

John Angelo Jackson 1921- 2005



A series of articles by John himself, by Eileen
and by several people who knew him,
respected him and will greatly miss him

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Introduction

"I HAVE LOVED YOU WELL AND YOU HAVE REWARDED ME" Julius Kugy, Alpine Pilgrimage .

Just over 40 years ago (1962), as a leader in the Scout Association, I was fortunate in being chosen to attend a multi activity course based at Plas y Brenin..

It was the first week in November and the weather was glorious. What a privilege, and what excitement – lowly me, off to attend a training course at the National Mountaineering Centre, right in the middle of the most wonderful part of the world. The course, sponsored by the Whitbread Trust, brought youth leaders together from across the country to learn more about the growing sport of mountaineering. Of course this was my introduction to John Jackson..

Clearly to me being the boss of this phenomenal place, he was if not a god then someone nearly of another world; a person to be respected, a headmaster figure – and he lived up to all my expectations. The first slide show convinced me. I cannot remember the subject but it was about his comparatively recent travels in the Himalayas, again another world somewhere that was always going to be a step to far with my experience and background. Yes, we had a fantastic week, canoeing, climbing, camping, socialising - it could not have impressed me more, and it was probable the stepping off point for many, many adventures and experiences, both for myself and the other participants on the course; the knowledge and confidence that it instilled into me has bridged the gap between "Maybe I Can" to "Yes I Can!" .

As a little side to the week, one of the many things that impressed me was the amount of gear available at the centre. Pre my visit, I owned a few "Crabs", some slings, a hemp waist length and 120 feet of hemp rope. Suddenly Nylon and Kermantle rope was everywhere. So on my return home I wrote to "The Director", (or was he Warden in those days?), asking if when they had finished with their ropes could I inherited them for the Venture Scout group that I ran. I guess you can anticipate John's reply! It was short and curt – No, when a rope was beyond use at Plas y Brenin it was destroyed, and I should never consider taking youngsters out on the crags using old ropes! I kept that letter for many years but sadly it has now gone missing..

So eventually through a number of fortunate occurrences my move to Pen y Pass took place, a move to another world for someone who had spent his previous working life under a factory roof. Pen y Pass did not provide the two small children that Rosie and I took with us the Leisure Centre facilities that were on the doorstep of the urban environment that we had moved from..

But down the road were Plas y Brenin and John! High on the activity agenda was the Dry Ski Slope and it did not take very long for the children to become part of the junior skiing scene at the Brenin. John as Centre Director encouraged the local children to use the facilities (not an action that other educational centres in the area set out to do), and soon there were a group of local children brought together, some of whom are still friends 30 years later. Every Friday evening, the North Wales Ski Club junior sessions were a magnet to them. What ever the weather (it can be wild on the Ski Slope!) Mike Keating the slope supervisor and trainer put the group through their paces..

My involvement grew, until I held the elated position of Chairman of the junior section, North Wales Ski Club, and this led to regular contact with John until he retired from there. We were able to use the Centre facilities to the full, often a Mini Bus being made available for trips to Aviemore and Glenshee, the two main ski resorts in Scotland, in the winter months. How lucky we and the children were to have John as a mentor; at times when the task seemed impossible the facilities of the Brenin were put into gear and the solution found! These early days created impressions on those children that will carry them through life..

What else can I write? His personality shone, he was always so positive, but he could be severe with anyone who acted foolishly, (I fitted that category once or twice!) but problems were soon forgotten and help was always available when requested. As our guests at the dinner his informal speeches

have always been pertinent and amusing. His support for the Gorphwysfa Expedition to the Garhwal Himalaya ensured success from day one – how sad it was that I could not be part of this once in a life time opportunity..

John and Eileen have been in the forefront of the support for the Friends of St Julitta's Church from the earliest of days, their support was readily given to ensure the restoration of this lovely old building went ahead. The idea of putting together an exhibition on the history of Mountaineering in the area, had him delving it his archives and producing some wonderful artefacts and photographs, ensuring that the event was a success – John & Eileen's attendance at the official opening brought together a wonderful cross section of the early climbers in the area - what a lovely afternoon it was! Finally I mention how well written John's book is - a true adventure book from cover to cover, it uncovers a man who it can be said was an exception in so many ways – and remember it was written in 1955. Fifty years of his life followed these early adventures, and fifty years followed were he contributed so much to so many people. My life has been enhanced by the friendship that he extended, many thousands of other contacts and acquaintances say the same, We will miss you John..

Harvey Lloyd

John Jackson – An Appreciation

John Jackson, who died in July, was an exceptional mountaineer and a much loved member of the club. He was born in the North of England in 1921 and as a young man became a keen climber. In World War II he served in the RAF and flew operational missions over Burma. He was also based at the Aircrew Mountain Centre in Kashmir to train aircrews. After the war he trained as a pharmacist and later became an outstanding schoolteacher in Lancashire and Yorkshire where he taught science and geography.

Between 1951 and 1955 he was involved in numerous Himalayan expeditions. He explored the Garhwal in 1951 and he trained with the 1953 Everest expedition as a reserve (should one of the members become incapacitated). In 1954 he led an expedition to Sola Khumbu to investigate the evidence of the existence of the yeti after footprints had been reported by members of the Mount Everest reconnaissance expedition. He followed this by a remarkable first-ever journey from Everest to Kangchenjunga accompanied only by Sherpas.

In 1955 he was selected to join the British expedition to Kangchenjunga led by Sir Charles Evans. On this expedition he performed a remarkable act of courage which played a significant role in ensuring the success of the expedition. After battling through bad conditions, which necessitated him removing his snow goggles, he became almost totally snow blind. The following day, despite this severe handicap, he insisted on being tied closely between two other climbers so he could carry a vital load to a higher camp. This feat, which illustrated John's courage and determination, was described at some length by Charles Evans in his book *Kangchenjunga-the Untrodden Peak*. John published his own book *More Than Mountains (1955)* which, together with many articles in geographical and mountaineering journals, described his Himalayan explorations.

Following his return from the Himalayas he began a career as an instructor in mountaineering centres. In 1958 he was appointed Chief Instructor at Plas y Brenin, the National Mountaineering Centre which had been set up in Capel Curig by the Council for Physical Recreation. In 1960 he was appointed Director and developed Plas y Brenin as the national centre of excellence in this field. He was a founding member of the Ski Council of Wales and he established the first dry ski slope in Wales which led to a generation of Welsh international skiers. He was much involved in the debate which led to the development of the Mountain Leadership scheme. John was actively concerned with mountain safety. Plas y Brenin was established as a Mountain Rescue Post and published an influential booklet, *Safety on Mountains*, which has been widely used to help avoid accidents on British hills.

In 1978 the Sports Council for Wales invited John to take part in the establishment of Plas Menai, a site that he had identified, as the new National Outdoor Watersports Centre for Wales. He became the first director in 1980 and continued in this post until his retirement in 1983. Together with Ioan Bowen Rees, he developed the Welsh Mountain Leadership scheme. Throughout his career John was active as a mountain explorer and on many occasions was accompanied by Eileen. In 1976 he spent ten months climbing in India and Nepal. He volunteered much time giving extensive lecture tours describing this and his many other Himalayan adventures to appreciative audiences all over the country. He was an exceptional photographer and established a quite remarkable collection of photographs of the mountainous areas of the world. A slide show by John was always a most appreciated feature of the Gorphwysfa New Year. After his retirement he became increasingly active in leading and organising mountaineering visits to the Alps, Himalayas, and South America. At the age of 83 he was actively organising a trek to the Everest North Face base camp and continued to encourage young people to take an interest in mountaineering through his lecturing and other activities.

In 1981 he led the Gorphwysfa Himalayan expedition to the Garhwal. The expedition had as its original objective an unclimbed peak on the wall of the Nanda Devi sanctuary. It experienced a very severe storm which caused much loss of life in neighbouring expeditions but John's vast experience and deep understanding of the risks associated with Himalayan mountaineering enabled all members

to retreat safely to the base camp. Later John Rowlinson and Stephen Simpson climbed the nearby Berthartoli Himal South, 20,720ft. John's style of leadership, which commanded universal respect, was very positive. He famously said: "Mountaineering is not about pleasure, it's about satisfaction," and "Look at your left boot laces, move the boot, look at your right boot laces, move the boot. Do this all day and there will be another load at Camp Three".

It was John's good fortune to have the enthusiastic support, encouragement and companionship of Eileen throughout his mountaineering adventures and travels. John and Eileen's presence greatly enriched the life of our club and, a few years ago, we were delighted to elect them as Honorary Members.

John was a staunch friend to very many members of the club and he was a great inspiration.

He will be sadly missed.

Brian Smith .

The Gorphwysfa in Garhwal

THE RISHI GANGA AND THE OUTER SANCTUARY

"This region is connected with the most ancient traditions of the Indo-Aryan race. The Mahabharata, the Sanscrit Illiad, tells that at Bageswar, in the Kumaon foothills, Siva was married to Parvati, the "mountain born" daughter of Himachal. She is enshrined in Nanda Devi. Trisul it's outlier, is the Trident of Shiva himself."

Tom Longstaff - 'This My Voyage.'

The two mountains Nanda Devi East and West are both over 7,000 metres in height. They are guarded by a host of other high peaks which form a great cirque or wall around them. The main approach route is through a wild river cut gorge named the Rishi Ganga, which leads first of all to the Trisulgal or "outer sanctuary" and then finally penetrates the wall to attain the "inner sanctuary" first reached by Shipton and Tilman in 1934.

When eventually I did return to the Garhwal Himalaya, it was as leader of an expedition which among other things followed a new way of penetrating the wall from the Trisulgal to the "inter sanctuary". Rather cheekily, and because we were a Welsh based group, we named the route "Bwlch y Geifr" - the "Pass of the Goats."

The Gorphwysfa Club .

*"Where the wind from Cwm Idwal, Cwm Llydaw, Cwm Glas
Comes welcoming over the scree;
Come home mountain friends to your rest on the pass,
Come back mountain climber to me."*

The Gorphwysfa Song GWY .

Gorphwysfa means a resting place and Gorphwysfa Peris is the resting place at the head of the rugged glaciated valley of Llanberis in Snowdonia. There at the Gorphwysfa Inn during the early part of the century, Wynthrop Young, Mallory and many other mountain men used to meet to share hill days and pioneer rock climbs on the crags of North Wales. The 'Inn' has now become a Youth Hostel and is also the 'home' of the present day Gorphwysfa Climbing Club.

During an evening when Eileen and I were guests at the annual dinner of the Club, several members expressed a quaint desire to ascend Trisul using similar equipment to that used by Dr. Tom Longstaff on his ascent of that mountain in 1907! This laudable ambition was not fulfilled, because the Japanese had already been given permission to climb the mountain and a new and more demanding objective had to be identified.

In addition whilst the expedition was being organised, everyone's ideas changed rapidly towards using modern gear such as plastic boots, Jumar clamps, ice-screws, C.B. radios, and a thousand feet of fixed rope! Eileen and I were impressed by this remarkable evidence of flexibility and having been invited to join the Gorphwysfa team felt assured that we were going to the mountains with the right kind of people. A little later I was asked to be the leader of the venture.

Most of the members came from the Oxford area (Jim Murray, a Professor of Zoology came from Charlottesville, Virginia) and were either doctors, solicitors, professors or senior lecturers of one kind or another. They proved to be a fine bunch of boffins to be with, good companions, splendid mountain people and their youthful enthusiasm (most were aged between 40 and 50 - though two were but 24 years old) was very refreshing. During preparations, we met several times in Snowdonia and trained with my staff at the national Centre for Wales, Plas Menai.

We eventually flew from Heathrow early in September. During the flight to Delhi, I reflected on it being thirty years since my last visit to Garhwal, remembering that whilst climbing and exploring north and west of Badrinath, I had been swept down by an avalanche. Thought it wasn't realised at the time, I fractured my left femur. It knitted together and self healed so that the fracture was only discovered 17 years later. Eventually this resulted in me having a painful arthritic hip and a shorter left leg. Surgeons gave me a new hip. It was akin to being reborn. "Yes" I thought "now I have a new and artificial hip, the mountains might take me back in a more kindly fashion." They did.

The Moment of Truth

We began the trek into the mountains from the small village of Suriatota and six days later set up the Base Camp at 15,500 ft. in the Trisulgal. All the way I was aware of following the footsteps of many famous mountaineer explorers other than Shipton and Tilman. W.W. Graham who had first had a look into the Rishiganga in 1883, then later the well known Everester's, Bruce, Somervell and Ruttledge, but it was the doyen of them all, Dr. Tom Longstaff, that I thought of the most. His description of the area and of his penetration up the Rishiganga related in the book "this My Voyage" is excellent, but it was my memory of poring over the map of the area with him at his cottage near Achilibuie that was the freshest in my mind. With Eileen and our two sons I had camped several times on a green stretch of 'machair' below his cottage and we always paid him a visit. Knowing him I am sure he would have appreciated a woman's thoughts of the journey to the Trisulgal and because Eileen wrote a short piece called the "Moment of Truth" for a W.I. magazine, here they are:- .

"Well here's the moment of truth," I thought. "From here on you are on your own two feet." The two and a half days' hair-raising drive from Delhi to Rishikesh and on to Josimath was behind us. Following a restless night at Suriatota, my day sack was packed and the trail up to Tolma, our next campsite was before me. As Stella Barczak (one of our two doctors) and I set off together, there was still a lot of activity around the school house in the village and John Rowlinson (J.R.) our Professor of Chemistry who John had asked to be this deputy leader, was weighing the last of the porter loads. The track led up by fields of millet and buckwheat, through sunny glades, Deodar and Chir trees with wild orchids and false strawberries underfoot. Then we reached our stopping place for lunch and surprise, surprise, this turned out to be Tolma and the end of our walking for the day.

Tents were being pitched whilst Habib Cheta, our Kashmiri cook and Sharma his assistant were preparing a meal. In the evening we were invited to a 'harvest festival' at one of the houses in Tolma. At the religious ceremony or 'puja' the family altar had been decorated with fruit and evergreens and with the many candles burning all around, it was similar to a Christmas crib back home in Britain. We found out that during the festival week, their holy book had to be read from beginning to end and this was the evening of the final reading. It was very much a family ceremony and everyone was there including the little children. At the end of each chapter reading, there was a ringing of a bell and a blowing of a conch shell. A twist of blue-grey smoke curled out of a waved pot and a nose tickling smell of incense pervaded the room. One small boy was being allowed to blow the conch shell for his first time but unfortunately when his big moment came, he was so excited, he couldn't raise the 'puff' and no sound came out. His big sister hastily snatched it away, blew a great blast and family honour was saved.

Goats and goat men were sleeping across the track as in the dark we walked back to camp, a short yet potentially ankle breaking journey but a memorable end to a very satisfying first day.

The following day's walk proved to be steep and tiring and was made the longer when with Brian Smith, I went down the far side of a ridge instead of along it. Eventually we reached the campsite - a place ever since referred to as "dry camp" - because the only nearby source of water had dried up. John went to much trouble unsuccessfully to find a spring of water and then, having sent porters to search in all directions, a sufficient amount was brought back for everybody. All had a cup of tea that evening, plus another one in the morning and a half flask of water for the journey over the Dharansi Pass the next day.

The night was cold and early on we were all glad to be on our way and over the pass at 14,000 feet. For me, it was the hardest day, with the added hindrance of feeling slightly sick, but Paul Barczak

(our other doctor) and Mike Leask chivvied me along. Once over the pass there was a welcome stop for drinks at a stream, then it was downhill all the way to Dibrugheta. On the walk John had been pleased to find and photograph a variety of flora so late in the year - Edelweiss, Immortelle, Gentian, Mountain Aster and a decaying but recognisable Sausseria. Our sixty or so goats and sheep, each carrying a pack of twenty pounds, were strung out along the path and with the high mountains as a backcloth, they made a fine sight.

When resting below the Dharansi, Jim Murray pointed out a Lammergeir that soared high above the pass and nearby, several furry Mousehares, or Tiakpa as John calls them, were scurrying in and out among the rocks. Just before reaching camp, we had an exciting few moments crossing the rushing river on a single slanting pine log, then there was a welcome brew of tea made for us by a small party of Calcutta mountaineers who were on their way out of the mountains, having been climbing in the sanctuary area.

The narrow path winding along the steep flanks of the mountains high above the Rishi Ganga gorge made our journey to Deodi the next day the most spectacular of the whole walk to base. Nanda Devi, a streamer of cloud blowing from its summit gave us a breath taking first viewing and the dark cut of the Rishi gorge provided a mysterious lead into the "Sanctuary of the Goddess". Before reaching the Deodi campsite, we had to cross a rather rickety and dangerous looking bridge over the Rishi and Mike Leask who was taking cine, decided it was photographically ideal. Though we had crossed the bridge, he made us go back so that he could film us once more but the first attempt wasn't good enough, and we had to go back over it again and again, in my opinion shortening the odds against us alarmingly! The campsite at Deodi was a clearing among the trees, a good situation and at 4 p.m. tea break, John got all the expedition together to break us about our various responsibilities when we reached Base Camp and once we were climbing and camping at high altitudes. The day ended with us and our porters all crowding around a huge camp fire where we sang and danced well into the evening.

To reach Bethartoli camp (Longstaff's Juniper Camp of 1907) we took the path up the Rishi Ganga towards Ramani, then turned off towards the Trisulgal. I was feeling fitter now and the whole party except for Mike who had a bad cold, seemed in good form. At the campsite, it was evident that most of the Juniper that had once grown in profusion had been cut down for firewood by goat herders and previous expeditions.

A few Musk Deer scampered away out of sight when we arrived and towards evening we had a few warning flakes of snow. On our last day's walk, Mike and I toiled up and over the gigantic side moraine and as the Devistan peaks loomed nearer and nearer, we knew that Base Camp could not be far away.

Even so, it was quite a surprise when the flagged cairn marking Base Camp came into view. Within minutes the goats and sheep arrived, followed closely by the porters and quickly the tents were erected.

Habib and Sharma arranged their kitchen, got a fire going and before long we were all sitting on the moraine and tucking into a good meal.

Early in the expedition our main meal of the day was chicken. These chickens were carried in crates, and they didn't look very happy. Eventually the poor things disappeared one by one, so we started on mutton, and during the next few weeks we ate our way through three sheep, though what actually happened to the meat on them, I was never quite sure. Mostly, our helpings seemed to be short lengths of bone and gristle with a small collar of meat round the middle. But then, after a tough walk in for six days, perhaps there wasn't much meat on the poor beasts to start with. Before the end of the expedition, we ran out of fresh meat but we did manage to have an egg for breakfast right up to the last day. Dal (boiled lentils), rice and chapattis became our staple diet, reinforced with a tin of meat now and again. To some, the meals became rather monotonous but because I hadn't much appetite at altitude, I must admit I wasn't the best judge.

Before leaving Britain, I had been asked to put together about 10lbs of food suitable for the higher camps. This I did by buying tubes of cheese, packets of nuts and raisins, packet meals, Cup-a Soups, orange crystals, Kendal Mint Cake and so on. These items were a great success and in future I would take a lot more and certainly use them on treks. It would be money well spent.

I shall always cherish many happy memories of Base Camp throughout the expedition, and most certainly the splendid companionship we had, plus the many gatherings in the big yellow tent which we christened the "Clubhouse". When the weather was bad we had many games of cards there, and long conversations with Ajay Thanka, our liaison officer, about life and times in India. Later we had cheese and coffee "parties"; made possible by presents from a departing Italian expedition - what a treat to have real coffee - and never again will Parmesan cheese be just something you sprinkle on spaghetti. On a lighter note who could ever forget "Speedy J.R.'s" disreputable sunhat and around camp or Jeremy Naish's immaculate tent, or Mike Leask consuming five, or was it six, chapattis at breakfast every morning. Then there was Stephen Simpson's affection for goats, as well as his constant letter writing to his wife and children, or Ram Prasad's ever cheerful smile below his tea-towel turban, and Git Singh's run down the moraine to the mess tent with the teapot and his greeting of "Chai Sahib". Finally, there was that last night at Base Camp when the late sun put a blush on the summit of Devistan and whilst we stood around the campfire, a thoughtful Jim Murray produced an unexpected but magic bottle of "Virginia Gentleman " whisky for a final toast.

Eileen Jackson.



By giving you some of Eileen's thoughts on the expedition, I have jumped ahead of the story which is really about the intention we had of climbing two peaks, Mrigthuni 22,490 ft. and Devistan South 21,810 ft. We didn't in the end climb either of them, but did make the ascent of a third, and also achieved other worthwhile aims. Here is how it all worked out.

Diplomatic Relations

Once Base Camp was organised we wasted no time but set up a Camp I on the prow of a moraine below Mrigthuni 22,490 ft. and Devistan South 21,810 ft. From this camp, Brian and Mike reconnoitred to almost 19,000 ft on the Northwest ridge of Devistan South and during a two day reconnaissance in misty cold weather, Jim and Stephen worked out a possible route towards a Camp 2 on the glacier of Mrigthuni.

By this time a party of twelve mountaineers, members of an Italian expedition had arrived at Trisul Base, and to our dismay they also were to attempt the ascent of the Northwest ridge of Devistan South. Some sensible discussion between our two expeditions was immediately essential and along with J.R. and Ajay, I visited the Italian Camp. We finally agreed the following:

- 1) It was agreed by all that unfortunately the Indian Mountaineering Foundation through circumstances that could not have been foreseen, had given permission for the two expeditions to attempt the same peak, by the same route, at the same time.
- 2) All appreciated that the Gorphwysfa Expedition had already established a Camp 1 that allowed of a two pronged approach to the two mountains.
 - a) To the North-west ridge of Devistan South and
 - b) To Mrigthuni

As our expedition was already on the two mountains, it was not realistic to retreat - however,

- 3) We agreed on behalf of the rest of the Gorphwysfa team that we would concentrate our efforts on Mrigthuni, allowing the Italians, because they only had permission for the one mountain, a clear run at Devistan South.

From thereon, both parties operated amicably and throughout it all our liaison officers did a fine job.



Attempt on Mrigthuni - High Hopes and Storm

By the 20th September, J.R., Stephen and I with the help of Noti and Govind Singh finally established Camp 2 at 18,700 feet on Mrigthuni. Early morning clouds had quickly dispersed so that soon the whole face of the mountain became clear and east of Mrigthuni we could see the pass between Devistan South and Maiktoli summits. I remembered the talks I used to have with Wilfred Noyce about Maiktoli when we were in Kashmir together. In 1943 he had climbed one of the lesser summits and whilst winding our way through the crevasses on Mrigthuni, I pondered on the possibility of eventually crossing the pass to see Maiktoli for myself. Quickly we erected two of our Limpet tents at Camp 2, and then returned to join the others. There was no doubt that the weather was improving and at all our camps the clear, crisp, starry nights were being followed by days of brilliant clarity that gave us imposing views of Trisul, the Devistan wall and of Dunagiri at the end of the valley. Two days later, Brian and Mike with two high altitude porters set up Camp 3 at 20,500 feet and meanwhile the rest of us carried supplies to Camp 2.

Eileen, lips smeared liberally with "Labisan" looked like a refugee from a minstrel show but thoroughly enjoyed her carry to 18,700 feet and apart from her usual loss of appetite at heights over 15,000 was clearly doing well. Around this time the logistics of ascent were becoming complicated. I had written schedules for use of tentage and for movements among the team to ensure that by the 24th of September, three weeks exactly from leaving Heathrow Airport, I could have some expedition members reaching the summit. It being the first time to the Himalaya for most, it was my dearest wish to put all the climbing members on top within twenty-three days. We all had high hopes and on the 23rd, my first summit party of J.R., Stephen and Govind Singh were settled in at Camp 3.

"How are you all up there" I asked on the C.B. radio. "We're fine and the weather is good. The deep snow makes it heavy going but we will reach the top tomorrow" John's confident prediction ended with a brief description of the panorama which took in Changabang, Kalanka, Dunagiri and the nearby massive summits of Nanda Devi. "Best of luck for tomorrow then. Have a good mountain day." Switching off, I knew that to reach the summit would be a moment they would never forget. Once again, the night was clear and cold and before turning in to our Meade tent at Camp 1, I took an early evening photograph of Trisul. It was one of those iridescent pale gold sunsets and all seemed set for a successful ascent the next day.

During the night, I woke to hear the flapping of canvas and the rustle of snowflakes on the tent fabric.

Much new snow had fallen by the dawn and we all knew that at Camp 3 with the strong wind, the conditions would be much worse and rapidly deteriorating. Our planned early radio contact was unsuccessful and though I made a call each half hour thereafter, there was no reply. The silence seemed ominous and I could imagine the snow packing and piling up dangerously on the slopes above and below Camp 3. With no radio contact forthcoming, I felt real concern and considered the following possibilities and alternatives.

1) The summit party was OK and on the way down to Camp 1 but because of the conditions and the pressures of the moment were not bothering to make radio contact. This omission would be surprising and most unlike J.R. but nevertheless a decision he could have to make.

2) The party was down safely to Camp 2 and staying there but not bothering to make radio contact.

This would be so irresponsible I could not believe it to be possible.

3) The party was staying at Camp 3. I felt that no one would try to sit out the storm with the small amount of H/A rations available. If however, they were still at Camp 3 then it would be that conditions would not allow them to move. If this was so, their plight would be becoming more dangerous every hour. However, this seemed not to be a likely situation because of the lack of radio contact.

4) Finally, I had to consider that the party had left Camp 3 to descend, without making radio contact and had been involved in some disaster on the route.

I rejected 2 as being unlikely in the extreme, and felt that 3 though possible were much less likely than 4.

On the whole I favoured the first alternative but nevertheless knew that by 1 p.m. I must send out a first search party and that because of the possibilities in alternatives 3 and 4 the party must be made up of those who knew the route above Camp 2. It had to be Mike and Brian with their two H/A porters. I watched them leave with trepidation but treated the moment with as much light-heartedness as possible, for I wondered what Stella (J.R.'s daughter) might be thinking at that time.

I may have seemed callous by showing a light-hearted attitude, but really it was a tense situation and became more so when we saw one lone figure descending towards our rockpoint marker on the glacier.

Where were the others? What could have happened to them? Brian moved up quickly to the staggering figure, then there was much gesticulation and Brian shouted to Mike "All is OK. The others are on their way down." Mike radioed the message back to our waiting group at Camp 1 and there was massive relief all round. This set back was a bitter blow, but J.R. and Stephen's report of conditions and the continuing poor weather left me in no doubt that we should immediately return to Base Camp and there eat better, sleep warmer, save fuel, conserve our meagre H/A rations, and ride out the storm.

Skis on Trisul and the "Pass of the Goat"

The storms continued for one more week during which time a lot of snow fell in high wind, forming slab avalanches. It was a trying period for everybody but one we didn't waste. We had previously planned to attempt two things in addition to the climbing. The first was to seek out a rumoured goat herder's route to the inner sanctuary of Nanda Devi. Govind Singh had told us on the trek that such a route had been found and used by men from his village. The second was for Eileen and me, along with others who were interested, to set up a Ski Camp on Trisul. First of all we had to obtain permission to ski on the lower slopes, from the Japanese, who were attempting the ascent of the mountain on ski. Like us, they also had been stopped by the storm but already they had set up camps to over 20,000 ft. They gave us the permission and with some excitement Eileen and I remembered ski days we had shared with the India Tibet Border Police in Kulu several years before. Two of our companions at that time were the first to make a ski ascent of Trisul, and loud and long were the songs of praise that had been sung for Dorje and Lil Bahadur.

With the help of Jeremy, John and Brian we placed a ski camp at 18,500 ft. on the mountain and two days later, following further falls of snow, we occupied the camp for two days. During these two days Eileen gave Paul and Stella Barczak, our two doctors, their first ski lessons at 18,700 ft. This must be quite a record height for a first ski lesson and beats by several hundred feet the height at which we gave Sirdar Dawa Tenzing his first ski lessons on the Everest area during 1976.

Whilst Eileen was busy teaching, I made a strenuous ascent on ski over virgin convex slopes, to the Japanese Camp at round 19,600 ft. Two of the Japanese team were there, and to my surprise I found that Ajay Thanka our Indian Liaison Officer had also cramponed up the lower flanks using the Japanese route.

Following the previous days of storm and high winds, we enjoyed the warmth of the sun, the calm, and most of all the clarity of the atmosphere. Changabang, Kalanka and Dunagiri beyond the Trisulgal seemed but a stones throw away and the twin peaks of the Goddess Nanda rose majestically above the sanctuary wall. At last all seemed right with the World.

The Japanese skiers left for their Camp 2 and Ajay began the descent back to the ski camp. Reluctant to go down, I followed the Japanese ski trail for some way, reaching a height of 20,000 ft thereby achieving an ambition I had had for many years. It was also a good vantage point for looking at the

slopes of Mrigthuni. A disturbing factor was that I could see the numerous slab avalanches had poured down the face of the mountain and over our route of ascent. Slab had also demolished, and apparently buried our tents, which were no longer visible at Camp 3. Snow falls in high wind invariably mean slab and the decision to pull everybody off the mountain seemed justified.

Finally, I turned away to return to my companions. Descent over the convex slopes was made on long gliding traverses because of areas of breaking crust – the leg breaking kind – and remembering what had happened in Garhwal thirty years before, I took my time. This ski experience was a particularly satisfying and carefree break, though all too short, and I remember it for reasons other than that it was the coldest camp in which I have ever slept. Stella, Paul and Eileen also skied and in addition provided welcome sustenance and cheer. Mike remained his usual happy and imperturbable self whilst quietly filming our moments on ski, and Ajay Thanka was as always huge and friendly and enjoying being amongst his mountains.

All of us from ski camp returned to base to find that Jeremy, Jim and Brian had successfully found the goat route, then ascended to a pass at over 18,000 ft. The pass proved to be a natural break in the sanctuary wall and from it they could see the descent was relatively easy into the inner-sanctuary of Nanda Devi. Theirs had been a "tour de force" by making the ascent and return all in one day.

Thought it does demonstrate the extreme feasibility of the pass which we named "Bwlch y Geifr: (Pass of the Goats) we have to hope it will not be used in the future as an alternative to the more difficult entrance to the "Sanctuary" via the Rishiganga Gorge. The sensitive environment could suffer badly from an increase in the number of travellers going there, or from a disastrous influx of goat herders with their goats.

By now the weather was improving, but perhaps because of the instability caused by the depths of new snow, the hanging glaciers were constantly breaking off and the tumbling ice disintegrating to form powerful airborne powder avalanches. Ice cliffs on Devistan South were becoming exceptionally precarious and the Italians decided to abandon their attempts on the Northwest ridge and return home.

You could almost feel their despair at having to retreat but clearly they appreciated the opportunity we had given them of a clear ascent route on the mountain. Before leaving, they wished us well, generously handed over parcels of Parmesan cheese, packets of roast ground coffee, and a broken, but useable coffee percolator. These things brought a small and welcome change in our diet, luxuries really, but a boost to our morale, a gift from hill people known only fleetingly yet friends we would remember.

Success on Bethartoli Himal South

On one day during the week of storms, Brian, Eileen and I, ascended the slopes rising to the west of our base camp. It was snowing, visibility was poor, and there was little to see except at one point we found some stone stripes and stone polygons, evidence of permafrost. I photographed them.

"It's good to be moving and not cramped inside a tent," said Eileen "Definitely" was Brian's response "and what exposure are you giving those polygons John?" "Oh – a hundred and twenty fifth at F8 – and soon we should be stopping for lunch" I was feeling hungry.

Each of us brushed snow off the rocks and sat munching our chappattis and egg; the clouds began to break open and for a short spell the weather was clear. Across the valley we could see the sanctuary wall and behind us when the clouds rose higher, a high white peak revealed itself looking promisingly accessible.

Brian was excited "What do you think it is?" "I don't know" was my reply "but it looks high. Around 21,000 ft I should think and wouldn't be good to have a crack at it?" Our feeling of despondency because of the weather gave rise to hope and a more buoyant outlook on life.

We descended back to camp in much happier mood and a quick examination of maps determined that our peak was most probably Bethartoli Himal South, a mountain 20,720 ft in height.

We decided that having given up our chance of climbing Devistan to the Italian expedition; we would be justified in taking the Bethartoli peak as a replacement. A reconnaissance was needed and whilst Jim and Jeremy made an abortive attempt in thigh deep and heavy snow to reach the site of Camp 3 on Mrigthuni, Stephen and J.R. set up a Camp 1 on Bethartoli at 18,000 ft. Later, from this camp, they made the ascent.

First, they traversed a snow dome, crossed a rock ridge, and then descended to the Bethartoli glacier.

After the snow dome and the crossing of the ridge the progress across the glacier was slow and laborious for many hours, then the final seven or eight hundred feet was steep and crevassed, providing tiring cramponing for them on the blue ice, but it took them to the summit. Success at last! This the expedition members richly deserved, for all had put in much hard effort throughout the good weather and the bad. Returning from the summit, Stephen and John came right down to base and it was long dark before we saw them. For a time I waited alone some way down in the ablation valley below the camp. Many Mousehares (*Ochotona*) kept me company, but more exciting, for over thirty minutes, whilst I sat by a glacial erratic, I watched a flock of ten Bharal – (Himalayan Blue Sheep), grazing quietly on the sparse grass. Eventually they trotted off from the grazing site, possibly disturbed by the voices and the flashing lights from the summiteers coming down the mountain. A memorable day.

Avalanche Peak Again

Later, Brian and Mike made a second attempt to ascend Berthartoli, and early on the same day, Ajay and I left Base Camp to reach Camp 1 then crossed the snow dome and the rock ridge to the glacier. Ahead of us, we watched the two tiny figures of Brian and Mike ascending to the Col at 20,000 ft and having reached it, they disappeared from view so we turned away to photograph the surrounding peaks, Dunagiri, Changabang, Nanda Devi East and West and many others. These peaks and those of Northwest Garhwal in the region of the Satopanth were breathtakingly crisp and clean following the many days of storm. It is so often the way. Picking out Avalanche Peak from the multitude of mountains, I remembered my vow of thirty years before, and was glad that I had finally attained its promise along with friends from the Gorphwysfa Club.

We turned away from the glacier and on descending the snow dome found excellent stone polygons and stripes on the broad shoulder of the ridge, again evidence of sporadic permafrost. Small clumps of Wild Rhubarb were beginning to show between the stones, choughs "chack chacked" overhead and at the head of the Trisulgal, the two mountains that had been our original objectives, Devistan South and Mrigthuni stood our boldly and frustratingly clear. Our time in the Trisulgal was at an end but it was no use regretting missing those ascents, and Berthartoli Himal was a splendid alternative prize.

It was later during the walk out to Josimath that the porter grapevine told us of the many accidents in the Garhwal Himalaya and this was confirmed when in Delhi we reported to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. During our few weeks stay in Garhwal, over twenty mountaineers and H/A porters had lost their lives in the storms and subsequent avalanches – it had been by far the worst disaster year anyone could remember in that region.

From the rock ridge we returned to the lower camp then descended to base, feeling sure that quite deservedly, Mike and Brian would reach the summit but again the fates decided otherwise. Brian, the price within his grasp became violently ill at around 20,150 ft and later in the afternoon both climbers arrived back at base. Theirs was a fine attempt and it was ironic that sickness had struck at just the wrong time.

Brief Reflection

Our last day at the base camp was beautifully clear whilst we packed ready to leave and Eileen's "Moment of Truth" reminds me of the sunset on Devistan and of the similar rosy glow produced by drinking a dram of Jim's "Virginia Gentleman".

After the others had turned in and it being a clear moonlight night, I walked a little way up the ablation valley. Down below, the glacier gave a creak and a groan and no doubt because of this movement, there was a skittering and crashing of boulders tumbling down the steep moraine. Above me, a soft bleat and rustling of many bodies was a reminder that earlier, a flock of goats had arrived, each animal to carry a load of 20 or so pounds on the way out to Josimath. The mountains, gripped in intense cold still showed and I reflected that ours had been but a fleeting moment in their history. Once again, I questioned what it was that drew us to them.

Each person must have his or her own unique reason, each their own difference of appreciation and secret urge. For me, there had always been the attraction of the environment, the pull of the wild and the unknown, as well as the satisfaction of understanding what becomes friendly and familiar. The mountains of southeast Garhwal had been kind to me. It was good to have led a moderately successful team and both Eileen and I had filled our days with worthwhile experiences in the company of splendid companions. Turning back to the tents, I remembered the lines written by Geoffrey Winthrop Young, - possibly at the Gorphwysfa Inn at the head of Llanberis

*"I may not grudge the little left undone,
I hold the heights, I keep the dreams I won"*

I hoped the rest of the expedition members would feel that "we" could fittingly be substituted for "I" in the quotation.

Return and Final Thoughts

We descended the Rishi and returned to Joshimath in mixed weather conditions of sun and snow. At the Dharansi Pass, Lammergeir and Mountains Choughs circled hopefully for food and once again the Mouse hares scurried amongst the rocks at this time we descended the ridge to Lata Karak and the mountain village of Lata.

On the way up to the Dharansi, we frequently looked back to the peaks of Nanda Devi enclosed within the "Sanctuary". It was mountaineers who first gave it that name and when eventually Shipton and Tilman found the way into it, they found it to be an area of lush grazing where wild life lived free from the depredations of man.

Dharal, Musk Deer, Snow Leopard, Goral and other spectacular animals, plus a wide variety of bird life had lived there unmolested for centuries but during the last two decades, expeditions plus goatherds and poachers have played havoc with the fragile ecosystem. In 1978 all trekking as such was stopped and despite the fact that the area was eventually designated a National Park, the supervision and efforts at conservation did not prove adequate to reverse the trend of environmental despoliation.

Finally in the 1980's the Indian Government closed down all access to the Sanctuary, the Rishi Ganga and the Trisulgal not only to treks but to everyone – expeditions and goatherds alike. This was for an unspecified period and we have to hope that before the area is reopened, a detailed and carefully worked out plan of supervision and control is established to ensure that conservation of this wilderness area is assured. It would be sad if treks and expeditions were not to be allowed there again, particularly as the worst offenders are the goatherds and poachers. But rightly, unless the standards and quality of treks and expeditions improves, it may be decided that man in any numbers should not go there again.

This does not mean that trekking would be finished in Garhwal – far from it. Areas to the North and West are still open. "Pilgrimage" or Yatra treks to the Gangotri, Badrinath and Kedernath are still possible and these are reached via Hardwar and Rishikesh. Other areas such as the Pindari glacier

and Rup Kund are even more readily accessible from Karnaprayag or via splendid trekking country north of Naini Tal and Raniket. This country takes you right up to the outer rim of those great mountains we climbed and skied on in the "outer sanctuary" of Nanda Devi.

John A Jackson

“Jacko”

Some memories of my time at Plas y Brenin with the late John Jackson.

"Harvey has asked me if I can say anything about "Jacko" pertaining to my time at the centre. He was, of course, Chief Instructor in 1958, and became Warden in 1960, succeeded as C.I. by Roger Orgill. I heard of his death just before leaving Liz Leask's for Michael and Nicolette's house-party in July. The company and the wine were a welcome distraction, but the man filled my mind, and remains a daily memory".

In 1957 before leaving to work in Canada I had my first taste of outdoor centre life at "The Brenin" under Major G.I. ("Jim") Milton. At Sheila Dean's, an employ of the Nature Conservancy Council who knew Jim, suggestion I did a couple of weeks as a Voluntary Instructor (V.I.). In those early days Plas y Brenin welcomed Voluntary Instructors, because the CCPR ran it at a loss; it had to be subsidized, and Sheila's recommendation was considered good enough for Jim. For me, it was a start.

Prior to returning to the UK after a spell in the Canadian uranium mines I wrote to PyB hoping for work. On arrival in spring '59 I was welcomed there by John Jackson as a Voluntary Instructor, one of the very many who shared and expanded their experience alongside his regular staff under his watchful eye. We all knew something of his achievements, but he was always too modest to think of himself as anything special. Now he's gone the obituaries in the national Press and probably the mountaineering journals worldwide have said everything about his enthusiasm, his generous encouragement and personal warmth, and his abilities and achievements as a teacher, lecturer, mountaineer and leader of men. He was all these things, and to me a fatherfigure and mentor. It's not easy to detach my life from my view of Jacko because he helped me so much to find my chosen way.

He watched me work alongside the professionals, his properly paid staff, and when the ML Training Board awarded certificates I was given my MIAC, no.54 of a very limited edition. However, he didn't allow our friendship to warp his judgment, because although I returned to PyB several times as a VI, I think he reckoned I'd be better off working somewhere else rather than under him! In achievements and abilities we were poles apart of course, but in some ways, it seems, we were much alike. He certainly gave me a roasting when I used Llynnau Mymbyr, the Capel Curig Lakes, canoeing with kids from my own Centre, without his permission.

The use of these waters had been negotiated with the farmer at Garth farm, and Jacko didn't differentiate between me and the many cowboys who were horning in on his patch. At quiet times, though, I was allowed to use "The Racks", as Jackson's Rocks became known, on Esme Kirby's land.

When John and Eileen arrived at PyB to look at the job it happened to be Farmer's Night, when the local farmers were wined and dined and generally given an enjoyable evening – and they thought it was a regular feature of PyB life! It was in fact an event started by Jim Milton, as a thank you to the local farmers, and a very good PR exercise. Regular staff was in attendance, but not the VI's. Lines had to be drawn! Eventually – thanks to Jacko - the bar was built, and he gave me a photo of me drinking the first pint ever served across it. One of my few claims to fame! Whilst at PyB in '59 I received no pay, of course, only bed and board, but one glorious August morning of that long hot summer Alwen, his large and formidable secretary, whom newcomer's tip-toed around, gave me ten shilling out of petty cash. She never repeated this grand gesture with the largesse, but with the rest of the few quid I'd brought back from Canada it went on beer and petrol - more of the former, because my Bond Minicar's 197cc two-stroke didn't use much! I was back instructing at PyB in 63-64, again an unpaid VI, but with a wife working in the kitchen we had a room of our own. Jacko kindly let me use the darkroom he'd set up in the cavernous depths of that old hotel, so I was able to use his darkroom to make some of my own b&w climbing prints to sell to the wage-earners on the courses. Jacko's own b&w photos of the Himalayas, absolute masterpieces of composition and printing, hung on the walls, reminding us of the greater world beyond our local hills. They probably still hang there today, and if they don't they should, as a reminder.

My failure to get on his full time staff turned out to be a blessing, because I think he helped into a job at Hafod Meurig, a Centre dealing with outdoor pursuits for juvenile delinquents. It was run by a London-based charity, The Rainer Foundation. To a frustrated sergeant-major like me - definitely not a social worker - this was hard work, and eventually I persuaded the management committee to allow us to run courses for "normal" people – from schools, colleges, industry, etc. I insisted it would help keep the instructors sane and the charity solvent. It did, for a while.

After 5 years there, working alongside such as Roland Edwards and Eric (Spider) Penman, I left to open my own little Centre, and it was helpful that some of the customers I'd attracted to Hafod Meurig followed me. Armed with the ticket earned – I hope – at PyB, and some little experience at Glenmore, Whitehall Lodge, Plas Gwynant and Eskdale, I ran courses for various Education Authorities, at their own posh centres or at my own place, and did enough private guiding to preserve my own illusion that I could climb a little. (As many will know, nowadays this really is an illusion. On the most recent Gorphwysfa "climbing weekend" I was reduced to a gibbering wreck by following Bill McCann on Bochlwyd Buttress).

But back to the late Jacko, kind but firm, the overseer of all things instructional, domestic, and politic in the Golden Years of The Brenin. He always gave things a fair trial. There was the horse riding, orchestrated by the bristling, baggy-breech'd and shiny-booted Major Tibor Demko, a Hungarian cavalry officer who's quaint English thundered across the property, his eyebrows twitching in time with his whip, as he urged his pupils to "place their sit-bones". There was the fly-fishing, a pass-time so boring that I completely forget who cast the spell over the students and the lines in the Llygwy, except that it was better after rain "with a bit of colour in the water." And I remember helping Roger Orgill to set up the gear for snow-making on Brynengan field, following earlier successful experiments in a field near Betws y Coed, which I felt was a wildly ambitious scheme even before the knowledge of global warming. The place was stiff with compressors, hoses, generators, pumps, spray heads – everything but cold weather. Later I and many others did a stint helping Roger build the timberwork of the dry ski slope which has become so popular.

Jacko was always an excellent ski instructor, of course, and whenever I tried to parallel, Jacko's reprimand would float across the piste "Jesse – you're stemming!" But skiing one time on ice with Eileen at Lanersbach, Jacko bought each of us a stiff Rum-tea, and after that there was no stemming – we shot across those glassy frozen ice slopes with exuberant alcoholic confidence. Later that week Jacko, Alan and David Hughes and I were slab-avalanched at Hintertux. Even Jacko, the Himalayan man, was surprised.

It was with Jacko and Eileen that I went to Everest Base in 1988. I joined their little group of 7, it was certainly a great experience, being led by this remarkable couple who were able to show and tell us so much about the places and people on this delightful journey. Sometimes walking alone with Jacko it was as I imagined it would be with Rousseau, 'taking a child by the hand and teaching him about everything he saw in the world' He talked of geology, geography, history and people, and left me with wonderful abiding memories. At our leaders' suggestion, at the end of the trek we donated whatever spare items of kit and clothing we could spare for our Sherpas. Jacko and Eileen always took lots of small gifts, like pencils, biro's, and little books – for the village children en route. Needless to say, as we walked through the little settlements they were welcomed as old friends.

His slide shows – some of which have been seen by the Gorphwysfa – were all quite wonderful. The accompanying soundtrack brought back the sounds of the Tibetan music, the long horns and the deep booming, then the close-up of a bright mountain flower surviving in the wilderness bowing in the cold biting wind. His mountain safety slide show which took one on a trek through the Lairig Ghru was a brilliant statement of the dangers of changing weather.

The Friday night socials and sing-songs at the Brenin after the various courses – mountain activities, rock climbing, canoeing or whatever – became quite a tradition, and part of the wonderful warm atmosphere that Jacko kept alive and encouraged, and he and Eileen would often be there enjoying

the happy celebration of a good time had by all. From the groups would emerge fiddlers, guitarists, singers, poets, balladeers and whatever else, all part of a great family having fun.

All the staff and VI's of those days will remember "5 o'clock afternoon tea", in the tiny crowded staff common room. When the trolley was wheeled in it was a great game of tactical skill and quickness of movement to ensure nourishment came your way, whilst attempting to maintain some dignity and social decorum. The long bold reach of the rock climber, the broad shoulder strength of the canoeist, the take-what-comes and enjoy it of the mountaineer, all brought their rewards. Only the timid got crumbs and cold tea, and they didn't get very far as instructors.

For what he did for the Brenin and Outdoor Education generally in the UK I always felt he should have received wider recognition. Having retired from PyB he subsequently set up and became Director of Plas Menai, and got Wales' own National Centre commissioned, launched and sailing – with mountain interests and involvement, of course.

I retained my links with PyB long after they'd left, and before the Brenin had its own Bunkhouse they sometimes used my place as an overflow. Now, I've remained – by choice - the same simple "roadside mountain hut", but the world has gone up market! Maggie and I have been frequent callers on John and Eileen. There was always tea, or something stronger and I was pleased to get John to accept that his delicious Australian reds could be chambre'd in a microwave! There was much talk of mountains and mountain people, and I was always sorry I'd not recorded those wonderful verbal travelogues. We called several times after their last trip to India, but he was too unwell to welcome visitors in the weeks before his death. Talking and listening had become too much of an effort. I feared every goodbye would be the last.

And then it was. But he will always be with us.

I'm not a writer or a journalist, and these are just some of my personal impressions. They go beyond the Brenin, but then so did "Jacko", and I'm glad to have known him.

Jessie James

John, 1954

A large number of club members and friends were privileged to sit through John's slide show on the Himalayas at the Pen y Pass New Year Meet, 2003.

In it he told us about his epic crossing in 1954, at the age of 33, from the Khumbu area of Nepal, to meet a small party, led by John Kempe, that were reconnoitring the South West face of Kangchenjunga; his brother Ron was a member of the team.

At that time the pre-war route to the mountain was closed to Europeans; and the Kempe expedition had been set up to find a new approach. If we look at the Himalayas in the 1930's FS Smythe pronounced that the south side of the mountain (Kangchenjunga) up the Yalung valley to the South west face was "... unclimable, there seems little justification for a further attempt from this side." This perhaps sets the scene for the area that John set himself, alone except for a group of Sherpas /porters to cross into. Remember there were no mobile phones in those days and inter party communications were non existent.

After the 1954 expedition John Tucker a member of the team wrote a book about their adventures, (Kanchenjunga*¹. Elek books, 1955), in it he describes the arrival of John and his party at their base camp. I thought you might like to read it: Chapter XX11 p207 "On May 28th we were in agony of uncertainty waiting for the coolies to arrive from Ghunza, but we need not have worried. At about 8am some coolies arrived in the company of our Sherpas from the direction of Upper Ramser. They told us a garbled yarn about Jackson Sahib coming from Ghunza and we were completely fogged. Eventually we straightened the story out and were delighted by what we heard.

"The day before, John Jackson, the brother of Ron Jackson and a member of the triumphant 1955 expedition whom we had hoped would join our expedition, had arrived with a score of Sherpas and coolies in Ghunza. He had been four months with the Daily Mail Yeti Expedition and as they had finished their explorations and were winding up their investigations into the whereabouts of the Abominable Snowman, John had decided to take a walk across to meet us. He was, according to the new arrivals, at that moment on his way over from Ghunza.

"Ron, of course was delighted and I was immensely pleased. I have climbed in many places at home and in the Alps with John and to meet him like this in the Himalayas was quite exciting. Ron and I went off in the direction of the upper Ramser hoping to meet John, but he arrived at the camp when we were away. He had been "guided" across the Ghunza by the coolie factor from there who was a bringing our men across and was himself paying us a visit to collect an advance of agent's fees on their behalf. We strongly suspected that this fee went into his pocket for good, but the coolies seemed happy about it so we said nothing. This Ghunza character had been most successful in losing John Jackson and his party at night on the Mirgin La, a steep pass between Tseram and Ghunza, and poor John had had the responsibility of not only seeing his own party safely over in bad conditions but the factor's as well. They arrived in the camp utterly worn out and very wet having been out on their feet for twenty nine-hours.

"However, all discomfort was forgotten in the thrill and excitement of the reunion of the Jackson brothers and this excitement mounted to fever pitch when John Jackson announced that the Daily Mail expedition had sent us their salaams and a present of food and tobacco. We fell on John and urged him to stop wasting time and produce something to eat, where upon he delved into a great sack and produced a huge tin of tongue. We hurriedly opened up the tin and called for tea and chapatties. While these were coming Jackson produced a large tin of butter and very soon we were sitting back wiping our mouths and showing our appreciation of the gifts in true Eastern fashion. John swore afterwards that we had eaten the tin as well.

¹ * This spelling is used throughout the book – and was chosen because of its familiarity though use by the British press at that time. The correct spelling is Kangchenjunga.

"The night John Jackson, with the aid of Mingma, his cook, and Ang Dawa, our cook produced a meal of such proportions and delicacy and served with such finesse that we might have been on a certain Everest Expedition of the thirties.

We gorged on such delicacies as anchovy and mushrooms, we encored a second tin of rare meat with heaps of vegetables and we finished off with fruit and clotted cream followed by a fragrant cheese. Never have lips smacked so and never before did men ply themselves so doughtily to their task. John Jackson was a little disgusted with us; but his Sherpas were loud in their praise of our appetites.

"There was very little sleep that evening and we built a huge fire round which we all gathered; it was something of a reunion for the Sherpas too who greeted old friends and relatives. I talked for a long time with Ang Nyima who had accompanied George Lowe and Alf Gregory to the top camp on Everest and Ang Nyima asked me about Blackpool and its Tower; was it as high as Everest? "As the evening wore on to early morning the songs of the Sherpas filled the night air. They had some "chang" which was passed around and the tempo of the evening increased somewhat; but eventually we crept off to our tents to get a little sleep before moving off on our return to Darjeeling." I like a sentence later in the book describing the walk out: "..... for the most part rain fell steadily so that we usually arrived in camp very wet and spent the nights in sopping sleeping bags. However, it was no worse than a good summer day in the Lake District at home....." Men were Men in those days!

Harvey

Appendix to Above:

Of course, John in his book More than Mountains writes about the same adventure. Below in John's word his story; P. 149. "Now I began to organise my loads for a journey across to Kangchenjunga which the Daily Mail was generously allowing me to make later in May. On the way there I should perhaps be able to send back a runner any fresh news of the Meh-Teh (the Yeti), and at Kangchenjunga would be near the Zemu Gap, where John Hunt and C.L. Cooke found footprints in 1937. I should, too, meet my brother Ron, who was with the Kangchenjunga Reconnaissance.

" Above Tola I shook hands with and said farewell to the members of the expedition. Da Temba put the white scarf from Sangi Lama round my neck, and placed a cup of rakshi in my hand. Sherpas and Sherpanis gathered around, giving me their blessing for the road. It was spontaneous and honest I was sorry to be leaving these fine people..... ".....On what might be a long and difficult journey I was responsible to some extent for eleven people. None knew the country beyond Makalu, and I hadn't a map. Nevertheless, it was the type of mountain travel that fascinates, and I am sure it will be full of interest.

".....After nine days Mankim, Squalid and filthy, was perched on a westerly spur above the river Arun..... at the most imposing hut we were greeted by a very jungly native who wore the largest of bamboo hats and the smallest possible G-string.....his children swarmed everywhere. I was the first white man that they had ever seen. Sheep herders were camped nearby I gave Ang Dawa 30 rupees to buy a sheep and very quickly they returned with a fine ram..... quickly dispatched by Dorje, who severed its head from its shoulders with one swift blow of his kukri.

".....Then it rained hard, the tents were not waterproof, and we spent an uncomfortable night avoiding the drips and removing several cadaverous-looking leeches, probably attracted by our very strong body smell. Two Tibetan mastiffs set upon me, and for once were not discouraged by liberal application of the ice-axe. The sortie was won eventually by throwing stones- hard.

"..... We arrived at Ghunza. The two day march had been wet and misty; I was feeling downcast at the thought of an early monsoon..... It would have been interesting to learn more of the local people but their news gave me other things to think about. Two of the Kangchenjunga Recce had returned to Darjeeling two days before – the doctor and one other who was injured. uneasily I thought of my brother Ron, and tried to put from my mind that he might be badly hurt. The final piece of

news was that the remaining members... were leaving on the morning of the 28th. It was the evening of the 26th – only 32 hours to go.

"I arranged with Mingma Gyaldzen that he look after the bandobast while Ang Dawa and I left early with light loads to reach Tseram and locate the base camp.

The journey normally took two days so it was going to be a push. By the worst possible piece of luck, the coolie-contractor at Ghunza volunteered to join us, and at the same time show us a different but quicker route to the Yalung Glacier. I have no doubt that such a route exists but he had forgotten it. The pace was quick as we ascended the Yamatari Khola to the Yamatari Glacier, and turned north east up a steep rise to a stony glacier. Heavy clouds sunk down and around us, and sleet obscured all but the nearest ground. Our friend was completely lost.

I felt that we must try to the limit as we ascended a steep glacier, cutting steps for most of the way. Seracs surrounded us. The ice became steeper..... up and up we went, but suddenly immediately to our left ice was falling - the roar of it all the more threatening because nothing could be seen..... with heavy heart I decided to turn back.....

"The dreary return through dense and dripping rhododendron and along swollen stream beds is best forgotten. We arrived at Ghunza wet through thirteen and a half hours after our departure, and no nearer Yalung Base Camp. Almost three hours later we again left the village and walked through the night-a drenching stormy night spent squelching and skidding on the track by the light of one dismal hurricane lamp. Though wet and cold, we dozed for forty minutes at four o'clock we had been on our feet for over twenty four hours..... Warily we crossed the Mergin La and looked down into the valley of the Yalung. Here at last we sat down, and faithful Ang Dawa produced at this fitting moment a bottle of chang, which we drank contentedly. Ang Dawa, I knew was extremely proud and happy, for this was the first time the journey from Everest had been made across the Barun through north east Nepal and Tibet to Kangchenjunga; he, as the sirdar of the eleven, had most reason to be proud.

".... Two thousand feet of descent remained. I gave the cuckoo call, and received no answer. My happiness changed to sadness, for my brother was not there. At Tseram I could see a line of Meade tents, and soon I was shaking hands John Kempe, Gilmour Lewis and Jack Tucker. There was a loud cuckoo call, and to my intense joy there was Ron running out of the woods above, where he had gone to meet me. My journey to Kangchenjunga was at an end.

"Fortunately the four members of the Kangchenjunga Reconnaissance that remained had delayed their departure by one day, or otherwise I would have had to push off at full speed after them. It was a relief not to do so, because Ang Dawa and I had been on our feet for twenty nine hours. Instead of vigorous activity I was able to masquerade as Father Christmas for the day, and bring forth from a voluminous kit-bag a variety of tasty foods....." More than Mountains is a fascinating tale of John's obvious love of Nepal, adventure and mountain exploration in the Himalayas. Read it if you can, and learn about the skills and knowledge of the man. It really was a privilege to know him.

Ed. by H Lloyd

A Privilege

To see a slide show presented by John was a privilege and a great pleasure. His photographs are beautifully composed and capture the wild spirit of his high mountain adventures. The conditions in which he photographed must have been most challenging. Severe mountain weather, fatigue, and cameras requiring technical skills would have defeated many mountaineers. To obtain such a wonderful photographs under these conditions reflects not only a great eye for beauty but also a considerable determination.

John, with his sonorous voice and engaging enthusiasm, narrated the shows with detail which brought all of us with him on his epic adventures. He will be greatly missed.

Regina Smith.

Overland to India - Facets of a Journey

"Let us probe the silent places
Let us seek what lucks betide us
Let us journey to a lonely land I know.
There's a whisper on the night wind
There's a star a gleam to guide us
And the wild is calling, calling.....
Let us go"

For many years my wife Eileen and I planned to return to India and the Himalaya and finally decided we would travel overland in our own transport. This we did by buying a second-hand petrol driven Ford Transit Caravanette which once overhauled was made safer and more useful by making three important additions. The first of these was a large and immensely strong luggage rack made of wrought iron that extended from the roof of the cab and out over the front bonnet. In addition to carrying tents, skis, climbing equipment, spare wheels, tyres and extra clothing. We found that in the Far East, the rack gave us welcome relief from the heat and glare of the sun. Secondly, we added extra springs to absorb shocks on the roughest of tracks. The vehicle never let us down. The third addition was made after a conversation we had with two friends (the doctors Peter Steel and Drummond Rennie) during a "Mountain Medicine" Symposium held in North Wales. Both insisted that a very loud and piercing twin horn was almost as important as brakes - invaluable advice that proved to be absolutely true. We visited many places during our travels which as well as the journey overland to India, included driving to Nepal, Kulu, Kashmir and Ladakh. We never broke down, suffered but three flat tyres - and quickly gave the name of "Juggernaut" to the Transit because it never stopped for anything.

Looking back years, I realise that as we travelled from North Wales, we lived life to the full and though I haven't written about many facets of the journey (because at the time I merely thought of it as a means to an end) it was really an end in itself.

The Journey Begins

"It is obviously going to be your lucky year." These encouraging words were included in a letter to Eileen by Batchelor's Foods who having donated two cases of soups and diced apples for our journey, had in error sent us four. She pointed out their error but they asked her not to return the excess and finished their letter with the above comments. To both of us it seemed a good omen.

Eileen had taken on the task of organising most of the special foods for the nine months we would be away, which included rations for Sherpa's as well as Himalayan porters for a period of at least ninety days. When I stacked the nineteen boxes of food inside the Transit the night before we started the journey, I felt sure that there would be enough to eat - and there was.

We began our travels on the first day of February. The weather was cold and grey and though it remained so throughout that day, we travelled with a feeling of lightness and good cheer having had a heart-warming send off, from friends in the village of Dwyran on Anglesey and Capel Curig in Snowdonia.

Istanbul - Gateway to the East

Long before we arrived in Antolia we became acclimatised to the cold and reconciled to the knowledge that the temperatures would be exceptionally low. At Frankfurt am Main, a New Zealand driver of a much battered T.I.R. lorry gave us lurid accounts of snow blocked passes in north and central Turkey, of icy, rutted tracks, freezing diesel fuel, and even of freezing petrol in temperatures down to -45 degrees centigrade. Prospects for the future seemed daunting.

In Austria we met our son Robin who was with the British ski team, and with him for several days we watched events in the Winter Olympic Games. At Seefeld, the temperatures outside the "Juggernaut" fell to -20 degrees centigrade, and later at Hohentauern in Steirmark the thermometer dropped even

lower. After the games ended, Robin returned home whilst we continued our journey east through Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, where there was less snow but it was none the warmer.

It was on reaching the outskirts of Istanbul that we caught the first glimmer of a warming sun and during a two days stay with friends Otto and Rosi Ther, we built up a sunny kaleidoscope of impressions. Crossing the Galeta Bridge over the Bosphorous, we looked up towards the Golden Horn absorbing the sounds of the busy bustling cosmopolitan population. These sounds mingled with the hoots of frantic traffic, the warning blasts of ships klaxons, and the exhorting cries of fishmongers who at each end of the bridge stood among trays of strong smelling fish. People sitting quietly drinking small cups of strong Turkish coffee were a contrast to darting vociferous moneychangers and noisy, pugnacious traders of trinkets. Women with the flat faced features of people in the Balkan countries shared seats with us on the train from Yesilkoy into the central of Istanbul. Poor but proud, their hands were hard and cracked and tough blunt fingers constantly smoothed out the creases of the neat clothes covering their small frames. Their shoes, though old and worn, were cared for, headscarves were brightly coloured and when parting from the older women, the young showed respect by placing their hands to their foreheads and giving a slight bow.

At the old bazaar in Istanbul, all the colours and the splendours of the orient were on display - artefacts of gold, silver, bronze turquoise, and utensils made of copper reflected the rich warm glow of the metal. The shops laid out a dazzling array of antiques, fine clothing, leather goods, ceramics, and carpets from Anatolia, Armenia, Persia, Nuristan, India and far away Kashmir. It was contact with an old World - seemingly timeless - and a total contrast to the younger people outside in the streets playing volleyball and football, or to the excitable students shouting slogans and spraying walls with political text.

At dawn on the morning we left Istanbul we were awakened by the clattering wheels of a railway train, followed by the cries of the Imam from the mosque calling the devout to prayer.

Graveyard of the Lorries

A grey and hostile landscape blanketed with wind-drift snow began to glow soft and pink at sunrise on the morning we drove to the joint Iranian and Turkish customs post at Bazargan. Condensation crystals sparkled by the side of the rutted icy track and showers of ice diamonds winked their way to earth from a clear blue sky. There was a sparkle to the World, and a promise of more sun with increasing warmth and colour to come; a welcome promise after the previous days of crossing the bleak and treeless plateau of Anatolia where night temperatures had fallen to -35 degrees centigrade. This the ancient land of the Hittites lay deep with snow and untidy clusters of flat roofed, mud walled dwellings were grimly silent, as their occupants remained within doors seeking warmth from smoky fires of damp wood and burning dung. The narrow mountainous road, potholed and ice rutted led over higher and yet higher passes, the Kopdagi Gecidi 7,841 feet, on to the Tahir Gecidi 8,122 feet and eventually to Agri Dagi (Mount Ararat) near the border.

The first day we named the route the "Graveyard of the Lorries". Frequently we came across trucks that had skidded off the road, overturned, or jack-knifed then burned out, and several had rolled down the steep mountainside. Twice we found a cluster of Lorries that, unable to avoid each other, had simply battered and bumped their way together to a level spot where they remained seemingly inextricably intertwined. On a section of thirty kilometres, we counted over one hundred Lorries that had met one or the other of these fates. Finally on the night previous to reaching the border we stopped at a small wooden shack near Taslicay - a shack where a solitary pump gave promise of fuel for the Transit. When we finally stopped it was late, winds were strong and biting cold; the "Juggernaut" sheeted in ice was heavy, running sluggishly and in the dark our halting place, welcome though it was, appeared to be at the end of the World. A boisterous and motley gang of grubby youngsters swept out of the dark shrieking incomprehensibly, and surrounded the vehicle.

One, taller and older than all the others beckoned us inside the wooden shack. Inside we sat on orange boxes beside a roaring and almost white hot diesel stove drinking beer out of the neck of a bottle with an Italian and a Hungarian lorry driver. "They're a hard, tough but good people," said the Italian, "and you are welcome." "You want coffee?" queried one of the youngsters. We both relaxed,

impressed by the quick warm friendship shown to us in such a remote and seemingly inhospitable spot. Within the hour we were back inside the "Juggernaut" and fast asleep.

Turkoman!

Cheese with flatbread (Nan) and "chai" without milk or sugar became our diet as we traversed the mountains, and then rolled on across an open monotonous plain between Tabris and Tehran.

"Whatever you do avoid arriving in Tehran at 5 O'clock in the afternoon". Peter Boardman had warned us, but inevitably it was right on 5 o'clock when we arrived, and that ultimate in chaotic experiences, though now joked about, left an indelible impression. To use a modern idiom it was "mind blowing and when finally at dusk we extricated ourselves from the bedlam of Tehran, we sped on and over the Elburz mountains as if pursued by demons.

After a few hours sleep, we were off again at dawn, driving down the last few miles of a bare and craggy defile and across the rice growing plain to Sari. North of us stretched the Caspian Sea and the wooded foothills of the Elburz Mountains lay to the south. By mid-day, we were well into the Steppe country where snow covered the wooded hills almost down to the plain. Here in the land of the Turkoman nomads we frequently stopped to watch the shepherds and their tough looking dogs slowly moving flocks of sheep to areas of fresh grazing. At one stop, a car drove by then screeched to a halt, and the suntanned occupant, wearing a bright red sweater, pointed to our skis, then enquired if we had been skiing at Ab Ali in the Elburz.

"No we haven't" I told him "but we do intend to ski in Nepala".

"If that is so, you must be going to bring back hashish" he replied laughingly, but stopped laughing when I asked him if he was an Iranian ski instructor. He drew back his shoulders, lifting his chin, then replied with pride - "No, I am not an Iranian, I am a Turkoman!"

Systems and Souls

Before arriving at any customs posts, we had a system that we hoped would help us cover all formalities quickly and allow us to move on as soon as possible. An hour or so before arrival, we used to wash down the "Juggernaut" and following this, I would have a shave, then we would wash and put on cleaning clothing. Documents and information required varied slightly in different countries so always we had the following material ready in a zip folder - Passports, visas, green card, carnet or other vehicle insurance, International Driving Licence, number of chassis, number of engine, list of spares, typed lists of equipment, and medical documents which included inoculation and vaccination certificates. Carrying the zip folder, a pen and hard backed notebook, I used to present myself to the police and complete all the necessary formalities then move on and do the same for the customs. At least for us the system worked well and both going out and on return we were delayed for more than one hour on only one occasion. This was on the return journey at the Afghan/Iranian frontier. On the Afghan side, we sat for several hours whilst a Landrover owned by four unkempt French lads was systematically taken apart in a search for drugs. They had been to Swat in northern Pakistan, a notorious place for 'pot' but none was found. The young Afghan customs official then beckoned me to drive the Transit on to a ramp and spoke to me in French.

"Sorry, I'm British" I said "Oh! Then take everything out and put it on the tables" he replied in English.

By the time I had opened the rear doors, he had noted our names on the side of the vehicle 'John and Eileen Jackson'.

"Mr. John. Do you have anything you shouldn't have?" he asked "You mean things like drugs, or guns and ammunition?" "That's right" he said. On my replying "No" he put out his hand and asked "Will you shake on that?" We did. However, as he made out the clearance note for our move on to the next border he asked me to read and mark well the sign above the door of the customs shed. It read as follows:- "If you have any guns, ammunition, or drugs, declare them now for if you don't we will find them." There was then a break in the sentence followed by the telling rider, "And if we

don't the Iranians will." But it was the final ominous prayer that really hit the mark - "And if the Iranians do, - may Allah have mercy on your soul!"

Into Afghanistan

Space - a land of almost limitless space as our first impression of Afghanistan. It seemed an empty land though it was soon evident that it was far from empty. A cold wind swept constantly across the road (built by the Russians between Herat and Kandahar) and along it long lines of slow moving camel trains carried trade goods to and from remote settlements. Bearded Afghans, backs to the wind squatted patiently by the roadside, waiting - forever waiting - as if life for them stretched into eternity.

Small and nimble donkeys laden down with loads of "lakri" (wood) trotted steadily over the stony barren ground. These were followed by their wood collecting owners who, having walked and searched huge areas for the precious fuel in a seemingly bare and treeless land were bringing carefully garnered bundles to pick up trucks waiting at the roadside. Sometimes we stopped in what seemed a really deserted spot but then to see in the distance the movement of sheep goats, donkeys, camels and the groups of nomadic peoples who owned them.

Occasionally we passed by flat roofed fortified houses built of mud and straw, or further away from the road could see little clusters of small black tents (yurts) out of which spiralled blue-grey smoke providing evidence of habitation. From them savage dogs looking huge and shaggy often came bounding towards us, anxious to protect the few belongings of their masters. Once, in the middle of the afternoon there was a shimmering, a mirage, giving the road an appearance of being almost underwater. In the distance a tiny mounted figure came slowly towards us and I was reminded of the film "Lawrence of Arabia" and the Bedouin mounted on his camel coming out of the desert to visit his waterhole - but this time as the figure came nearer, we recognised it for a young Afghan on his modern Honda motorbike! Then there was the wind - always the wind - and rolling balls of tumbleweed flittering in ghostly fashion from stone to stone, or trundling eerily along the road.

Oranges, Eggs and Rice Pudding

The road between Kandahar and Kabul, built by the Americans, make a gradual ascent through the valley of the River Tarnak to Ghazni.

All along this valley we had clear views of picturesque forts, and mud-walled villages, all of them enhanced by a strong sun shining onto the surrounding "whipped cream" snow. Again there were people - walking, sitting, sheltering, smoking or talking - and outside the small village shops young boys dressed in European fashion were selling baskets of fresh juicy oranges and clusters of fresh or hard boiled eggs. These we bought. The fruit and eggs were very cheap and a welcome supplement to our daily diet, and throughout our stay in Afghanistan we had an abundance of such fresh foods. Beyond Ghazni the snow again lay deep and we crossed a treacherous pass at 9,000 feet, but then there was an easy descent to Kabul where the first sign we saw augured well. It read

SIGIS HOTEL - RESTUARANT
GOOD FOOD AND RICE PUDDING

Later in the Steak House in Chicken Street (I wonder if its still there) we met Theresa and Jonathan Hewat who were on the last leg of a three year drive through Africa, South and Northern America, the Far East and India. They were full of joy when we gave them two tins of Tate and Lyle's Golden Syrup - a commodity for which they had been longing for some time! An impressive map showing the route of their journey was painted on the back of their Volkswagen Kombi and for anyone wishing to emulate their travels, the book they wrote and published later "Overland and Beyond" is well worth buying.

So much has happened in Afghanistan since we were there. We met many fine people and had many satisfying experiences but now as the country goes through the agonies of civil war the memories are tinged with sadness.

On a happier note, at Sigis Hotel, not only did we have rice pudding but found bottles of Italian wine which we bought for a few Afghans, but were amused to find that another label on the back of the bottle told us it was produced and bottled in Afghanistan !! We stayed in Kabul for two days, then moving on I continued writing my diary each day to Delhi.

Friday, March 4th - Muslim Sunday, Evening

"No one is allowed to travel through the Khyber Pass between sunset and sunrise" says "Buster" Goodwin "and the man who came to sit with you when you had your coffee by the roadside at noon would be a guard. Many Pathan families still fled with each other and it's a potential danger that travellers became embroiled in their activities." "Buster", who wrote the book "Life among the Pathans", is a mine of information, and whilst I write this diary, he and Eileen are having a great time together with Eileen inundating him with questions.

We arrived here in Rawalpindi a couple of hours ago finding "Buster's" house in Peshawar Road quite quickly. As well as being a retired army colonel of the North West Frontier Force, "Buster" is also the Himalayan Club secretary for Pakistan and we've discovered that we have many mutual friends and acquaintances. They are mountain people who have stayed with him in the past - Mike Banks, George Garratt, Hamish McInnes, Wilfrid Noyce and so on - but he is extremely pleased to have news of "Nobby" and Arthur Clarke. "Nobby" quite clearly made a tremendous hit with him as well she might. "Buster" (who is 81 years of age!) resembles an older Don Whillans (of whom he's also glad to have news) or reminds me of the statues of a benevolent Buddha.

This morning after a minor delay trying to get a water pump to work we left Kabul just after dawn and descended through the Tangi-Gharu gorge. Rays from the early morning sun slanted down from serrated rock ridges differentially lighting up the dark recesses of the gorge. Once we were away from the deep cut defile we crossed a warm and fertile plain from which we had crisp clear views of the snow covered outliers of the Hindu Kush. After a short stop at the border we wound up and through the gears and through the behinds of the Khyber Pass stopping at times to take photographs but more to absorb the atmosphere and get a feeling of the history of this ancient route. Many straw and clay forts dotted the mountain sides, whilst below us down in the defile, along the old and dusty trail, trains of mules and camels carrying a variety of trade goods wound their way slowly between Kabul and Peshawar. It is how it must have been for centuries.

March 5th Evening - "Battle of the Horns"

Today the journey has been very varied following a reasonably early start at 6.30 a.m. After leaving Rawalpindi we crossed the rivers Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi in that order before arriving in Lahore.

There we asked for directions to Ganda Singhawala from three engaging and beautifully clothed Pakistani girls. For reasons we now well understand they seemed puzzled by our insistence that we wanted to go to Ganda Singhawala. Being a most polite people they eventually gave us the information and their initial reluctance to give it was only made clear on arrival at Ganda Singhawala where we discovered that as a border crossing point it had been closed since 1971!! However, the extra ninety miles of driving did take us through some of the most peaceful pastoral country we've yet travelled - a splendid contrast to the noisy dusty road between Pindi and Lahore. On that part of the day's journey we found the public carrier vehicles played a disconcerting "chicken" game with each other seeing who would waver first then drive off the tarmac road and onto the brown earthen bullock tracks. As part of the "chicken game" the PCV's made much use of their motor horns. These varied remarkably in range and scale but were all of a similar intensity. Some kept up a high shrill shrieking hoping to impress with their continuous production of maximum decibels, whilst others more of middle range, gave intermittent blasts both long and short. Some would sweep by using a shattering mixture of the two types, but without doubt the most successful protagonist was a bottom of the scale, reverberating bass horn that sounded not like the oncoming of a truck or bus, but of a slow moving cargo ship in the middle of a Mersey fog. Whenever it was necessary, we added our own quota to this constant cacophony of sound and rightly we've called the day "The Battle of the Horns".

March 6th morning

Last night we eventually stopped and stayed outside a police station some ten miles from Wagah, the border between Pakistan and India. Despite a long and tiring day, we were kept awake for a time and also reminded of the "Battle of the Horns" by the infuriating buzzing and whining of hundreds of mosquitoes. We again took our Nivoquine anti-malarials and will repeat the dose every three days for the next eight months until we return back home.

Evening

By 10 a m this morning we had completed formalities with the Pakistan customs at Wagha, and were then quickly through the Indian customs at Attari Road and into India. It has been a relaxing day driving quietly along the Grand Trunk (G.T.) road through the Punjab and Haryana to Pipli where we are now staying.

Despite the big cities with their millions of inhabitants India is a rural country and it has been good to take so many photographs of village life - such as the old man and his son watering their buffalo by the river and not many yards away the women of the village washing and combing their hair then collecting water for the home in shining brass "chattis". We are now staying at the Green Parakeet - one of the rest houses (or caravanserai) belonging to the Haryana Tourist Complex. The food is good and amazingly cheap - for less than 8 rupees (50 pence) we had a well spiced curried chicken with rice, creme caramel and a cup of instant coffee" Even more surprising is the luxury we can have for 50 rupees (£2.50) for the night for the two of us. Our double room is air conditioned with its own bathroom and shower - a welcome luxury after two and a half weeks of living in the "Juggernaut".

March 7th Evening

Up at 8 O'clock! It seemed like afternoon as we've usually driven a hundred miles or so by then.

After a leisurely breakfast we had a stimulating morning and afternoon meeting many people and visiting a variety of places. It being a "holi" day many were visiting the temple of Hanuman the monkey God, or the temple of Lord Khrishna where a heady aroma of incense permeated the rooms which then seemed to follow us to the most sacred Banyan tree where Lord Khrishna wrote the Bhagavad Gita. Most of the people wore clean pale yellow robes and were quiet and graceful.

Beneath the shade of the Banyan tree we sat and talked with the chowkidar from the Green Parakeet who explained that the sacred tanks (man made lakes) nearby are being strengthened and enlarged in preparation for the important "holi" day on April 29th when there will be an eclipse of the sun. Up to 200,000 people are expected to travel from all parts of India to bathe in the tanks and wash away their sins.

It's a land of contrasts - and we felt it more when we arrived back into modern India at our hotel and rest house which is absolutely first class.

March 8th

Delhi at last! We broke the siesta of our friend Harish Sarin, who I think is surprised we arrived in Delhi on the day we forecast. He arranged our stay at the India International Centre (a superb place) where we met John Lall the Director, who is a friend of Charles and Denise Evans, and the man who was the political officer in Sikkim when we went to Kangchenjunga in 1955.

"Horars Cops" - and Preparations

The day after our arrival in Delhi we made arrangements for a journey by train to South India and in Connaught circus also booked a train to Calcutta for a visit to Darjeeling and Kalimpong that we intended to make later. The "booking office" owned and run by Lil Ram - a Congress man, and Ramesh a fortune teller, - was the most amazing "booking office" I've ever used. It was actually the space beneath the bottom stairs of a multi storey building and at the entrance a large placard described the proprietors as "property dealers, astrologers and numerologists, menders of typewriters, bicycles, and travel agents". Lil Ram, who proudly told us he was a member of the Delhi Jail Committee got me to phone the railway booking office to book our seats then most charmingly

charged me an extra 30 rupees for doing my own booking! When we were leaving, he gave us a card which read as follows:-

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| Annual Horars Cops | Rupees 80 |
| Complete Life History by Indian Method | Rupees 500 |
| Complete Life History by Western Method | Rupees 800 |
| To ask any questions | Rupees 10 |

He was so friendly, anxious to help and delightfully naive.

I wondered what he would have told us in our "Horars Cops" before we started our journey overland to India.

John A Jackson

We shall remember....

Exerts from *More than Mountains*

"In a thousand ages of the gods, I could not tell thee of the glories of the Himachal"

Hindu proverb

Handwritten by John in H.L.'s copy of *More than Mountains*

"In April the bridge below Dolle, in the upper Dudh Kosi, was swept away by flood-waters, caused by the melting snow from Cho Oyu and Gyachung Kang, at the head of the valley.someone, I don't remember who, suggested we search the opposite bank of the river, and we cross without the aid of a bridge. we were all sceptical about the possibility of crossing, but in the end I suggested it would be possible if someone could be lowered over the steep smooth wall on the true left bank of the river on to a tiny rock projection. With a dry take-off, a neat shallow dive, and a few quick crawl-strokes I was sure that someone could reach a projecting boulder two-thirds of the way across. Once he had scrambled on to the boulder, one more powerful plunge was all that was required to reach the opposite bank. I volunteered to swim the rope across. Stanley Jeeves and I tied ourselves to each end of the rope, and made a strong belay on top of the wall. It bulged out slightly at the top, and with a large measure of assistance from the rope, and use of small finger-holds that were available, I descended to the small projecting lip.

"The roar of the river drowned my voice, and Stan continued to let out the rope so that I was unable to maintain my position for a dry take-off and swung out into the river. My feet rested on a rounded boulder, but the water was surging past me above the hip. Already I felt the numbing cold creeping through my body, and in a few minutes knew it would be hopeless to attempt to cross, I weaved and pushed, but my feet slipped on the slim of the boulder, giving me no start at all. A start from scratch- and quickly the river was plucking at my body with icy fingers; my legs beat rapidly, and arms flailed at a pretence of a neat crawl. A surge of joy – I had reached the rock. It was under-cut the current running strongly below it, and soon my hands, which were searching for a good hold, began to claw wildly at the water worn surface, smooth as marble. There was a fraction of time to realise the implications of one important fact that I had left out of my calculations, and then my legs were dragged around and down into the powerful current. My hands were torn from their flimsy grip, and I was whisked like a cork into mid stream.

"..... I was over the falls into a watery world deep down that consisted of millions of shining bubbles steaming past me to the light above. The rope jerked around my waist within a few feet of ferocious rapids, and at the same time Ralph threw a lasso, which I caught with my left hand. With the rope I swung round into calmer water behind a large boulder, but the anxious Sherpas pulled hard, dragging me back into the foam and under the waterfall, where it was impossible to breathe."

More than Mountains. J.A. Jackson

"By strange coincidence we were wakened in the morning by the loud shouting from the yakherder, and when we stumbled out into the pale light of dawn we saw a large cream-coloured Tibetan wolf dragging at the hind leg of a struggling yak. Upon our approach it loped away disdainfully in the direction of the Changu La....."

More than Mountains. J.A. Jackson

"..... and we stepped forward carefully to avoid disturbing those strange prints in the snow.

They seemed very near together and very large, but the closeness was only at one place. There were prints of snow-cock in the snow near by, and apparently the animal had been stalking it.

There were no feathers or specks of blood, so the bird must have got away. But these prints! We examined them carefully, and photographed them too. At least three toe-marks were visible, the rest of the front part of the foot being indistinct. There was a deeper depression on one side of the heel than the other – the same side as the toe-marks. We measured them for length and breadth, finding them roughly eleven inches by six inches. The snow was crisp and sparkling, and the tracks were crisp too – none of the edges rounded by the sun. They were made within 24 hours, we estimated. No, they were unlike any bear tracks I had ever seen, but they did remind me forcibly of the footprints photographed by Eric Sipton and Michael Ward on the Menlung La. The big toe was not so prominent, but the size and shape were similar..... ..”

More than Mountains. J.A. Jackson

“Kangchenjunga, Talung, Kabru, Rohtang, Kaktang – all the peaks of this tremendous area were before us. Each face of fluting, each ridge, each rock stood out sharp and clear.....”

More than Mountains. J.A. Jackson

Links

There is an illustrated, wide ranging summary of his life and achievements on [Wikipedia](#)..

Obituaries were published in the following newspapers:.

- [Guardian](#)
- [Times](#)
- [Independent](#)