

Alpine Club Library Report - November 2017 ver2



At the last AGM, Barbara Grigor-Taylor was appointed Honorary Librarian, to succeed Dr Jerry Lovatt who had served - initially a few years as Hon Keeper of the Paintings, and then Hon Librarian - for a total of 26 years; a prodigious feat. Jerry has accepted the post of Librarian Emeritus; we are delighted to retain his vast knowledge of historic books and artefacts.

In March, it was with great regret that we noted the death of Peter Mallalieu, who was Keeper of the Paintings for around 20 years. Peter compiled "The Artists of the Alpine Club", an important biographical dictionary recording the many artists represented in the AC collections.

Barbara has started her new role with great energy and much has happened this year. Her first important task was to engage a new Librarian when Tad (Tadeuz) Hudowski resigned in the Spring, after being with us for 8 years. Nigel Buckley has now been appointed. Nigel has an MA from Newcastle University, has librarian experience with Kingston University, and is just completing his second MA, in Library Collection Management, at University College, London.

Book Library: The book catalogue now holds 27,404 volumes; if we include printed "tracts", such as pamphlets, and maps, the overall total is well over 30,000 items. For many years this catalogue has run on AdLib software, and Nigel has started trials on newer flexible, widely accepted, Koha software to increase our search abilities and publication facilities.

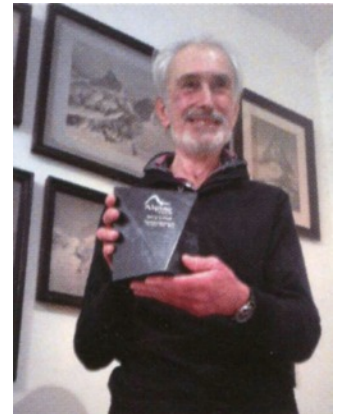
Barbara and Jerry completed the mammoth task of making a new valuation of the books so we have up-to-date figures for insurance; at the same time the shelving was cleaned and improved. Peter Payne and Philip Meredith created further book space by assembling extra shelving.

Digitization of Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) expedition reports (nearly 1,000 to date) continues and they will be going online as they are scanned; this should be completed in 2018. Digitized Alpine Journals (AJs) from 1930 to 2014 are now on our website and, with further work by Phillippe De Renzy-Martin, those from 1911 to 1929 are due to be added in 2018. Our High Asia maps, e.g. Tian Shan and the Karakorum, are popular for reference; by arrangement, some can be digitized by Peter Payne.

The sale of duplicate second-hand books (with grateful thanks for many members' donations and bequests) provides AC members the opportunity to purchase some classic, or even rare books, at reasonable prices.

Gordon Turner and Barbara organized lists of these mountaineering books (as well as Alpine and other guide books) to be circulated to members via Alpinet (or hard copies). The resulting orders gained well over £2,000 for the Library; this goes directly to the maintenance and upkeep of the library stock. Duplicate books have also been donated to libraries at the George Starkey Hut, Somerhill School in Tonbridge, and the Climbers' Club huts.

An initiative by Nigel and Barbara has been to make an illustrated presentation - with examples of books, maps and climbing gear - to a visiting group from Hoe Bridge School, Woking. Their project topics are The Eiger and South American peaks including Roraima.



Jerry proudly accepting this memento, celebrating his 26 yrs Library service



Nigel, our new Librarian



(On right) Our new Hon Librarian, Barbara, explaining a point at the Frenchay Village Museum exhibition - see later

Archives: The past year has been a very fruitful one for archive acquisitions, and in particular for diaries. The most important single donation has been the Frank Smythe archive, donated by his son, Tony. This includes his diaries from Kamet, Everest, and the Rockies expeditions, and also some scrap-books and photographs that survived the conflagration.

The Charles Marriott archive, passed on to us by our member John Atherton, includes accounts of climbs with Eric Shipton and Denise Evans, but also two voyages with Tilman. Colin Kirkus' diary from Gangotri came by a circuitous route from his brother. Coincidentally that day, Charles Warren's diary from the same expedition, having been "lost", was found in the archives, mis-filed with officers' papers. Furthermore, over several visits, we have been helping Susan to sort George Band's books and records. Searches for George's diary of his first ascent of Kangchenjunga in 1955, had failed. However, a visit by Glyn located this at last; now we are digitizing it to make it readily available for study. As our Hon Archivist, Glyn Hughes says "Pure serendipity"... indeed.

Himalayan Index: This has records of over 7,500 ascents or attempts on peaks over 6,000 m in the Himalaya, Karakorum, Hindu Kush, Hindu Raj, and (some) in China and the Tibet region. Sally Russell has kept this index up-to-date for many years, using information reported in the leading climbing journals. Lists of peaks within a specific area (and journal references) are on the AC website. Fuller information on some 30,000 members of the expeditions is available on enquiry to the Library. However, we face challenges in extending this index to cover all the many 6,000 m peaks, in China.

If any member would like to volunteer to help take this work forward, please contact me.

Artefacts: Jerry continues as the Hon Keeper of the Artefacts. These range from Sandy Irvine's 1924 Everest ice-axe to one of Hillary's boots from 1953, and the sun compass and barometer carried by Professor Horace de Saussure on his 1787 ascent of Mont Blanc. We hold circa 350 items. We now have around 100 photographs for our records; we want to photograph the rest for the catalogue, and take some attractive high-resolution photos for possible publication.

Again, if any member would like to volunteer to help take this photography project forward, I would like to hear from them.

Photographs: Our Hon Keeper of the Photographs, Peter Rowland, and his able deputy, Bernie Ingrams, have made continued progress to search the photo collection boxes, quantify what we have, and scan many at high resolution. Examination of 51 albums in 26 boxes, acquired as the Basil Goodfellow collection, found some important photos of people. Also, many of our photos, as thumbnail images, have been added to the catalogue in Capture software; currently, this stands at around 3,500 images. Overall, it is estimated that the entire collections contain 35,000 images so there is still a lot to do.

During 2017, the BMC started a Mountain Photo Collection, for viewing on their website. We have prepared 100 of our historic photos for the new BMC website. Work is in progress to scan 1,500 slides of the Himalaya, donated by Harish Karpadia. During this work, Peter Payne is transferring these into a better archival environment. We received slides from George Band's widow, Susan, of Rakaposhi and Kangchenjunga, now digitized. Also, we were given some Frank Smythe photos (with diaries and scrap-books, q.v.). All these are very interesting, and work has started to sort, assess, conserve, and digitize them.

As Photo Sales Manager, Sue Hare has continued to gain one-use reproduction fees for photos to appear in magazines, publicity and journals; always an important source of income to the library.

We presented a large framed print of a historic photo of Joseph Biner to the Lauber family at the Bahnhof in Zermatt in June. A daughter of the Biner family of famous guides, married into the Lauber family of guides, and they now own and run the Bahnhof. The traditional link with the AC has been continued.

A third group from the London College of Communications visited us; Peter Rowland gave a lecture, "A History of Mountain Photography"; they donated £375 to ACL. David Coral, from the climbing club in Equador and editor of their "Montana" journal, came to look at our archives and photos. He has made Whymper's climbs in Equador, the subject for his PhD and a possible book.

Also amongst treasures stored away in the Photo Library, are 192 stereoscopic slides taken by Albert Hackett, AC, c1860-1910. These have been digitized and electronically cleaned; important items because they represent the great popularity of stereo photographs in Victorian times.



Our member, Dr Peter Blair, recounts that Stereoscopic "3D" photographs were shown at the London Great Exhibition in 1851 and, as legend has it, Queen Victoria was amused.

Stereoviews soon became all the rage. Often, it was a person's first contact with a photograph.

Paintings: John Fairley, our Hon Keeper of the Paintings, has made great progress by cataloguing every painting and illustration in the collections; 740 items, each with a thumbnail photo for identification. This has been tested on small format Mac computers (preferred software is essentially Apple-Mac friendly). Now we are starting a full trial of this catalogue so all can browse the Club's paintings at a Visitor Desk and we are establishing mechanisms to prevent any hacking of our images. For this, a new Mac Mini has been purchased to replace the obsolete Mac (used for map scanning). The basement now has better storage racks for the artefacts, made by John; freeing-up more much needed space for paintings.

Exhibitions at the AC Lecture Room have been of paintings by Rowan Huntley, Neil Pittaway and Tim Pollard; each for around 2 months. These have earned significant commission income for the Library.

For the Mountain Heritage Trust, Glyn attended to provide several exhibits for the "British Woman Climb" exhibition at Keswick Museum and Art Gallery from Sep this year until Sep 2018. These included the AC painting "The Fee Glacier and the Allalinhorn" by Hilda Heckle; loan arranged by John Fairley.



*La Tour Ronde by
Tim Pollard, left*



*The Fee glacier by
Hilda Heckle, right*



**Chamonix valley imagined from the
Brevant**



**View from the Aiguille du Midi towards
Switzerland**

Exhibitions at Charlotte Road:

Two Paintings by Neil Pittaway, above

Public Exhibitions: During January to March, we showed at the Frenchay Village Museum, Bristol, a small version of the exhibition “The Golden Age of Alpinism”, run in Chamonix 2015-16. With insurance limitations, we could not take many original items so large high quality prints were made of 16 historic photos and 5 paintings; many were also framed for the exhibition. This show was a success being visited by many local AC members and others from the public; 120 people attended the related evening lecture given by us.



“The Golden Age of Alpinism” at Frenchay with the installation team: Hywel, Barbara, and Tony Westcott



AC Photographic Competition: This new event has been organised by Peter, with John Cleare as the chief judge. The winners were announced at the Annual Dinner in November. Many of the photos entered for the award are in the AC 2018 Calendar, designed by Peter (shown on left), is on sale now.

The winners and runner-up photographers are listed on the Club web-site; the winning photos are below



Innominata Ridge, Mont Blanc



Matterhorn from Hirli

The winning photographs of the AC Photo Competition 2017 were both by Ben Tibbetts

Finances: The Library manages its finance carefully; it receives funding from the AC, from interest derived from its endowment, from donations, and from fees for: library use, photocopies, photo reproduction licence sales, and exhibition commissions. We usually achieve a small surplus.

This year I am pleased to report two large bequests made by Alan Lyall, our late member known for his definitive book “The Descent of the Matterhorn”, and by Roger (Lord) Chorley, renowned climber when younger with the ACG, and AC President 1983-85. These totalled £13,000 and the Trustees are deciding how to apply them to specific projects to improve the Library for future generations of mountaineers.

In conclusion: The entire Library team is very committed to the care of this splendid heritage, collected by AC members over so many years. All members can be proud of this continuing tradition. All our thanks are due to the many volunteers who have provided their time and expertise.

Hywel Lloyd,

Chairman of the Council of Alpine Club Library Trustees