

In Memoriam

ERIC E. SHIPTON
1907-1977

Eric Shipton, probably the world's most distinguished explorer of mountain regions, died at Ansty Manor, near Salisbury, England, March 28, 1977. A gentle, kindly man, with a philosophical turn of mind, Eric had a lifelong enthusiasm for travelling, exploring and climbing in little known mountain areas. He was born in Ceylon, where his father was a tea planter, but before Eric was three his father died and for several years thereafter his mother travelled constantly between England, Southern India, Ceylon and France. Young Eric found this nomadic existence very delightful and without doubt it had an effect on his later life.

As a child he suffered from dyslexia (word blindness), which affected his work at school. Even so he was accepted at Cambridge University and would have studied geology there if he had not been told that the only use for such study was to become a teacher. Painful experiences at school made this fate seem unbearable and in 1928 he gave up his university plans and left for Kenya to work on a large coffee farm at Nyeri. Here he was able to begin the mountain climbs and explorations that were to make him famous.

Eric had already had two good summers in the Alps and Easter climbing at Helyg in North Wales, and so finding himself within twenty miles of Mount Kenya was a delight and a challenge. Mount Kenya has two summits. At the time of Shipton's arrival, Batian had been climbed once (by Mackinder with two Alpine guides) but Nelion, thirty feet lower, was unclimbed. Eric wrote to Wyn Harris, then in Kenya, and their distinguished ascent of both peaks followed. Next year Eric and Bill Tilman, then a novice climber, made a magnificent traverse of the two peaks, starting with the west ridge of Batian. It was not surprising that thereafter Eric became eagerly sought as a mountaineering companion in the Himalaya, the Karakoram and elsewhere.

In 1931 he was on Kamet, in 1932 on Ruwenzori, in 1933 on Everest with Ruttledge; and in 1934, with Bill Tilman again, he forced the route up the Rishi Gorge to the Nanda Devi sanctuary. By now Shipton's thoughts of a planter's life had vanished and he had given himself to mountain travel and writing about the mountains. In 1935 he led a party to the Everest area to test post-monsoon conditions, and in 1936 was on Everest again. In 1937, with Tilman and others, he launched a major expedition to the Shaksgam and the northern side of the Karakoram,

during which they crossed the range from Payu and mapped the country to the north, exploring the glaciers north and west of K2. They crossed the Aghil Pass and also the Shimsal Pass, eventually returning to India through Baltit. In 1938 he was again on Everest, and in 1939 was on the Hispar Glacier in the Karakoram working on a detailed map of the Hispar, Biafo and Punmah glacier systems when word was received of World War II. That ended the expedition but not Eric's contact with Central Asia, for from 1940 to 1942 he was appointed British Consul-General in Kashgar.

On his return to England in 1942 he married Diana Channer, who shared his love of wild country. For the next four years, however, they were usually separated as he was on government service in Iran and later with the British Military Mission in Hungary, but in 1946 he was returned to his former post in Kashgar and Diana accompanied him. There followed a tour as Consul-General in Kuming, China, where he held his post until after the Communists had taken over.

In 1951 Eric was back in the mountains, leading a reconnaissance of Everest from the south, an enterprise that discovered the route which has become the standard one today. At the last moment he added two New Zealanders to the party: George Lowe and Edmund Hillary, who distinguished themselves in the successful ascent in 1953. Eric was originally scheduled to lead the 1953 party too, but he preferred to take a small expedition and resigned when the Everest Committee insisted on a more military type of campaign. Thereafter his travels took him mainly to Patagonia, where he made numerous first ascents and served as adviser to the Chilean Government. His single expedition to Alaska came in 1966, when he joined an attempt on Mount Russell that Adams Carter and I will not forget.

Eric and Diana had two sons but their marriage was dissolved in 1952.

Eric was a delightful writer and his books include *Nanda Devi* (1936), *Upon That Mountain* (1948), *Mountains of Tartary* (1951), *Land of Tempest* (1963), and his autobiography, *That Untravelled World* (1969). His friends and acquaintances were of many races and nationalities. Spread across half the world, they will regret the loss of his companionship, understanding and humanity.

ROBERT H. BATES

DUSAN JAGERSKY

1940-1977

A few minutes before midnight on June 14, 1977, Dusan Jagersky and Al Givler were tragically killed while descending from the summit of a unnamed peak in Alaska's Fairweather range.