



**THE HIMALAYAN CLUB**

*Climbing and Beyond...*



# **E-LETTER**

Volume 34 - July 2016

# E-LETTER

Volume 34, July 2016

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Cover Photo : View from Pesi-La [Photo] Christina Pozacian

## Climbs and Explorations

### Sikkim and Nepal Himalaya

#### First Ascent of Talung, 7439m, Nepal

This autumn the Ukrainian mountaineers Nikita Balabanov and Mikhail Fomin set their sights on what they have described as “one of the most aesthetic and logical unclimbed lines” in the Himalaya, the long and difficult NNW Spur of Talung in Nepal’s Himalaya.

Inspired by the 2012 British Talung Expedition by Gavin Pike, James Clapham and Dave Searle - and by successive attempts by Czech alpinists Marek Holecek and Zdenek Hruby and by the Italians Daniele Bernasconi, Mario Panzeri and Giampaolo Corona - the Ukrainians established BC at the end of September. Acclimatization was successfully carried out during the next fortnight, on Boktoh peak and, importantly, up to 7100m on Talung’s normal route which they planned to use during their descent.

A short period of bad weather coincided with 3 days of rest, after which they headed off to ABC below the NNW Spur. Knowing they would have to deal with “Chamonix mixed climbing but with heavy packs higher than 6000m” they took food for 7 days and gas for 9. The first pitch above the Bergschrund at 5600m proved to be one of the cruxes of the route, a thin ice pillar followed by some hard vertical mixed terrain (M6) with very run-out protection. Over the next three days difficulties eased off only slightly.



The 2350-meter north-northwest pillar of Mt. Talung in the Kangchenjunga region, Nepal. [Photo] Mikhail Fomin/ Nikita Balabanov collection

On day 3 they reached the spur proper and were faced with a second crux: tenuous A3 aid followed by difficult mixed and then loose rock, which all led to somewhat easier ground. Despite hard mixed climbing on thin ice they gained height rapidly, breaching the obvious second rock band on day 5. Motivated by this success, on day 6 they simul-climbed along the ridge to reach summit at 14:00 on 23 October.

The top was covered in fog but 10 minutes later the strong winds blew away the clouds, offering stunning views onto the East faces of Jannu and South faces of Kangchenjunga. After half an hour on the summit they started down the western slope, bivying at 6700m and

then descending safely to BC the next day, having been on the mountain for 7 days in total and just in time to rush to Kathmandu and catch their flight home.

Balabanov and Fomin's remarkable success on this important prize comes in the wake of their first ascent of on Langshisa Ri (6427m) NW Spur in 2014. Commenting after their ascent, they stated "It total for both of us that route showed at the same time how much things we still have to learn in Himalaya, but also it showed how much we already can do. Each of us have lost 10-15 kg of weight after this ascent but the experience and huge motivational charge we received at the end is really worth it."

For the excellent detailed trip report check out [www.mountain.ru](http://www.mountain.ru)

### Chamlang (7319m) - Montane Alpine Club Fund trip news

Jon Griffith and Andrew Houseman attempted Chamlang but did not succeed in climbing it due to poor route conditions. Their acclimatisation was an ascent of Ama Dablam. A short narration by Andrew Houseman:

*"Chamlang wasn't to be this year. Even the initial easy snow slopes were going to be difficult to access as Jon found out here on the first of only two pitches we climbed. Looking across from Ama Dablam we knew the route wasn't in the conditions we need, the whole Everest region was exceptional dry this spring. All we found was loose rotten rock and not a single bit of usable névé.*

*The climbing was going to be too slow and the thought of dangerous, loose rotten rock for pitch after pitch. If we got into the meat of the route, higher up wasn't exactly motivating or what we were after. Back in base camp later that day as the usual afternoon snow started and the sounds of thunder echoed around the valley we were pretty relieved we'd bailed rather than carrying on higher just to have a look like we'd briefly contemplated."*

*From the Alpine Club*



On the north spur of Chamlang (7319m). [Photo] Andrew Houseman

## Himachal Pradesh

This is an article written by *Ranjini Murali*. It defines the spirit of youth in India these days. Demographically, 50+% of the Indian population is under the age of 30 years. They are travelling the country and enjoying the multitude of dimensions which the Himalaya has to offer. Here is one such report talking about *Caragana*, a shrub found in higher reaches of Spiti.

### Caragana: A view from the top

Why do you climb?

“Because it’s there,” George Mallory is rumoured to have replied when asked why he wants to climb Everest. These words were to go down as the most famous three words in mountaineering history.

“Because the view from the top is spectacular”, is another oft quoted phrase to the same question.

I couldn’t help thinking of these quotes as I stood atop Kanamo. Kanamo, in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh, stands at 5994 meters. The hard-core mountaineers call it an easy climb, with its gentle slopes. But for a novice like me, this was still a challenge. Its slope might be gentle, but the altitude more than makes up for it. We had started our trek from the scenic village of Kibber, which was at 4200 meters, and were already tired having walked for a few hours. At these high altitudes, every tiny step is a struggle.

Right foot- left foot- don’t look up; are we there yet?

The last 100 meters took us close to an hour to climb.

As I stood on the peak, I couldn’t help wondering if it was worth it. Why do people climb? I think, it is just to be able to say they did it. The cynic in me came out as I began to feel the first signs of altitude sickness. I sat down, hoping that the waves of nausea and my throbbing head would settle down. My teammates were enjoying the thrill of summiting 5994 meters and I didn’t want to ruin it by saying that we descend immediately.

To take my mind off my impending sickness, I looked at the stunning landscape below. The treeless, undulating terrain of the trans-Himalaya never fails to take my breath away. Vegetation stops growing at about 5200 meters, after which there is just black scree. But below 5200 meters, the dwarf shrub – *Caragana* – rules these landscapes. A thorny, dwarf leguminous shrub, it might not be the prettiest, but if you’ve been to the trans-Himalaya, it’s impossible to miss. Even atop Kanamo, I could see the patterns of *Caragana* green on the brown mountain-scape. *Caragana*’s form – tough, short, and dense – is perfectly suited to thrive in the high altitudes. Species of *Caragana* are distributed across arid parts of Asia and Eastern Europe. In Spiti, *Caragana* normally flowers in the end of July. It has bright yellow flowers, occasionally



A patch of Caragana burnt by visitors. [Photo] Abhishek Goshal

streaked with red, that mature into pods. The pods look similar to commercial green pea pods, except they are thinner and much smaller. Its common English name is Siberian pea-shrub.

Even the thoughts of *Caragana's* yellow flowers were not enough to keep my headache and nausea at bay.

"Ok guys, I'm heading down. My head is splitting and I don't want to die on top of Kanamo."

"Wait, we will come with you. We'll all go down together."

The descent was much faster and my headache started dissipating as we climbed lower. From being surrounded by snow and black scree, soon *Caragana* was almost everywhere. One shrub I passed had a bunch of other plants sticking out amidst the slender *Caragana* leaves. Famed for its, 'nursing ability', a close inspection of a *Caragana* shrub will almost always reveal a diverse assemblage of other plants. Scientists are not entirely sure how *Caragana* helps these plants but they have a few theories. They think that the dense canopy could be providing them a refuge from herbivores and the harsh wind. This leguminous plant could be improving the soil conditions, facilitating the growth of other vegetation. It could also be acting as a harbor, protecting other plants from extreme weather conditions. Its extensive root systems are useful in preventing soil erosion. It could be one or all these factors that make it the ideal home for other vegetation. For these reasons, we've fondly called it the 'steppe-mother'.



Caragana's yellow flowers and slender leaves.  
[Photo] Dipti Humraskar

As I got closer to the village, I could see the picturesque, white, square houses with twigs of dried *Caragana* on their roofs. People in Spiti also use *Caragana*. It is part of their traditional architecture and in the winter months, these dried twigs are used for burning along with dung that is collected from the pastures. *Caragana*, along with other shrubs, stacked along the edges of the flat roofs help in firming up the roof, make it waterproof and of course, provide emergency fuel wood too.

Unfortunately, because of this ability of the shrub to burn easily, it is often injudiciously used for warmth in this cold landscape, by a range of people who walk through here. The local communities often have very strict rules for collecting *Caragana*, such as when to collect and how to collect.

But for other visitors in this landscape, these rules are foreign to us, and we end up either burning or uprooting the entire plant. This causes a lot of damage as it removes any chance of the plant recovering and makes the soil unstable, increasing chances for soil erosion. Further, in these harsh conditions, with such few months of good growing period, it takes years for plants to grow.

The thoughts of a warm bed ushered my aching feet faster toward the village. Ah! Finally, I was almost home. I couldn't wait to sip a hot cup of soup and rest my tired body.

Why do you climb?

Because it feels so unbelievably good when it's done.

*By Ranjini Murali*

## Ladakh and Zanskar Climbs in Raru Valley

Last summer the Slovenes Anastasija Davidova and Matija Jošt – Matic travelled to the Zanskar region of India's Himalaya where they spent 35 days exploring the westernmost valley of Teteleh Nala, an area that had only been visited once previously by the 2011 British Imperial College expedition.



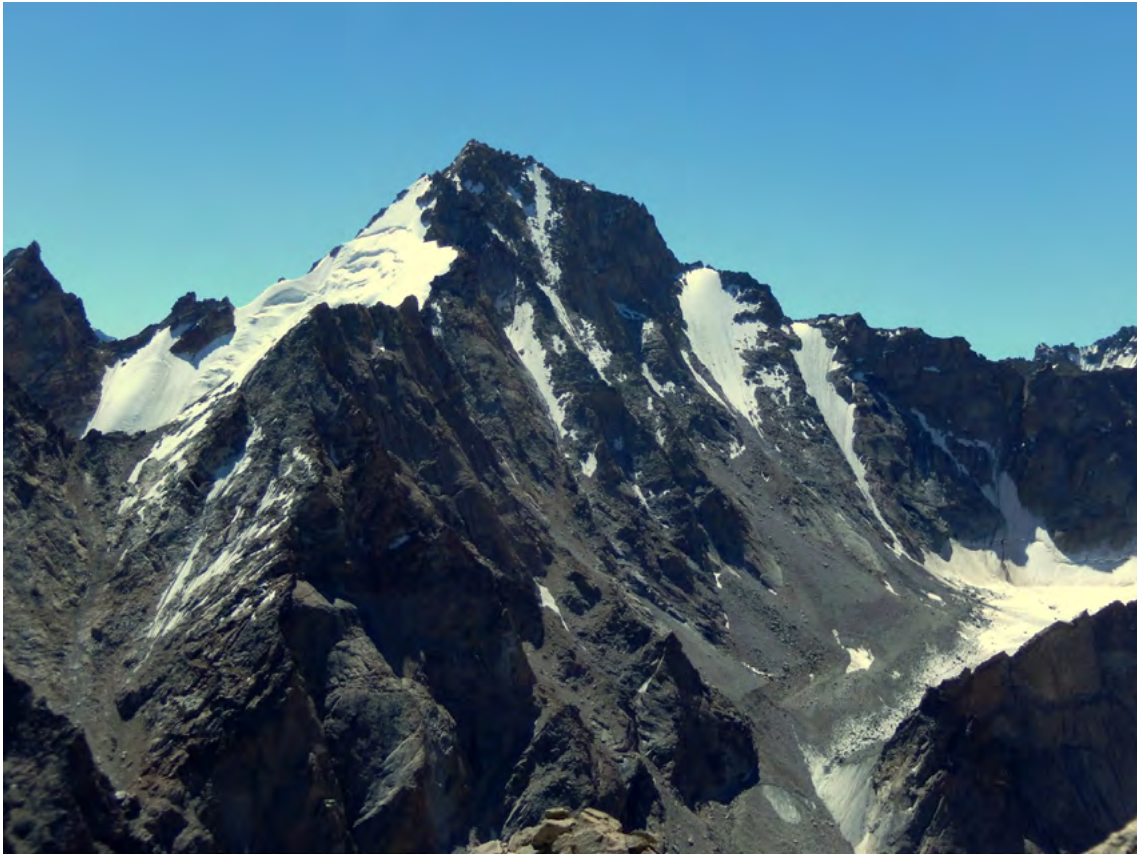
Heading towards summit of Kumuchu Ri [Photo] © Anastasija Davidova

Together with Chetan Pandey (liaison officer) and Heera Singh (cook), Davidova and Jost – Matic established BC at 4623m on 29 July after trekking for two days from Raru, and then acclimatised by trekking further up the valley during the following days. On 5 August they climbed Khumchu Ri via its SE Ridge in 13 hours from their bivy at 5549m. Although this mountain served as an acclimatisation climb, the Slovene's believe theirs might well be the first ascent of this 6064m peak.

Bad weather set in but on 13 August the duo trekked back up Teteleh Nala towards an unclimbed mountain on the west side of the valley to bivy at 5533m. The next two days were spent climbing the mountain's West Face, and on 16 August they successfully reached the 6058m summit of Kun Long Ri via their route *Happy Journey* (TD+, 1500m), before descending to Base Camp on the 17th.

Davidova experienced toothache and had to travel to Padum to see a dentist, but on her return there was still enough time to attempt one final objective: The East Face of Ri Pok Te. After a false start on 24 August due to poor weather, on 25 August Davidova and Jošt set off once again towards the mountain's eastern slopes, following the line initially chosen by the British mountaineers Prinold and Scott. After a bivouac at 5920m they continued easily to reach the 6210m summit in fine weather at 15:30 on the 26th, before descending down the line of ascent to reach base camp on the 27th of August. They named their route *From East to West*, have graded it TD+/





Kun Long Ri 6058m from South West[Photo] ©Anastasia Davidova

ED-, VI-, 1200m and believe “the beauty of its climbing is five stars”. This marked the end of their alpine exploration and at the start of September they began their return to civilisation.

Writing after their expedition, Davidova and Jošt – Matic concluded: “The mountains above Tettleh Nala and valley itself are great. The upper part of the valley is very rarely visited even by locals and therefore nature is pretty much unspoiled and fragile. For our climbing pleasures we had chosen such objectives that fit our skills and other circumstances. It means that we managed to climb in simple (alpine) style. Mostly we used nuts and friends for protection, we hammered in few pitons, and only one of them pollutes face of Ri Pok Te, we use it for abseil. We also left some 25 rappel slings, some of them with carabineers that now “decorate” slopes of Kun Long Ri and Ri Pok Te. When we left the valley we did our best to clean the base camp.”

## T16, South summit, Zanskar, India “Supercouloir” ED – first ascent

### Excerpts from a Report by Cosmin Andron

On May 30th, after a month of guiding and playing in Khumbu, I met Cristina in Delhi and on the 1st of June we were all four of us (Cristina, Prerna, Karn and myself) at the IMF to pick up our paperwork for our intended objective(s) (T13 and T16 as

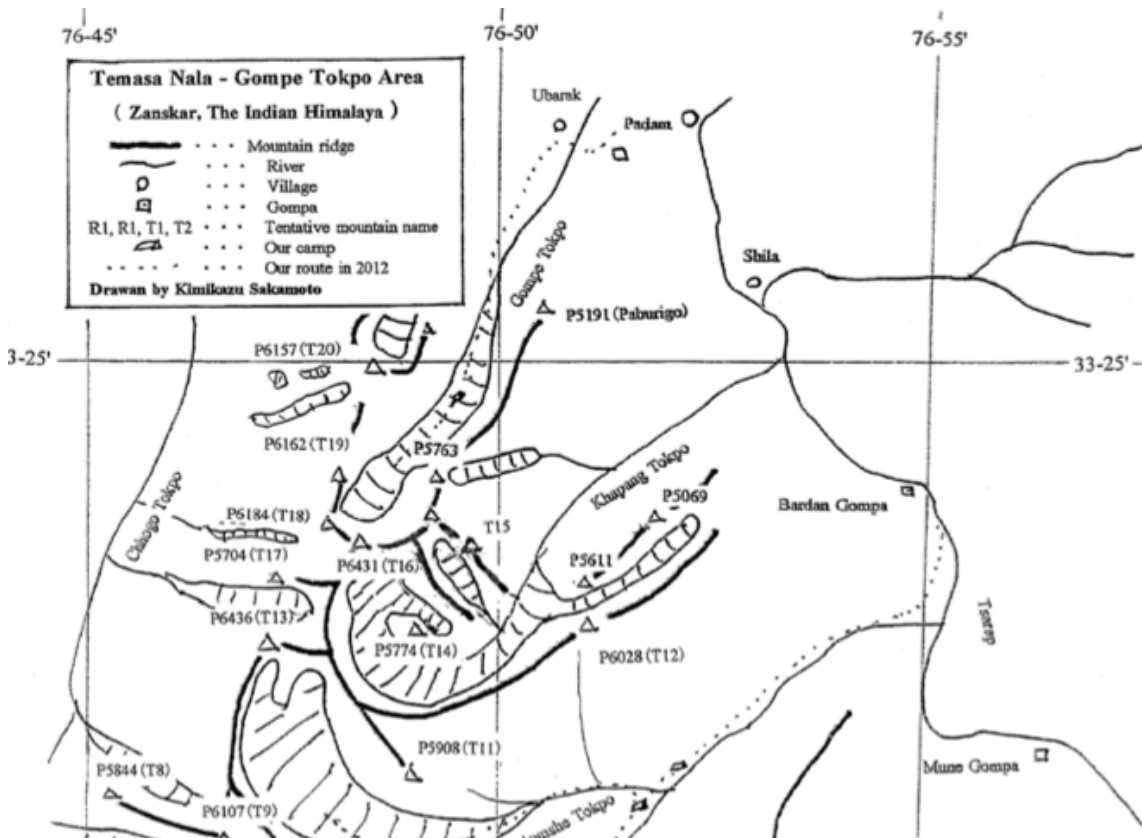
were coded further by the Japanese expedition). We were to be joined on the trip by Nishit, a boulderer from Pune and good friend of Karn and Prerna. On June 2nd we left Delhi in two batches – Karn, Nishit and Argos the dog with part of our luggage in Karn’s Duster and Cristina, Prerna and I by public transport with the rest of the luggage. We were planning on meeting at the end of the road, ahem... the world: the village of Padum.

We travelled by public bus from Delhi to Jammu (about 10 hours) where we switched to a shared taxi and we stopped, 12 hours later, in Srinagar. From Srinagar, where we spent the night, we took the next day another van to Kargil for another 10 hour journey. Twelve hours later, on the night of June the 5th we were in Padum (3600m). We promptly yet totally by chance met Karn, Nishit and Argos in the first restaurant. Also by chance and not by design a local boy, taxi driver by trade, by the name of Tenzing Thapa was officially appointed our sirdar, cook and BC manager.

Next day was spent on a recce trip up the valley towards our objective looking for a way across the river (river which the Japanese party had troubles crossing so skipped entirely Chhogo Tokpo, our intended destination) then by sorting out loads and gear lists.

Weather was perfect and I was wondering how long it will last. From the doorway of our guesthouse we could see peak T20... It didn’t look bad at all....

On June 7th, we headed towards our intended Base Camp accompanied by Tenzing



Tamasa Nala – Gompe Tokpo Area.

and 12 porters: 6 Nepali and 6 Ladakhi. Despite the rather short distance (12 km from where the truck dropped us) to our intended BC we decided, for acclimatization purposes, to stop at 4200 m on a grassy shelf full of boulders. While Cristina and I were waiting there for the rest of the party to arrive we identified a cavern under boulders that would suffice for the 5 of us as shelter and save us from setting up a tent. The porters would have to fit somehow in the kitchen tent and that may have been a problem... so we started looking for another cavern. Nevertheless, the problem was solved rather swiftly though not sure if in our advantage; after waiting for a ridiculous amount of time compared to the distance to be covered, in the end only 6 porters showed up with Tenzing, Karn, Nishit and Prerna. Apparently the Nepalese spent some time chasing yaks to load them with our gear and by the time they covered half of the distance and the yaks were of no use anymore they decided the task at hand is quite hard for them and bugged off. The 6 remaining Ladakhi were left to pick up the slack which they were happy to do for double the time and double the pay; the joys and thrills of expedition life...

On 8th of June we set up the BC at 4900m on a moraine and the following day the porters finished bringing all the luggage. A quick recce up the moraine/glacier showed our initial objective, T13, quite unlike it seemed on Google Earth. The N face of T13 looked quite barren of ice with unstable snow patches and with all the lines quite hard and no easy way up as we hoped for our acclimatisation / training climb. We deemed all the lines but the West Ridge unfeasible for our group and we decided to go for it after a day of rest.

On June 11th at 3 AM we left our BC. The day before we discussed then voted if to set up an ABC up on the glacier or set off directly from BC. Laziness won... We planned on taking bivy gear as we did not expect to move too fast (this being an acclimatisation climb) and we envisaged spending 1 night on the ridge. We moved decently over moderate ground with only a couple of belaying places up to close to 5900m. Unfortunately, unlike the Google Earth imagery, the ridge was not continuous but more a convergence of ridges running from S to N and stopping into the W ridge of T13.

From where we stopped, above a couloir of snow on the N side of the W ridge the way ahead looked long and progressively more difficult culminating with several abseils and wall climbs before reaching the summit of T13.

Despite having bivy gear with us we deemed the undertaking a tad too much for our merry band in its current configuration and we decided to bail.

Travelling on the ridge had forced us to stay on its southern aspect and the time of the day was quite poorly elected. The mountain chooses to show us a bit of welcoming and threw behind us a volley of avalanches.

That night we were back in BC tired and a bit regretful. Not having photos of the area but only computerized imagery led us to believe that easy lines are possible on T13. Reality showed us it was not the case.

Cristina and I were pondering on our next target and since the time in BC was limited to 11 days in total (her visa running out on the 28th) we needed to decide fast and act faster. We could try and trace a line on the N face of T13 but it would be an invention, a linking of snow islands and I did not like very much the odds of being in the firing range for 3 or so days. Each night we could hear from ABC the rumble of avalanches. The alternative was the S side of T16, right opposite the N face of T13. While on the ridge I saw a beautiful, perfect, natural line – a couloir running from the bottom to the top; a perfect line.

The problem was that the upper third of the couloir seemed pure rock, possibly overhanging. Will we be able to find a way through that? The choice was between forcing a line through dangerous terrain or follow a natural, safer line with a major question mark right at the top. In the end we decided to set up an ABC in the middle of the glacier, right between the two faces, saving us a 2.5 Km slog and giving us the option to decide after watching in more detail both faces.

After 2 days of rest in BC on the 14th of June, Karn, Nishit and Argos left for Padum with the mission to usher the porters our way on the 17th by evening, Cristina and I left to set up our ABC at around 5200m.

That night in ABC the decision was easy for us. The N face of T13 was rumbling with avalanches and rock fall. It wasn't wise to be up there any time of the day and there was a much better alternative just opposite. We set our alarms for 3 AM.

The couloir was pretty much straight forward (as we expected it to be) with a couple 75\* sections but short lived. The early start allowed us to have decent neve and the going was fairly relaxed. We simul climbed pretty much all of it with a short brewing and breakfast stop on a ledge half way up. We were hoping to get off the snow and in a sheltered spot before the sun hits the couloir as we were anticipating at the least slush and rock fall. The N face of T 13 was always looming in the background and rumbling with activity. The inner dialogue was mostly one congratulating ourselves for staying off it...

The snow section of the couloir ended with a constriction and a foretelling of what was to come higher up. The 5-7 m or so of mixed and ice was anything but pleasant and Cristina managed to draw the short straw... Rotten ice and polished rock required some inventive shimmying up the pitch.

By the time we were done the sun was moving in and we scurried to find a sheltered place. The rocks were whizzing around and we played a bit of dodge games until we found a ledge under a small overhang and we sat down waiting. We were expecting it to be a long wait but we did not expected it to be such a hot wait. The sun was upon us and without much room to move if we wanted to stay away from the volley we stripped to base layers and put our GoreTex shells on top of our heads. It wasn't nice not even a bit. We had all the inconvenience of a day sunbathing at the seaside

without any of the perks. We both started reminiscing about our adventure up on the South Face of Shishapangma in 2011 when we had a similar situation. Slowly but surely we were boiling in our own juices....

By 5 PM the sun went over the ridge and by 7 PM the rocks stopped falling. Did another pitch on easy snow up to an icefall but since it was more of a waterfall by then and without it looking easy even frozen we decided to return to the little ledge, sort out the bivy and have an early start in the morning. We settled in after an hour or so of digging at the ice base of our ledge. We were both queasy and sun-struck. Conversation was merely functional and with a tint of irritation. We were, literally, cooked. We went to sleep and I ominously said: 'at least it's not snowing!' It didn't take half an hour for the first snowflakes to dance down onto our bivy bags... My wife told me, quite justifiably, to shut up....

Morning dawned beautiful and, grunting and aching, we extracted ourselves from the bags, unhung ourselves from the anchor and started up. It was to be my leading day and what a glorious day was I expecting... The icefall was indeed frozen but the surprises were just at the beginning. After the warmup pitch on the frozen snow up from the bivy, at the gear recount I had the opportunity to congratulate myself for only bringing 2 ice screws. One was promptly sunk in the base of the icefall and I was expecting that the following 30 m (what was visible from the icefall) would be pleased with the remaining one. Little did I know that out of sight, cork-screwing, the icefall was to be a full rope length... I moved in between ice and rock wondering what the meaning of the 'easier way' could be. Half way up, with sinking heart, I had to call down to Cristina asking for the lower screw to be sent up on one of the ropes – quite a matter of dexterity as I was hanging of one tool with feet in both ice and a crack. The ice was old, brown, thin but "at least" it was brittle... Fun somehow missed during the process. Out of sight the exit was burly on mixed and I managed to clean the upper bit straight on the belay below. Not the prettiest start of a day, but heaving and grunting gets you long way if you're persistent. Backpack followed suit then Cristina.

A pitch higher the couloir was blocked by vertical, frozen mud with rock stuck in it – some sort of dubious looking, 'improvised' conglomerate. An attempt up on it produced little progress, moderate amount of fear and loads of doubt. We opted for the 'sporty' option and we ended up negotiating overhangs and thin mixed. I felt well in control of my tools but not necessarily of my emotions too since the pro was scarce and mainly on ball-nuts, the run-outs long and the ice was thin. Luckily I was spent enough so I could not tap it too hard hence preserving some for Cristina as well on her way up.

Not knowing what expects us further and with time wasted on the 'fake conglomerate' we started looking for a bivy spot. The sun was moving in but since we were blessed with a cloudy day the fire-range opened a tad later that day. The bivy spot we found and excavated was good for one person if they were small; below

it was a seat available for the masochistic half our our family... Since I was spent I delegated the cooking, conversation and general upkeep to Cristina while I seated myself, not at all comfortably. Promptly I was served with a cup of Maggi soup with yummy sausage bits floating in. Hunger evaporated with the last rays of sun and the only thing I was glad about was that next day it was Cristina's lead. Once we could negotiate the overhang above the rest looked more like good, clean rock climbing above. As the rock monkey in our family I was happy to delegate to her the glory.

Morning came bright yet it could not make up for a sleepless night, sitting on one butt-cheek. Grumpy was my middle name on the 17th June, morning.

After a few wet and snowy pitches on decent rock but with finery moves we ended up on a beautiful face. Sun was out, the rock was dry, protection about right and I was happy seconding. We left all the bivy gear at the bivy spot and we took only what we deemed necessary. We climbed in rock shoes. We soon passed the fake summit (the white triangle visible from base camp) on the face to its right (by it's E side) and we carried on. The higher we went the better the climb became. Towards the exit to the final ridge we both experienced some of the best rock climbing we did in the higher mountains. It was staring to get pleasurable and fun. The sun was shining yet not scorching hot and the wind, for one, stopped. The rope-lengths were succeeding one after another and the rhythm was pleasant. After a while we could not be bothered in switching our rock shoes to negotiate the snow bands and at the base of the final arrete we left behind the backpack, the camera (we only kept my iPhone) and the big boots. We were gunning for the top and it was all rolling too nicely. The afternoon was approaching and we were keen to touchdown and start getting down.

Like in the case of T13 the final arête was the meeting point of several ridges, including the two sides sheltering our couloir. We exited the couloir already by its left (W) side onto the face by then and the ground ahead was fairly moderate. One could see the flat, table-top, N summit of T16 ahead and the S summit above. With the end in sight we moved ahead as it was already passed 4 PM and everything just got permeated by a high sense of urgency.

The N summit was at least 1 Km away and the ridge was up and down with quite a few pinnacles in between – all pretty much at the same level, of course depending on the perspective. We were not keen on hopping on each and every of them and not planning to tag the N summit either (especially since we had no idea which is higher anyway as the IMF records only mentioned one altitude for a two summits peak). Quite a bit passed 5 PM we started heading down, down-climbing what we could, abseiling where we could not or where it was faster.

We recovered the backpack then the stuff left at the bivy and by the time the dark set in we were abseiling in the void, above the icefall, above overhangs, past the first bivy and into the snow couloir. We started down-climbing until tiredness caught

up and we encountered the steeper bits. We alternated between abseils and down-climbing until the slope gave in and we started walking face out towards the glacier below. We both moved, quite apart and quite in silence as each step required both care and effort. Conversation was an unnecessary waste of energy and neither of us had any to spare. We saw a little light down on the glacier, near our ABC and we were relieved to realise that Prerna has sent someone up to help us dismantling it and head down to BC. After-all the porters were due to arrive that evening. By 3 AM we were in Base Camp with a mug of hot chocolate in hand. Sleep was never sweeter nor the sleeping bag softer.

Next morning, June the 18th, we woke up earlier than we wanted and later than needed. We started packing the Base camp and headed down towards Padum. We left the porters behind, with Tenzing, Cristina and Prerna were walking together and I sprinted down, alone, giving myself the time to digest the climb we have just completed. The weather was still perfect but on the side of hot and lots of the snow and ice we encountered on the way up has melted away. The peaks, especially the lower ones looked barren, devoid of snow and mind was racing to a proper bed and a season of sport climbing.

The snow bridge we passed on the way in had melted in the meantime and we were deprived of the luxury of having a truck waiting for us at the road-head. Stuck on



"Supercouloir" +1200m, ED snow 75' max, WI 4+, M5/6, 6b, C1  
South summit of T16 (6431m),  
Zaskar region, Indian Himalaya  
First ascent: Cristina Pogacean & Cosmin Andron, 15-17 June 2016

Topo-Supercouloir-T16. [Photo] Cosmin Andron



Cosmin Andron atop T16 [Photo] Cosmin Andron

the right flank of the river we had to walk all the way to Padum, another 7 or 8 Km at least. The landscape, the breeze and the sun however were a treat even if the last miles had the tender touch of the *legionnaire's march test*.

The expedition was entirely self funded.

*By Cosmin Andron*

<http://www.cosmin-andron.com/2016/06/t16-south-summit-zanskar-india-supercouloir-ed-first-ascent/>

## Karakoram

### First Winter Ascent of Nanga Parbat

3:37 p.m., February 26, 2016. Simone Moro (Italy), Muhammad Ali Sadpara (Pakistan) and Alex Txikon (Spain) reached the summit of Nanga Parbat, the thirteenth 8000-meter peak to get a winter ascent. The successful climb leaves K2 as the only 8000-meter peak that has not been climbed in winter.

Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain in the world, is located in the western Himalaya. German climber Hermann Buhl completed the first ascent of the peak, by the East Ridge--reaching the summit alone and without the use of supplemental oxygen--in 1953.





Nanga Parbat

### **International Teams Unite**

Members of two separate teams came together to form the final summit team. A total of three teams started up the peak, but one had retreated after fixing lines and hauling loads between camps. Txikon and Sadpara, along with Daniele Nardi of Italy, arrived at Base Camp (4000m) on Nanga Parbat's Diamir (west) Face on December 31. With a second team of climbers--Adam Bielecki and Jacek Czech of Poland--they spent nearly a month fixing ropes and hauling gear to Camps 2 and 3 on the Kinshofer Route (ca. 3500m, Kinshofer-Low-Manhardt, 1962), which follows a buttress left of the Diamir Face.

While hauling gear between Camp 1 (4800m) and Camp 2 (6100m), at about 5800 meters, Bielecki fell about 80 meters, wrote Valentina D' Angella on *danielenardi.org*. While not seriously injured, Bielecki and Czech opted to abandon the climb. After several rotations on the route from Base Camp to Camp 3, Nardi also chose to descend.

A third team--composed of Moro and fellow Italian Tamara Lunger--that began on the Messner-Eisendle route. After encountering unsafe conditions, they descended to join Txikon and Sadpara on the Kinshofer Route.

Before Moro and Lunger joined their group, Txikon and Sadpara had several false starts from Base Camp in January, and they had turned back because of avalanche conditions, including one slide that partially buried the climbers on January 29, wrote Igone Mariezkurrena on the website *alexixikon.com*. Throughout February, the four climbers took turns climbing the start of the Kinshofer Route to maintain the track, but were unable to continue beyond Camp 1 because of high winds.

On February 22, they took advantage of a weather window, climbing the fixed route to Camp 2 the first day. Three days later, on February 25, they made it to Camp 4



Diamir Face

(7200m). Lunger, who became ill, started with the team the next morning, but abandoned her bid a few hundred meters below the summit.

Nanga Parbat has received thirty-one known winter attempts on the peak, from the 1988-89 winter season through the 2014-15 season. Six teams attempted Nanga Parbat during the 2015-16 season, including the Polish-Pakistani team on the Schell Route (ca. 4500m, Gimpel-Schauer-Schell-Sturm, 1976) on the Rupal (south) Face; and the “Nanga Light Expedition” on the northeast side, between the Diamir (west) and Rakhiot (north) flanks.

### **Winter Ascent Guidelines**

In the 1970s, winter Himalayan ascents were often defined as those that took place during the original Nepali winter permit season from December 1 through the end of February. During the twenty-first century, the definition has shifted to calendar winter between December 21 and March 20, the winter solstice and spring equinox, respectively.

The winter season adds extreme cold temperatures, high winds and unstable terrain, beyond the usual severe conditions encountered on 8000-meter peaks. Winter attempts on Nanga Parbat and K2 have been especially difficult. Adding to the challenge, the two peaks have 4608 and 4020 meters of prominence, respectively, more than any other mountains in the western Himalaya.

“Six teams attempted Nanga Parbat this winter,” Adnan told us in an email. “Two on Rupal side and four on Diamir. Apart from the three mentioned teams, [the] summit



Atop Nanga Parbat. Ali 'Sadpara' and Alex Txikon on the summit.

push of Tomek Mackiewicz and Elisabeth Revol ended at 7500m due to extreme cold in January. They were on Messner-Eisendle route.”

### **Records**

This climb marks Moro’s fourth time reaching the summit of an 8000-meter peak in winter. Simone Moro now has twelve successful summits on nine 8000-meter peaks, including four ascents of Mt. Everest (8848m). Alex Txikon has completed thirteen summits on eleven 8000-meter peaks. Muhammad Ali Sadpara, a mountaineer from the Skardu village of Sadpara, has completed six ascents of four 8000-meter peaks, including three summits of Nanga Parbat (8125m).

“Climbing any giant in the winter, especially that one shows incredible respect, discipline and courage,” Vince Anderson said, who established a 4100-meter route on Nanga Parbat’s Rupal Face in September 2005, with Steve House. “They definitely deserve all the accolades they receive for this. It’s a huge feat: Out there in the winter, in a true wilderness, on a massive mountain in difficult and dangerous conditions.”

**Sources:** Vince Anderson, Raheel Adnan, [adventureblog.nationalgeographic.com](http://adventureblog.nationalgeographic.com), [alextxikon.com](http://alextxikon.com), [alpinist.com](http://alpinist.com), [altitudepakistan.com](http://altitudepakistan.com), [danielenardi.org](http://danielenardi.org), [simonemoro.com](http://simonemoro.com), [thenorthfacejournal.com](http://thenorthfacejournal.com)



Martin Moran [Photo] Harish Kapadia



Mr. Bhimani and Motup Chewang in an intense discussion. [Photo] Ravi Mariwala



Debabrata Mukharji and Martin Moran.  
[Photo] Ravi Mariwala

## The Himalayan Club News

### Annual Seminar 2016

The Himalayan Club held its Annual Seminar on 13th and 14th February 2016. It was held at the Dadar Matunga Cultural Centre, in Central Mumbai. The theme of this years seminar was Risk in Mountaineering.

The seminar started with the Annual Meeting followed by the Kaivan Memorial Lecture by Martin Moran. Martin delighted the audience with his experiences of 30+ years of mountaineering and exploring the Himalayas. After Martin's talk, the Jagdish Nanvati awards ceremony was held.

The next session was the Kekoo Naoroji Book Award. Stephen Alter was the recipient of the award for his book, becoming a mountain about the ordeal of overcoming a violent robbery and rising from it.

The concluding session was a presentation by Deepa Balsavar and Nandini Purandare on the Climbing Sherpas of Darjeeling - the Himalayan Club is the institutional sponsor for this project.

The next day was filled with very exciting talks by Martin Moran, Motup Chewang, Dr. Godbole, Harish Kapadia, Divyesh Muni and Wng. Cmdr. Amit Choudhary from Indian Mountaineering Foundation. The theme was about risk.

Martin gave a very insightful talk about the anatomy of Risk and why accidents happen. Motup talked about his rescue efforts through his long association with mountains including the epic

ferries on Khumbhu glacier to rescue the members of an Indian Expedition and what role can the govt. play to prevent accidents.

Dr. Godbole gave a very insightful lecture on the medical fatalities with a lot of good and real data.

Divyesh talked about his experience in Ladakh and how satellite phones saved lives of the team members. The talk clearly showed the usefulness of the satellite phones for emergency situations. The government needs to look at allowing it for rescue and emergency situations.

Harish Kapadia with his encyclopaedic knowledge of mountains brought to light the historic accidents and rescue efforts. The talks culminated with Wng. Cmdr. Choudhry's talk on what IMF is doing to address the risk and rescue in the Himalaya. The seminar ended with a lively panel discussion on risk in mountains and how to respond to it.

## The Himalayan Club Awards

### Kekoo Naoroji Book Award for Himalayan Literature



Stephen Alter. [Photo] Harish Kapadia

Mr. Stephen Alter was the recipient of 2016 Kekoo Naoroji Book award for his book *Becoming a Mountain*

### Jagdish Nanavati Award for Excellence in Mountaineering

2016 JN excellence in Mountaineering was awarded to *First Exploration of Ryong Kharu Lungpa* by a team from Mumbai led by Mr. Divyesh Muni.

In the words of Chair Person Lindsay Griffin

*The selection committee felt that most of this year's applicants exhibited a certain spirit of exploration, and that, in general, reports were quite impressive, with good use of clear digital photography, mapping and GPS measurement. The committee also noted that for the most part climbs, even over moderate ground, were undertaken in a traditional fashion, where a purer, alpine-style approach would nowadays be more appropriate.*

*Taking into consideration the exploratory content, execution of plan, quality of final report, and the fact that it best embodies the spirit and values of the JCN Award, the committee was unanimous in its decision that this year's award should go to Karakoram Adventure, the first exploration of the Ryong Kharu Lungpa. The team members seized opportunities, traversed*



Divyesh Muni. [Photo] Harish Kapadia

*unvisited regions, climbed virgin peaks and pushed their own personal boundaries. They were sensitive to the environment and have acknowledge the great help of their support team. A well constructed report provides valuable and clear information to future expeditions eager to explore this little known sector of the East Karakoram.*

*The committee would also like to take the opportunity to mention the report submitted by the expedition to Shilla Nala, which was a quality production, comprehensive, perfectly clear and with good historical content.*

### Jagdish Nanavati Garud Medal

Twenty six year old Naveen Panwar from Uttarakhand was awarded the Garud Medal for 2016. He received strong recommendations from expedition members who he has supported. They say his always smiling face, cool thinking during difficult situations, a lion-hearted approach to the most difficult climbing situations, helping attitude and never tiring activities make him deserving of this honour. This young man is a great asset to the mountaineering community.

A special mention must be made of Naveen's heroic efforts on the 2012 IMF Kamet Expedition where he was HAP. He helped in rescue of a NCC team and saved the lives of at least two persons who were affected by cold and altitude above Meade's Col - at 23,500 ft. He carried them back to Camp IV over two ferries at night and one the next morning.

### Visit to Japanese Alpine Club



Nandini presents a Himalayan Club tie and a copy of the Himalayan Journal, Volume 71 to the President of the Japanese Alpine Club, Mr. Masashi Kobayashi.

JAC, Mr. Masayuki Yoshikawa and Ms. Harumi Okubo - both Vice Presidents of the JAC, Mikio Kaminaga, Hon Secretary JAC, Mr. Shigeki Nakayama, Director JAC and senior members Mr. Hiroshi Sakai and Ms Reiko Terasawa were also present.

Nandini Purandare, Hon. Secretary, the Himalayan Club visited Japan during May 2016. The Japanese Alpine Club (JAC) members hosted a lunch reception in Tokyo for Nandini and her husband.

Among those present at the luncheon were Mr. Masashi Kobavashi, President



Renowned explorer Tom Nakamura with Nandini Purandare

The members fondly recalled their wonderful expeditions in the Himalaya including the Joint Expedition to East Karakoram with Harish Kapadia and others in 2002.

The Hon. Secretary presented members with the Himalayan Club Tie and volume 71 of the Himalayan Journal. Mr Tom Nakamura was away exploring a new area in China, he could not be present.

On his return, he hosted another dinner where he described his latest travels and talked about his new book. As always, much delicious food was consumed as was some great sake! Fun moments in the Himalayan Club...

## New Books Added to the Himalayan Club Library

The following new books have been added to the Himalayan Club Library.

1. Alpine Warriors by Bernadette McDonald. Published in 2015
2. The Sunlit Summit. The Life of W H Murray by Robin Lloyd-Jones. Published in 2013
3. Up and about. The hard Road to Everest by Doug Scott. Published in 2015
4. One Day as a Tiger. Alex Macintyre and the birth of Light and Fast Alpinism. By John Porter. Published in 2014.
5. In some lost place. The First Ascent of Nanga Parbat. by Mazeno Ridge. Published in 2015
6. Everest revealed. The Private Diaries and Sketches of Edward Norton by Christopher Norton
7. The Calling: A Life Rocked by Mountains by Barry Blanchard. Published in 2014
8. Becoming a Mountain. Himalayan Journeys in Search of the Sacred and the Sublime by Stephen Alter. Published in 2014
9. The Ghosts of K2. Epic Saga of First Ascent by Mick Conefrey
10. My Life at the Limit. by Reinhold Messner. Published in 2014
11. Cold feet. Stories of a Middling Climber by David Pagel. Published in 2014
12. Snowblind: Stories of Alpine Obsessions by Daniel Arnold. Published in 2015

## News & Views

### Asian Alpine E-News

The first issue of the Asian Alpine E-News was published in May 2016. Subsequent Issues are expected to appear semi-annually.

The Asian Alpine E-News is compiled from the activity of the Asian mountaineering community. Information sources, however, are not limited to the Asian countries.

Pioneering expeditions, notable ascents/journeys, field research, and mountain people and culture are highlighted for featuring variety of the submissions.

Asian Alpine E-News Issue No.1

[http://asian-alpine-e-news.com/asian\\_alpine\\_e-new\\_1st\\_issue.pdf](http://asian-alpine-e-news.com/asian_alpine_e-new_1st_issue.pdf)

Asian Alpine E-News Web Site

<http://asian-alpine-e-news.com/>

## Movie on Sherpas

Here is an interesting movie on Sherpas. Worth looking at.

<https://vimeo.com/139654857>

## News from Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF)

### **Update on issues discussed at the IMF governing council meeting held on May 13, 2016.**

Ministry of Youth and Sports has given an additional grant of Rs 25 lakhs to IMF in the end of the FY in Mar 2016, taking the total grant to Rs 1.25 crores.

Sport Authority of India (SAI) had supported IMF's request for financial support for Bouldering World Cup through grant from National Sports Development Fund (NSDF).

Program for women and disabled youth in Chandigarh: Shri Keerthi Pais, Chairman Youth Development Committee, was successful in obtaining a grant from Chandigarh administration for conducting four mountaineering courses cum expedition for 120 women and disabled youth from Chandigarh. The courses are being conducted at ABVIMAS, HMI and JIM & WS.

Himachal Pradesh: The Government has requested IMF to carry out reeve of potential site for adventure tourism in Chanshal region of Himachal and prepare report for the same.

Delhi: Adventure Activities at IMF for 1500 students of Delhi Govt Schools was conducted from April 1 to 9,2016. Total of 6400 school students have been trained by IMF till date.

Jammu & Kashmir Government (J&K Govt.): Joint activities-Climbathon & Youth Festival

J&K Govt. has agreed to provide full hospitality for Climbathon till road head. In addition, IMF is trying to get J&K Govt. to organize Kashmir Tourism Meet and Mountaineering & Tourism Meet in August to coincide with conclusion of Climbathon.



Cleaning Expeditions:

- a) ONGC has given sanction for grant of Rs 12.5 lakhs for Ganga Source cleaning expedition from Gangotri to Gangamukh over a period of six months from Jun - Nov. The campaign was flagged on 20 Jun 2016 from NIM.
- b) Coal India Ltd has also given Rs 5 lakhs for conduct of a cleaning expedition.

ONGC Everest expedition: ONGC intends to send a team to Everest in 2017 and IMF is assisting them in the same.

**IMF ACTIVITIES**

IMF Expeditions 2016

Medical Expedition: Certification Course on Expedition Medicine for Mountaineers during May-June 2016 in Gangotri III: Approved by UIAA Medical Commission. Being conducted from May 27- 24 Jun 2016. The expedition includes lectures by renowned doctors at IMF on various high altitude issues for 4 days. Dr Gurtoo and Dr Inigo Soteras, a Spanish doctor specializing mountain rescue will be accompanying the team. 22 participants are undergoing the expedition.

IMF expedition to Saser Kangri I: Planned in Jul- Aug 2016 with 20 members from IMF, Army, ITBP, Ladakh Scouts etc. Col IS Thapa is the expedition leader.

Climbathon 2016: Kun Base Camp region from 04-27 August 2016. DIG( Retd)SC Negi from BSF is the Leader.

Joint expedition with NIM to Mukut Parbat: Planned in Sep – Oct 2016.

Women Expedition to Gorichen: All women expedition to Gorichen is planned in Sep – Oct 2016. Ms Anshu Jamsenpa has been nominated as the leader.

Expedition to Kellas peak in Sikkim: Planned in Sep- Oct. However, approval has not yet been obtained from Sikkim Govt. Mr Debraj Dutta is nominated as the leader.

Reccee of Kangto: ITBP has agreed to provide entire logistic support for conduct of the reccee. IMF will nominate 4-5 members to accompany the ITBP team.

World Cup Bouldering: 13-15 May 16 at Navi Mumbai:

Training & Selection Camp was conducted from 12 to 16 April, 2016 and Final Training was held from 01 May to 12 May, 2016 at IMF. Seventeen athletes were selected for the World Cup. The event in Navi Mumbai had 81 participants from 20 countries. The event received good footfall and good reviews from participants, viewers and media. However, all of the Indian athletes were eliminated in the qualification round itself.

### Sport Climbing

- a. Judges and Route Setters course was successfully conducted from 7 to 9 April, 2016. 53 participants took part in the Course.
- b. 2nd Belayers Course from 25 to 27 May, 2016 at IMF. The Belayers Course is being conducted centrally. Additional courses for Route setters and judges are also being planned.

### IMF Issues

Amendment in IMF Rules- Suggestion from IMF Members & way ahead

A committee has been constituted under AVM A K Bhattacharyya. The first meeting is scheduled at IMF on 29 Jun 16.

### Future of Sport Climbing

A Committee under Brig D K Khullar has been constituted to look into the matter. The first meeting of the Committee is scheduled on 30 Jun 2016.

## Obituaries

### Jim Curran

#### **Jim Curran: Tribute to a Renaissance Man of Climbing**

Jim Curran, who passed away on Tuesday 5th April following a long illness, was a genuine Renaissance man of climbing. His creative life saw him achieve excellence as a filmmaker, writer and artist, always connected to his love of climbing and the mountains. He first came to prominence in the climbing world when his film *The Bat* (based on the short story 'The Bat and the Wicked' by Robin Smith) was shown at one of the early Kendal Film Festivals. He went on to make many more films, including two on Everest, with many of the greats of British mountaineering, including Chris Bonington, Joe Tasker, Alan Rouse, Joe Brown and Pete Boardman. He also filmed in the Andes, Caucasus and Atlas Mountains and China and nearer home, on St Kilda and the Old Man of Hoy where he filmed Catherine Destivelle's solo of the sea stack for *Rock Queen*.



Jim Curran. [Photo] Ian Smith

As a writer he produced a variety of books including *Trango*, *The Nameless Tower*, *K2*

Triumph and Tragedy, Suspended Sentences and K2 The Story of the Savage Mountain, which won the non-fiction award at the Banff Mountain Book Festival in 1996. He also wrote the authorised biography of Chris Bonington, High Achiever The Life and Climbs of Chris Bonington. His final book, Here, There and Everywhere... The Autobiography of Jim Curran, included a section evaluating and illustrating his paintings. He was very involved with the Boardman Tasker Award and served as a judge for two years. He was shortlisted for the award no less than five times and although he never won he was presented with a well-deserved BT Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014. He had taken up painting after his retirement from his work as a lecturer at Bristol Polytechnic when he rekindled his love of drawing and painting tackling a wide variety of subjects ranging from the Peak District to the Himalaya, taking in Scotland, Africa, India and Spain. A number of these were painted on some particularly large canvases, including a series of the sandstone crags of Kent where he had begun his climbing career.

Jim was so much more than his work though, he was a wit, a storyteller and was often at the centre of a lively social scene. His house in Sheffield was frequently the venue for post-pub parties and climbers from all over the world would appear and join in. His was a welcoming 'open house' for many and his pre-Christmas parties were always jam-packed and would last from lunch time to the early hours. Although never the most talented of climbers he was steady and a brilliant partner and was always an enthusiast for a climbing trip and enjoyed climbing with some of the best climbers and biggest characters Britain has produced such as Don Whillans, Chris Bonington, Joe Brown and Ian MacNaught-Davis. When, in 1984, I proposed a trip to climb on the then virtually unknown (in climbing terms) island of Jersey, he was the first to sign up and we had a brilliant week putting up almost 30 new routes between us, interspersed with much laughter and fun.

*by Ian Smith*

## Nicholas Clinch

### **Nick Clinch passes away**

NICHOLAS CLINCH, an Honorary Member of the Himalayan Club, passed away in California. He had visited the Club at Mumbai and lectured to the members. He was friends with many in the Himalayan Club.

I met him at USA during the American Alpine Club dinner and we enjoyed a long conversation. He came to Mumbai to lecture at the Himalayan Club, and later we travelled to Mussoorie to hear his another lecture at Mountain literature festival.

I would miss him and recall many anecdotes and events we shared. Rest In Peace Nick.

*By Harish Kapadia*



Left to Right, Nick Clinch, Charlie Houston and Harish Kapadia. [Photo] Harish Kapadia.

## AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB PAST PRESIDENT NICK CLINCH PASSES AWAY

June 15, 2016, Golden, CO—American Alpine Club past president Nicholas Bayard Clinch (b. 1930) passed away today, June 15, 2016 in Palo Alto, California.

Clinch is regarded as one of America's most successful expedition leaders. He is the only American to have led the first ascent of an 8,000 meter peak: Hidden Peak (Gasherbrum I, 26,470 feet) in 1958. He also led the first ascent of the notorious and beautiful Masherbrum (25,660 feet) in 1960 and Mount Vinson, the highest peak in Antarctica, along with the other major summits of the Vinson Massif in 1966. Clinch Peak (15,883 ft.) was named in his honour in 2006.

Clinch's account of the 1958 Hidden Peak expedition was published as the book *A Walk in the Sky* in 1982. Nick also published *Through a Land of Extremes: The Littledales of Central Asia* with his wife Elizabeth Clinch in 2011.

His explorations have included numerous ascents in the United States, the British Columbia Coast Range, Peru and China. He also introduced the ice screw into North American climbing usage. For his extraordinary services to mountaineering Clinch was made a Fellow of the prestigious Explorers Club in 1969 and later elected to Honorary Membership in The Alpine Club [London]. In 2013 he was inducted into the Hall of Mountaineering Excellence for both his achievements on and off the mountain by the American Mountaineering Museum. He is an honorary member of the American Alpine Club and has received the Heilprin Award for service to the Club and the rarely granted President's Gold Medal—twice.

Beyond Clinch's important role in the history of American mountaineering, his devotion to the AAC helped the Club thrive over the 62 years of his membership. Nick served as Club president from 1968 to 1970 and afterwards he served one term (1971-1973) as treasurer. He has been instrumental in the growth of the AAC Library, and a major contributor to the Central Asia collection. In 1971



Nicholas Clinch [Photo] Harish Kapadia

Nick worked tirelessly with Leigh Ortenberg and NPS Director Horace Albright to establish the Grand Teton Climbers' Ranch.

He was a student of climbing history and a prolific book collector with, as he often said, "the discrimination of a vacuum cleaner," according to AAC CEO Phil Powers. His collection resides at the American Alpine Club Library in Golden, Colorado.

"Nick certainly contributed much to climbing in America. He was a brilliant expedition leader and a wonderful diplomat. But I think most of his contributions were behind the scenes," said Powers. "He was always there with the counsel to get us through the hard decisions. I have benefitted from knowing a number of the great men on whose shoulders we stand as climbers today—but I'll miss none more than Nick."

Between expeditions and playing a strong and ongoing leadership role in support of AAC, Clinch was a long-time Executive Director of the Sierra Club Foundation and an early board member at REI.

*From American Alpine Club*

## Ken Wilson

Ken Wilson was a member of the Himalayan Club and the founder and long time editor of the Mountain magazine. He received the Boardman Tasker Lifetime Achievement Award last November.

### **Ed Douglas Remembers Ken Wilson:**

Now people email, but back then we talked, and Ken Wilson would call at pretty much any time of day. The telephone was his window on the world, and he kept the window open, broadcasting his high-voltage crackle of energy around the world. Joe Tasker told the story in his book *Savage Arena* of how, on returning to London from a new route on Dungaree, he borrowed Ken's phone for some reason. Ken became intensely agitated. "It wasn't the cost," Tasker recounted. "I was paying for the calls. He just felt out of touch with world mountaineering for as long as his phone was occupied." At that point, in the mid 1970s, Ken was at the height of his powers, editing *Mountain* magazine, a publication that captured the Zeitgeist of

world mountaineering as nothing had done before.



Ken Wilson in 1973. Wilson was the long time editor of Britain's Mountain magazine (seen in his hand). [Photo] Chris Bonington Picture Library

I remember being woken by the phone ringing early one morning when I was living in Manchester, editing a small rock-climbing magazine inspired mostly by Ken's example, following like so many others in his footsteps. This was in the late 1980s, when rock climbing was going through a seismic shift, perhaps its greatest, and Ken was arguing with characteristic passion a line that set him

at odds with a large proportion of the new elite. I crawled out of bed, and picked up the receiver. It was Ken, sounding me out, trying to get to the bottom of what I believed. (He did it with everyone. When he was publishing Ed Drummond's Byzantine collection of essays, *A Dream of White Horses*, Ken wrote him asking precisely that: Who exactly are you?) I gently put the receiver down on the kitchen table, and while Ken launched into one of his famous tirades, I made breakfast, occasionally returning to the phone to offer encouragement.

We talked often, and I came to know him well. I was too young to understand the scale of his achievements or the surprising complexity of his personality: his insatiable curiosity, his wisdom and his kindness. He was just a voice coming out of the earpiece, a Girolamo Savonarola of the heights, treating climbing as though it were a world religion whose fundamental precepts were under threat. With the passage of time, however, I can sense his frustration, his sense that for all his boundless energy and experience, things were drifting in a direction that undermined everything he held dear.

Ken was not your typical binary thinker. Yes, he believed the world could be divided into good and bad. Part of him reveled in that distinction. He also loved hierarchies. He divided climbers into teams; he and I were firmly in the "D" team, the broad mass of weekend enthusiasts with little discernible talent. To make the "A" team, you basically had to be Bonatti. The early editions of *Mountain* magazine, the title that defined the first part of his career, were full of definitive lists, lassoing world climbing and wrangling it to the floor. Back then, in the late 1960s, few behaved with such gleeful directness. He was Prometheus unchained, defining the world he was trying to describe. Very few editors get to do that. The side effect was a mood of competition, of taking climbers from their natural context and setting them against each other.

Yet his instincts were also profoundly libertarian, a paradox that explains how someone so opinionated could welcome such diversity. He adored the rough and tumble, and lacking self-importance, he took the consequences on the chin. *Mountain* thrived on a broad cross-section of voices and standpoints. He loved soccer and understood the complexities of teamwork; he was warmly respectful to talent but would never genuflect. If *Mountain* sometimes drifted towards pomposity, there were writers like Tom Patey and Ian McNaught-Davis, two of climbing's best satirists, or the genius of cartoonist Sheridan Anderson, to dirty the tone a little, to have a laugh and let some light in. The Letters pages were vibrant, critical, sometimes outraged and always carefully manicured, like a garden, to cultivate debate.

What drove Ken, I think, was his passion for the authentic. He took that idea very seriously. Publishing essays like Reinhold Messner's "The Murder of the Impossible" was the definition of what Ken was trying to do. Messner's criticism of expansion bolts resonated with Ken; he would argue ardently against them for the rest of his life. What is it that makes climbing so compelling and satisfactory? It is a game with rules--but none of them written in an arena that is not of our own design--a competition with no clear winners, a place to impose our will and then have it ripped away.

(He was powerfully influenced by Lito Tejada-Flores' essay "Games Climbers Play," anthologizing it in his classic essay collection of the same name as the lead article.)

This boisterous heralding of self-reliance could look a little daft in wider society. He campaigned against the imposition of seat belts for example, instead of just sticking two fingers up and not wearing his own. And he could misjudge the direction of travel in climbing too, famously lambasting John Allen for using chalk to free climb the iconic route Great Wall on Clogwyn d'ur Arddu. Even Ken laughed at that one, before mounting a spirited defence. Sometimes his passion for debate would spill over into something a little darker, a little more personal, but if it did, I think he regretted it.

He took the more journalistic parts of the job very seriously, mounting determined investigations. Fraudsters were of particular interest. He was quick to expose fantasists who claimed routes they hadn't done. He provided excellent and concise coverage of the Cairngorm Tragedy of 1971, a turning point in the long debate about the role of adventure in education. His inquiry into the claimed first ascent of Cerro Torre in 1959 was just as significant. Even after he stopped editing *Mountain*, he remained a sounding board and advisor for those like Rolo Garibotti who had the courage to keep pressing the investigation.

After *Mountain*, he moved naturally into publishing, ultimately a more productive role. It allowed his enthusiasm full rein. He reveled in the detail, far more than any mainstream publisher would consider sane or profitable. When Hodder and Stoughton bought his first company, Diadem, he managed four years in the corporate world before a merger forced him out. Within days he had started Baton Wicks. His books were underpinned by the same principles that *Mountain* had thrived under: scope, ambition and passion. *Hard Rock* serves as the best example, an eclectic smorgasbord of essays about British rock climbing at a particular moment that somehow contrives to give a sweeping overview, like a painting by Bruegel. He repeated the model successfully with *Cold Climbs*, a bible still for many winter climbers, *Classic Rock* and *Extreme Rock*.

He was nervous around more literary writers. Drummond's collection was his only real attempt to bring something of such complexity to press, although he used Jim Perrin to great effect as an editor for *Mirrors in the Cliff*, his second compendium, and for new editions of H. W. Tilman and Eric Shipton. His great strength was in his organizational ability, his scope, his enthusiasm and his clear visual imagination. He made books to last, books constructed with enthusiasm, books that rewarded close attention, and readers responded warmly. Ken was likeable, and so were his books. The dementia that slowly robbed him of himself was painful to watch, even from a distance. It must have been excruciating for those close to him, not least his wife Gloria. He was such a presence, such a commanding figure, bristling and industrious, that even though he was largely gone by the time he died, the feeling of sadness is profound.

I really miss those phone calls.

*By Ed Douglas from the Alpinist*



Hari Dang. [Photo] Harish Kapadia

## Hari Dang

Hari Dang passed away on July 23, 2016. He was a long standing member of the Himalayan Club. He served as a member and Vice President of IMF for years.

He was a well known mountaineer, respected wild life conservationist and a naturalist. He was awarded the Padma Shree by the Govt. of India.



Roger Chorley. [Photo] Harish Kapadia

## Lord Roger Chorley

Roger Chorley passed away in February 2016. He was an ardent environmentalist, the president of the Alpine Club (1983-85) and the Royal Geographic Society (1987-90). He was a stronger supporter of the Himalayan Club.





## Office bearers of the Himalayan Club for the year 2016

### OFFICERS

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View from Khumchu Ri towards east. [Photo] Anastasija Davidova

**Edited by**  
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### **Published for the Himalayan Club**

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Off Dr. E. Moses Road, Mahalaxmi [West], Mumbai 400011, India.

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