were camped on the North Shukpa Kunchang glacier about 1.5 km from Saser Kangri II when at 10 pm a massive avalanche swept the north face of Saser Kangri II. Although the main substance of the avalanche did not reach the camp, the blast from the leading edge lifted the tent that Parkin was in, and he was airborne then hurled

into a deep crevasse. Still in his sleeping bag, he fell through the floor of the tent, approximately 20 m into the crevasse, landing upside down. In the other tent, Jensen and Saunders were rolled along the glacier about 30 m before coming to rest on the edge of the same crevasse. Several pieces of equipment were now missing, notably Parkin's crampons, Saunders' and Parkin's axes, and both Saunders and Parkin had lost inner boots of their plastic boots. In addition, all the food and the stove were missing. Fortunately the rope and a few slings had survived the blast, allowing rescue operations to begin.

It took several hours for Jensen and Saunders to arrange safe crevasse rescue, descend to the base of the crevasse and to rescue Parkin, and recover his rucksack and the remains of his tent. Parkin had injured his back and was not able to stand. With the use of painkillers and oral dexamethasone, Parkin was sufficiently ambulatory to walk two kilometres to a junction in the North Shukpa Kunchang glacier which was safe from the avalanche prone north face of Saser Kangri II. Jensen and Saunders left Parkin there in a tent and broke trail back to Chamshen Base Camp, where they arrived in the afternoon of 15th August.

Early on the 16th August, Divyesh, Saunders and the Sherpas walked back to Parkin and carried him to the Chamshen Base Camp. Although illegal, it was fortunate that there was a satellite phone in the group. This allowed us to initiate an air rescue by the Indian Air Force on the 17th August. The airlift was in bad weather conditions with low clouds and poor visibility. It was executed with exceptionally fine flying and very determined ground-based support. We are pleased to acknowledge the commendable effort by the Indian Air Force and our agent RIMO Expeditions, and other friends who worked around the clock to ensure the rescue.

It took two days to fly Parkin to hospital in Leh, where he was found to have a minor fracture of the sacrum, from which he is currently making a fine recovery.

After a period of poor weather, though low on food and fuel, the remaining team consisting of Susan, Victor, Vineeta and Divyesh along with the Sherpas took advantage of a fine spell between 19th and 21st August to climb Chamshen Peak with camps at 6000 m and 6500 m, to reach the summit on 21st August at 10:30am. The summit was climbed by the West Ridge. About 600 m of rope was fixed to gain access to the camp at 6500 m.

The whole team was able to re-cross the col in a 17 hours effort on 24th August, eventually returning to Leh on 29th August. Apart from issues surrounding the use of the satellite phone to call the rescue, there were no further difficulties for the team.

(Divyesh Muni)

(Photos by the author)

First ascent of Plateau Peak

The Himalayan Club's Kolkata section organised a mountaineering expedition in the Eastern Karakoram during July –August 2013 and the unclimbed Plateau peak (7300m) as their target. It is located adjacent to Saser Kangri I. Several attempts in the past have proved unsuccessful due to severe technical difficulties.



Plateau Peak.

The mountain was approached from the south Phukpoche glacier and climbed through its difficult west ridge. The Base Camp was set up at 4706 m on the 14th of July, Camp 1 (5391m) was established on 17th July and Camp 2 (6015 m) on the 27th of July and the final camp (6366 m) on the 30th of July. The

summit attempt was started at midnight and the team reached the top on 31st of July, 2013 at around 13.40 hours. This was a historic first ascent. The team also traversed the length of the summit plateau. This sublime plateau is close to 2.5 km in length and offers rare perspectives of the Saser Kangri group and a brilliant panorama of the Karakoram peaks.

The team fixed around 2600 m of rope on the dangerous west ridge to establish a feasible route to the summit plateau .

The summiteers were Pradeep Sahoo, Subrata De (Deputy Leader), Prasanta Gorai, Debraj Dutta (leader), Phurba Sherpa, Mingma Sherpa, Lakpa Tenzing Sherpa, Dawa Sherpa, Lakpa Norbu Sherpa.

The other team members were Chetna Sahoo, Parag Kr Mitra, Biplab Banerjee, Aadrito Paul, Ganesh Saha, Pasang Gyalzen, Karma Thimle Sherpa, and Gyalzen Sherpa.

First ascent of Cha Ri (6046 m) by a British team

The three-person expedition was led by Douglas Briton, a research student at Edinburgh University. The expedition focused on a partially unvisited range of largely non-technical mountains accessed from the Leh-Manali road. At the very northern end of this chain stands the popular Kang Yissay (6400 m), at the head of the Markha Valley above Nimaling. Southeast from its summit the chain runs parallel to the road.

Built by the Indian Army to feed military supplies to the northern border areas, the 500 km road runs north from Manali in the Kullu Valley, finally crossing the Tanglang Pass (c. 5300 m) before descending to the Gya river valley. It winds along this through the Gya Gorge before eventually meeting the Indus River.



Peaks of Cha Ri valley.

Partway through the gorge stands the old monastery of Gya, about 70 km from Leh, and the three climbers set up base camp here, before moving west into the hills.

Prior to 2013 no officially approved mountaineering expedition appears to have operated in their chosen part of the range, and the

three spent the last two years planning and gaining a permit to visit to what is locally referred to as the Yabat Valley.

Assisted by local horsemen, the team took five days to reach the foot of the Yabat Glacier, where they established an advanced base. After reconnoitring the glacier and using two local helpers to cache supplies to be used during descent, Caroline McCann and Matthew Jones climbed a nearly snow-free, unnamed mountain in a 13-hour round trip. While the lower flanks were typically loose scree, the upper section held solid red granite, giving enjoyable climbing. However, on the summit pyramid the rock deteriorated once more, and the final eight metres were considered too precarious to climb, a decision validated the following day when a significant rock fall was seen emanating from the summit cone. The pair managed to reach advanced base just before nightfall.

Rongdo (Rongdu) Valley Exploration May – Jun 2013

A team of 12 mountaineers from the Indian Air Force explored the little known Rongdo valley in May – Jun 2013. This valley has seen only two forays in the past. The team spent 35 days in the valley, explored the main valley and its major side valleys and, climbed 8 virgin peaks in that area.

Rongdo togpo is a small stream originating in the glacial mass of East Karakorams north of the Shyok river in the Nubra region. The Rongdo village is located at the mouth of the stream and is 35 km from the bridge across the Shyok at Timur and 52 km from Hunder. Tsati, a large village with a primary health care centre, is its nearest neighbour and is located 20 km away to its west and is connected to it by a dirt track.

For the sake of easy description, the Rongdo valley can be divided into two parts: the lower and upper Rongdo valleys. The lower Rongdo valley extends from the site where the river debouches into Shyok river up to a little below the location of the Hot Springs.

Immediately beyond Rongdo village, the valley narrows to a defile. The narrowing is due to a large rock fall on the true right side. The trail is about 3 feet wide in Lower

Summary of climbs

Peak	Name suggested	Height	Date of Ascent	Team
1	Sa'i Lhamo	19785' 6030m	18 May 13	Members: Gp Capt VK Sashindran, Sqn Ldr S Dubey, Sgt G S Pokhariya, Cpl JPS Raina, Cpl S Bohra, Cpl JR Poonia Sherpas/Ladakhi nonoos: Skalzang Rigzin, Tshering Bhutia, Karma Sherpa, Tashi Zangla
2	Lung Khor	19086' 5990m	19 May 13*	Members: Sgt C Y Basavaraj, Sgt D K Vyas, Cpl D Chhetry Sherpas/ Ladakhi nonoos: Konchok Thinles, Tsewang Rigzin, Dawa Norbu, Stenzing Desal
3	Khyung Kangri	20286' 6183m	25 May 13	Members: Gp Capt V K Sashindran, Sqn Ldr S Dubey, Cpl JPS Raina, Cpl S Bohra, Cpl JR Poonia Sherpas/ Ladakhi nonoos: S Rigzin, K Thinles, Tashi Gyalson, S Desal, Tsewang Gialston
4	Chu Skeyes Kangri	19860' 6053m	26 May 13	Members: Sqn Ldr Avinash Prasad, Sgt CY Basavaraj, Sgt D K Vyas, Cpl D Chhetry, Cpl IA Dar Sherpas/ Ladakhi nonoos: S Rigzin, T Zangla, T Rigzin, K Sherpa, D Norbu, Cheder Bhutia, Dawa Gyalpo
5	Langpoche	19582' 5968m	26 May 13	Members: Sqn Ldr Avinash Prasad, Flt Lt K S Sanghera, Sgt CY Basavaraj, Sgt D K Vyas, Cpl D Chhetry, Cpl IA Dar Sherpas/ Ladakhi nonoos: T Zangla, T Rigzin, K Sherpa, D Norbu, C Bhutia, D Gyalpo
6	Odgsal I	20454' 6234m		Members: Gp Capt VK Sashindran, Sgt GS Pokhariya, Cpl JPS Raina, Cpl JR Poonia Sherpas/Ladakhi nonoos: K Thinless, D Norbu, D Gyalpo, Tashi Phunchok
7	Odgsal II	19778' 6028m		Members: Sqn Ldr S Dubey, Flt Lt KS Sanghera, Sgt CY Basavaraj, Cpl S Bohra Sherpas/Ladakhi nonoos: S Rigzin, K Thinles, D Gyalpo, S Desal
8	Charok	20087' 6122m		Members: Sqn Ldr A Prasad, Sgt DK Vyas, Cpl D Chhetry, Cpl IA Dar Sherpas/ Ladakhi nonoos: S Rigzin, K Thinless, S Desal, T Bhutia

*Not summited, height mentioned refers to the actual height climbed. The peak's height as per Survey of India map is 6160m.



Air Warrior's Col.



Khyungkangri base view.

Rongdo and this mainly due to regular movement of people, cattle and flocks of sheep moving up and down the valley. The trail stays to the right of a clump of willow trees with some pasture land all enclosed by a fence of thorny branches.

On the way up the main valley we did not go to village fields. Instead, we followed the Saskyulas further up to where a tributary from the first valley on the right (R1) joins it. We crossed this stream and set up our first base camp on a meadow to the left of this tributary. This site is a 45- minute walk from the Hot Springs. A broad peak is visible to the true right of the main valley just as you approach the base camp. The peak looks like a truncated pyramid and this peak was our first objective. This valley was explored by a Canadian expedition in 2012. This is a broad valley and has many peaks above 6000m hedging it. A route up the mountain was discovered from its western aspect along a southwest ridge which started just beyond our ABC. An attempt of the peak was made on 18 May

2013. The route up took 6 hours. The last 50m was like a tongue, a flat but steep slope. The peak had a 2m overhang on the eastern side and we had to be careful not to step too close to the edge. This was our first climb and later on we moved up the main valley and climbed many peaks.

The Air Force expedition spent 5 weeks in Rongdo valley exploring many valleys. They climbed 8 peaks, successfully summiting 7, six of which were more than 6000m high as given below). The greatest achievement was that all this was accomplished without anybody falling ill or any mishap.

(Gp. Capt. V. K. Sashindran)

(Photos by the author)

Rongdo (Rongdu)

The first mention of the area was in the Himalayan Journal, Vol XV (1949) the name Rongdu was used for the river valley and the village. ("Rongdu and the Nubra Valley", visit in July and August 1947, by R. C. Schomberg)

In the Survey of India maps then and maps of J. Wala, US Army Map series and others name Rongdu was used. Several teams which climbed there (Divyesh Muni and Joie Seagram) and records of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation recorded the name Rongdu. The Alpine Club and the American Alpine Club in their various indexes recorded the area as Rongdu .

Author of above note records that in the latest Survey of India map No. 52 F/15 the name is revised to "Rongdo". This should be noted and used to avoid any confusion with past records.

Climbs in Himachal Pradesh – Bara Shigri Glacier

Indian Mountaineering Foundation hosted the “Climbathon 2013” from July 20 – August 10, 2013, an event meant to instruct already competent mountaineers in different styles of climbing and to reach several summits in the Bara Shigri area of Indian Himalaya (Himachal Pradesh). Mihnea-Radu Prundeanu and Cosmin Andron guided on Khhang Shiling (6360 m) during the first ascent of the NE face with 9 people reaching the summit (4 August), including Bogdan Vasile Dumitrică, Angel Robledo and Karn Kowshik. After the climb, Mihnea, Vasile and Cosmin attempted (9 August) Kullu Makalu (6349 m) by its unclimbed north face to be thwarted by a massive rock fall nearly half way up the face. While Cosmin sustained only minor hits on arm, back and legs and Vasile got away unscathed, Mihnea was seriously injured (back/spine). The team rushed down the face to the safety of the base camp. Both climbs were alpine style.

(Cosmin Andron)

(Photos by the author)



Khhang Shiling.



Kullu Makalu.

Nanda Devi East Expedition: May 2013:

Anindya Mukherjee led a semi-alpine style attempt on Nanda Devi East with a 6 member team in May 2013.

The expedition started its journey from Kolkata on 2 May, 2013, It took us 5 days to reach Bidalgwar and on 10 May, was the first ferry to the foot of Longstaff's Col. At around 4900 m, this was their Advance Base Camp. From May 11 to May 13, for three continuous days and nights it snowed

The col and the giant gendarmes

During the next two days, the team ferried up and positioned themselves at the ABC and then after only two team ferries to the Longstaff's Col, on May 17, it camped on the Col (5910 m). It took 10 hours from ABC with loaded backpacks to reach Longstaff's col. The exposure to the bombardments of rocks, coming from the southern flanks of the col kept the team on its toes! This 'col camp' was Camp 1. The next morning the team saw the much coveted view of the inner sanctuary and the main summit of Nanda Devi.

The next two days were spent in bringing up limited lengths of static rope from the lower sections of the snow slope below Longstaff's Col and fixing them on pitches of the three giant pinnacles. The team found very little snow and ice on the rock pillars, especially so on the inner sanctuary side. From top of the first gendarme it is a relatively straightforward yet very exposed crossing to the second pinnacle. From the top of the second pinnacle an abseil brought the team down on the south ridge and then a short climb to the top of the third pinnacle.

Camp 2 (6200 m) was pitched on the very narrow south ridge, meters beyond the third pinnacle, with great views of Nanda's main and East summits.

Over the next three days, Camp 2 was relocated to a buttress after a steep 25 m ascent. Fixed higher sections of the south ridge and finally on May 22, 2013, after crossing a few rock and snow steps, a gentle snow arête appeared. The team kept moving up the snow arête and stopped just before it merged into a snow shelf. Camp 3 (6600 m) was established after digging a platform. On May 23, an alpine start was made as two roped up parties. The strong winds on the ridge were like a gale. The team had two nights of food and fuel and one day at their disposal to give the summit a shot. At around 7100 m, just before the quartzite mixed rock sections of the summit pyramid began at a gradient of approximately 50 degrees, the team stopped. At day brake the party called off the summit attempt due to excessive cold and chances of severe frost bite and returned safely to the base camp.

Team: Anindya Mukherjee (Leader), Thendup Sherpa, Karna Bahadur Rai, Ananth H Vishkantiah (Bangalore), Suman Guhaneogy (Chandannagore) and Alope Kumar Das (Kolkata). 3 HAPs, Kiran Chetri, Lhakpa Sherpa and Temba Sherpa.

(Anindya Mukherjee)

Badrinath to Gangotri via Chaukhamba Col (6053 m)

First Crossing of Mead's Chaukhamba Col and Traverse of entire Gangotri Glacier

A five member team was led by Debabrata Mukherjee, Biman Biswas, Biplav Baidya, Paratha Sarathi Mouluk and me for an attempt.

On the 16th May, the team got moving from Joshimath to Mana village via Badrinath. On 18th May went from Mana to Vasudhara falls. After walking for two days the base camp at Chaukhamba, 3898 m was reached. Camp 1 at 4320 m was established after a 6 hour tiring scrambled down and a hoping walk on to the main moraine of the Bhagirathi Kharak, with towards the left side, in the shadow of Balakun. Camp 2 at 4732 m was established at the headwall of Bhagirathi Kharak below Chaukhamba I.

Camp 2 to Ledge Camp

On 22nd May Biman opened the route followed by the four HAPS, Debabrata, Partha, Biplav and me. After the rock came ice and snow. Biman had fixed close to 425 m of rope on the snow. The team daggered up the slope and reached a small ledge which was hacked to fit the tent. The night at the ledge at 5131m, passed in a haze of cramped sleeping, careful snow melting, and trippy dreams. On 23rd May, the camp was wound up. Camp 3 at 5420 m was a two and a half hour climb. As the climb progressed, the incline eased and the base of the Col at 5623 m, was reached.



Members on Chaukhamba Col.

Chaukhamba Col Crossing

26th May the col was reached and the decent on to the Gangotri side started. After a small plateau, it was a sheer drop on either side. Biman found a snow chute, down climbed, and then repeated the cycle again and again. After three or four hours we finally piled in the tent dead tired and thirsty at 5563 m. The team had climbed for 14 hours that day and reached the camp at 10.30 pm.

The next day, Biman fixed the rappel rope and was the first one down to the Gangotri glacier. It was a complex rappel of 300 m, because the rope had couple of knots in between. A blizzard made the decent more difficult. It was around



Chaukhamba Col from Bhagat Kharak glacier.

seven p.m. when all of us were down having their first brew in the camp on the névé of Gangotri glacier at 5245 m.

Subsequently due to dwindling rations and Partha's hurt leg, the team trekked down slowly to Gangotri via Tapovan and reached Gangotri on May 31.

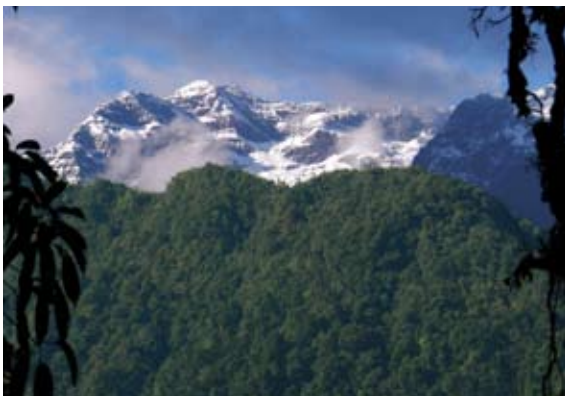
(Ritabrata Saha)

Explorations in Upper Subansiri, 2013

Central Arunachal Pradesh



Jungle Trail to Kechi pass.



Plateau of Ghaghu Siriu.

This was my second visit to the Upper Subansiri. In 2005 I had trekked to Bidak in the northeast and to Taksing on the west. Now I returned to explore some lakes, and the famed peak of Takpa Siri which we could not see last time.

The upper Subansiri areas, Nacho and ahead, consists of many lakes. This is a rarity, in a way, in thickly forested Arunachal Pradesh as in most areas one does not find these many lakes. All these lakes are in a deep rocky bowl on high ground, which is also a unique phenomenon. A look at the Google Earth image will amplify this. Tibetans, being Buddhists, have a tradition of visiting lakes and performing a kora - circumambulation. Arunachali tribes are followers of Donyi-polo, worshippers of the sun and moon. Now most tribes have converted to Christianity. They do not visit these lakes for religious purposes anymore, hence apart from a few shikaris travelling in the area, the trails are nonexistent.

One such high altitude lake is Ghaghu Siriu (Siriu is lake), which is situated above Limeking (1220 m). The trail climbs very steeply through forest. Wooden ladders that were put in place have rotted. Moreover one has to climb from Dorjen Mempu (2020 m) on the

Subansiri, to Paru (3951 m), Swa Dibin (4000 m) and Point 4781 m to descend to the lake at 3909 m. A proposition that will be challenging due to lack of water and camping places en route and problems related to acclimatisation.

Tradition of Kora

Ghaghu Siriu is in the upper Subansiri valley. The lake situated near the peak of Takpa Siri- one of the three great holy mountains in Tibetan Buddhism. There was a tradition of people performing a kora, (circumambulation) around Takpa Siri, like the kora around the well known peak of Kailash on the Tibetan plateau. The shorter Kora (Kingkor) is performed in about a day, while the Ringkor kora of Takpa Siri was longer and it took 10 days to complete. The Ringkor kora was undertaken by hundreds of Tibetans every 12 years. Unfortunately now, after the 1962 war, the 'Line of Actual Control' cuts across the route of the kora. Thus the route is divided between Chinese and Indian territories and kora is prohibited by armies on both sides. The last such kora was undertaken in 1953.

Hindus in Uttarakhand visit Nanda Devi foothills on a pilgrimage, called 'Nanda Jat' which is also performed every 12 years. This has continued regularly and has now become a huge affair with live TV coverage! This year, 2013, Nanda Jat Yatra was held as per the 12 year cycle. The Takpa Siri Kora (Ringkor) followed the same pattern and the same years – 1953 was last kora so if it had continued, it would have been undertaken in 2013, according to the 12 year cycle. It is matter of research how Hindu and Buddhist koras in completely different regions follow the same 12 year cycle. This is possibly because both, Hindus and Buddhist follow the moon calendar, which calculates dates and years accordingly. But there are few variations which needs study.

Our treks

Reaching Dibrugarh from Mumbai, we crossed the mighty Brahmaputra by a ferry, always a pleasure. On the northern bank we passed Likabali, and travelled two days (340 km) to Limekang braving a broken bridge where vehicles had to be changed. Engaging porters was an expensive affair as they made an agreement for nine days wages even if we finish the trek earlier! Earlier there was a feeling that Arunachalis needed to earn but now it has changed to greed.

For us two short treks followed. Climbing steeply, on forested slopes to look at Ghaghu Siriu was almost an impossible task due to recent rain that had deposited plenty of snow on upper reaches. After three days we could see the lake but it was covered by snow. In thick fog it was not distinguishable from the surrounding areas. It was also not possible to make 800 m descent to the lake due to snow.

We decided to climb on the southern side to Kechi Pass (3030 m) which was marked on the map as a village trail(!) to lower Subansiri. This too was very steep and we had to climb holding bamboo branches. Camps were on small platforms cut out by porters and water was available only at one spot. As we reached higher, the trail

became more challenging- as this route like many others is not in use now and people prefer two days of roundabout road travel instead of a trek across the pass. The pass itself is a gentle depression and we were hoping to see the famed Takpa Siri peak (5735 m). The porters pointed out three different mountains as "Takpa Siri" - as the peak is small it merges with surrounding ridges. A view of Takpa Siri from the south is not available as reference and hence it will be a matter of study to locate the peak in photographs.

We travelled back the same way, across the Brahmaputra to Dibrugarh and to Mumbai. Dates: 20th October to 13th November 2013 Members: Harish Kapadia (68) and Atul Rawal (65).

(Harish Kapadia)

(Photos by the author)

Karakoram

Kunyang Chhish East - Southwest Face - 2013

Simon Anthamatten, Hansjörg Auer and Matthias Auer have made the first ascent of Kunyang Chhish East (7400m) in the Karakoram mountains - one of the last great problems in world alpinism.

First ascent of Kunyang Chhish East (7400 m)

Southwest Face, 2700m,

Climbed on 18 July 2013 By Hansjörg Auer , Matthias Auer , Simon Anthamatten

Simon Anthamatten from Switzerland and brothers Hansjörg and Matthias Auer from Austria have made the first ascent of Kunyang Chhish East, in the Hispar area of Karakoram mountains.

Their successful ascent of the southwest face was the third attempt in the course of the expedition. Simon Anthamatten and Hansjörg Auer abandoned their first attempt when a storm developed during their third day on the route. Fresh snow and avalanches defeated a second attempt by the two climbers.

Anthamatten and the two Auer brothers began a third attempt on 14 July. After three days climbing, high winds and spindrift forced the climbers to wait for two days in the shelter of a crevasse. On 18 July they continued to the summit.

The southwest face of Kunyang Chhish East has seen several previous attempts, Kunyang Chhish East, including an attempt by US climbers Steve House and Vince Anderson who were forced to turn back about 300m below the summit in 2006.

Broad Peak - West Ridge - 2013

Polish climbers Maciej Berbeka and Tomasz Kowalski died while descending Broad Peak, having made the first winter ascent of the mountain on 5 March with Adam Bielecki and Artur Małek.

First winter ascent of Broad Peak (8051m), West Ridge.

Climbed on 5 March 2013 by Maciej Berbeka , Adam Bielecki , Tomasz Kowalski , and Artur Małek. Other Team Members: Krzysztof Wielicki , Karim Hayyat , Shaheen Baig, Amin Ullah

Polish climbers Maciej Berbeka, Adam Bielecki, Tomasz Kowalski and Artur Małek have reached the summit of Broad Peak in the Karakoram. But Kowalski and Berbeka have disappeared during the descent.

The four climbers reached the summit between 5 pm and 6 pm on 5 March and immediately began to descend. Tomasz Kowalski was descending last and reported by radio that he could see Maciej Berbeka in front of him. Bielecki reached the top camp (Camp 4) at 7400 m at about 9 pm and Artur Małek reached the camp at about 2 am on 6th March. Berbeka and Kowalski seem to have reached the col (7900 m) at around this time and to have stopped to bivouac there.

In a radio call to base camp at 6.30 am on 6 March Kowalski reported problems fixing a crampon that had loosened shortly after he left the summit of Broad Peak. He also said that he had seen Berbeka. This was the last radio contact with Kowalski. There has been no radio contact with Berbeka since he spoke to basecamp from the summit using Kowalski's radio.

Karim Hayyat set off up the mountain from Camp 2 at dawn on 6 March and at around 1 pm reached a height of about 7700 m. He saw no sign of the missing climbers.

Later on 6 March the team descended towards base camp, on the instructions of leader Krzysztof Wielicki and in anticipation of bad weather forecast for 7 March. Camp 4 was left in its place at 7400 m. Adam Bielecki and Artur Małek are said to be fine, with no signs of frostbite. On 7 March Amin Ullah and Shaheen Baig ascended to Camp 3 at 7000 m to keep watch on the upper part of the route. The following day brought a serious deterioration in the weather. Expedition leader Krzysztof Wielicki issued a statement saying:

“Considering all the circumstances, conditions, my experience, history of Himalayan mountaineering, knowledge regarding physiology and high-altitude medicine as well as consultations with doctors and co-organizers of the expedition in Poland, I have to declare Maciej Berbeka and Tomasz Kowalski dead.”

Maciej Berbeka had reached the fore-summit of Broad Peak exactly 25 years earlier, on 6th March 1988. Climbing fast and alone, he believed he had reached the summit. But visibility was poor, and he subsequently realised that he had in fact only reached

the fore-summit, 20m lower than the main summit (American Alpine Journal 1989, p243). His ascent was the closest anyone came to the summit of a Karakoram 8000er in winter until Gasherbrum II was climbed in 2011.

Broad Peak - Iranian Route - 2013

Three Iranian climbers died after completing a new route on Broad Peak, in Karakoram mountains

Broad Peak (8051m)

First ascent of Iranian Route

Climbed on 16 July 2013 by Aidin Bozorgi , Pouya Keivan , Mojtaba Jarabi

Other Team Members: Ramin Shojaei , Afshin Saadi

Iranian climbers Aidin Bozorgi, Pouya Keivan and Mojtaba Jarabi died while attempting to descend Broad Peak in Karakoram mountains. They had reached the summit after completing a new route on the southwest face of the mountain.

Their route follows a line attempted unsuccessfully by an Iranian team in 2009. It appears that the 2013 team did not repeat the lower part of the 2009 route up the southwest spur of Broad Peak, but instead followed the normal route to Camp 3, and from there embarked on the unclimbed upper section of the route attempted in 2009.

Aidin Bozorgi, Pouya Keivan and Mojtaba Jarabi set off from Camp 3 while Ramin Shojaei and Afshin Saadi remained in support. They reached the summit after 3 bivouacs, early on 16 July. From there they planned to descend the normal route, following the frontier ridge to the col at 7850 m.

They appear to have strayed from the route and to have found themselves confronting increasing difficulties while their own physical condition deteriorated. Ramin Shojaei and Afshin Saadi, in support at Camp 3, were not well enough to attempt a rescue. The last contact with the summit team was via satellite phone call on 20 July. It seems



Broad Peak.

that by that time Bozorgi was alone, at the top of a steep wall that he couldn't descend.

In the meantime efforts to arrange a rescue were under way and the col at 7850 m was searched, without any trace of the missing climbers being found. An attempt was also made to spot the climbers from a helicopter, though the helicopter's altitude ceiling put the upper section of the mountain out of its reach.

K6 West - North-West Face - 2013



First ascent of K6 West (7040m) by North-West Face, *Karakoram*. Climbed on 29 July 2013 by Rafael Slawinski and Ian Welsted.

Canadian climbers Rafael Slawinski and Ian Welsted have made the first ascent of K6 West, in the Charakusa Valley of Karakoram mountains.

They climbed it via a steep icefall and a hanging valley exposed to avalanches. They found the face itself relatively free from objective dangers. Their line followed an ice streak, mostly at 55-60°, but with a short overhanging section at about 6000m. They started climbing on 26 July and reached the summit on 29 July.

K6 West had previously rebuffed several attempts by strong teams.

Laila Peak - West Face - 2013

In August 2013 Carlos Suárez made the first BASE jump from Laila Peak (6096 m) in the Karakoram mountains.



First BASE jump from Laila Peak

Laila Peak (6096 m) ascended *via* West Face
Jump on 22 August 2013

Carlos Suárez has made the first BASE jump from Laila Peak in the Karakoram mountains. He reached the summit via the normal route with Ramón Portilla and Darío Barrio and then jumped from a level spot about 2 metres below the top. A few minutes later he landed safely at the expedition's base camp, 2000 metres below.

Darío Barrio had hoped to descend by wingsuit, but found that Laila Peak provided insufficient height clearance for this style of descent. Had the situation proved suitable for wingsuit descent, Carlos and Darío would have had to decide which of the two of them would jump, and which one would descend conventionally with Ramón.

Laila Peak - West Face – 2013

Spanish climbers José Fernandez and Alex Txikon have made the first winter ascent of the iconic Laila Peak in the Karakoram

First winter ascent of Laila Peak (6096 m), West Face

Climbed on 18 February 2013 by José Fernandez , Alex Txikon. Other Team Members: Ramón Portilla, Juanjo San Sebastián

Spanish climbers José Fernandez and Alex Txikon have made the first winter ascent of the iconic Laila Peak in the Karakoram. However, they didn't stand on the mountain's summit, judging the snow conditions to be too dangerous for that.

Following an unsuccessful attempt a week earlier, they made the ascent of the mountain's west face on 18 February in a single push from their top camp at 5600m - a day they have described as "wild, extreme, hard, and endless, under very adverse weather conditions." They had to contend with a temperature of -35°C and winds of up to 60km/h.

The last two pitches involved chest-deep snow. They reached a point at which their GPS set indicated an altitude of 6100m. Txikon said afterwards:

"At most, we would be able to get about ten metres from where the summit, strictly speaking, is, but there was so much powder snow that it was impossible to continue and if we had, it would no doubt have given way and we would have fallen into space on the other side."

First Ascent of Koh-e-Gulistan

Karakorum Expeditions 2013 team reached the unnamed and unclimbed peak in the shimshal ,shimshal pass Dast Yaz Glacier ,the team set up high camp and from there they went for the summit push, After 8 hours of climbing from the high camp, which is situated below on the Shuijerab glacier at 5200 m, Harry Kirschenhofer, Birgit Walk and Michael successfully made the first ascent of a previously unclimbed peak hidden away in the remote north west region of the Karakorum. the team named the peak "Koh-e-Gulistan", and registered the altitude to be 6222 m. The team consist of two Germans, one Austrian, and one Danish. guided by Arshad Karim.

Superb teamwork and a beautiful summit

Nepal Himalaya

Gandharva Chuli - southwest face / west ridge - 2013

Gandharva Chuli, a previously unclimbed peak near Annapurna in the Nepal Himalaya, has been climbed by Romanians Cosmin Andron and Cristina Pogacean. They avoided standing on the summit out of respect for local beliefs.

First ascent of southwest face / west ridge. Route completed without continuing to the summit. Nepal. Climbed on 6 May 2013 by Cosmin Andron, Cristina Pogacean

Other Team Members: Purna Tamang, Hasta Magar, Sohit Ghale, Sukram Tamang, Dawa Tamang, Ram Shresta, Wanchu Sherpa, Lok Bahadur Gurung

Romanian climbers Cosmin Andron and Cristina Pogacean have made the first ascent of Gandharva Chuli in Nepal's Annapurna Himal. They stopped just short

of the summit out of respect for the religious significance of the peak. Gandharva Chuli stands on the east rim of the Annapurna Sanctuary, between Annapurna III and Macchapuchhare.

The Romanian route takes mixed ground up the southwest face to the southwest spur and then the west ridge. Macchapuchhare is forbidden to climbers because of its religious significance, but Gandharva Chuli is open to climbing expeditions that include Nepali members. However, the Romanians discovered that the peak is strongly associated with Macchapuchhare and that local people were uncomfortable about the ascent.

From a base camp beside the Modi Khola, Andron and Pogacean established an advance base at 4448 m with the help of Nepali members of the team. They then climbed the route with two bivouacs. A storm developed during the first afternoon and snow continued to fall during the night and the following morning, forcing the climbers to spend a day at their second bivouac site waiting for conditions to improve. Progress on the final section of the climb was slowed by wind and spindrift.

The climbers reached a point close to the summit on 6 May. They report that they were “one body-length” below the top, and that their GPS recorded 6302m. They then descended by their route of ascent, with one further bivouac.

The climbers felt unable to allocate a grade to their route, but Andron likened it to the “Swiss Route on Les Courtes combined with the Cosmiques Arete on Aiguille du Midi (have them stacked and expanded a bit).” There were no “official” attempts on Gandharva Chuli prior to the Romanian ascent.

Talung 2013 Expedition

Czech climbers Marek Holeček and Zdeněk Hrubý have established a new route on the north face of Talung Peak, near Kanchenjunga on the Nepal-Sikkim border.



Talung Peak

Talung Peak (7349 m)

First ascent of Thumba Party

2500m, M6+, WI6

Climbed on 19 May 2013 by Marek Holeček, Zdeněk Hrubý

Climbing alpine-style, Marek Holeček and Zdeněk Hrubý established a new route on the north face of Talung Peak, on the Nepal-Sikkim border in the Kanchenjunga Himal. Their climb was the fourth overall ascent of the mountain.

Talung Peak is remotely situated and it took the climbers nearly 16 days to reach their Base Camp at 5100m in the Yalung Valley.

The pair had hoped to attempt the north-northwest pillar of Talung, which Holecek and Tomas Rinn had attempted in 2004. Snowless conditions on the lower third of the pillar made the route impracticable, so they turned instead to a line further to the left, on the north face of the mountain.

They reached the summit after 4 bivouacs. The route involved difficulties of M6+ and WI6, with the crux section being the upper headwall.

Poor visibility hampered their descent down the west face, but they reached their Bas Camp after a further bivouac.

They named the route Thumba Party after a local 'beer' (thumba, tumba or tungba).

The Eight-Thousanders

By Adam Voiland. Design by Robert Simmon

Eight thousand is a perfectly arbitrary number. Yet, no other number looms larger for mountain climbers.

Fourteen mountain peaks stand taller than 8,000 meters (26,247 feet). There could have been many more of these "eight-thousanders" if the French commission that established the length of the meter (in 1793) had made it just a bit shorter; there would be hardly any if they had made the meter longer. The decision to make a meter equivalent to one ten-millionth of the distance between the equator and the North Pole left the world with fourteen 8K peaks. All of them are found in either the Karakoram or Himalayan mountain ranges of central Asia.

Fourteen is a number that pushes climbers to the point of obsession. It's big enough that only the most ambitious consider climbing all of them, but small enough that doing so over a lifetime still seems possible. Even in the United States, a country where most people shun metric measurements, climbers dream of ascending the eight-thousanders. The "twenty-six-thousand, two-hundred-and-forty-seven-footers" hardly has the same ring.

Now NASA has photographed all 14 X 8000er from space! They look magnificent and challenging. See it all by viewing the following link.

Here's the link:

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/8000MeterPeaks/?src=eo-features>

NEWS AND EVENTS

Himalayan Disaster – Nature’s Fury or Man-made Calamity?

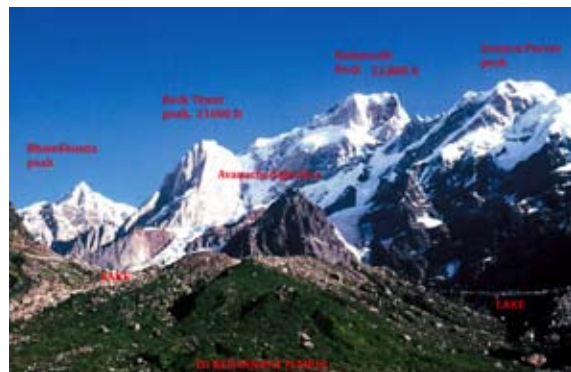
A look at Himalayan floods in recent memory

On night of 15-16 June 2013, scientists at Wadia Institute’s weather stations recorded 315 mm of rain in Kedarnath valley, which is extremely rare for this part of the year. The rain soon brought down huge avalanches from the glacier slopes of Kedarnath peak and the nearby ‘Rock Tower’ peak. These peaks form the backdrop of the Kedarnath temple on a long ridge, behind which lies the Gangotri glacier. The huge avalanches crashed down into the Chorabari lake at its foot forcing the lake to burst at its banks. This wide lake had never had much water and was thus not capable of storing vast amounts of water and debris. Water rushed down from the lake with great fury, towards the Kedarnath temple bringing with it huge stones and debris. In its normal course, the Manadakini river flows on both sides of the temple plateau. But this time, the flow was so furious that it breached the plateau on which the temple is built and rushed towards the temple complex. A huge stone rolled towards the temple, smashing the memorial built for Adi Shankracharyya behind the temple and came to a stop. This event possibly saved the temple from destruction as stones and flood following this passed around it, burying the shops in bazaar and burying many pilgrims there.

The devastation caused in the lower areas was staggering, making the Uttarakhand catastrophe ‘one of the most extreme events of the century’. In the lower valleys more than 70,000 pilgrims were trapped and many died. Unplanned roads, makeshift constructions on river banks and an overwhelming number of pilgrims were victims of the disaster. Nature’s fury certainly started it but later it turned into a man-made disaster. It will take years before we are able to enjoy the Himalayan mountains in the Kedarnath area.



Kedar Valley before the flood.



Kedarnath group from temple copy.

With traditional wisdom, villagers had built homes far above reach of the river. Their houses were safe from rains and flood. Those villagers who had not followed the traditional wisdom and built homes near the river and road for commercial reasons were wiped out. Although cut off as a result of destruction of roads and lack of supplies, these traditional habitations have been relatively safe.

This devastation was caused by just two glaciers and one lake. The Indian Himalayan region is home to over 7,000 glaciers, covering an area of 8,500 km. They play a crucial role in shaping and influencing the environmental conditions in India. Siachen, Gangotri, Zemu, Milam, Bhagirath Kharak and Satopanth are some of the important glaciers located in the Indian Himalayan region. Approximately 968 glaciers drain into the Ganga basin in Uttarakhand and over 4,660 glaciers feed the Indus, Shyok, Jhelum and Chenab river systems. The Ravi, Beas, Chenab and Sutlej river systems are fed by 1,375 glaciers and 611 glaciers drain into the Teesta and Brahmaputra basins and contribute between 50 – 70 per cent of the annual discharge. If the higher Himalayan region is not treated with due respect any of these glaciers can cause havoc anytime.

Himalayan glaciers and natural dams have caused havoc in the past. It may be interesting to recall just a few of these events.

Gona Tal

Gona tal was a largish lake created by natural landslide in the early part of the last century. It was serene lake with clear green water. Situated in the Birehi valley, about 24 km from Pipalkoti, it is on the banks of the Alaknanda and a popular halting place for pilgrims to Badrinath.

Two of us as young students trekked to this lake in 1966. This is what I wrote in my diary:

“5th June 1966: We left at 7 a.m. for Gona tal (13 km; 1710 m) where we intended to spend a few days. The path we followed went through thick forest and kept going downwards. After covering nearly 12 km we were in the hot valley near the Gona village from where the lake was three km ahead. It had been a horrid, hot, sweltering journey, at the end of which we found a beautifully located Forest Rest House facing the green, clear water of Gona tal. Two days passed quickly; mostly boating and swimming in the lake.”

“Three days of paradise were not enough but we had to leave mainly because our food stock was over and we had to eat the local food which we did not relish. On the 8th, we left Gona tal for Birehi, 16 km away. We could see the forests burning in the distance in the darkness of the night. After our 170 km trek over 16 days, we were psychologically drained. There was no question of walking even a kilometre more, and Pipalkoti was 8 km away. It sounded like eternity. Providence was on our side, for the Engineer whom we had met at Gona tal was going to Pipalkoti in his jeep and he was

kind enough to give us a lift. We spent a day at Pipalkoti, on the banks of Alaknanda.”

Five years later we heard tragic news. In 1971, at the peak of summer the natural dam which had created the Gona tal, suddenly burst, causing floods and havoc. Fortunately only half the retaining wall had broken, or else tragedy would have been far greater. Water rushed down the valley where we had walked and in a flash it reached Alaknanda, luckily below Pipalkoti. The impact was the same - roads were wiped out, many pilgrims who were on the road were killed and their bodies carried down to Rishikesh. But then there were not the hordes of tourist and pilgrims that were there in 2013. Thus the devastation in terms of human deaths was far less. After about a decade the engineers allowed controlled bursting of the remaining wall and the lake’s water was allowed to drain out without causing more fury.

Now only an empty bowl exists at the ‘paradise’ where we had enjoyed three wonderful days!

Sikkim

In 1976, Zerkis Boga and I were camping at the foot of Kangchenjunga. It was at the head of the Zemu glacier. This was the spot where many explorers had camped in the 1930s. Douglas Freshfield (see his book *Round Kanchenjunga*), Paul Bauer and his German team, G.O. Dyhrenfurth, John Hunt, H.W. Tilman amongst others. Everything was the same, except that the ‘Green Lake’ they all had camped at had disappeared and we were staying next to an empty crater.



Zemu river after the floods.



Remains of Chholamo lake on the Plateau on Sikkim. Kangchenjau peak see. P.M. Das was killed on this peak.

Sikkim, amongst other natural beauties is a land of glaciers. The main glaciers of Sikkim are Zemu glacier, Rathong glacier and Lhonak glacier. These glaciers surrounded by potentially dangerous glacial lakes that can burst and cause floods any time; scientists say that Sikkim is a ticking time bomb. The famous Green Lake in west Sikkim was a moraine dammed lake that had formed due to the retreat of long Zemu and its subsidiary glaciers. Another glacial lake is in formation behind the terminal moraines due to blockage of the melt.

These glacial lakes are formed by melting glaciers and a sudden discharge of large volumes of water and debris from them. This phenomenon is termed 'glacial lake outburst flood' or 'GLOF'.

In North Sikkim the area of one of the lakes in the Gurudongmar complex has increased nearly four times between 1965 and 1989. The Khanchung Chho, origin of the river Teesta is another moraine dammed lake which has grown noticeably over past few years. The Chho Lhamo, a glacial lake situated on 'The Plateau', near the border of Sikkim and Tibet, had grown significantly in size. Dr. Alexander Kellas, T. H. Braham and John Claude-White have written about the Chholamo as one of the most beautiful place on earth. Now only a small portion remains, as we photographed it in 2012.

'Teesta floods' are a regular phenomenon in the area. The Green lake and glacial lakes of the Zemu glacier breach natural dams and cause misery downstream. The devastation of lower Zemu glacier is to be seen to be believed, the stone-bed going on for several kilometres. The glaciers in the northern areas contribute to the floods with the level of water increasing to wipe out roads and habitations. The effects have been felt until the Bengal plains and Bangladesh. A severe earthquake hit the region in September 2011. But the epicentre near Talung gumpa was about 10 km below the surface. Hence it caused destruction of ridges faraway but the Talung gumpa, near the epicentre was not totally destroyed! Thus a major catastrophe was avoided.

Leh Floods

Leh and Ladakh situated at around 3500 m usually receives very little rainfall (around 100 mm/yr). Described as a 'high altitude cold desert', the area has sparse rainfall and a heavy downpour is a rare occurrence. The average rainfall in Leh for the month of August is 15.4 mm, with highest rainfall ever recorded during a single 24 hour period being 51.3 mm, recorded on 22 August 1933.

But then the unbelievable happened on the night of 6 August 2010. In space of 30 minutes Leh received 75 mm of rain due to a cloud burst. This implies that it received around a year's worth of rainfall in half an hour! Moreover the intensity was concentrated within a six km band. Suddenly debris were falling and Leh, not used to such rain was in disarray. Homes were destroyed, hospitals, schools and many buildings were damaged. The death toll was about 250. Much of the destruction was caused by debris flowing from the rocky sidewalls of the valleys, not by the flooding itself.

The village of Choglamsar at the outskirts of the city was particularly badly hit. This settlement had sprung up in the last few decades, in the direct line of walls of mud. Thus the traditional wisdom of the Ladakhi village building was violated and they paid a heavy price for it. The traditional villages, on the plateau, did not suffer much damage. Though the cloud burst was a natural calamity, but again by not respecting Nature's laws, men had paid a price.

Chong Kumdan Glacier Dam



Chong Kumdan gal in 199- turning west. Water-level marks still seen on the opposite wall. copy.

One of the earliest bursting of the glacier dams recorded were in the East Karakoram. There are several huge glaciers in this area that records extreme temperatures.

Over a century ago and repeatedly later, a large dam was created at the junction where the Chong Kumdan glacier meets the Chip Chap river. The word itself in Yarkandi language, means 'big dam' (Chong - big, Kumdan - dam)

The Chong Kumdan glacier had advanced rapidly over the years, pressing against the opposite eastern walls. The glacier takes a sharp turn here; the movement of mass was so forceful that the pressure on the walls was tremendous. This blocked the flow of the Chip Chap river. However, a glacier is liable to retreat and weakened by the retreat, water broke the dams and bursts occurred.

Such dam-bursts have occurred in 1780, 1826, 1835 and 1839. It had been a regular feature for many years then on. The dam-waters rose for about 125 m at the peak and the water marks can still be seen. The dam was studied by Ney Elias and Godwin-Austen in 1877.

All the dammed water rushed out and death and destruction was caused right up to Attock Fort, about 1200 km downstream. A battalion of Sikh soldiers stationed there suffered many casualties. Hence, the river acquired the name Shyok—'the river of death'.

Kenneth Mason, the first editor of the *Himalayan Journal*, took keen interest in this dam. He collected large amount of material, and recorded observations and diagrams. In 1926, floods released by the Chong Kumdan dam destroyed Abudan village and the surrounding land which were at a distance of 400 km from the outburst.



Kichik Kumdan Dam.

Another major dam-burst occurred in 1929. Mr. T. Durgi of the Public Works Department was then posted at the dam-site to warn against a future burst. In 1932 he sent two runners to Khalsar over the Saser Pass to warn people about the oncoming floods. Flood waters had already reached Khalsar, but by this phenomenal fast trek (130 km in 28 hours) they did manage to pass on a warning. Kenneth Mason calculated the frequency of advance and retreat of Kichik ('small dam') and Chong Kumdan glaciers. He predicted:

As I shall not be here to be proved wrong, I will be precise. The Chong Kumdan will advance rapidly during the winter of 1968-69; the Shyok valley be blocked; a lake will form above it, some 10 miles long; and there will be floods caused by the collapse of the dam in autumns (July to September) of 1971, 1974 and 1977, the first one occurring probably in the autumn 2½ years after the glacier has advanced.

However as per all the available records the last major burst which caused destruction occurred on 16 August 1929. We camped at this lake in 1991, exactly 62 years to the date. The line created by height of lake was seen clearly on the retaining wall. The huge vacant area was sometimes filled with ice-penitents. Little lower the Kichik Kumdan dam ('smaller dam') was still active but not enough to cause damage. We could compare our photos with those published in the *Himalayan Journal* in 1930.

Since then minor bursts have taken place in 1932-33 and 1937-39. The dam waters escaped slowly in these cases and no major damage was caused. But no bursts of dams have occurred after that. The Karakoram glaciers in this region are in a state of retreat. Indian forces are stationed in the area since long and their records of the Shyok water-level do not speak of any floods.

Is it likely Mason may still prove correct about the future? Curiously he gave the current year, 2013, for the last advance of the glacier and its dam. But perhaps the 'global warming' phenomenon has nullified his prediction.

As these examples indicate, the Himalayan and Karakoram glaciers are prone to floods. This has probably been accentuated by the phenomena of global warming causing cloud bursts.

But what about roads that are built on a wrong axis, dams that change the course of rivers, uncontrolled and unplanned building of hotels and habitation on river banks, loads of pilgrims and tourists on fragile valleys? This is far more than Nature can bear - therefore disasters like the recent one in Uttarakhand (2013) are bound to happen. It is best to understand the Himalaya and its glaciers and respect them.

(Harish Kapadia)

(All photos by the author)

Development or Damgate?



With 153 MoUs inked, Arunachal is all set to have the highest concentration of hydel projects in the world. Is that development or Damgate?

As the recent Uttarakhand disaster has shown, the relationship between development and the ecology cannot be regarded as a zero sum

game. Not in this country, at least, which will soon be the most populous, and one of the countries likely to be the worst affected by climate change.

Yet, state after state is brushing environment concerns aside - with the central environment ministry playing along. And one state where some of the most irresponsible tinkering with natural systems has taken place is Arunachal Pradesh.

Between 2006 and now, this state in north-eastern India has signed an incredible 153 MoUs for hydel power projects on eight river basins. This translates into one of the highest concentration of hydel projects anywhere in the world.

As expected, the environmental costs are high. Not only is this part of the Himalayas prone to large earthquakes, these dams will also change rivers' behaviour.

Arunachal is building what are called run of the river (RoR) projects - dams used only for power generation. Unlike thermal power plants which take a long time to warm up and cool down and are therefore used only for meeting base demand, hydel projects can generate power at the flick of a switch. All you have to do is get the water to spin the turbines.

In a RoR project, the dam's wall stops the river from flowing as before. The reservoir fills up. In the evening, water is released to meet peak demand. Once the reservoir is empty, power generation stops, the floodgates are closed, and the reservoir slowly fills up again.

What does this mean for a river? Take the Lohit, which flows out of Arunachal and into the Brahmaputra. According to the environmental impact assessment (EIA) report for one of the dams coming up on the river - the Lower Demwe Hydro Electric Project - the Lohit's flow is around 463 cubic metres per second (cumecs) in winter, 832 cumecs in summer and 2, 050 cumecs in the rains. (A 3 cumecs flow is akin to a Tata Nano passing you every second.)

This will change once the dam comes up. For up to 20 hours a day, says the EIA report, the dam will trap the river, releasing just 35 cumecs (12 Nanos a second). The remaining will be released to spin the turbines only when demand for electricity rises in the evening. At that time, the river's flow will expand to 1, 729 cumecs (576 Nanos a second). As the reservoir empties out, the river will again shrink to 35 cumecs.

This is palpably new. River flows ebb and rise over months. "But now, what was an annual variation will be a daily variation, " says MD Madhusudan, a biologist with Mysore-based Nature Conservation Foundation.

And this is from just one dam. Arunachal is building 153. To imagine their combined impact, see the EIA report for the Jaypee Group's Lower Siang Project. If waters from the three terminal dams on the Lohit, Subansiri and the Siang rivers reach the floodplains at the same time, it says, the Brahmaputra's height will fluctuate daily by 2-3 metres, as far as 65 km downstream. This unpredictability of flow will affect fishing communities and those farming in the Brahmaputra's floodplains.

For its part, Arunachal defends these dams saying they will accelerate development in the state. Which makes sense till you realise that, for all its proclaimed urgency to ensure development, the Arunachal government has mainly signed MoUs with companies with little or no experience in hydel. In fact, as a recent CAG report noted, around 2005, the state took hydel projects away from the National Hydro-Electric Power Corporation (NHPC) and discretionarily gave them to private companies - some of which were new to hydel power. Till now, work has not begun on any of these projects.

Other MoUs are with companies that lack the finances. The outcome? A secondary market for trading in the licenses has come up. For instance, the company with the largest number of MoUs in Arunachal is politician Amar Singh's Energy Development Company. At the time of signing these MoUs, it had less than 20 MW of hydel power generating capacity. It has, however, signed MoUs over 550 MW with Arunachal.

Singh is now looking for people willing to invest in his Arunachal projects. "If we find a major player or a consortium, we are willing to lower our stake in the projects to 26 per cent, even lower, " says Amar Singh of EDC.

Those are the questions. If the state was so eager for rapid development, why would it sign MoUs with untested companies? Wouldn't it have been better to reach out to more established companies and to build fewer dams after better studies? For some reason, that was not done. Nor is it clear why the state decided against building multi-purpose dams - which can also do flood control which is useful in an area that gets cloudbursts - and began building only RoR dams. "While multi-purpose dams with large reservoirs can act as flood cushions, sequestering water and stopping it from reaching the floodplains all of a sudden, RoR projects with their small reservoirs cannot perform that role, " points out Dulal Goswami, former member of the expert appraisal committee set up by the environment ministry to evaluate hydel projects.

There are other questions. These dams are coming up close to each other. On the Lohit, the distance between six dams is 1 km, 9.5 km, 1.8 km, 3.8 km and 1.8 km, respectively. There are no studies on what such clustering portends for a river or how they will behave during a quake.

Was the logic here rapid development or the discretionary allocation of natural resources - through MoUs - in return for rent?

(M Rajshekhar)

The Everest story is incomplete without the Sherpas

Conflicting reports over the assault by Sherpas on three prominent European mountaineers, during their recent ascent to Mount Everest, leave many questions unanswered.

To the imagination of adventurers and armchair adventurers, they are the people of the world's highest peak. Recently, an incident occurred at altitude, which in the way it was told and subsequently dissected by climbing enthusiasts has been one-sided. Internet chatter raised questions like — has the Everest economy changed the Sherpa character of yore? How does new Nepal, having passed through Maoist movements and nursing now a fragile democracy, view Everest's brew of rich clientele and foreign climbing companies?

The incident that provoked these questions occurred in April. Ueli Steck, a Swiss rock climber and mountaineer rated to be among the finest climbers in the world, Italian alpinist Simone Moro and British photographer and climber, Jon Griffith, were on their way from Camp 2 to Camp 3 on Everest. They had to pass a group of Sherpas setting up fixed lines for the season's clients brought by commercial mountaineering companies. Camp 2 is at roughly 23,000 ft. Skilled mountaineers, Steck, Moro and Griffith were climbing on their own. A meeting held earlier on the mountain had reportedly agreed that neither would the Sherpas be disturbed during their work nor would anyone climb higher than them. It is unclear if the trio knew of this. Climbing without using any ropes and then traversing sideways to reach the camp's location, Griffith crossed the line the Sherpas were fixing. The three claim that no ice was dislodged, nothing was disturbed. As Steck approached to cross, the lead Sherpa climber rappelled down yelling angrily and landing nearly on top of him. The trio were accused of dislodging ice that injured a Sherpa below (they claim the Sherpa later said this wasn't so). Steck who had put out his hand to shield himself from the lead climber was asked why he had touched him. Compounding matters, Moro uttered an insulting expletive. It was a mess.

In a reconciliatory gesture the Europeans claim they did some of the Sherpas' work, fixing a length of rope although they were climbing separately, on their own. The mood remained ugly worrying the climbers enough to descend from Camp 3 to Camp 2, to settle the issue. On reaching Camp 2, friends cautioned that the situation

was dangerous. A large number of angry Sherpas gathered (Steck claims, 100); their faces covered to avoid identification. Steck was punched. Rocks were hurled. Moro was asked to apologise and when he did so, he was physically assaulted.

The trio were told to quit Camp 2 and not return. Navigating in the light of their headlamps and deliberately avoiding the secure passage down the Khumbu Icefall so that they won't be pursued, they fled un-rope along heavily crevassed sections to the mountain's Base Camp.

Griffith spoke to *The Guardian*. Steck was interviewed by *Outside* magazine while *National Geographic* interviewed Moro. Minor discrepancies aside, overall what emerges is the story above. They said things could have been worse but for the intervention of some other climbers and a senior Sherpa. In the preface to its interview with Steck, *Outside* says that an army Major stood witness to the truce signed later by both the sides. Accounts giving the Sherpas' perspective (as comprehensively as the publicised European perspective) don't seem to be there on the Internet. Reports by people running commercial climbing companies have been described as indirectly sourced and guarding commercial interests.

On some websites, readers blamed the Europeans for their arrogance. Discussions also faulted Everest's commercialisation. Access fee is high. It makes anyone who is climbing, with or without guides, summit-focussed. Why else did you pay all the money for? The Sherpas fix lines to maximise chances for clients, many of who aren't skilled climbers. The role of Sherpa guides and fixed ropes become central. Purists sneer at this. Who should have right of say, mountaineering or client-mountaineering? This resonated in the climbing community's reaction. For some, Steck, Moro and Griffith climbing up was the original sin as there was an agreement on the mountain that the Sherpas won't be disturbed while setting up fixed ropes. Others felt agreements like the one above can't apply to Steck and company who are expert mountaineers. If the weather was good and they felt good, why shouldn't they move from Camp 2 to Camp 3?

Nepali participants in these Internet exchanges appeared few. One person – ostensibly from Nepal – pointed out that not only have many Sherpas lost their lives serving expeditions on Everest (the relief their families get cannot be compared to foreigners insured to the teeth) but all Sherpas are not on Everest and only some of those guiding on Everest are Sherpa. When publicised, stories like this affect Sherpas as a whole.

Before the Himalaya reduced to being climbing destination, it was the theatre of exploration. The legend of the Sherpa owes much to the expedition style mountaineering of the age of exploration. Over time, expedition style morphed to being preferred commercial model, particularly in South Asia, because it provided employment. On the other hand, small alpine style expeditions (self sustained expeditions with climbers doing all the work) put less stress on the environment and keep the climbing ethic purer.

With the days of exploration over, competitive climbing set in. If client-mountaineers pay money to be hauled up high mountains, competitive climbers push the limit to sustain sponsorships. Either way, it is money deciding mountaineering. In tune with

how much competitive climbing has become its own addict living in technical details, there is the argument that the Sherpas are not technically skilled climbers. This observation surfaced in Internet chatter on the April incident.

The Sherpas' records on Everest, they contest, are merely records on familiar terrain. Such observations even if true, are both a shift from what the Sherpa once meant for Himalayan expeditions and a measure of how, many modern climbers relate to the world around them. They see the world through climbing's prism; like a series of technical moves and not mountain as a whole. Was this trend also to blame for the April incident which is basically a tussle with context?

(Shyam Menon)

Everest Traffic Jam

Following new reports of overcrowding on Everest, mountaineer Stephen Venables explains why the peak has lost its allure.

“Adventure is all about risk, uncertainty and self-determination – not buying a predictable, packaged commodity”

Reaching the summit of Everest – or, rather, returning alive from it – has to be one of the most exhilarating experiences life can offer. But what really matters is how you reach the summit.

It used to be a prize earned through a long apprenticeship. Chris Bonington's 1975 expedition brought the elite of British mountaineering to the previously unclimbed southwest face. When I climbed the mountain in 1988 it was my tenth Himalayan expedition. We too pioneered a new route, with just four climbers, no high-altitude porters, and no supplementary oxygen. The journey was everything; the outcome never a forgone conclusion.

Now, Everest has become the ultimate tick on the global adventure-tourism circuit. But, as the famous Tyrolean climber Reinhold Messner observed recently, the very term “adventure tourism” is often an oxymoron. Adventure is all about risk, uncertainty and self-determination – not buying a predictable, packaged commodity: you pay me £40,000 and I'll make your dream come true.

Last year more than 500 people reached the summit, and this year more than 700 are expected. Climbers report scenes of chaos as around 100 people tried to reach the summit in the space of a few hours, while lengthy queues formed below trickier sections.

Mark Jenkins, covering the phenomenon for *National Geographic*, reported “garbage leaking out of the glaciers and pyramids of human excrement befouling the high camps”. But what appalled him most, as an experienced mountaineer, was the total abdication of personal responsibility, as he was forced to take his place on the human conveyor belt, clipped to a handrail behind scores of less competent people.

To be fair to the guides, the best of them run a slick operation and try strenuously to clear litter from the mountain. Faced with the huge numbers of people, they probably have no option but to fix ropes virtually all the way from base camp to the summit. In terms of deaths per number of people on the mountain, Everest is statistically a much safer place than it used to be. It just seems sad to me that the western cwm – that extraordinary glacial basin that the Swiss in 1952 called “the Valley of Silence” – has become such a crowded place.

It would be easy to reduce the numbers. Until the late 1980s the Nepalese government allowed only one expedition at a time on any route on the south side. The Chinese operated a similar system in Tibet. Reinstating those rules and Everest would be peaceful again. Even better would be to ban the use of supplementary oxygen. H W Tilman, the great explorer, travel writer and leader of the 1938 Everest expedition, said that in his view “there is a cogent reason for not climbing it at all rather than climb it with the help of oxygen”. Why devalue the summit by effectively lowering its altitude from 8,850 metres to nearer 6,500 metres, to suit human capabilities? Remove what the Sherpas used to call “English air” and there wouldn’t be too many people on the summit.

Of course none of this is likely to happen. The American and European guides who struggle to make a decent living on their routine home mountains earn much better money from their annual Everest season. Their Sherpa colleagues make the kind of sums most Nepalese can only dream about. And, with climbing permits averaging about \$10,000 a head, the Kathmandu government is raking in the cash. Everest is a lucrative seller’s market, and who wants to give that up?

So I suspect that this fat milch cow of a mountain, along with the other so-called “Seven Summits”, will remain an anachronism, while the real adventurers seek their challenges, and the solace of wild places, elsewhere.

(Stephen Venables)

Murder of Mountaineers in Pakistan

Nine foreign tourists and their local guide were murdered when Taliban gunmen dressed as policemen forced their way into a climbing camp during the night in a remote northern region of Pakistan.



Officials said five Ukrainians, three Chinese and one Russian were killed in the attack.. A dual American-Chinese citizen was among the dead. Another Chinese tourist survived the raid at the base camp of Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain in the world at 26,660 ft, in an area renowned for its breathtaking Himalayan scenery and world-class

trekking. Both the Pakistan Taliban, an umbrella militant group, and a sectarian Sunni group linked to the Taliban both claimed responsibility. Ehsanullah Ehsan, a spokesman for the Pakistan Taliban, said the movement had set up a cell to target foreigners.

He said the operation was carried out in revenge for the death of Wali-ur-Rehman, the group's second in command who was killed by a US drone strike last month.

"This operation was also in reaction to the continuing drone attacks by the US," he added. "The foreign tourists were targeted so that we could get our protests heard at the international level."

Police officers in Gilgit-Baltistan said the gunmen wore uniforms of the Frontier Constabulary, the local security force. They woke the tourists shortly after midnight and beat local staff before opening fire on the foreigners.

The attackers checked the identities of Pakistanis with the group and killed one, possibly because he was a member of the minority Shia community.

The attack will jeopardise future foreign expeditions to a country known for the presence of al-Qaeda, the Taliban and several home grown terrorist organisations.

Gilgit-Baltistan borders China and Kashmir and is considered one of the safer areas of Pakistan.

Last year, the Pakistan military airlifted 120 foreign tourists from the area after they became stranded amid a wave of violence.

(Rob Crilly)

New mountain books published in last few months

Title	Author	Area	Subject
Murder in the Hindu Kush	Hannigan, Tim	Great Game	George Hayward
Perlude to Everest	Mitchell, Ian and Rodway, George	Sikkim	Dr Kellas
The Challenge of K2	Sale, Richard	K2	Karakoram
Writing on the Wall	Hazarika, Sanjoy	Northeast	
Flight by Elephant	Martin, Andrew	Chaukan Pass	
Climbing Ramabang	Galligan, Gerry	Spiti	Travel
Tibet A History	Schaik, Sam Van	Tibet	
Rataban Betrayal	Alter, Stephen	Fiction	
In Farthest Burma	Kingdon-Ward, Frank	Burma	
Tibet Wild	Schaller, George B.	Tibet	Environment
K2 Man and his Molluscs (Godwin-Austen)	Moorehead, Catherine	Biography	
Shipton & Tilman	Perrin, Jim	Biography	
My Father, Frank	Smythe, Tony	Biography	
Land of Flying Lamas (The)	Punj, Gaurav	Trekking guide	

Mountain Writers' Fest

6th Mussoorie Writers' Mountain Festival

Nov. 7-10, 2013, Mussoorie Writers celebrated its sixth Mountain Festival, bringing together more than twenty-five authors, mountaineers, artists, filmmakers, conservationists and musicians. The festival included a number of exciting events, including exhibitions, concerts and talks by distinguished writers and climbers, as well as two film premieres and even an app release. Woodstock School's Parker Hall was the primary venue and Winterline Foundation was the chief sponsor.

Festivities began on the evening of, Nov. 7, when the District Magistrate, Dehradun, Dr. B.V.R.C. Purushottam, inaugurated the festival and the exhibition of Thangka Paintings by master artist, Ayush Yonjan, from Nepal. This was followed by a concert of Vintage Rock 'n Roll from the Highlands of Shillong, featuring veteran crooners Headingson Ryntathiang, Phom Lyttan and Robin Dkhar, backed up by Felix Langstieh and his band. Their music gave new meaning to Mountain Culture, proving that Elvis is still alive in the Himalaya and that the beautiful mountains of Meghalaya continue to echo with lyrical and resonant voices.

The first session of the festival focused on Outdoor and Experiential Education, with a renowned panel of experts. John Gans, CEO of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Lander, Wyoming opened the session with a talk on "Our Classroom is the Wilderness," describing the inspirational curriculum of nature that NOLS students experience. Mark Vermeal, V.P. for Safety at Outward Bound, USA, spoke next about "Integrating Experiential Education into the Classroom." He also focused on questions of risk assessment, comparing the dangers and rewards of white-water kayaking or mountaineering to sitting on a couch. Simon Beames, professor of experiential education at Edinburgh University, provided an insightful critique of Outdoor Learning and Leadership Training, raising pertinent questions about the motivations and methods of adventure courses. Woodstock School's Hanifl Centre for Outdoor Education was a key partner in the festival and this session underscored its commitment to encouraging students to explore the Himalaya.

Mountaineering was the theme of the second session, with author, climber and filmmaker, Freddie Wilkinson presenting his experiences in Alaska's Moose's Tooth Range, one of the most remote and spectacular regions of North America. Aerial footage of his traverse along precipitous snow ridges left the audience breathless. Maria Coffey, an author who has explored the tragic side of extreme sports, narrated a moving account of her own experience of losing a partner on Everest. Her story brings to light the wrenching ordeals of those who are left behind when climbers are killed. Dawa Steven Sherpa concluded the session with an illustrated talk about his expeditions in Nepal and how he combines mountaineering with conservation, hauling 14,000 kg of garbage down from Everest. He spoke about preserving the beauty of high places and encouraging a responsible approach to mountain adventure.

Following lunch, Neela Venkatraman introduced her new film, which premiered at the festival, *Hill, Vale and Many a Tale*, a visual chronicle of Mussoorie Writers. Narrated by Tom Alter, the film explores the importance of place in the lives and imaginations of writers like Bill Aitken, Ruskin Bond, Allan Sealy, Ganesh Saili, Hugh and Colleen Gantzer, Arvind Mehrotra and Stephen Alter. With this literary prelude, William Dalrymple took center stage in Parker Hall with a riveting talk on his recent book, *Return of a King*. Combining considerable research and wit, as well as a vision of history that evokes the present, Dalrymple narrated the catastrophic tale of Britain's defeat in 19th century Afghanistan and lessons to be gleaned today.

This year, the weather in Mussoorie was unseasonably cold and wet, which meant that the "Poetry and Prose Under the Lyre Tree" session had to be moved indoors. Omair Ahmad read from his new book, *The Kingdom at the Centre of the World: Journeys in Bhutan*, selecting a passage that emphasizes the historical importance of tea. Novelist, journalist and poet, Mamang Dai, read a selection of verses that capture the beauty and mystery of her home in Arunachal Pradesh, including a poignant and powerful poem, "The Voice of the Mountain." I. Allan Sealy, best known as a novelist, chose to share his poetry with the audience, reading from a work in progress, *Zelaldinus*, a sequence of poems that describe a conversation between the ghost of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, and a literary tourist named Irwin, as they wander the abandoned palace of Fatehpur Sikri.

The penultimate event on the first day of the festival was the India premiere of Rom Whitaker's new film, *Leopard -21st Century Cat*. Rom introduced the film, sections of which were shot in Uttarakhand, by explaining the ways in which leopards have adapted to changing environments and the encroachment of man. Dramatic sequences, shot with a night vision camera, reveal the conflict and co-existence between leopards and human beings in India. The film screening was followed by a repeat performance of the concert by Shillong's musicians, who had the audience dancing in the aisles.

Early risers on Saturday morning joined Dr. Sejal Worah for a nature walk to Flag Hill, where she presented her Jabberkhet Eco-Development Project, which seeks to preserve and interpret the rich diversity of plant and animal life on this nearby mountain.

Conservation and Natural History were the themes of the first session on the second day of the festival. E. Theopholis, "Theo," started things off with presentation on Himalayan wetlands and rivers, illustrating the vital force of water in the mountains, as well as its destructive potential. Using the example of recent floods in Uttarakhand, he explained how human development and progress in the Himalaya cannot ignore the changeable nature of rivers. Lepidopterist and author, Peter Smetacek, turned our attention to butterflies, which are the subject of his recently published memoir. Stunning photographs projected the variety of insect life in the mountains, as the well as the link between science and storytelling, which Smetacek combines with informed eloquence. His new app "Introducing Common Indian Butterflies," was released at the festival by Rom Whitaker. Janaki Lenin was the third speaker in this

session, talking about “Living With A Wild Man,” her husband Rom. With humour and insight, she related her journey from being a naïve urban dweller in Chennai to a seasoned denizen of the jungle, who shares her home with frogs, scorpions and the occasional leopard.

Himalayan Exploration was the theme of the next session, as Deborah Baker read passages from her work in progress, focussing on the legendary British mountaineers Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman but also their lesser known companions, Michael Spender and John Auden (both brothers of English poets) who shared a passion for mountains, as surveyors and geologists. During the past six festivals, Parker Hall has witnessed the presence of several distinguished mountaineers but this year one of the legends of Himalayan mountaineering stepped onto the stage. Krzysztof Wielicki is the fifth person to climb all fourteen peaks over 8,000 meters, but he stands apart from other climbers because he accomplished this feat often in winter and mostly alone. He is credited with the first winter ascents of Everest, Lhotse and Kangchenjunga. Speaking about “Polish Winter Exploration in the Himalaya,” Wielicki recounted the remarkable resilience and determination of Polish mountaineering, as well as the supreme challenge of excavating a frozen brick of cheese above 6,000 meters. Daniele Nardi, a young mountaineer from Italy, followed in Wielicki’s footsteps, approaching the Himalaya alpine style. He talked about his commitment to taking on extreme challenges in the mountains, rock walls and ice cliffs, with minimal support and equipment. His videos of ascending the vertical face of Bhagirathi III in Garhwal seemed to defy gravity and brought the audience face to face with the danger and exhilaration of mountaineering.

After lunch, the focus shifted to folklore and folk traditions in the mountains, with animator Tara Douglas, presenting her ongoing project to translate folk tales into animated films, working with local artists in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Her organization, the Adivasi Arts Trust, seeks to preserve traditional cultures, many of them in mountainous regions, and to make these traditions accessible to contemporary audiences. One of Uttarakhand’s most distinguished experts on folklore, Prof. D.R. Purohit, spoke about folk theatre in Garhwal and Kumaun, illustrating his talk with images of masks and costumes used in village performances. The final presentation in this session shifted attention to the easternmost corner of the Himalaya, where the Mekong River has its source. Jeph and Kaaren Mathias told the story of their expedition from the mountains to the sea, trekking, cycling and rafting through China, Laos and Cambodia. Their inspiring message was a celebration of the natural world and the teamwork that makes such journeys possible.

The concluding programme on Saturday was a screening of Jerzy Porebski’s film *Kukuczka* about the great Polish climber Jerzy Kukuczka who was one of the leading climbers during the 1970s and 80s before he perished in a fall on the Lhotse Face. The award-winning film contains dramatic archival footage as well as interviews with renowned mountaineers like Reinhold Messner and Kurt Deimberger.

Sunday morning began with the second Mussoorie Half Marathon. The starting line was in Library Bazaar, the turnaround point at Everest House and the finish at

Woodstock School. Many staff and students participated, as well as runners from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. Steve Luukkonen, head of Physical Education at Woodstock, achieved double success by both organizing and winning the race.

Mussoorie Writers' Mountain Festival ended with a grand finale on Silverton Ground, at the heart of Mussoorie. *Chakravyuh* is an episode from the Mahabharata, incorporating song and drama. This Folk Theatre Performance, written and directed by Prof. D.R. Purohit, included more than seventy artists from Uttarakhand. The event drew a large crowd of spectators and celebrated the traditions of Uttarakhand, its art, history, language, mythology and its people.

The Mountain Festival was made possible through the generous support of Winterline Foundation and Woodstock School, as well as our partners, the Hanifl Centre for Outdoor and Experiential Education, Rokeby Manor, Doma's Inn, The Italian Cultural Institute and The Polish Institute.

Expedition Information Centre

The Alpine club (London) has launched an "Expedition Information Centre" on its website. The EIC is an extensive service for all mountaineers providing a wealth of knowledge relevant to all essential aspects for planning a successful expedition.

You can see the EIC by following this link http://www.alpine-club.org.uk/ac_exped/ Browse through the pages, checkout what information we've already gathered, and have a think about what you might be able to contribute.

Obituary



RM (Martin) Scott (1941 -2013). (Harish Kapadia)

RM (Martin) Scott (1941 -2013)

Martin Scott was Honorary Local Secretary (London) of the Himalayan Club.

He was on the Committee of The Alpine Club, London, 2001, Hon Sec 2003-07, Vice President 2008/9.

He Died of cancer 31st May. Martin's funeral was on Friday 14 June 2013 at the Parish Church of St. John-at-Hampstead.

(Full Obituary in HJ Vol. 69)

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Himalayan Journal, Vol. 68



The Himalayan Journal, Vol. 68 was published recently. It contains several articles of interest. It was sent to members of the Club. Many letters and e mails of appreciation for the efforts of the editors: Rajesh Gadgil and Nandini Purandare, are received.

The Himalayan Club Kolkata Section Programmes

The Kolkata Section of the Himalayan Club Organized a presentation and panel discussion session “Environment at peril- view from the ground”, on 25th May at Rotary Sadan.

Meher Mehta, a veteran Himalayan Club member, set the stage with a philosophical perspective on environmental concerns, pointing out the appalling state of the environment posterity is going to inherit. Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay, Founder Secretary of Bidya Bhaban School and chief guest of the day, illustrated how melting glaciers, waste dumping and mushrooming tourism industry is destroying the Himalayan ecology. Amit Roy’s presentation was a poignant journey through the lives of global warming affected climate refugees and endangered flora and fauna of the Sunderbans. B.L .Chandak, Executive Director of RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, offered a ray of hope, showing how the RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group is taking initiatives to rebuild a green environment. A stimulating panel discussion on ‘Women and Environment’ followed, with Ms. Tina Roy, Dr. Archana Banerjee and Chinmoy Chakraborty exploring various perspectives of women’s role in environmental protection, from policy making and green business to traditional living in harmony with nature. The session ended on an emotional note on rendering of ‘Vandemataram’.

‘Poet on a Mountain’ Danielle Nardi

(in collaboration with the Italian Consulate General)

“Alpine climbing adds a poetic dimension to my life that I find impossible to put into words. I’m lucky to be able to live pursuing my passion; without its music, little else would make sense.” –Danielle Nardi



On 17th November, M. H. Mehta, set the ball rolling with a brief overview on the Club's history and the local Section's activities. Cesare Bieller introduced the climber to the audience and then the Nardi story unfolded. For this poet on the mountain, seeking the 'seed of madness that makes the tree of wisdom' whilst crafting a new and near vertical line on Bhagirathi III (and surviving a vicious avalanche as his

stunning video on this climb unfolded), mountaineering photography adds a new dimension to his passion. Daniele opened his heart as he recounted his climbing philosophy to the young climbers present at the programme. For him, no fixed ropes, minimum hardware and at times no tent is the hall mark of his climbing style- a distinct contrast to the traditional Sherpa supported climbing.



Top: Introduction of The Himalayan Club.
Above: Felicitation of Danielle Nardi.
Right: Danielle Nardi climbing.



The Himalayan Club Future Programmes

**Arun Samant Memorial Lectures will be on 12th January 2014 (Sunday)
full day at Mumbai**

Speakers:

Group Captain Sashindran,	Explorations and Climbs in Rongdo Valley
Dhruv Joshi	Climbing Kuchela Dhura
Partha Sarathi Moulik	First Crossing of the Chaukhamba Col
Ashutosh Mishra	Jadung Valley Exploration
Dr. Kamdar	Trek to Bara Bangahal
Harish Kapadia	Exploring Chhota Bangahal

**The Himalayan Club Annual Seminar will be held on 15th and 16th
February 2014. (Saturday-Sunday) at Mumbai**

Speakers

Marko Prezelj	Two lectures based on his vast climbing experiences in India and higher ranges.
David Brashears	About his work in the Himalaya
Garry Weare	Trekking in India
P.C. Sahoo	First ascent of the Plateau Peak in Eastern Karakoram.
Divyesh Muni	First ascent of the Chamshen peak in Eastern Karakoram
Harish Kapadia	Exploring passes to Burma- on the Eastern Frontier of India- Chaukan Pass and Pangsus Pass
Kekoo Naoroji Book Award, Jagdish Nanavati Excellence Award for Expeditions and Jagdish Nanavati Garud Medal will be presented.	

The Banff Film Festival will be held at Mumbai in Second week of March 2014

Tensing Norgay National Adventure Award

The 2012 Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award was given to Maj Ranveer Singh Jamval VSM for leading two successful expeditions to Mount Everest.

The Himalayan Club calls for Nominations for the following awards for the year 2013

- J.C. Nanavati Garud Medal
- J.C. Nanavati Award for Excellence in Expedition
- Kekoo Naoroji Book Award

For details of each Award and rules kindly see the club website : www.himalayanclub.org

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