

Bill Allsup therefore deserves to be remembered for his contributions to the founding of the Himalayan Club, and to the development of cave exploration in India.

I am copying this to the Editor of the Himalayan Journal for his information.

With best wishes from,

DR. STEVE A. CRAVEN

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Subject: old film

Date: 29 June 2001

From: "willefans" <willefans@ukonline.co.uk>

To: "Harish Kapadia" <harikaps@vsnl.com>

Dear Harish,

Martin Moran, UK, suggested I contact you. I have a 35mm film of a Himalayan climb, which had been lost for 35-40 years, but which quite possibly depicts a pre-war expedition. The film covers the walk-in, a base camp, wide rivers and rocky foothills and leads to a severe climb of a snowbound ridge, with a summit in view.

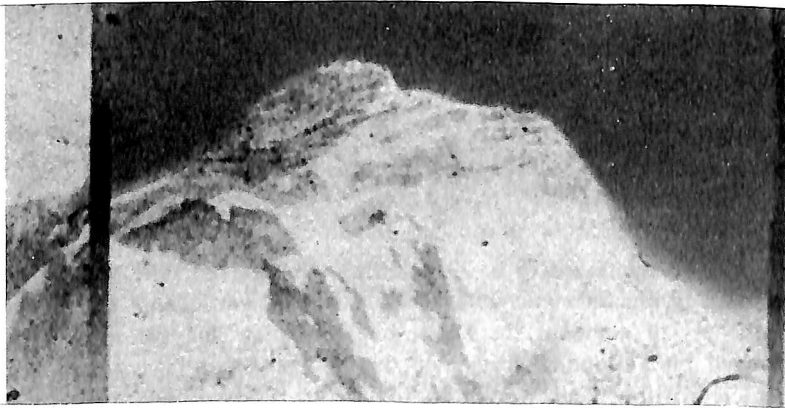
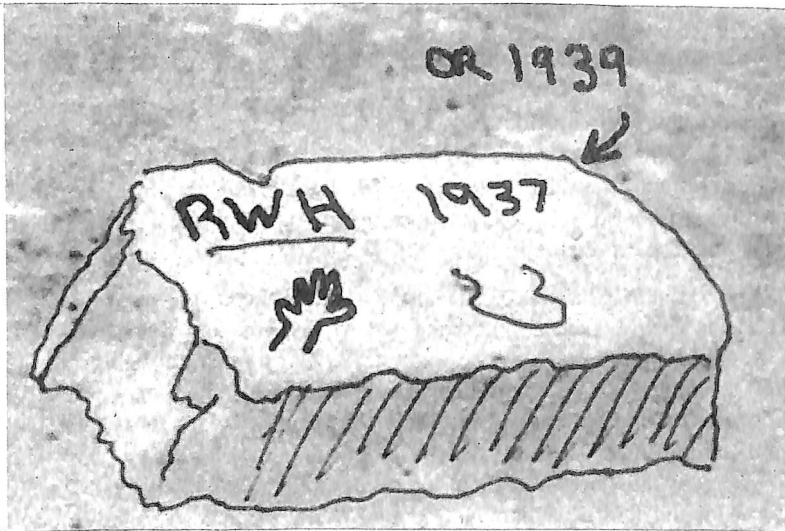
There are 4 European? climbers, possibly German/Austrian and about 20 porters. The local dress consists of robes and caps and in some views the men are bare-footed. Does this suggest an early date for the climb? There is little to see in the camp photographs other than a couple of tents and some wooden boxes marked 1,2,3 etc. It is the lack of equipment and the traditional dress of the porters that makes me believe it to be pre-war - but I admit I am only guessing!

One of the photos shows a climber paused beside a rock, about 6ftx4ft. The rock is very distinctive with the carved initials RWH, and a date, either 1937 or 1939, The outline of a hand is carved under the initials. I am hoping that this will prove to be a known landmark on the walk-in to one particular mountain. I have attached a picture of the summit and one of the rock, on which I have "inked over" what I believe to be written there.

I have no idea who these men are or whether they succeeded, but they certainly tried - I hope we will be able to set the record straight with your help.

Regards

WILL EVANS



23 July 2001

Dear Harish,

OK here goes, It is very interesting to hear that you have just returned from Nanda Devi Sanctuary, because that is where the film is from!. It is actually a black and white still film and the make of the

film is "Perutz". It has been absolutely and positively identified with none other than a 1940 edition of *Himalayan Journal*. The article is by S.B.Blake, and in his report on the Polish expedition to Nanda Devi East that he accompanied, he published a photograph of a group of four men, one in a striped jacket. The film I have portrays exactly the same group, but from a slightly different angle. Same time, same place, but obviously a different camera - probably one of the Poles.

This film has some extremely interesting photographs, and the magazine that is going to retell the story of these men is *High Mountain Sports*, with none other than your friend Geoff Birtles. One could see the photographs from the "new" film. The achievements of the climbers would be worth reading again, as their original report would have been totally overshadowed by the outbreak of war and the invasion of their country.

The film itself has had quite an adventure. From the upper reaches of Nanda Devi it must have travelled to the UK and then been lost. It was purchased by my late father, N. W. Evans, probably in the 1950's, along with other photographic gear, but at that time it was still undeveloped and he had no idea what the subject was. He developed the film but then had no way of identifying it. The film was then "lost" again but it resurfaced a couple of months ago, and by this time it was in the Scottish Outer Hebrides! With my access to the internet I set about trying to identify it, and I am delighted with the results - I think the story is worth another telling.

Regards

WILL EVANS

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Geoff Birtles wrote :

I was quite pleased to have identified the film for Will Evans. He had been trying for some time and when he sent me some low grade prints out of some of the shots, one of which had the date 1939 engraved on a stone, I speculated that it would not have been later than early fifties and would be India. So I started with the 1939 *Himalayan Journal* and by the next one spotted an article on the Polish trip to Nanda Devi East and by looking through this found the photograph which proved the case. Inspector Geoff on the case and mystery solved in three days!

*(Geoff Birtles is the distinguished editor of High Mountain Sports, published from UK).*