



E-LETTER

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Nya Kangri from Arganglas Valley. Photo Divyesh Muni



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CLIMBS AND EXPLORATIONS

Sikkim and Nepal Himalaya

First Ascent – North face of Nyainqentangla South East (7046m)

British Climbers Nick Bullock and Paul Ramsden made the first ascent of the north face of a rarely visited Nyainqentangla South East (7046m) on October 2-8, 2016. Difficulty of getting a permit to climb and the persistent bad weather has made this mountain relatively inaccessible. According to the climbers, this was the first ascent of the South East peak.



North Buttress of Nyainqentangla South East, first ascent by Paul Ramsden/Nick Bullock.



In Nick Bullock's words

After the five days' acclimatisation, some bad weather, some resting (for me), Paul and I walked up the valley with bags packed. Being camped beneath the triangular face made the word, insignificance, have meaning. The face was huge. In the night it hailed and snowed several inches. We had time, so we left all of the gear and ran away, but remember, this was a Ramsden trip and Ramsden does not really do waiting well, so after only one day of rest, we were again camped beneath the face. On this day of walking we had been granted our first full day of sun and dry since we arrived, it had to be a sign, a pointer from the gods, a good luck gift, but of course it wasn't, it was just another card, an incitement pulled from the bag of weather tricks this range had in its pocket.

see <http://nickbullock-climber.co.uk/2016/10/10/nyainqentangla-south-east-via-the-north-buttress/> for a detailed account.

Kumaon and Garhwal Himalaya

Vishnu Killa (5968m)– First Ascent

Martin Moran led a team of 10 climbers to this remote valley and climbed the PK 5968m called Vishnu Killa – The abode of Lord Vishnu. The range is called Vishnu Ghar Dhar. The peak is not high but looks complex, serrated and heavily glaciated. Ascents at sub-6000m altitude are possible on a three-week time budget – a definite plus to those with working lives.

The team travelled from Delhi to Haridwar to Urgan, 15 km before Joshimath. The low starting altitude of 2000m meant a big ascent on day one of the trek. The team tramped 1500 metres uphill to emerge from the forest on the ridge of Bansi Narayan. After a strike of porters and amidst thunder showers, they established their base camp at the snout of Gimme Glacier.

The Gimme Glacier curves up into an impressive icefall and at its head lies a 5300m col. The col is to be crossed to reach Peak 5968m.

While the good weather lasted, the team made a push for the col. At the col, a blindingly beautiful view broke forth. Across the gulf of the Panpatia valley lay the bulwarks of Parvati Parabat and 6596m Nilkanth. Most importantly, the crown of Peak 5968m rose up to the left. The team

need to descend a hundred metres before it could commence the summit climb. This was a climb to be done at night, but the route was undoubtedly feasible with a margin of safety.

The team got up at 10.30pm to start the summit bid in two parties. The descent from the col was the psychological threshold. The night hours passed in the ascent of the glacier, weaving round huge crevasses and ice walls. The eastern skyline was punctured by the spears and obelisks of the great peaks of the Nanda Devi range. The sunrise came slow but at 6.00am the sun burst forth. A part of the team, passed the second team on their descent. Had they been to the top? Well, yes and no. True to the sporting tradition of amateur mountaineering they had stopped three metres below a crowning cornice and decreed that the summit plinth should remain the domain of god Vishnu and his cohorts. The second team had no such scruples. They reached the top. By midday the last stragglers staggered back into camp. The team returned safely to base camp.



Vishnu Killa.



Indo-Scottish Vishnugarh Darh Expedition 2016, Garhwal

The expedition's objective was to explore unclimbed mountains in a reasonably accessible range between Joshimath and Badrinath, in Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India. The ridge is called the Vishnugarh Darh (Vishnu's Fortress), south of the Panpatia Glacier, which is to the south of Nilkanth. All the peaks are under 6000m, and they require minimal hassle of permits, liaison officers and their concomitant costs.

Susan Jensen met Anindya 'Raja' Mukherjee in Delhi on 22 May 2016, travelled to Joshimath. The team organised food, tents, kitchen equipment, kerosene and all the other miscellany at Joshimath. On 27 May the team started a two day walk up to base camp, another day moving base camp to a better place, then a couple of days in recce to decide where to begin.

From the beginning of the walk up to base camp Raja's breathing had started going rough. After a couple of recce days, on 2 June the team went up to a higher position (about 4200m) from which the next day the team would move into a glacial bowl that would present them with their first set of unclimbed peaks.

The morning arrived and Raja's breathing was painful. It didn't have the usual symptoms of HAPE, but it was also obvious that he wasn't acclimatising. Susan went for a recce walk to 4765m to peek into that glacial bowl, then went back to the tent, packed up and walked back down to base camp

The next day (4 June) Raja rested in base camp and Susan went to a lower bivvy at the base of a couloir that led into a cirque in a easterly section of the Vishnugarh Darh. Susan was on top of a 4400m peak in the early morning. Subsequently she returned to the camp. Meanwhile, Raja's health was deteriorating. He needed immediate medical attention.

The following day, Susan and Dinesh (one of the base camp staff) returned to Joshimath to send the porters up. On June 7, Raja and Zaman returned to Joshimath. On June 9, the team returned to Haridwar; on 10 June Susan flew to UK and Raja returned on a train to Kolkata. Raja had developed a lung infection.

Team Members : Susan Jensen, Anindya 'Raja' Mukherjee

Himachal Pradesh

Sersank Peak (6050m) - First ascent of North Buttress

Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders made the first ascent of the North Buttress of Sersank Peak also known as Shiv Shankar. This peak was first climbed in 2008 from the west side by a Japanese team. The Japanese team stopped 40m shy of the top because of a request from the locals.

The pair set of on September 26, 2016 and returned after eight days.



North Buttress of Shersank Peak.



“The technical difficulties were exciting, varied and challenging,” Fowler said. “It was a brilliant and memorable outing. The first day was crossing the Sersank La to the foot of the face. The second day was slow going with powder on steep rock. The third day was mainly a sharp, exposed crest with powder and rock challenges (crampons removed at one point) and the fourth, fifth and sixth days were fantastic ice/mixed climbing. Day 7 was mixed/snow climbing to the summit followed by glacial terrain in descent. Day 8 was very complex and satisfying glacial terrain involving several abseils from abalakovs.”

See http://www.alpinist.com/doc/_print/web16f/newswire-mick-fowler-and-victor-saunders-make-first-ascent for details

First ascent of the north west ridge of Gangtang (6162m)

The aim of this expedition in May and June 2016 was to make the first ascent of the NW Ridge of Gangtang (6163m) in the Lahaul district of Himachal Pradesh, India. Gangtang lies near the Chandra-Bhaga River and is normally approached from Keylong (3350m) for the Voie Normal (SW Ridge) from the Gangtang Glacier. However, for this expedition we approached from the road head of Nainghar further to the west. The expedition was blessed with excellent weather with a usual pattern of late afternoon and very early morning mist, drizzle or snow and fine days.

Gangtang was first reportedly climbed by Italians in 1945 and again in 1973 by a team from Calcutta. It is most commonly climbed via the SW Ridge. Successful parties have approached from the Gangtang Glacier to the East. In 2001 a Japanese party broke new ground by approaching the peak via the glacier below the North Face and from here made the first approach of the East Ridge. In 2007, Martin Moran brought a commercial expedition to the Thiro Valley. During that time his team successfully climbed what they called Thiro Shivling (5324m), a prominent rocky bastion at the far end of the NW 1 Ridge of Gangtang, PD- and established a partial new route up a curving snow couloir on the west face of Gangtang before joining the standard SW Ridge.

The team started walking towards their objective from the village of Naingarh. The base camp was established at 4200m after a two-day trek. After acclimatising for a few days and climbing Neelkantha (5324m), the team was ready to tackle the main objective.

On the morning of 6 Jun, the team headed back up the moraine and toward the base of the glacier that sits under the North face of Gangstang. Over the next three days they climbed the rock and ice face and summited on June 9 in bad weather. Subsequently they descended safely to the base camp.

The expedition consisted of Malcolm Bass (Leader) and Guy Buckingham (climber), Mr Parmender Sharma (Liaison Officer) Mr Bhim Bahadar Lama (Guide) Mr Santabir Sherpa (Chef), Mr Dawa Bhutiya (Assistant)

North Spur of Marakula Killa (5755m) – First Ascent

Team Members Ian Dring and Martin Moran

Ian Dring and Martin Moran made the first ascent of the north spur of Marakula Killa (5755m). This beautiful peak also called Crocodile Rock is in Miyar Valley of Lahul District of Himachal Pradesh.



It was an alpine style attempt with first bivvy at 4630m and over the next 6 days they reached the top on a sheer rock face.

They reached the top on October 1, 2016 and returned safely.

Marakula Killa. *Photo Martin Moran*



Ladakh, Zaskar and Kashmir

Ascent of Brahma II (6425m) South Face

Chris Gibisch and Jeff Shapiro made the first ascent of the 1300m south face of Brahma II on November 7, 2016. They chose a line which was safer from rock fall and avalanche due to the warm conditions they experienced. On the first day they climbed for 13 hours to reach the South West ridge and an ideal place for bivvy. On the next day, after a long climb on the face, they summited at 6.30 pm in clam weather. They rappelled about 5 rope lengths on to a lower ice slope to spend the second night in ice seats for lack of flat ground. They descended to the base camp in another day and a half. The climb was funded in part by Mugs Stump award.

First ascent of Lak Kangri – PK6222 and Thrung-ma Kangri – PK 6315

Five members of the Alpine Club visited the remote Rassa Glacier beyond Arganglas between August 25 and Oct 2, 2016. They travelled via Delhi to Leh (3,500m) where they spent two days acclimatising before crossing the 5,370m Kardung La into the Nubra Valley. Following two additional days near Sumur the team transferred to the small town of Tirit from where they began a three-day trek up the Tirit Phu to establish a base camp at 4,756m, a little beyond Arganglas and close to the confluence of the Rassa and Phunangma glacial outflows.

After identifying an optimised access to the lower Rassa Glacier, an advance base camp was subsequently established on 5th September on a sandy area at 5,100m. Further forays resulted in two high camps on the glacier proper; Camp 1 at 5,585m and Camp 2 at 5,675m. From the higher camp team members successfully made the first and second ascents of PK 6222 (Lak Kangri) via the SE face on the 10th & 11th September respectively. Eight days later, on 19th September, the team accomplished the first ascent of their main target, PK 6315 (Thrung-ma Kangri), via the steep south face.

The team members were Derek Buckle, Mike Cocker, Drew Cook, Gus Morton, Knut Tønsberg.

Attempt on Shahi Kangri(6934m)

Our expedition to Shahi Kangri (6934 m.) was organized under the aegis of The Himalayan Club.



Rajesh Gadgil, Ratnesh Javeri, Vineeta Muni, Dinesh Korday, Roshmin Mehandru and I met up with our 10-member support staff. We reached Leh on 5th May via Srinagar, Sonamarg, Kargil and Mulbek.

On 9th May, we drove from Leh to Shyok village via Darbuk. En route, we crossed the Changla (5360m). Snow levels were still high and temperatures were low. It was late evening when we reached the Border Roads Organization post at Shyok, where we spent the night.

The following day we drove 150 kms to Murgo. At Sultan Chusku we crossed the Shyok river. We camped at Murgo for the next three days awaiting the final clearance from the local Army unit for us to proceed. The road-head camp was located a few hundred metres from the Chip Chap nala near Chongtash.

We started receiving a route to base camp. Our first foray was along the Chip Chap nala itself. The route traversed on flat ground for a kilometre and then we had to descend to the Chip Chap nala on some very loose scree. We went along the nala for a few kilometres crossing the river at many places. Unfortunately, we were stopped at a narrow section of the nala where the water was touching both edges of the nala.

The following day, we attempted to climb high and find a way to pass the bottle neck. A 600m climb brought us to a high pass overlooking the nala. It was not possible to negotiate this route with all our rations and equipment. We would have to find a different path.

We started off along the true left of the nala and traversed the slopes about 200 m above the riverbed. For the first two km the route gave us hope. Suddenly the slopes fell steeply into the nala just beyond the bottle neck. The drop was nearly 70 degrees with loose mud and rubble all the way down. Unfortunately, the route was too loose and steep for us to plan shifting our loads to Base Camp.

After discussion, we decided to call off our attempt to reach Shahi Kangri. Our quest for adventure was far from satisfied. We decided to attempt a peak in the 'open' area, Nya Kangri which was unclimbed as yet. We soon made our way to the Nubra valley.

We spent two days in Tirit re-organizing our loads, and arranging for horses.

The approach trek started at near the Tirit Monastery, climbing about 900 m before traversing the valley from its true left. It was late evening by the



The Bottle Neck on Chip Chap Nala. Photo Divyesh Muni

time we reached Wasekhar – (jungle camp). On the next day, by evening, we were still some distance away from Base Camp, and unsure about the route ahead. We decided to camp for the night and continue only after we had confirmed a safe route.

On 21st May, we finally established base camp at Phonglas (4630 m). On 28th May, we shifted to ABC at 5430 m. The following day we ventured further up the glacier and were happy to discover a possible route which we could negotiate.

The route to summit camp started along the glacier just above the ABC site. It was a steady climb till we reach a basin below the east ridge and south west ridge of Nya Kangri. The south west ridge route seemed to be safer. Initially the slopes were easy angled with a layer of snow cover. After the initial 200 m the route got steeper and the ice was exposed. A short section of rope was fixed just below the campsite due to the hard ice.

On 2nd June, we moved to summit camp at 5965 m. Early next morning we started up the ridge. The initial 100 m. was steep followed by a short traverse to overcome a bergschrund. The angle eased a bit for the next 100 m and then we hit a section of steep blue ice. Another 100 m brought us to more steep blue ice. This would lead us to the rock outcrop that



would culminate at the final summit ridge. We were now about 250 m from the summit. It was 10:30 a.m. but a steady wind was blowing and it had started to snow. We realized that the next 250 m, with sections of steep blue ice, would take us considerable time to negotiate. Keeping the fast changing weather in mind, we decided to turn back for the day.

We all moved down to base camp for rest and recuperation giving time for the weather to settle. After five days, on 7th June, we moved to ABC and were back at summit camp on the 8th.

We woke up at 2:00 a.m. on 9th June to the sound of a constant patter of snowfall on the tents. A peek outside was disheartening - the visibility was barely a few feet. Hoping the weather would settle, we decided to postpone the summit attempt by a day. The snow fall was intermittent during the day. Unfortunately, the weather turned worst by late evening and it continued to snow heavily through the night. In the morning, we quickly wound up camp and made our way down. By late afternoon we had wound up ABC and were at BC. We had reached so close to the summit that it seemed certain that we would get there. We had now run out of rations and fuel and our horses were expected in two days. We had no choice but to call off further attempts.

The weather we had experienced had paralyzed the Nubra valley for a few days. News was that Khardung La was blocked and hundreds of vehicles were stranded due to the sudden and heavy snowfall. It was only after we returned to Leh on 14th June that the weather finally cleared.

By Divyesh Muni



The Chogtash Plains. *Photo Divyesh Muni*

Karakoram

Death on Ogre II (6980m)

Kyle Dempster and Scott Adamson perished on Ogre II in Karakoram. They were last seen on August 22, 2016 on the North Face of Ogre II. A storm arrived on August 23 and cleared after 11 days on September 3. No trace of the climbers was found. A search and rescue operation was aided through a crowd funding effort, raising \$198,000 in 6 days. Nearly 5000 people contributed to the fund raising.

According to Jonathan Thesenga of Black Diamond: "In light of those extensive yet unsuccessful efforts, the search team and knowledgeable observers in the US, and Europe, assessed that there remained a very slim chance that any evidence of their passage would be revealed in subsequent sweeps of the mountain. Given the time that has elapsed and the nearly continuous stormy weather since they were last seen, and the substantial risks that such high-altitude missions entail, Kyle and Scott's families have made the extremely difficult decision to end the search efforts."



The Ogre II



The Ogre – as the name suggests means a monster of a fairy tale which feeds on humans, lives up to its name. It is a sharp tooth like structure high above the Choktoi Glacier near the Latok Peaks. The north face of Ogre II is 1400m tall with falling debris and vulnerable to storms. The north face has not been climbed.

The same pair had attempted the north face in 2015 reaching an altitude of 6631m- 367m below the summit.

See Alpinist September 9, 2016 post for a detailed report

Attempt on Gulmit Tower (5801m)

A two-member British team of Pete Thompson and Aiden Laffey abandoned the attempt on Gulmit Tower East face and South East ridge due to rock fall and unsafe conditions on the glacier. They moved to Moorkhun Valley to attempt Pregar(6112m). Pete Thomson reached within 20m of the summit and had to turn back due to poor snow conditions.

THE HIMALAYAN CLUB NEWS

Kolkata Section

88th Founders Day Celebrations Held on March 5, 2016

The 88th Founders Day Celebrations were held by the Kolkata Section at Rotary Sadan on 5th March 2016. The program started with a presentation by Mr. Aadrito Paul on the latest expedition organized by the Club. The Himalayan Club Kolkata Section, in its quest for newer challenges, organized an expedition to Mt. Koa Rong-III (6145m), jointly with the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, in September 2015. With fewer climbing members available and a dream to climb alpine style, the KR group of peaks located deep in the lesser trodden mountains of the Himachal Pradesh was a natural choice. Young Aadrito in his presentation eloquently described the hazardous climb which, though could not be concluded successfully due to extreme bad weather condition, proved to be a learning experience for many of them. This was followed by an illuminating talk by the Director of Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Mahmood Shah, who impressed upon the audience that Kashmir was a safe tourist destination now. Mr. Shah, who is also a mountaineer and President of Jammu and Kashmir Mountaineering and Hiking Club, had trekked a hundred high altitude lakes in Jammu & Kashmir. The next speaker, Mr. Tanmoy Banerjee, regaled the audience with a well manicured National Geographic produced video of his trip to the Arctic along with the photographs taken by him on the expedition.



Mr. Mahmood Shah, Director of Tourism - Jammu-Kashmir

The last speaker, Mr. Ratanlal Biswas's 'The Forbidden Land of Nepal' was a well documented series of his journey through Upper Dolpo and the Mustang valley following in the footsteps of David Snellgrove. Mr. Nilay Chakraborty, Hony. Local Secretary, thanked the audience, the speakers and the dignitaries present, and invited them to share tea and snacks.



Grandeur of Everest – Lure of Sagarmatha at Rotary Sadan Kolkata on July 6th 2016

The Consulate General of Nepal in Kolkata and The Himalayan Club, Kolkata Section organised the program “Grandeur of Everest, The Lure of Sagarmatha 2016”, which highlighted newer developments in mountaineering tourism in Nepal, felicitation of the successful mountaineers from West Bengal who scaled Everest in 2016, and the recount of climbing accounts on Everest this year.

Their Excellencies Mr. Eak Narayan Aryal, Consul General of Nepal in Kolkata and Mr. Sudarshan Prasad Dhakal, Director General of Tourism, Nepal jointly inaugurated the program and set the ball rolling. The main program, commenced with a note of silence, in fond remembrance of our beloved HC member Goutam Ghosh and other friends from the Bengal mountaineering fraternity, who made their peace with their maker on the summit slopes of Mt. Everest and Dhaulagiri in the spring climbing season 2016.



Mr. Eak Narayan Aryal, Consul General of Nepal and Mr. Sudarshan Dhakal, Director of Tourism, Nepal inaugurating the function

Thereafter, Mr. Pradeep Chandra Sahoo spoke from his heart on his presentation – ‘Sacred Summit of Sagarmatha’, describing the climb and efforts on Everest, from 2014 to his eventual ascent in 2016. The program wrapped up with a

felicitation being made to the climbers from West Bengal. The program was followed by a grand dinner hosted by the Consulate General of Nepal in Kolkata at their premises.

By Niloy Chakraborty



Delhi Section

Many talks and films were organised by the Delhi section of the club during 2016. These were :

K2 and the Invisible Footmen – May 18, 2016 - Film directed by Lara Lee

For many climbers, K2, the second-highest mountain on Earth, is an even greater prize than Everest, with limited routes, a steeper ascent, and a harder push to its summit. Nicknamed the 'Savage Mountain', K2's peak juts unprotected into the atmosphere, regularly exposing climbers and porters to life-threatening weather conditions. In 'K2 and the Invisible footmen', filmmaker Lara Lee and her team chronicle the lives of both high-altitude porters (HAPs) and sherpas. The film also follows the climbing team, made up of former high-altitude porters from Gilgit-Baltistan, who successfully summited in 2014, in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the first successful climb of K2. Amid breathtaking scenery, the film depicts the everyday sacrifices of porters and the courage of those indigenous climbers who choose to return to scale K2 in spite of past tragedies. Collab: Indian Mountaineering Foundation

'Birds of the Western Himalaya'. – March 13, 2016 - Illustrated Talk by Commander K. B. Singh

The Himalaya is one of the most spectacular physical features of our world. The abrupt rise of the Himalayan mountains from less than 500 metres to more than 8000 metres results in a diversity of ecosystems that range, in only a just couple of hundred kilometres, from alluvial grasslands and subtropical broadleaf forests along the foothills to temperate broadleaf forests in the mid hills, mixed conifer and conifer forests in the higher hills, and alpine meadows above the tree line. The greatest part of the avian biodiversity of South Asia is to be found in the narrow space along the Himalayan range. Birdlife International has identified four Endemic Bird Areas (EBAs) that overlap partially or fully with the Himalaya hotspot. The Western Himalaya EBA has 11 species restricted to it, including the Himalayan Quail as well as the Cheer Pheasant (*Catreus wallichii*, VU) and the Western Tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*, VU). The Himalaya also hold large areas of alpine habitat with its own diverse avifauna. The arid plateaux to the north of the range has its own sparse and distinctively



Tibetan avifauna. The illustrated talk provided an introduction to the rich birdlife of the Western Himalaya, including the adjacent trans-Himalayan regions of Ladakh and Lahaul & Spiti. Few critical species found here and associated conservation challenges were also discussed. Commander Kanwar B. Singh is a retired naval officer with a keen interest and passion for ornithology for the last two decades. He coordinates various birding activities in Delhi and is also the founder of Facebook forum 'Indian Birds', which is the largest online community of bird enthusiasts in India. Cdr K. B. Singh has also been closely associated with the Himalayan Club for many years and has served in the Management Committee of the Club.

'Why do we climb? Exploring the answer through my expeditions.'
– February 27, 2016 - Illustrated Talk by Prem Kumar Singh

Mountaineer Prem Kumar Singh dwelled on what motivates one to climb mountains and whether it is really worth the investment of human potential and what is the return on investment. Prem has climbed various peaks across the Himalaya, including Mt. Deo Tibba (6001m), Mt. Satopanth (7075m), Mt. Everest (8848m), and Mt. Nun (7135m). He has also climbed various peaks outside of the Himalayan range, including Mt. Elbrus (5642m, the highest in Europe), Mt. Aconcagua (6961m, the highest in South America), and Mt. Puncak Jaya (4884m, the highest in Oceania). He featured on an adventure reality TV show on NDTV Prime called 'Volvo XC Adventure', which he won after a gruesome 15-episodes journey. Nowadays, apart from putting together a team for his next expedition to Mount Janahut (6805m), he has embarked on cleaning expeditions, the first one to Mt. Ladakhi (5345m) from where they brought back 30 kg of garbage.

'The Trails Less Travelled' – January 22, 2016 - Illustrated Talk by Avay Shukla

Avay Shukla recounted his experiences of high-altitude trekking in Himachal Pradesh over twenty years, including in the Great Himalayan National Park in Kullu district, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015, of which little is known and even less written. He did not limit himself to describing the stunning landscapes but also chronicled interesting mountain lore, local mythology, amusing anecdotes, and rare wildlife sightings. He also flagged some of the conservation issues that have long bedevilled nature lovers and administrators. Avay Shukla retired from



the Himachal Pradesh cadre of the IAS in 2010. He is a passionate nature lover, a founder-member of the Eco-Tourism Society of India and President of the HP Trekking Association. He considers himself fortunate to have served in a state so richly endowed by nature, and to have held positions in government which have enabled him to contribute to conservation focused policies, such as notification of the Green Belt in Shimla, creation of two new National Parks, notification of GHNP as a World Heritage Site. formulation of the country's first Eco-Tourism and Home Stay policies and mitigation of the impact of Hydel power projects on the environment.

'High Adventure in Western Garhwal' - December 23, 2015

Illustrated Talk by Maninder Kohli, accompanied by Arati Shriram, Pooja Gandhi, and Amina Bharat Ram

This illustrated talk presented images of four spectacular treks—Baraadsar Lake, Maldaru Lake, Kanasar Lake, and the crossing of Bali Pass (4840m). The speakers have visited the Western Garhwal many times, exploring the immense beauty of the region and its lesser known lakes. The talks also reflected the personal journey of each of the trekkers, building on physical endurance, apprehensions, fitness, use of high-quality gear, awareness of altitude issues, and mentoring new participants whilst pushing each other to greater heights. The key trek featured in the talk was the recent crossing of Bali Pass (4840m) where all the learning of previous treks was put to the test to support a group of 18 getting across the Bali Pass.

Compiled by Rama Goel and Maninder Kohli

Pune Section

The Pune section of the Himalayan Club has been very active during the last year. Some of the highlights of the programs organised were

The Annual Program of the Pune Section held on April 10, 2016 at the Symbiosis Vishwabhan Auditorium, Pune. Vineeta Muni a member of the club with many expeditions and treks to her credit, delivered the Dr. Vrinda Chinchwadkar Memorial Lecture - "*A life of Adventure*".

She narrated her experience through a unique audio visual presentation and described how adventure and mountains transformed her life and inspired her through years. The lecture was followed by the *Banff Mountain Film Festival*. It was attended by over 500 persons.



The Pune section under the able leadership of Dr. Godbole organised a high altitude trek of the Dhaulagiri Circuit in Nepal Himalaya from May 10 to 31, 2016. The trek involved crossing two high passes of 5000+ meters. The Pune section also organised four monsoon treks in lush green Western Ghats to Rajgad Fort, Raireswar Fort, Pandavgad Fort and a traverse of the Panshet Valley. These were enjoyed by more than 100 members and guests.

From information received from Dr. Godbole

THE HIMALAYAN CLUB AWARDS

Kekoo Naoroji Book Award

Doug Scott is the recipient of this year's Kekoo Naoroji Book Award for Himalayan Literature. He will be present during the annual function to receive the award in February 2017.

Jagdish Nanavati Award for Excellence in Mountaineering and Jagdish Nanavati Garud Medal

Nominations are invited for the above awards. Please recognise people who have made a difference and nominate them for the Jagdish Nanavati awards. The details can be found on the Himalayan Club Web Site.

NEWS & VIEWS

Piolets d'Or Asia Awards - 2016

2016 Piolets d'Or Asia Award Lifetime Award - Tamotsu Nakamura

Gentleman Tamotsu Nakamura born in 1934 led an expedition to Peru and Bolivia in 1961, where he made the several first ascents. After living and working around the world in Pakistan, Mexico, New Zealand and Hong Kong, he seriously devoted his life to the mountains in the borderlands of south-east Tibet and west China: Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai. Over 25 years he conducted 38 expeditions for discovery, photographing and mapping of countless unclimbed peaks, untrodden glaciers, high plateau, lakes,



gorges and Tibetan culture. Not only having written several books, one in Germany, he edited the Japanese Alpine News for 15 years.

These forays have garnered numerous awards from internationally recognized societies such as the UIAA Award (2007), the Royal Geographical Society's Busk Medal (2008) and International Explorers Award in Poland (2010). In 2016 he published life-work "East of the Himalaya-Mountain Peak Maps-Alps of Tibet and beyond."

11th Piolets d'Or Asia Award

The joint winners of the main award were confirmed as:

A Korean Team led by Mr. Chang-Ho, Kim, who has completed all 14 Himalayan Giants without supplementary oxygen. He and two team members climbed a new route on the south face of Mt. Ganggapurna (7,455m) in the Annapura region under the name "KOREAN-WAY PROJECT 2016." Their climbing achievements in itself were excellent, however, most of all they left nothing on the mountain.

Secret to an adventurous life as told by Reinhold Messner

"I would never have been able to climb Cerro Torre in Patagonia free, without using bolts, like David Lama did," Messner says. "I am very impressed and interested in seeing what's happening today because mountaineering is in a period of great change. Ninety percent of the people going to the mountains today are tourists or sporty people. They climb in the gym, and they do some very difficult climbing, but this is not what I'd call alpinism. Traditional adventure alpinism is a very limited activity in these times. I have the greatest respect for these young climbers who go back to tradition and true alpinism."

<http://www.climbing.com/people/advice-reinhold-messner-on-the-secret-to-an-adventurous-life/>

Climbing officially approved for 2020 Olympics

It's official. Climbers will compete for gold in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. the International Olympic Committee (IOC) approved a package of new events including baseball/softball, karate, skateboarding, climbing, and surfing. The decision was based on a desire to appeal to a young audience.



“We want to take sport to the youth,” said IOC President Thomas Bach. “With the many options that young people have, we cannot expect any more that they will come automatically to us. We have to go to them.”

The climbing event will include three disciplines: sport, bouldering, and speed. 40 climbers (20 men and 20 women) will compete over four days, and the medalists will be chosen based on the combined results of all three disciplines.

For more detailed reading visit

<http://www.climbing.com/news/climbing-officially-approved-for-2020-olympics/>

[Disaster Waiting to Happen in Arunachal Pradesh](#)

This is an eye opening article about the environmental damage waiting to happen in Arunachal Pradesh because of Hydel Power projects. Worth a read.

<http://scroll.in/article/802708/why-private-companies-want-to-give-their-hydel-projects-in-arunachal-to-nhpc>

[Two weeks in the mountains can change your blood for months](#)

This is an interesting article on physiology at high altitude – a must read. It challenges the long held view that low-oxygen conditions cause the body to build new red blood cells, making it easier to supply oxygen to muscles and vital organs

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/10/two-weeks-mountains-can-change-your-blood-months>



OBITUARIES

Pradeep Chandra Sahoo - (1967 – 2016)

Members of the Himalayan Club are deeply grieved to learn about the sad and sudden demise of Mr Pradeep Sahoo on 20th November 2016 in Harare, Zimbabwe. He was a respected member of the Himalayan Club and its Vice President representing the Eastern Section from 2012 to 2014. He had been a member since 2006 and also served as the Honorary Local Secretary of the Eastern Section. During these years he played an active role in his own quiet way to bring up the Eastern section.

By all accounts he was a fine, gentlemanly and extremely skilled mountaineer, who achieved many summits - his most recent one was standing atop Mount Everest with his wife and climbing partner, Chetna just a few months ago. He was the biggest mentor, friend, philosopher and guide to his support staff and younger mountaineers alike.

His sudden passing has come as a great shock to the Members of the Himalayan Club, several who knew him personally as well as the whole mountaineering fraternity and those whose lives he touched during his years as a climber.

On behalf of the Members of the Himalayan Club as well as myself pray for his soul and offer deepest condolences to his family. May God give them strength to bear this hard loss.

I end with a quote from Pradeep, when he resigned as Vice President:

The journey had been very challenging and also very satisfying for me. Like any other journey, there have been highs and lows that taught me life's lessons and made me stronger. I convey my sincere thanks to all of you who helped me to bring me this far in the journey.

By Tanil Kilachand

The first woman to climb Mount Everest, Junko Tabei, has died aged 77

The Japanese climber had been diagnosed with cancer and died at a hospital outside of Tokyo. Tabei reached the summit of the world's highest mountain in 1975, at the age of 35.



Ms. Junko Tabei. Photo Harish Kapadia

In 1992, she also became the first woman to complete the Seven Summits, reaching the highest peaks of the seven continents. Tabei climbed her first mountain in elementary school, when she was led by her teacher to the summit of Mt Nasu, her official website states. She later established the Ladies Climbing Club: Japan, with the slogan “Let’s go on an overseas expedition by ourselves”.

“Back in 1970s Japan, it was still widely considered that men were the ones to work outside and women would stay at home,” Tabei told the Japan Times in 2012.

“Even women who had jobs — they were asked just to serve tea.”

When she left on her Everest expedition, as part of a 15-member, all-women team, “we were told we should be raising children instead”, she told the newspaper.

“There was never a question in my mind that I wanted to climb that mountain, no matter what other people said.”

She had continued climbing later in life, and her website said she went abroad “seven to eight times a year to climb the highest mountain of each country”.

As of 2008, Tabei had climbed the highest peaks of 56 countries, it stated.

Tabei was married with two children.

She completed a degree in English and American Literature at Showa Women’s University in 1962, and a master’s degree in comparative social culture, focusing on garbage problems in the Himalayas, at Kyushu University in 2000.

She campaigned for sustainable mountaineering and was chairperson of the Himalayan Adventure Trust of Japan, which is dedicated to the protection of mountain environments.

Kim Schmitz Dies in a Car Accident

Kim Schmitz a long time climbing partner of John Roskelley died in a car accident while driving to Spokane, Washington, USA. His long time climbing partner and friend John Roskelley said,

“Kim loved the simplicity of trekking and time travel through the Asian cultures he so much admired. He seemed much more at peace with himself on the trail, and the more remote the better. Once on the climb, though, his intensity was fierce and focused. It was Kim’s Yin and Yang; the joy of living life fully, yet continuing to look death in the eye.”



Kim Schmitz had climbed with John Roskelley. To his credit, he had the first ascent of Trango Tower (6286m) and Uli Bihao (6109m) in Karakoram.

He was part of the team which made the first ascent of Gaurishnaker (7181m) in 1979. He participated in a 300 km ski traverse of Karakoram with Galen Rowell.

Last year he received the American Alpine Club’s Robert and Miriam Underhill award for a lifetime of contribution to climbing.

Kim Schmitz on Gaurishankar (7181m).
Photo John Roskelley



Announcing the Commencement of the 90th Year Celebrations of the Himalayan Club

A glimpse of the formidable line up of guest speakers at
the **Himalayan Club's Annual Seminar** February 18 & 19, 2017
KC College Auditorium, Churchgate, Mumbai.



Doug Scott



Leo Houlding



Nungshi & Tashi Malik

Highlights:

- **Doug Scott, CBE**, will receive the **Kekoo Naoroji Book Award** for the first part of his autobiography *Up and About*.
- **Leo Houlding** will deliver the **Kaivan Mistry Memorial Lecture**.
- **The Malik Twins** will make presentations on the **Explorers Grand Slam** achievement as well as their work for the **Foundation** and **girl empowerment**.





Doug Scott

Doug Scott has made 45 expeditions to the high mountains of Asia. He has reached the summit of 40 peaks, of which half were climbed by new routes or for the first time in Alpine Style. Apart from his climb up the South West Face of Everest with Dougal Haston during Chris Bonington's Expedition of 1975, he has made all his climbs in lightweight or Alpine Style, without the use of artificial oxygen. He has reached the highest peaks on all seven continents – 'the seven summits'.

He is a past President of the Alpine Club and was made a CBE in 1994. In 1999 he received the Royal Geographical Society Patron's Gold Medal.

- *Extracted from Doug Scott's website*

Doug Scott, CBE, will be in Mumbai to receive the Kekoo Naoroji Book Award for the first part of his autobiography *Up and About*. He will address audiences at the Seminar on February 18 – 19 2017. Block your dates.

Leo Houlding

If modern British adventure has a face, it looks a lot like Leo Houlding. Based in the Lake District, UK, he is one of Britain's top climbers and among the best in the world.

He is a veteran of a score of epic ascents, including Everest, but specialises in free climbing the most technical peaks and biggest walls in the world.

An experienced base jumper he is at the forefront of Para-Alpinism (climbing up then flying down). Leo pushes the limits of exploratory adventure by taking the ultimate in extreme sports to the most extreme environments.

An articulate communicator he has captivated and inspired audiences around the world with his tales of adrenalin-fuelled exploits.

He sports an impressive television résumé, including an infamous appearance on the BBC's Top Gear, his own show on Virgin One "Take Me To The Edge", and an IMAX movie released in 2010, "The Wildest Dream", retracing the last steps of Mallory and Irvine on their fateful expedition to Everest in 1924.

Most recently he has teamed up with natural historian and adventurer Monty Halls to film the TV series 'Lost Worlds' for the Discovery Channel. Together they make the perfect team to explore the exotic and dangerous locations and truly get to grips with the ecology and wildlife that surrounds them.



In 2013 Leo led his most ambitious and challenging expedition to date in brutal conditions to make the first ascent of Ulvetanna's remarkable, mile long north east ridge. They spent 35 days in the harsh beauty of Antarctica testing themselves to their limits during the climb of their lives.

In 2009, he produced and featured in the multi award-winning movie, "The Asgard Project", an epic, arctic adventure to free climb and BASE jump from one of the world's toughest and most remote big walls.

Leo has become an ambassador for the younger generation of climbers and has been called one of Britain's top ten adventurers by The Telegraph.

- Extracted from the Leo Houlding Website

Leo Houlding will deliver the Kaivan Mistry Memorial Lecture on February 18 2107 and also speak to audiences and make slide, video and film assisted presentations on February 18 - 19, 2017 on the occasion of the Annual Seminar of the Himalayan Club. Block your dates.

Nungshi & Tashi Malik

Despite roots in rural Haryana, notorious for its skewed sex ratio in favour of boys, Nungshi and Tashi Malik have achieved several global gender iconic milestones. They are the world's first siblings and twins to complete the 'Adventurers Grand Slam' (scaling highest peaks in all continents and skiing to North and South Poles). They are also world's youngest persons ever and the first South Asians to complete it. They are also the youngest South Asians to scale the Seven Summits and to reach the South and North Pole on Skis. The twins were featured in 60th edition of Guinness World Records, 2015. They are fellows of the Royal Geographical Society, London.

The twins are India's most reported mountaineers in India and abroad. They have set up the NungshiTashi Foundation dedicated to the Indian girl child with the motto 'Gender Equality Now: Fight Female Feticide'.

The twin sisters have graduated with diploma in Sport and Exercise under New Zealand's Prime Minister's scholarship in December 2015. Recently they attended the US Government's Global Sports Mentorship Program for 'emerging women leaders in sports'.

- Extracted from the NungshiTashi Foundation Website

The Malik Twins will make slide and video presentations on the Explorers Grand Slam achievement as well as their work for the Foundation and girl empowerment on the occasion of the Annual Seminar of the Himalayan Club, February 18 - 19, 2017. Block your dates.



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View from the summit camp of Nya Kangri peaks seen – Argan Kangri (on the right) and Abale (on the left). *Photo Divyesh Muni*

Edited by

[Dr. Ravi Mariwala](#)

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Himalayan Club Centre, 314, Turf Estate, Shakti Mills Lane,
Off Dr. E. Moses Road, Mahalaxmi [West], Mumbai 400011, India.

Phone: [91-22] 24912829

Website: www.himalayanclub.org

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