

IN MEMORIAM

J. A. K. MARTYN

(1903-1984)

JOHN to his many friends in India and Jack to some in England, was just short of his 81st birthday when he died at the end of June. In 1935 he had to come to India with Arthur Foot, another mountaineer, to start the Doon School.

When I joined in January 1937 John had already been to Gyantse, and that summer he and I, with Tensing as one of the party, explored an approach to Bandarpunch, and then crossed from Gangotri to Badrinath. The next year we explored bits of Lahul, and in 1939 went for the summer vacation to England. In 1940, with R. L. Holdsworth, we made a first ascent of Mankial in Swat.

We had all three been keen that the boys of the Doon School should learn the pleasures of mountaineering and from its early days had encouraged climbing expeditions to the hills north of Dehra Dun and winter skiing above Gulmarg; but it was not till 1942 that John and Holdy took boys, of whom Nandu Jayal was one, into the real mountains.

I had joined the navy, but after the war John and I did a number of treks and climbs with parties of boys from both the Doon School and the Joint Services Wing of the N.D.A., and after I had migrated to Ajmer John continued to climb with Doon School expeditions upto the age of, I think, at least 60, possibly more.

John was a very strong walker and tough. On Bandarpunch in 1937 he had slipped on our way up a steep snow-filled gully and fallen some 400 ft head over heels, much to the anxiety of Tensing, Rinsing and myself. However he managed to stop his fall with his ice-axe, and rejoined us with apologies. Perhaps we should have been roped, but I did not know that, though he had done a lot of rock climbing, he was not much practised on ice and snow and the rucksack and bedding he had been carrying had upset his balance.

John was also a delightful companion, never flustered by setbacks and always cheerful. He enjoyed scenery and painted it with appreciation. Typical of this is a remark I find in one of his letters: "The open valleys of Kumaon are more soothing than the narrow gorges of Garhwal."

The Himalayan Club owes him a big debt for his 56 page 'Story of the Himalayan Club 1928-78' that he wrote for the Golden Jubilee number of the *Himalayan Journal* after reading the minutes of Committee meetings and fifty years of the Journal.

Even bigger, perhaps, apart from his great successes as a schoolmaster and teacher, is the part he played in introducing young Indians to the high mountains.

J. T. M. GIBSON