

Creation of The Himalayan Club Archives, 2019

Harish Kapadia

The Club now has enviable record of all its Himalayan Journals, Newsletters, Committee Minutes, Members Application forms, Annual Reports and expedition reports scanned digitally.

The Himalayan Club, since its inception in 1928, has moved to various places. Initially formed in New Delhi, it later moved to Kolkata. Kolkata served as the Club's headquarters until mid-1960s when a shortage of member-volunteers, caused a crisis in the management of Club affairs. Soli Mehta, who was posted there from Mumbai, carried on with the Club's activities and published some volumes of the *Himalayan Journals* for few years from Rishra, in West Bengal. Finally, it was decided to move the Club to Mumbai, (then Bombay). In Bombay too, the Club had no premises of its own and operated from the office of Jagdish Nanavati, who was the Hon Secretary for more than two decades and later the President of the Club for almost a decade. When he changed his office, the Himalayan Club material moved with him. When he retired, all these resources were packed into boxes and stored at a member Rajesh Gadgil's residence. In 2006, the Himalayan Club acquired its own premises and gradually all the material was shifted to this new office. Unfortunately, in all this movement, a large part of the material was scattered, damaged or even lost.

Of historic importance are original documents of the first Committee Minutes, Memorandum of Association, Rules and Regulations and lists of members. Some of these have been retrieved over the years and stored but are falling apart due to age and climatic conditions.

The Himalayan Journal has always been the wealth of the club in its 90-year history. The production of the *HJ* generated large amounts of paper before the digital age. More than 100 articles were received for each *HJ* volume. The editor selected about 40 Articles and Notes to be printed with photographs. Soli Mehta (10 *HJ* Volumes) and later I as editor for over 37 years, gathered all the material received, whether used or not. They were sorted after the publication of each *HJ* volume and bound with all photographs neatly pasted in albums. Captions were written by volunteers, especially Kaivan Mistry. These

papers and photograph albums were stored as 'Editors papers of the *Himalayan Journals*'. Each *HJ* volume generated almost four such hardbound volumes.

In those days the editors kept in touch with contributors and editors of other Journals of the world, by post. Thus, many letters were exchanged with leading author-mountaineers like Gurdial Singh, Trevor Braham, Chris Bonington and others. Each editor established contacts with editors like H. Adams Carter of the *American Alpine Journal* and editors of the *Alpine Journal* (London). With the advent of emails, material took a digital form and was stored on hard disks. However, over 200 albums needed to be looked after, being of archival importance.

Moreover, the Club has in its possession photographs of historic importance, records of Club programmes, studies by Jagdish Nanavati of more than 40 different expeditions, correspondence by Soli Mehta, (from Kolkata and later from Sudan and Nigeria where he was posted), and I, for work related to the *Himalayan Journals*. The Hon Secretary also generated volumes of correspondence but most of it was however lost in transit. The Club also received photographs and material from members like Gurdial Singh, Aamir Ali and photo albums donated by Bill Aitken.

In the year 2018, the Club first discussed scanning and digitizing this material. It was a major and expensive project so it took a while to find the right people to undertake the work and arrange finance. The job once started, at the Club office, went on for almost a year. All the albums were cut open to scan. Each letter was scanned as per the volume and photographs were scanned with captions where available. All volumes of the *Himalayan Journal* 1 to 73, *The Himalayan Club Newsletter*, 1 to 61, other journals in the Club library like *Indian Mountaineer*, *the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute journals*, *Himavanta*, *Climbers Club Bulletin*, and the *Sahyadri Bulletin* were scanned. These have taken much digital space - the process of sifting through and cataloguing will take time but the process has begun. The Club now has enviable record of all its *Himalayan Journals*, *Newsletters*, Committee Minutes, Members Application forms, Annual Reports and expedition reports. Rare books, manuscripts and unpublished works from F.M. Bailey for example, are available too.

The originals of the digitized material have been rebound and are waiting for a new home. Total scanned material has amounted to more than 60,000 pages and hundreds of photographs.

The current President of the Club, Tanil Kilachand worked with Chetan Desai and me to set up the work. I supervised this mammoth project with technical and financial expertise from Ratnesh Javeri. All the material will soon be available on the HC website.

With the Phase 1 of this project now completed, the Himalayan Club is up to date in terms of preserving all its records and studies in the digital world.

It is intended that the Himalayan Club archives will in addition to being the only complete record of the activities of the club, will also be a major source of all Indian documents and reports related to the Himalayan activities. It is sincerely hoped that all researchers, climbers and history buffs will use this digitized material freely for mountain related reference, and also share relevant material with the HC Archives. That is, after all, what the Himalayan Club is all about.

The Himalayan Club Digitization Project

Over 200 expeditions reports.

The Himalayan Club Newsletters: (1928 - 2000): Nos 1 to 61

The *Himalayan Journals* Volume 1 to 73 (1928 to 2018)

Jagdish Nanavati study papers: 35 expedition reports with sketch-maps, photos and comments.

Several map catalogues of The Survey of India.

The Sahyadri Bulletin nos 1 to 5

Himavanta, published from Kolkata.

Indian Mountaineer (1978 to 2019), volumes 1 to 54.

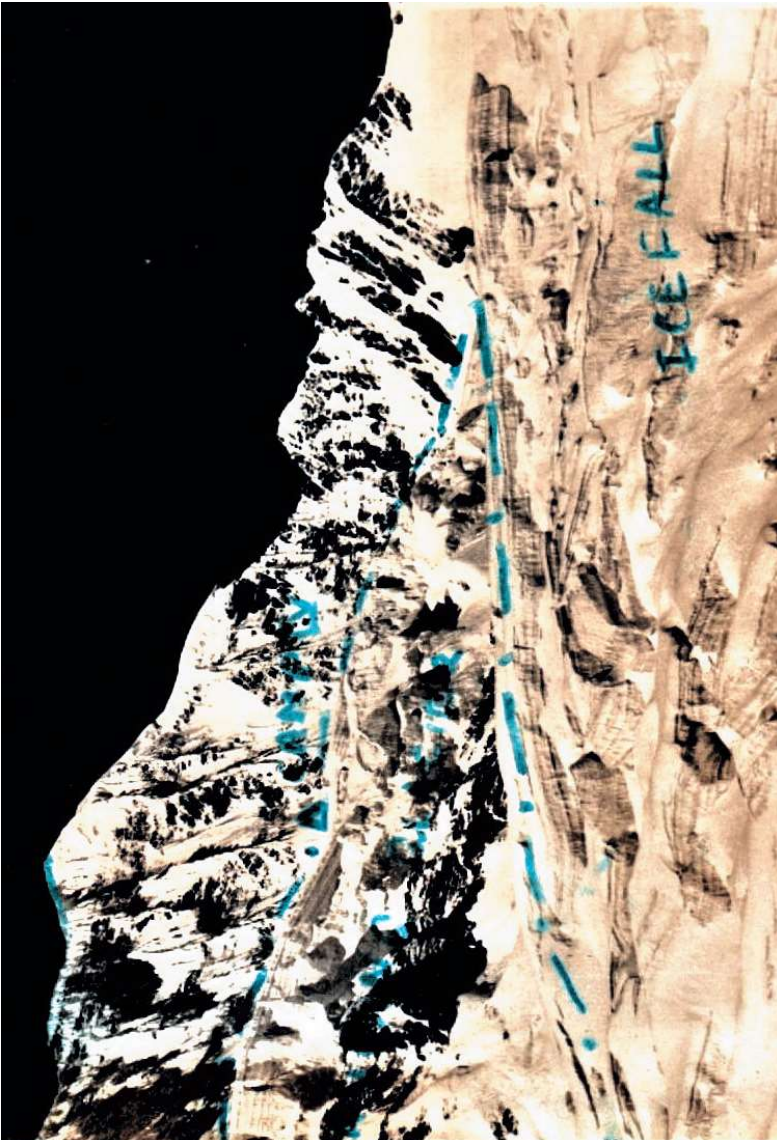
Editor's Papers for each Volume: correspondence by each editor, articles and references - over a 100 books.

Unpublished books like Shaksgam valley, Planes flying across the Hump, reports by F. M. Bailey, Climbers Club Bulletin, and many more.

Articles of special interest to the Himalaya from The Geographic Journal, and other sources.

Hundreds of pictures received for the *Himalayan Journal* and as gifts from members. They are being classified and captioned which will take some time.

(A) Founding papers, (B) Managing Committee minutes from 1928 onwards, (C) Annual Reports and Accounts of the club for several years, (D) Application forms submitted by members to join the Club.



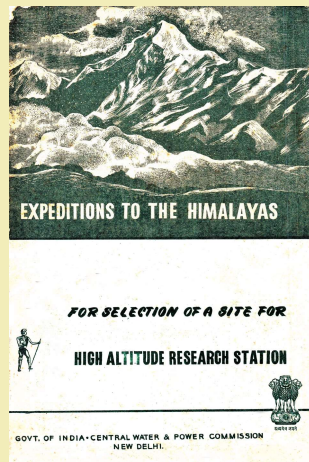
First Ascent of Tirsuli (1966)

A view of the east face of Tirsuli 1966 (taken from near the saddle in between Chalab and Kholi peaks on the north of the upper basin). It shows route followed from camp 3 and Rocky Rib: Hanging glacier and uppermost icefall.

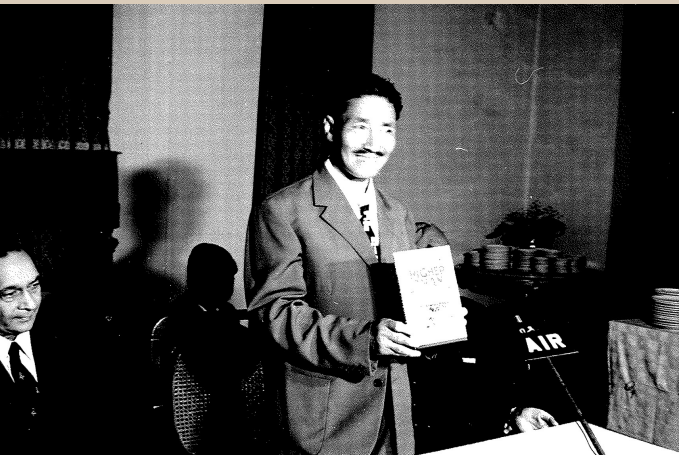
(Hundreds of photos like this, letters and maps are in the HC archives and will soon be hosted on the club website)



Col. Eric 'Buster' Goodwin, author of the book - Life Among Pathans talking to Andrez Kus of the Polish Karakoram Expedition (1969)



Report on Water Research (1952)



Tenzing Norgay releasing a book at International Mountaineers Meet (1973)



Gurdial Singh on summit of Trisul (1951)

International Mountaineers Meet at Darjeeling (1973)

Roy Greenwood on summit of Trisul (1951)—see letter on page 359



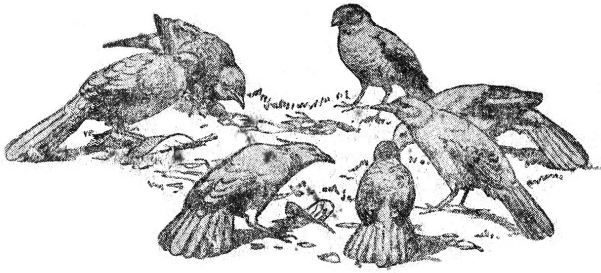
ABOUT INDIAN BIRDS

by

LAEQ FUTEHALLY

AND

SALIM ALI



Illustrated by
D. V. COWEN

BLACKIE & SON (INDIA) LTD

Rare book on birds (1959)

CAMBRIDGE HINDU KUSH EXPEDITION 1966

SKETCHMAP OF UPPER DARRAH-E-ABI

ROUTE FOLLOWED BY EXPEDITION

CAMP OR BIVOUAC

HIGH OR PROMINENT PEAK

OTHER PEAK

ROCK WALL WITH RIDGE ABOVE

HANGING GLACIER, ICEFALL OR ICECLIFF

BLANK AREAS WITHIN BROKEN LINES
REPRESENT LEVEL OR GENTLY SLOPING
GLACIER OR SNOW FIELD

OTHER BLANK AREAS MAY BE ASSUMED TO BE BOULDER MORAINE

LAKE

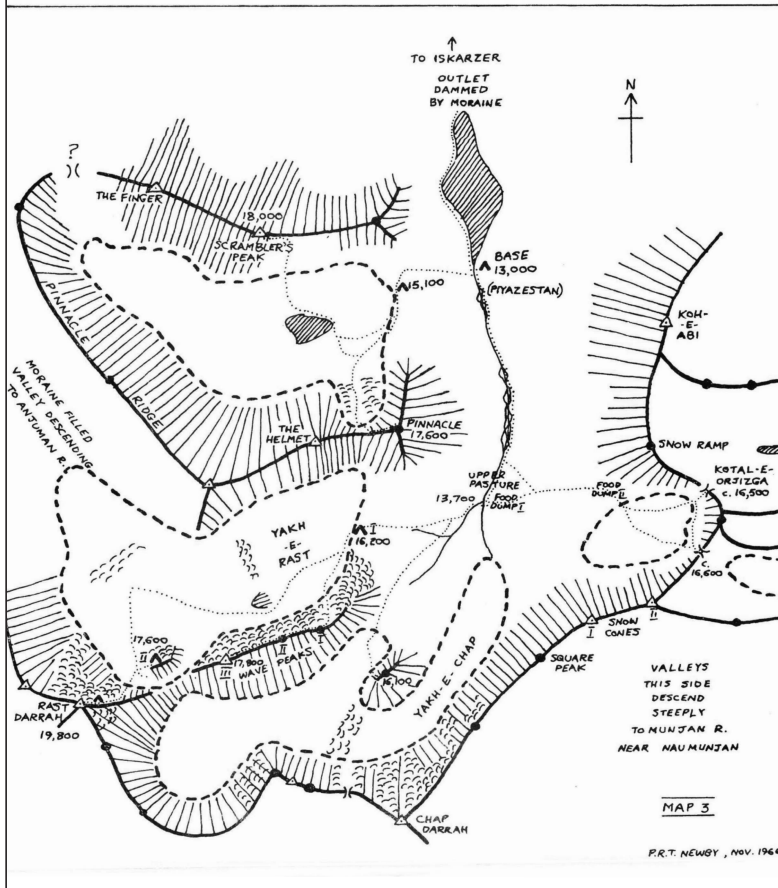
PASS



APPROXIMATE SCALE

ONE MILE

HEIGHTS IN FEET
BY ANEROID ALTIMETER,
PROBABLY CORRECT
TO ± 200 FEET



Cambridge Hindu Kush Expedition (1966)



Lt Col SANDHU B S

DO No 8464/IBG/1
6TH BATTALION
THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT

C/O 56 APO

07 Dec 73

IBG EXPEDITION - 74 CHANGABANG

My Dear Soli,

Here we plan, once again, for the mountains. CHRIS Bonnington and I are the Co-leaders of the joint 10 member expedition to Changabang in Apr 74.

2. I would like the Box wallahs to help trim my budget by gifting some items for the use of the expedition. I am not sure if I am allowed to give credit to ICI in my write ups but shall be glad to do so - if allowed. Will you let me know what all the 'ICI' could gift?

3. The Indian members would like to present a pair of Bata Mountain Boots (also known as the Approach March Boot) to each of the British Climbers. For the expedition, I would thus require approx 20 pairs: Could you let me have the address of the right quarters I should approach?

Chris turned up a fine account of ascent of 'Brahma' for Sunday telegraph and promises to send me another ^{he} write for Mountain Life.
With regards,

Shri Soli S Mehta
The Alkali & Chemical
Corporation of India Ltd
P.O. Rishra
Distt . HOOGHLY (W.B)

ever
Balwant



H. ADAMS CARTER
361 CENTRE STREET
MILTON, MASS. 02186

March 1, 1974

Dear Soli,

My first name is Adams but I am usually called Ad.

Thanks for your letters. I have been terribly busy trying to get the manuscript to the printer. I shall reply briefly.

I shall get the Chouinard Catalog sent directly to you.

The address for Adrian Burgess
69 Hoole Lane
Chester, England
For Major J. W. Fleming
1st Battalion
The Parachute Regiment
Mons Barracks
Aldershot, Hants, England

I have received also the Newsletter. The American Tirich Mir expedition was of little importance, but I enclose a copy of their account. The Dhaulagiri galley proofs are also included. I am sure you may have permission for the article if credit is given. I'll check with Lou Reichardt, but unless I let you know, you may assume you have it and mine, with of course the credit line.

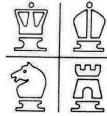
I am sorry to have rushed so but I want to get it into the mail before the weekend delays it.

Sincerely,

Ad
H. Adams Carter

Letter from H Adams Carter—one of the greatest editors of his time (1974)

Hodder & Stoughton



20 November 1987

Mr Soli S Mehta
The Himalayan Club
PO Box 1905
Bombay
400 001 INDIA

47 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3DP
Telephone: 01-636 9851
Telex: 885887
FAX 01 631 5248

Dear Mr Mehta

Thank you for your letter of 14 October about the possibility of Hodders producing the Himalayan Club Diamond Jubilee Journal.

We are flattered to be asked and, indeed, should be very interested in co-operating with you on this venture in the manner you suggest, providing the Journal is going to contain enough pages to make it a proper book length and thus something we ourselves might sell in other markets.

Perhaps you would like to let us know how many pages you are visualising, how much colour, how much black and white. Better still, can you send us what you have already got together or let us know when we might be able to look at something, and how quickly we should be expected to produce the issue. Are you aiming towards having it available by a specific date in 1988?

The whole project sounds extremely interesting and one we might collaborate in most successfully. So I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

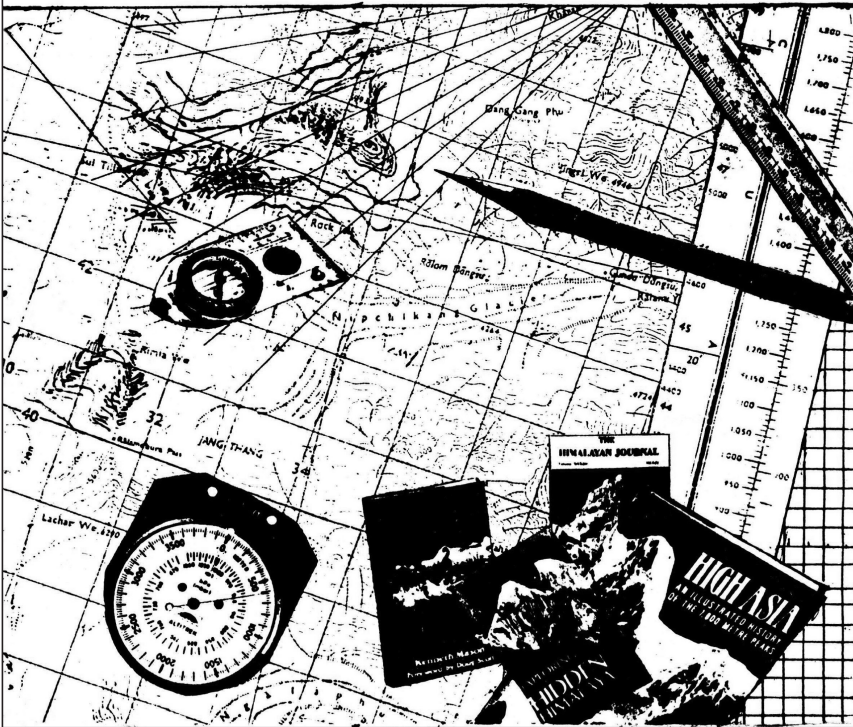
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Margaret Body'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Margaret' being more prominent than the last name 'Body'.

Margaret Body
Managing Editor

Exploring the Hidden Himalaya—letter from M. Body (1987)



WORKSHOP ON
PLANNING AN EXPEDITION, 1994.
ORGANISED BY THE HIMALAYAN CLUB-BOMBAY SECTION.



Planning an Expedition workshop (1994)

HARISH KAPADIA

La Finquita, Aptdo 78
Pollensa, Mallorca, Spain.

12th July 2001

Dear Harish Kapadia

My wife and I have recently returned from what can only be described as "the summit experience" of our pensioner Years.

We were invited to the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the ascent of Trisul, 23rd June 1951. You will probably know that this was held at the Splendidly sited India International Centre, New Delhi.

An excellently mounted exhibition captured the Spirit Of our venture.

The morning after we three surviving members had made Our presentation of the expedition, Gurdial Singh Suggested that I send you a copy of the two poems that Were my contribution to the commemoration.

I'm obviously no poet. But I thought a different form of Presentation would add another dimension. If you think they may be of use in the Himalayan Journal, You are most welcome to use them.

(On a personal note. To meet up with Gurdial and Nalni after fifty years was a reunion conveying mutual joy. So much to recount of our lives..

We were taken by car to Gwaldam. Nanda Ghunti and Trisul stood clear and glorious in fresh morning light.)

Yours sincerely,

Bob Greenwood. Rev.

Harish Kapadia.

Honorary Editor, Himalayan Journal.

Letter from Greenwood (2001) (See photo on page 352)