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# Valedictory Address

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(Read before the Alpine Club on 7 December 2004)

When our then President, CE Mathews, first put forward the idea of a Presidential Valedictory Address, back in 1880 (*AJ* 10, 251, 1881), it was on the basis that the outgoing President should not just '*slink away*' but should say something of moment to the Club.

He referred in particular to the President being acquainted with what he called '*the traditions of Alpine government*'. Nowadays such issues are perhaps more the concern of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) or, as regards overseas ones, the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA). I have been involved with both of these bodies from time to time over the years, as well as with the Alpine Club, and will venture some personal comments on some of the issues of which I have had direct experience, and which may still be of some interest for the present. Mathews was evidently himself attracted to international collaboration, attending two Congresses of alpine clubs in 1878 and 1879 (*AJ* 9, 154, 333, 1879).

My starting point is that good administration is important for mountaineering; and that it is worth the various mountaineering bodies – especially the Club, the BMC and UIAA – trying to help people to climb or travel in the mountains, more or better or more safely.

The Club has a special role of leadership and influence, given its very long tradition of mountaineering and its commitment to mountaineering freedoms and ethics. It also has the ability to comment on and defend these freedoms and ethics, notably through the independent viewpoint of the *Alpine Journal*.

The fact that the Club is so firmly within the world of mountaineering for its own sake – with practically no links with commerce or officialdom – is perhaps its greatest strength. I speak, as regards the latter, as someone with both a commitment to the public service and a recognition of its limitations in dealing with, for example, customary freedoms or mountain traditions.

## Early days

A number of valedictory addresses have been autobiographical, so it may not be out of place for me to say something also of my own relationship with the hills. I first experienced them when I was evacuated to South Wales during the Second World War, living for some time on a Welsh-speaking

hill-farm in the shadow of the Carmarthen Van. In 1947, I cycled from my home in Liverpool to Land's End and back, for my fourteenth birthday; and the following year cycled to Glencoe and Lochaber. It was there that I met a young climber, John West, who encouraged me to walk over the Mamores; and who subsequently sold me his nailed climbing boots and hemp rope when he became engaged to be married.

Thereafter, I entered the friendly world of the impecunious young climber described by Dennis Gray in his book *Rope Boy* (1970). Most travel was by hitchhiking; and we either camped or stayed in a range of barns, notably at Ogwen (Williams), Wall End in Langdale, Altnafeadh (Cameron) and Glen Brittle (Macrae), or sometimes at Idwal Cottage or other Youth Hostels.

Climbing partnerships also depended on something like hitchhiking – meeting up with whoever might be available and willing to team-up at the time. When joining a party of three, it would usually be necessary for me, as the incomer, to offer to lead the second rope, an effective but inadvisable way of developing climbing skills.

I was fortunate to become a member of the Wayfarers' Club in about 1950 and benefited from more regular climbing partnerships, notably with George Bintley and John Walton. By then we had started doing climbs like the Great Slab and the East Buttress routes on Clogwyn D'ur Arddu, which were little frequented at that time.

In 1951 I was offered, through school, a spare place on a Workers' Educational Association party going to Annecy, which gave me the chance to get to Chamonix. There I met Geoffrey Sutton, and we climbed the Aiguille de l'M, surviving a scary lightning storm that night, camped on the Nantillons Glacier.

After starting at Oxford in 1951, I mainly climbed with the Oxford University Mountaineering Club (OUMC), mostly with Hamish Nicol, but initially at least very much in the shadow of the previous Oxford generation, including Tom Bourdillon, Derek Bull, Anthony Rawlinson and Michael Westmacott. David Cox was constantly supportive, as Senior Member in residence.

The following summer, 1952, however, I found myself unexpectedly alone in Chamonix again, and met up with an FRCC member, Desmond Stevens, at the Chalet Bioley. Together we were to traverse the Aiguilles du Diable, but unfortunately without the guidebook which we had left behind at the Col de la Fourche hut. The atmosphere of the time is conveyed by his subsequent article:

My companion of 19 summers was inexperienced but full of confidence. Blackamoor' [*sic*] 'led the first Diable as a matter of course. ... I would have enjoyed leading the second pinnacle, but my friend was half-way up before I could make my wishes known. ... We now stood on the summit of the Chaubert and an amusing discussion took place, to decide who should rappel last. Blackamoor appeared to regard my

160ft of nylon string as a joke and eloquently presented his case. In short that I should have sufficient faith in my own rope to descend last. This was *unanswerable*.<sup>1</sup> It can only be good to see yourself as others see you.

By way of night climbing at Oxford, I helped Hamish one Eights Week to put a neon sign on top of Trinity Tower, flashing on and off '*Bloody Trinity*', apparently as retribution by Balliol for some Trinity aggression earlier in the week.

In the OUMC I particularly enjoyed the lectures and Dinners, which gave us the opportunity to meet well-known figures of the time, like Sir John Hunt, Douglas Milner, Eric Shipton, Ken Tarbuck and, very memorably, Geoffrey Winthrop-Young.

My best season was in 1955, on the Stage des Etrangers at the Ecole Nationale in Chamonix, when Bob Downes and I did the south face of the Aiguille du Geant and the north face of the Aiguille de Triolet; and Eric Langmuir and I did the Republique Arête of the Grands Charmoz. All three of us, and Geoff Sutton, also did the south face of the Pointe Gugliermi and the north face of the Piz Badile.

By that time I had started National Service and shortly afterwards became an instructor in the then Cliff Assault Wing of 42 Royal Marine Commando, commanded by Mike Banks.

In the summer of 1956, I, like a number of others, was greatly shaken by the tragic accident to Tom Bourdillon and Dick Viney on the Jagihorn (*AJ* 61, 357, 1956). It was a terrible shock and we had to think very deeply about mountaineering, the ethical issues involved, and the question of obligations to families and civil society.

I came to realise that the very hard forms of mountaineering no longer held quite the same appeal for me. But I continued to enjoy the hills in various ways, notably through: expeditions with Sir John Hunt to the Caucasus (1958) and Greenland (1960); writing my Penguin *Mountaineering* (1965); climbing and mountain warfare instruction in the Royal Marines Reserve (until 1974); ski-touring or ski-mountaineering, including a traverse of the Alps from Kaprun to Gap in 1972, and of Scandinavia end to end over the period 1973-77 (*AJ* 83, 91, 1978); and completing the Scottish Munros (1978).

George Band discussed the problem of how to balance work with mountaineering in his Valedictory Address, which he said he might appropriately have called '*I Chose to Work*' (*AJ* 95, 1-10, 1990). In my own case, I had joined the Civil Service in 1956, and fitted in these mountain activities with a number of jobs, mainly in the Ministry of Power in London where I was Private Secretary to various ministers for about five years altogether, but with secondments to the Diplomatic Service (UK Delegation to OECD, Paris, 1964-66) and to the City (Charterhouse Bank, 1972-73). In 1974 I was very pleased to move to Scotland to set up the HQ of the

Offshore Supplies Office in Glasgow for the burgeoning North Sea oil and gas programme. I will mention later some of the difficulties which were to arise, following this period, when I was to attempt to switch to more of a mountain way of life, at the end of the 1970s.

### **Some mountain issues to 1980**

I had joined the AC in 1954, on attaining the age of 21, which was the minimum at that time; and received a nice welcoming letter from Basil Goodfellow, the Club's Hon Secretary.

We were in parallel setting up the Alpine Climbing Group (ACG), modelled on the Groupe de Haute Montagne, and I became Editor of its *Bulletin*, which disseminated information about current alpine activity, a role now mainly fulfilled by the modern climbing magazine.

I was also involved in 1955 with the working party set up by Sir Edwin Herbert (later Lord Tangle), our then President, to examine ways of improving recruitment to the AC; and repeated this in 1967-68 when Sir Charles Evans led another group on the future of the Club (*AJ* 75, 285, 1970). These recognised that the Club needed to be more accessible and should give better value for money through improved services, really the same issue we face now.

Dick Viney, who, as I mentioned a moment ago, was the victim of a tragic accident in 1956, was an immensely energetic and effective Hon Secretary of the Climbers' Club at the time, and had won the MC in the Parachute Regiment during the Rhine crossing. As I was his Assistant Secretary, it fell to me to succeed him (1956-61). There was a lot to do in such an active Club, with five huts; a major guidebook programme; meets and Dinners; and a need to relate to the other 'Senior Clubs' and the BMC. We bought freeholds of the huts in order to secure them for the longer term; but also faced the difficult issue of reducing the unduly powerful position of some of the hut custodians in relation to the active climbers or elected members of the Committee. I enjoyed working with the several successive Presidents – HRC Carr, David Cox and AB Hargreaves.

My first connection with the UIAA was in about 1961, when I attended a meeting in Switzerland at the request of the BMC, and met Egmond d'Arcis, *The Times* correspondent in Geneva, who had been involved in the foundation of the UIAA in 1932.

I was pleased to be asked to edit the *Alpine Journal* 1968-70; and changed it, after much consultation, into a single volume, with black and white illustrations integrated with the text. It is very good that Stephen Goodwin, in producing the present *AJ*, has taken this to such a splendid further stage, with coloured photos throughout the text.

One of the main issues in the 1970s was the reform of the BMC, of which I had become President in 1973. Based in Knightsbridge, it could not attract enough active climbers locally for its range of Committees, so we moved it to Manchester where, happily, it proved possible to gain considerable

support. We also set-up a Future Policy Group to determine its strategic objectives and main functions.<sup>2</sup> The main priority was to keep the BMC in close touch with the 'grass roots' of climbing and ensure that, by constantly rejuvenating itself, it did not become monolithic or a bureaucracy. One of the ideas of the time was that the AC should have a strong role on the international side of the BMC,<sup>3</sup> and I will return to this later.

I was also much involved with the Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) over the period 1968-74, as one of the Trustees nominated by the AC. This was in the Club's capacity as one of the two co-equal Constituent Societies of the MEF, the other being the Royal Geographical Society (RGS).

The MEF had by then run down its resources with generous grants and there was a suggestion that it should be wound up, its main tasks having been completed. The AC, through a working group led by Anthony Rawlinson, however, successfully argued that the MEF was still needed in the longer-term in the interests of small expeditions. This in turn led to a need to secure the MEF's financial future; and David Cox and I were appointed, for the Club, to the MEF's Administration Sub-Committee which recommended that the MEF should move on to a much cheaper voluntary basis, more like say the Climbers' Club, thus economising on the cost of the Secretary and of the room in the RGS. As President of the BMC at the same time I was also able to facilitate the setting-up of a parallel system of BMC grants (funded by the Sports Council) to help offset the shortage of MEF funds; these grants have recently been running at over £40,000 annually, and must have made a useful contribution to the current excellence of British exploratory mountaineering overseas.

In consequence of the MEF giving up its room at the RGS, the MEF Trustees asked the RGS in 1973 to take over the administration and storage both of the Everest photos and of the documentary archives, broadly as the RGS had done in the period 1921-55, before the MEF was set-up. This was on the basis that the RGS would receive payments in the form of royalties and rent.

This issue has recently come to the fore, with the current claim by the RGS that the MEF had not only transferred the administration and storage of the Everest photos to them in April 1973, but had also '*assigned*' the ownership and copyright.<sup>4</sup> In consequence the RGS appear to be treating the surplus income from the Everest photos, after recovering their costs, as RGS '*commercial funds*' available for RGS purposes generally; and not as MEF funds for mountain exploration and research, as was the original intention both of the AC and of the RGS in gifting the photos to the MEF in 1955-56.

Partly because of my residual obligations as a former Trustee at the relevant time, and partly because of the significance of this loss of funds for mountain exploration, I have thought it necessary to research the MEF and AC archives over the past year to check on the available historical evidence relevant to the RGS's claim. My Report<sup>5</sup> confirms that the MEF

Trustees collectively never even discussed the question of transferring the ownership and copyright of these photos to the RGS in April 1973, the date stated by the RGS; nor at any other time during my time as a Trustee 1968-74; nor indeed thereafter until they queried the position with the RGS in 1990-91. But it was mentioned retrospectively in correspondence between Staff of the RGS and MEF after I had left in 1974 and in the 1975 AGM papers. Such an issue, had it been considered by the Trustees in 1973, would have raised questions on, for example, the MEF's powers of disposal; on the need for income from MEF assets to be used only for the MEF objects; on the conditions to be attached to such a disposal of assets and the related income; and on the potential for conflict of interest for the RGS-nominated Trustees in participating in any such decision.

The Club's Committee has recently requested the views of the MEF and the RGS as to what they now consider to be the correct position, in the light of this historical research.

### **More of a mountain way of life**

By the end of the 1970s, the problem of how to combine work with mountaineering posed me the difficult choice of whether or not to leave the Civil Service. This had become a serious issue firstly because I had had to return from Scotland to London to head the Coal Division there. This meant that I had to leave my post as Director General of the Offshore Supplies Office, which I enjoyed both because of the interest of the work and because of its location in Scotland. But, secondly, I also needed time to revise my Penguin *Mountaineering*, which was out of print, and for other mountain writing.

By a freak of fate, my resignation from the Department in August 1979, unknown to myself, was to coincide with a Parliamentary investigation of what was at that time alleged to be mis-spending on North Sea oil grants; and a number of newspapers incorrectly concluded that I had left the Civil Service because of this.

Although I was exonerated by the Government in Parliament<sup>6</sup> and was subsequently to receive Government compensation,<sup>7</sup> the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* would not withdraw or apologise. It was not until two years later, in 1981, that I was to secure libel damages and costs in personal actions against them in the High Court; and it was to be not until two years after that, in 1983, that the issue was to be finally disposed of, when an appeal by the *Telegraph* was to be dismissed in the Court of Appeal.<sup>8</sup>

This long trauma effectively destroyed my hopes of pursuing mountain writing as a second career, firstly because it was extremely distracting, and secondly because subsequently I had to spend most of my time working as a management consultant, for financial reasons. But I often reflected that this catastrophe was far preferable to those much worse ones caused by mountain accidents, from which my family and I have so far, mercifully, been free.

By leaving the Civil Service, I have at least been able to live nearer the mountains, either in Scotland or in Le Tour, Argentiere.

### **Mountain training**

The review of future policy for the BMC in the 1970s<sup>2</sup> had left to one side the difficult issue of mountain training, on which a serious dispute was emerging between the BMC and the mountain training boards. The dispute centred on what was the correct role for the BMC with, on the one hand, its prime interest in maintaining the freedoms and traditions of mountaineering as a sport, and on the other, its responsibilities towards the Mountain Training Boards, with their emphasis on mountain training often as a form of outdoor education.

This complicated issue had been addressed instead in a separate report to the BMC by Lord Hunt,<sup>9</sup> and eventually there had been a formal Arbitration by Emlyn Jones (with George Band and David Cox), on the initiative of Peter Lloyd as President of the AC (*AJ* 85, 12, 1980). One of the recommendations of this Arbitration was that the BMC should set up a Standing Advisory Committee on Mountain Training to provide a mechanism by which such disputes might be avoided in the future; and the BMC asked me to chair this.

One of the first issues we were asked to address was the nature of the BMC's relationship with Plas y Brenin, the Sports Council's national centre for mountain activities. We advised that this should be seen not just as a mountain training centre, important though that role was, but more as a centre of gravity for British mountaineering, with a much wider role in support of the BMC. In 1985, I was asked by the Sports Council to be the Chair of the Plas y Brenin Committee, and continued to promote this co-operation between the BMC and the Centre until the late 1990s.

A second main issue was the future organisation of mountain training in Britain, and in particular how to produce a UK perspective while maintaining the independence of the mountain training boards in the home countries. We recommended the setting up of a UK Mountain Training Board to replace the then Joint Co-ordinating Committee, with a remit to consult regularly on those issues requiring a UK perspective.<sup>10</sup>

At that time there was also the question of how to relate British mountain training with overseas schemes, such as the emerging European Mountain Leader qualification. In my then capacity of President of the Mountaineering Commission of the UIAA (1989-98) (supported by Roger Payne (BMC) as Secretary), I encouraged it to set up a working group to advise on the possible introduction of International Model Standards for mountain training. Once these standards had been brought into operation,<sup>11</sup> the BMC applied for the British mountain leader and mountain instructor awards to be accepted as meeting them. In consequence, these British awards are, quite rightly, recognised internationally as being in line with international standards.

The success of the UIAA model training standards is due in no small measure to the support which the scheme has received from Britain, especially from Iain Peter (BMC) as Secretary of the initial Working Party (1992-94), and from John Cousins (UKMTB) as Secretary and now Chairman of the Sub-Committee which runs the scheme, since 1998.

### **Freedoms of mountain access**

Probably the most important single mountain issue with which I have been involved since the 1980s has however been the recent legislation to secure statutory rights of public access in Scotland.<sup>12</sup>

It brings to an end the campaign started by our former President, James Bryce OM, one-time Professor of Civil Law at Oxford, with his Access to Mountains Bills from 1885 onwards. His speech of 4 March 1892 in the House of Commons<sup>13</sup> was perhaps the best-ever exposition of the need for free, responsible, public access to mountains, in its correct historical and customary context. Before him a previous AC President, Sir Leslie Stephen, had also taken a stand on access with the adventurous excursions of his Sunday Tramps society.

James Bryce stood for a civil liberty of harmless and responsible public access to mountains, reflecting earlier public customs and freedoms which were being eroded in practice at that time by some landowners and their lawyers. My understanding of the existing freedoms of Scottish access is closely in line with his perception, namely that there is a long-standing general freedom in Scotland to take harmless responsible access to land not in cultivation without any need to seek consent, and without trespass, generally recognised by landholder and public alike as an accepted normal convention of society.

However, when I became a Board Member of the Government agency, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), in 1991, with a responsibility on the Board for access issues, I came to realise that the current official view treated public access not as a civil liberty but as a privilege tolerated by land-managers who could, in the SNH view, bring it to an end at any time.

This was so different from the long-standing traditional position in Scotland as I knew it, that I undertook historical research from 1994 onwards, supported by Scottish Environment LINK and the Ramblers' Association Scotland (especially David Morris), to explore how such a very different official view, so strongly favouring the land-owner or land manager, could have become established. This research (14) confirmed that James Bryce's more liberal approach was indeed broadly in line with long-standing Ministerial, Law Officer and other official views going well back into the 19th century. These were to be very usefully summarised in 1942 by the then Secretary of State, Tom Johnston, who advised Ernest Bevin officially that '*in Scotland anyone is at liberty to walk over land outside the curtilage provided he does not breach the poaching law or harm fences etc*' and that '*there is no law of trespass in Scotland*'.<sup>15</sup> It became clear that, quite remarkably, these earlier



more liberal official views had been replaced within the official system by the present more repressive ones in the late 1960s through the efforts, not of lawyers, but of a small group of planners, administrators and land-managers, notably the Master of Arbuthnott (later Lord Arbuthnott), Land Agent to the Nature Conservancy.<sup>16</sup>

When the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill was passing through the Scottish Parliament in 2002, I was asked to give evidence to the Justice 2 Committee, mainly in a personal capacity; and took the opportunity to enlarge on the earlier freedoms of public access as described by James Bryce and Tom Johnston, linking them with one of the fundamental principles of British civil liberties, namely that, as a general rule, what is not expressly prohibited is permitted.<sup>17</sup>

Although all of my historical research on the earlier more liberal official views had been made available to SNH since 1994 as it had progressed, I became the subject of public attacks in the Justice 2 Committee by their representatives,<sup>18</sup> who, along with the Law Society of Scotland (LSS), were still arguing for the new, more repressive, land-management approach developed within the official system since the late 1960s, claiming, incorrectly in my view, that this had always been the position.

At the invitation of the Convenor of the Justice 2 Committee, Pauline McNeill MSP,<sup>19</sup> I made a further submission to her Committee, aiming to show how these new views appeared to be out of line with the Tom Johnston letter and other earlier historical evidence and, where this was indeed so, were perhaps unlikely to be soundly based.<sup>20</sup> The Justice 2 Committee effectively accepted this with their conclusion that:

*The SNH and Law Society position is not the position understood by the majority of people taking access in Scotland and reflected in many of the written submissions on the Bill. Alan Blackshaw's extensive historical researches have also demonstrated that understanding of the legal position as interpreted in government statements (and statements by key organisations such as the SLF) has changed over time. For example, Government statements since the 1960s which refer to a Scottish law of trespass are compared to the statement by the Secretary of State for Scotland (Tom Johnston) in 1942 that "there is no law of trespass in Scotland" and that there is a presumption of freedom to roam so long as no offence is committed and crops and fences are not damaged.*<sup>21</sup>

The Convenor also subsequently advised the Scottish Parliament that she had 'rejected' the legal opinion of SNH on trespass, on the grounds that 'there is a widely-held view that there has been a right of access in Scotland and that there is no evidence that there is a prohibition'.<sup>22</sup>

SNH have however continued to attack me openly on their website until earlier this year, but without mentioning these Parliamentary conclusions.<sup>23</sup> This raises a number of issues about the propriety of an executive agency

using public resources to attack an independent Parliamentary witness, especially when, as in my case, his evidence has been broadly upheld by the Parliamentary Committee concerned.

Suffice it to say that James Bryce might well have been pleased with the access provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 as they finally emerged. They may even have exceeded his expectations by applying not just to mountains, but to virtually all land, water and air in Scotland.

I hope that this Scottish Act, and the related Scottish Access Code, may serve as an example of what might be aimed for elsewhere, including even in the rest of Britain, given that there are customary freedoms of harmless access in many areas there, for example in the north of England and in Wales, and also on many sea-cliffs, not dissimilar to the Scottish ones.

Further progress otherwise may need to look more to a Fundamental Human Right of the Enjoyment of Nature about which I wrote briefly in 2002.<sup>24</sup>

### **The life of the Alpine Club**

I have very much enjoyed the opportunity of being so closely involved with the Club over the past three years, which would not ordinarily have been the case, living as I do in the North of Scotland. The regular lectures, the mountain art exhibitions, the meets, and the two annual dinners which we have held in the Lake District (on the initiative of Doug Scott), have all been well attended; and the *Journal* and the new *Bulletin* a great success.

A highpoint was in May 2003, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the first ascent of Everest, when there were major celebrations organised by the MEF (chaired by Charles Clarke) with the administrative support of the RGS, and also an excellent party at the Club. It was a busy month for me, as the Centenary of the Ski Club of Great Britain (SCGB), of which I was also President at the time, was only a few days apart.

It will not come as a surprise that we have had a small Future Policy Group to look at the future direction of the Club. One of the Group's main conclusions was that the Club continues to have a very important role for networking among active exploratory mountaineers; in the provision of the information needed for active mountaineering worldwide; and in arranging for meets overseas. Another is that the Club should consciously seek to develop partnerships primarily with the BMC and the UIAA, but also, for example, with the RGS, the Himalayan Club, the Kendal Film Festival and the Festival of Mountain Literature. The Group also recommended to the Committee that those responsible for the Club's heritage assets, especially of books and pictures, should review them so that any not required in fulfilment of our important heritage role (eg second or third copies of books) might be considered for sale, in order to help provide funds for a separate climbing or development fund, whether

charitable or not. It also drew attention to the need to prepare for the Club's 150th Anniversary in 2007; and recommended that there should be a new publication on the Club's history, which, I am pleased to say, George Band is undertaking.

We have, finally, also introduced a category of Associate of the Club. This is different from any of the forms of Membership and is intended for those unable to qualify for membership but who support the objects of the Club and may be able to help in achieving them.

Throughout my time as President of the AC, there has been a very heavy burden of administration on the Club's officers, Committee and key individuals both voluntary and staff, especially in relation to the Clubhouse and the many Club activities here, and also the Library Council. It must be evident that we owe a considerable debt to all of them, and I would like to thank every one of them on the Club's behalf.

### **Relations with the BMC**

I mentioned earlier this evening that one of the ideas in the reorganisation of the BMC back in the 1970s was that the Club might have a stronger role on the international side of the BMC.<sup>3</sup> And I am pleased that the BMC and the Club are now looking at this issue together.

Peter Lloyd, in his Valedictory Address (*AJ* 85, 3-15, 1980) drew attention to the need for regular discussions between the Club and the BMC. The BMC is growing rapidly, particularly by attracting more and more individual members. I do not see this as being in anyway detrimental to the AC, which itself needs more members; indeed it must be welcomed. A closer association between us may help to make the Club better known and more readily accessible.

I hope that if, at some point in the future, the BMC decides to move to larger premises and offers the Club the possibility of sharing them, then the Committee of the day will consider the issue on its merits, bearing in mind the success of the American Alpine Club's move to larger premises in Golden. We considered the possibility of combining premises with the RGS some 15 years ago, so it is not really a particularly new idea.

We have also floated with the BMC the idea of a British Mountain Heritage electronic network which might record on a common or inter-linked database the contents of the Club's and other British mountain libraries, and perhaps also the locations of archives, paintings, photos, and artefacts of heritage value. Within that, I hope that there might be an enhanced role, and perhaps improved public financing, for the Club's library and other archives.

It is essential also that there should be some recognised focal point in Britain for the documentary and photographic archives of key individuals, which might otherwise be lost to posterity.

## The UIAA

The main area of international collaboration with the BMC will be in relation to the UIAA, on which the BMC represents the UK, but which the AC has recently rejoined. I say 're-joined' because the Club was involved when the UIAA was being set up in 1932-34, though we dropped out thereafter.

The UIAA brings together some 98 member Federations or other mountain organisations in 68 countries and the Club's membership should offer us the opportunity of extending our links among them. As it happens, I have recently been elected President, in succession to our member Ian McNaught-Davis, who has served in that capacity since the untimely death of Pietro Segantini almost 10 years ago. There are also of course quite a number of our members who have been nominated by the BMC to serve the UIAA in other ways, of whom I should mention Lindsay Griffin in the UIAA Expeditions Commission; Robert Pettigrew, the President of the Access and Conservation Commission; Anthony Rich, the Legal Advisor to the UIAA; and Martin Wragg in the UIAA Legal Experts Group. Many more have served previously. Roger Payne is employed by the UIAA as Sport and Development Director.

The UIAA is recognised by the International Olympic Committee as the international sporting federation responsible for mountaineering; and this in turn may be helpful to member federations in gaining recognition, and government funding, in their own countries. The UIAA has developed over the last 15 years an important responsibility on competitions in climbing, ski-mountaineering and ice-climbing, seeking to reconcile this with its continuing traditional responsibilities, which remain the main interest of its 2.5m members. My personal view is that mountaineering, including exploratory mountaineering in the Club's tradition, is very much in line with the modern Olympic ethic of '*stronger, faster, higher*', so the gap may not be quite as great as might appear.

The UIAA is also a member of the United Nations' Global Mountain Partnership which has developed from the UN's work on mountain issues, following the Rio agreements of 1992. The UIAA made a commitment to this Global Mountain Partnership in 2002,<sup>25</sup> on the basis that everyone should be able to enjoy the natural environment, including mountains and cliffs, with freedom of responsible access. It saw itself as having a particular role on clarifying and enhancing the economic benefit of mountain tourism to local communities; in developing codes of good practice for responsible mountain tourism; in helping with the training of, and the setting of standards for fair employment of, local guides and porters in those parts of the Greater Ranges where this might be helpful; and perhaps of identifying material in the archives of the older alpine clubs, showing the extent of changes over time, for example in the state of the glaciers. There are a number of substantive initiatives within the Partnership, including one on

Policy and Law, and others on the Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalaya, the Andes and Europe, requiring some mountaineering input.

The UIAA has, to its credit, also been active, usually in support of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), in quietly promoting the idea of Cross-Frontier (or Peace) Parks, most notably in the case of the Siachen Glacier, to which our Honorary Member Harish Kapadia has made a special contribution.

It is potentially to the benefit of our all-important access freedoms, wherever we go, that the UIAA should actively demonstrate that, on such environmental, economic and social issues, mountaineers are part of the solution and not part of the problem; and I hope that the Club and its members, individually, may make a contribution to this.

That concludes my Valedictory Address,<sup>26</sup> and it only remains for me to wish my successor, Stephen Venables, and the Club, all success in the future; and to thank the Club most sincerely for the honour of being its President.

Mountaineering needs a strong and active Alpine Club and I am confident that that is what the Club will continue to be.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, 54, 1954.
- 2 *Future Policy*, BMC, November 1976. See 'The first fifty years of the British Mountaineering Council', BMC, 51-54, 1997.
- 3 *ibid*, page 3.
- 4 Letter and enclosure dated 15 November 2003. See the Report at Note 5 below, Annex C1.
- 5 'Research on the ownership and copyright of the Everest photos', Alan Blackshaw, 4 October 2004 (2 vols).
- 6 *Official Report*, Commons, 28 October 1979.
- 7 *Third Report of the Public Accounts Committee 1978-79, Annex*.
- 8 *Blackshaw v Lord and the Daily Telegraph*, Court of Appeal, *All England Law Reports*, February 1983.
- 9 *The Hunt Report on Mountain Training*, BMC, 1976. See 'The first fifty years of the British Mountaineering Council', 59-65, 1997.
- 10 *Future of mountain training in the UK*, Standing Advisory Committee on Mountain Training, BMC, 1991.
- 11 *UIAA Model Training Standards*
- 12 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
- 13 *Official Report*, Commons, 4 March 1892.
- 14 Summarised in 'Implied Permission and the Traditions of Customary Access', Alan Blackshaw (LINK Access Research Project), *Edinburgh Law Review*, Vol 3, September 1999, pages 368-80.
- 15 *ibid*, pages 370-71; and National Archives of Scotland (NAS), file AF45/244.

- 16 *ibid*, page 373; and NAS file DD12/86/1, enclosure 3, February 1965.
- 17 Letter to Justice 2 Committee of 21 December 2001; and oral evidence of 14 January and 6 February 2002. See *Stage One Report on the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill*, Justice 2 Committee of the Scottish Parliament, published on about 10 March 2002, Vol 2, pages 65-67, 77-83 and 249-254, respectively.
- 18 Letter from SNH Board Member to Justice 2 Committee, in a personal capacity, 24 December 2001; and SNH oral evidence of 6 February 2002. See *Stage One Report*, Vol 2, pages 103-11 and 232, col 1007, respectively.
- 19 6 February 2002. See *Stage One Report*, Vol 2, page 249, col 1042.
- 20 '*Conflicts between the views of the Law Society of Scotland and the historical evidence of the LINK Access Research Project*', Alan Blackshaw, 12 February 2002.
- 21 *Stage One Report*, Vol 1, para 19
- 22 *Official Report*, Scottish Parliament, 20 March 2002, col 10399.
- 23 An SNH letter to the Justice 2 Committee, dated 5 March 2002, was left on the SNH website, as the sole item on the passage of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, without any mention of the Justice 2 Committee's subsequent criticisms of the SNH position (as in Notes 21 and 22 above), until February 2004. See also the references to SNH in '*Comments on some of the criticisms of the Link Access Research Project published by the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society*', Alan Blackshaw, 20 February 2003.
- 24 '*Human rights and mountain freedoms: Is Nature a missing link?*' Alan Blackshaw, Proceedings of UIAA Conference, Trento, 3 May 2002, p101. See also *AJ* 107, 139, 2002.
- 25 *UIAA Summit Charter 2002*.
- 26 For the author's historical research on the ownership of the Black Cuillin, see *AJ* 109, 402, 2004.