

In Memoriam

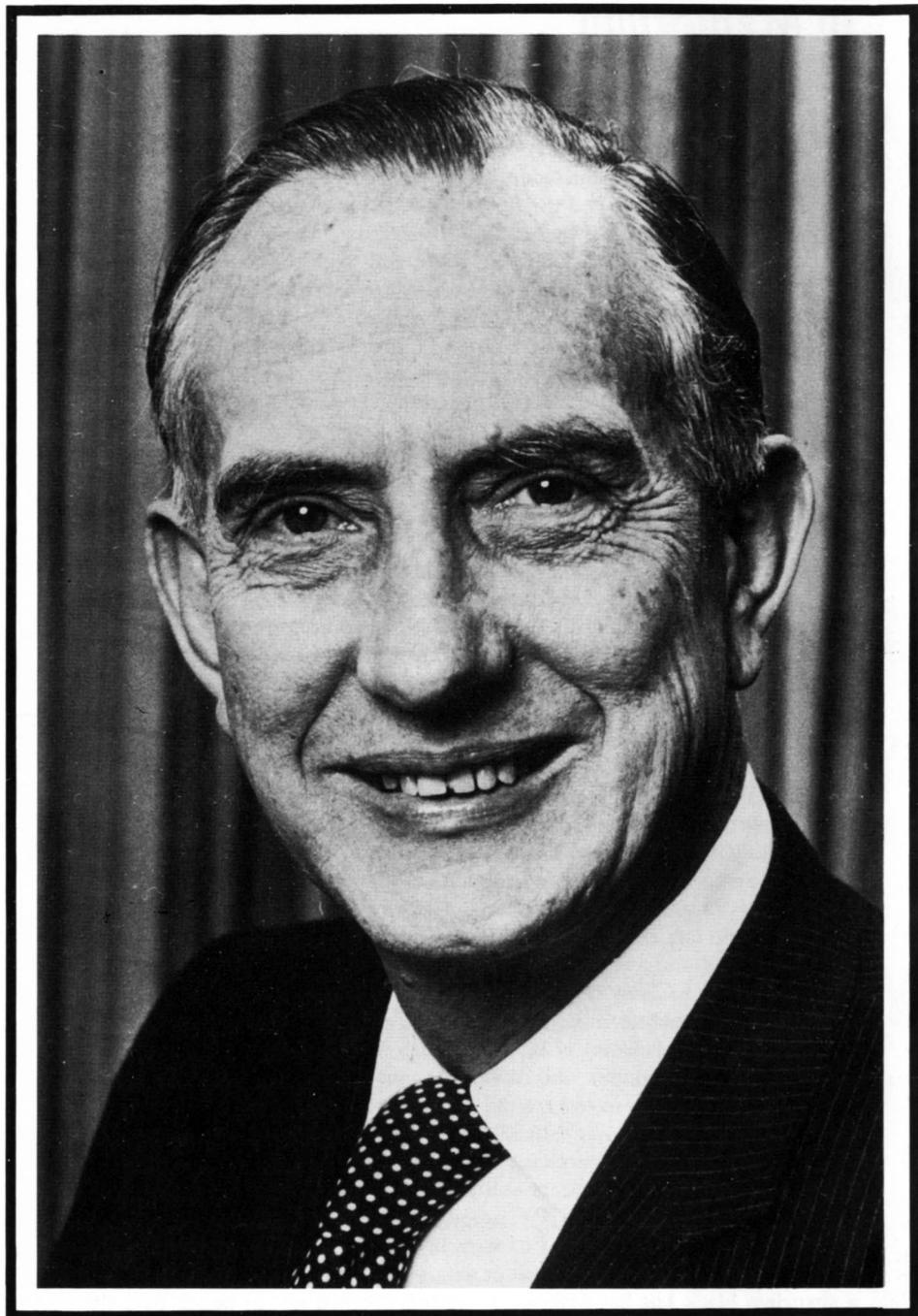
Sir Anthony Keith Rawlinson, KCB, 1926–1986

Sir Anthony Rawlinson, the forty-fourth president of the Club, was killed in a fall from Crib Goch on Snowdon on 22 February 1986. He was the first president to die in office and the first to be killed in the mountains. The club has suffered a grievous loss by his untimely death.

Anthony was born on 5 March 1926 and was the only son of Dr A E J Rawlinson, later Bishop of Derby. He had a brilliant academic career. He was a King's Scholar at Eton, and was Captain of the School in 1944. After completing his national service in 1944–47 as a lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards, he went up to Oxford on an open scholarship in classics. He obtained a first in Classical Mods and a second in Greats, the latter a few weeks after a near-fatal fall on Ben Nevis.

He then went into the civil service in the Ministry of Labour, transferring to the Treasury in 1953. He served for a time (1958–60) as private secretary to the chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority, and in 1972 became a deputy secretary, serving in Washington as Economic Minister and Head of the United Kingdom Treasury and Supply Delegation at the British Embassy. During this period he was also the UK executive director of the International Monetary Fund and the IBRD. On his return to London he was a deputy secretary, then second permanent secretary in the Department of Industry (1975–6) and then returned to the Treasury as a second permanent secretary. In that post his responsibilities included public expenditure control and the implementation of the switch to cash planning and budgeting. In 1983 he became permanent secretary of the Department of Trade, which soon after was combined with the Department of Industry. He remained as joint permanent secretary of the combined department until his retirement in 1985. He was then appointed chairman of the Gaming Board. In his long and distinguished career as a public servant, he earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues. As one of them has put it – 'In all that he did, as a civil servant or otherwise, he acted with clarity of mind and expression, meticulous attention to accuracy and to detail, robust firmness, and unswerving integrity and commitment.' He was appointed CB in 1975 and KCB in 1978.

Anthony's mountaineering career was equally distinguished. Throughout his life he kept detailed diaries of his expeditions to the hills, including in many instances notes on routes and times, equipment and expenses. His first accounts are of walking in and around Buttermere in 1937 when he was eleven, and for the next ten years he walked and scrambled in the Lakes, mostly based on family holidays in Buttermere, where he met and joined up with Claude Elliott, later to be his headmaster at Eton. In 1947 he attended his first OUMC meet at Brackenclose, with MHW, among others. He was a tall, slim, slightly gangling figure, clad as most of us were in those days in ex-army camouflage anorak, patched breeches, tricounis or tennis shoes, but in his case also sporting a shapeless black felt hat with the front brim turned up, in better days the property of his father, the bishop. In spite of some good times on that meet, the main impression of climbing carried away by the beginners was of rain, cold,



1 Sir Anthony Keith Rawlinson, KCB.

darkness and dirt and some doubted if it was for them. But this discouragement could not survive meeting Anthony next term, in the more civilized setting of his rooms at Christ Church. The enthusiasm for the mountains, the sense of fun, the glee with which he recalled the discomfort of reaching for holds submerged in rainwater, the pleasure at having done such classic climbs as the Needle, the planning for the next meet and the next season — they were all too infectious, and this meeting marked the start of a 20-year partnership.

He was soon one of the leading members of the OUMC. Indeed, it was always difficult to imagine Anthony not being a leading member of whatever group he joined. Not that he put himself forward, but in any company he stood out as a man of character, with an incisive mind and above all a man of goodwill. Moreover, he had a long apprenticeship in the hills behind him, an experience deepened by his interest in mountaineering history and literature. He was always willing to help, and was in due course treasurer, then president of the OUMC. For the next four years he climbed intensively with OUMC friends, and continued to climb with the same group for many years afterwards.

The OUMC was going through a good period. After the wartime interruption, British climbers were again in the Alps, keen to re-establish themselves, aiming not so much at first ascents as at 'first British' or 'first guideless'. Anthony played a large part in this effort. Standards were rising fast, due to men like Tom Bourdillon and Hamish Nicol. 'Practice for the Alps' was one of the ostensible reasons for the somewhat elitist OUMC Easter meets on Ben Nevis. Anthony was on three of these, doing most of the classics of those days, and finally attempting Zero Gully with Hamish, using old-fashioned ice-axes and tricounis. Their spectacular fall of some 240m did not dampen Anthony's enthusiasm, though it laid him low for some weeks.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in January 1951 — during the presidency of Claude Elliott — proposed by Jack Longland and seconded by David Cox, both of them later to become presidents of the Club. His 'list' at that time was long and detailed and in effect constituted the alpine record of the OUMC of the day. Typically, it consisted of classic traverses, meticulously researched and organized, with Anthony doing most of the research and much of the leading. Notable were the Ferpècle on the Dent Blanche, the Täschhorn by the Teufelsgrat, which then had quite a reputation, and the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon.

In the summer of 1951 he took part in the first guideless British ascent of the NW ridge of the Aiguille de Blaitière. This was a Ryan-Lochmatter route, and it was in keeping with Anthony's feeling for tradition that the first of his contributions to the *AJ* described this and two other Ryan-Lochmatter routes, the E ridge of the Dent d'Hérens and the Cresta Santa Caterina on the Nordend, both climbed in 1952. The latter was in some respects his best season and on return to England he was selected as one of the four reserves for the forthcoming expedition to Mount Everest. In fact he never visited the Himalaya, but this did not seriously disturb him because he was above all a traditionalist, who was steeped in alpine history and literature and found his greatest pleasure in following in the footsteps of the great alpine pioneers of the past, particularly in the Valais.

It was in 1953 that he did one of his most notable climbs, the fourth ascent (first British) of the Tronchey arete of the Grandes Jorasses, most of which he

led, with Dick Viney, Ted Wrangham, Mike Harris and Ralph Jones. This was in a real sense a pioneering effort, with considerable problems of route finding on difficult rock. One has only to read Viney's account (*A759*, 323) to see what a source of strength Anthony was in a difficult situation. Another epic, with MHW in 1955, was the SW ridge of the Fou. The climb itself was straightforward, but the descent over the Ciseaux and Blaitière was in thunder, lightning, blizzard and cold. Anthony's patience and competence were unfailing.

His diaries continue to record a steady stream of climbs. The traverse of the Meije, the S face of the Pavé, the Ryan-Lochmatter on the Plan, visit after visit to Zermatt, completing his list of the classics with the E-N traverse of the Weißhorn (1967) and repeating many of his earlier ascents. The Dolomites, Tarentaise, Saas, Bernina, Bregaglia. 1965 is worth particular mention. He represented the Club as an observer on a course for prospective guides and porters in the Val d'Aosta (*A770*, 262). Anthony was already a friend of Toni Gobbi, chief guide of Courmayeur, and did much to strengthen the Club's links with Italian climbers. Unfortunately bad weather precluded any notable climbs on the course, but he relished the chance of working with first-class guides.

In later years he rather lowered his sights, being unwilling to risk holding up his companions on the classic traverses he enjoyed so much. But he maintained his active mountaineering. The Washington posting provided opportunities to walk in New England and Colorado. There were frequent holidays in Skye, Ben Nevis, North Wales, and in the Lakes which remained his first love. Recently he enjoyed walking and scrambling holidays in and around the Alps, with parties of old friends.

In addition to his record as a mountaineer, it is right that we should pay tribute to the other contributions he made to the sport. He was president of the OUMC; in 1955–59 editor of the *Climbers Club Journal*; in 1963–66 he was honorary secretary of the Alpine Club and in 1972–73 a vice-president. He served for many years on the Committee of Management of the Mount Everest Foundation and was chairman in 1970–71. In 1966, as honorary secretary of the Club and having been a founder-member of the ACG, he played a large part with JHEJ in negotiating the merger of the two clubs, thus fusing the modern and the traditional strands of mountaineering.

In January 1986, Anthony began his term of office as President. In the space of a few weeks he had already demonstrated his great enthusiasm for the job, the freshness of his ideas and of his plans for the future of the Club. The Committee will miss his clear direction of their deliberations and the Club is the poorer for his loss.

Above all, Anthony enjoyed his mountains, and the fun which is to be derived from climbing. He had a great capacity for friendship — and indeed most of his close friends were those with whom he had climbed. His death leaves us all distressed and deprived, but we retain many happy memories of days spent in his company. The Club's sympathy is extended to the close-knit family which he leaves behind, to the three sons of whom he was so proud; and particularly to Mary, who although unable to accompany Anthony into the high mountains never allowed that to interfere with his pursuit of the sport which gave him and his many friends so much pleasure.