

# ASIAN ALPINE E-NEWS

## Issue No 75. September 2020



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# All-Afghan Team, with 2 Women

## Climb Nation's Highest – Peak Noshakh 7492m

The team members said they did their exercises for the trip in Panjshir, Salang and other places for one month ahead of their journey.

### Related News

- Female 30K Cycling Race Starts in Afghanistan
- Afghan Female Cyclist in France Prepares for Olympics



Fatima Sultani, an 18-year-old Afghan woman, spoke to TOLONews and said she and companions reached the summit of Noshakh in the Hindu Kush mountains, which is the highest peak in Afghanistan at 7,492 meters.



The group claims to be the first all-Afghan team to reach the summit.

Fatima was joined by eight other mountaineers, including two girls and six men, on the 17-day journey.



They began the challenging trip almost a month ago from Kabul. Noshakh is located in the Wakhan corridor in the northeastern province of Badakhshan.

“Mountaineering is a strong sport, but we can conquer the summit if we are provided the gear,” Sultani said. The team members said they did their exercises for the trip in Panjshir, Salang and other places for one month ahead of their journey.

“We made a plan with our friends to conquer Noshakh summit without foreign support as the first Afghan team,” said Ali Akbar Sakhi, head of the team.

The mountaineers said their trip posed challenge but they overcame them.





“The snow changed into ice after it melted. The way was slippery,” said Tahira Sultani, a mountaineer, referring to the hardships they experienced during their journey. They are members of Hike Ventures, a mountaineering team that has at least 200 members. Fatima is the youngest member of the team and was a boxer before this.





# Noshakh



Noshakh (also called Nowshak or Nōshākh; (Persian نوشاخ) is the second highest peak in the Hindu Kush Range (after Tirich Mir) at 7,492 m (24,580 ft). It lies in the Wakhan corridor, Afghanistan's Badakhshan Province. It is the highest point in Afghanistan and is the world's westernmost 7,000 meters massif.

□ Noshakh main was first climbed by a Japanese expedition in 1960 led by Professor Sakato. Other members of the expedition were Goro Iwatsubo and Toshiaki Sakai. The climb followed the normal Pakistan approach, the southeast ridge from the Qadzi Deh Glacier. The normal Afghanistan approach route is by the west ridge.



Noshaq East, Noshaq Central and Noshaq West were first climbed in 1963 by Austrians Dr. Gerald Gruber and Rudolf Pischenger.

The first winter ascent was 13 February 1973 by Tadeusz Piotrowski and Andrzej Zawada, members of a Polish expedition, via the north face. It was the world's first winter climb of any 7000 m peak. Until now it is the only winter ascent to this summit.

Between the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the mountain was very difficult to access because of political turmoil in the region. In 2011, National Geographic noted that the trail to the summit was again accessible to climbers, with hopes of opening the area up for tourism.

The first Afghan ascent of the mountain was in July 2009. Two members, Malang Daria and Amruddin Sanjar, of a team of four Afghans, also including Afiat Khan and Gurg Ali - who turned around on the final stretch of their climb for health reasons - from the Wakhan Corridor summited on July 19.

In August 2018, Hanifa Yousoufi became the first female Afghan climber to summit the mountain.





# THE HIMALAYAN CLUB



## THE HIMALAYAN CLUB E-LETTER

VOLUME 40 • AUGUST 2020



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## **Commemorating Pioneering Climbs**

### [50th Year of first ascent of Annapurna South Face](#)



Dougal Haston between Camp 4 and 5

The South Face of Annapurna is one of the most formidable mountain walls in the world, with 12,000 ft of steep rock and ice leading to its 26,545 ft summit. Its ascent in the Spring of 1970 by Chris Bonington's expedition was a land mark in the history of mountaineering as important as that of the original ascent of Everest, for this was the first time that one of these huge barriers, the Himalayan equivalent – on a vaster scale – of the North Wall of the Eiger, had been conquered.

*Excerpt from - Annapurna South Face by Chris Bonington.*

*Ed. Note : Sir Chris Bonington, C. B. E. is an Honorary Member of  
The Himalayan Club*



Don Whillans (left) and Mick Burke at base camp with the south face of Annapurna in the background



Martin Boysen on one of the steepest sections of the ice ridge on Annapurna





Ian Clough traversing fixed ropes on the steepest part of the ice ridge on the south face of Annapurna



Don Whillans on the summit of Annapurna (16mm movie frame)



Annapurna expedition members at the end of the climb in 1970

*Images @ Chris Bonington Picture Library*

## **Climbs, Treks and Explorations**

### [Bhagirathi IV](#)

*Matteo Della Bordella*



The Massif

According to the legend, the Ganga came down from the matted locks of Shiva, followed the king Bhagirath and dug its course in a narrow and deep valley, which since then took the name of Bhagirathi (river).

Besides being considered a holy place for Hinduism, Bhagirathis (group of peak) offer to alpinists a unique challenge: steep and difficult big walls at above 6000 meters of altitude.

Here have been written some of the most fantastic pages of the history of alpinism, such as the route “Estrella impossible” on the West pillar of Bhagirathi III (6454 m) or the route opened by Silvo Karo and Janec Jeglic right in the center of that same face, legendary ascents!

As a lover of the history of mountaineering, looking for information on the routes opened up in this gigantic amphitheater that starts from the





The objective

South face of Bhagirathi II (6512 m) and ends with the “Scottish” route on Bhagirathi III, there was a detail that immediately caught my attention: one of these mythical walls was still unclimbed!

It was precisely the West of the Bhagirathi IV, that with its 6193 meters of altitude, is the lowest among the peaks of the massif, but certainly not the least attractive from a mountaineering point of view.

Few sources were available on the web, mostly reporting information that was concise and essential for various attempts, many of which were stopped before beginning, for bad weather or for bureaucratic reasons, while others stopped after a few hundred meters of climbing.

In the spring of 2015 it was this lack of information that fueled my curiosity and suggested an attempt with Luca Schiera, who was already my companion in various climbs scattered between Patagonia and Pakistan and with Matteo De Zaiacomo “Giga”, twenty-one years old, who entered our Ragni di Lecco group a few months before.

Luca and I had already been together to Trango just two years before and we thought this was a good business card to the Bhagirathis; however



Time to take some pictures

Climbing up



the Indian Himalayas immediately gave us a resounding slap in the face, as if to tell us “Look guys this place is no joke!”

Our first attempt on the wall was a debacle: we understood what “west face at 5500 meters” meant, that is a temperature of -10 degrees until noon and then, when you finally started feeling the blood flowing in your hands and feet, the whistles of the stones that fall from above to the right and to the left begin. We climbed two pitches and a half before beating a retreat due to an inability to climb at that altitude on that kind of difficulty and an approximate acclimatization.

At least we had understood who or what we had in front of us and we





Climbing up

were prepared for a new attempt, following a line possibly more logical and even more climbing-friendly looking, which started fifty meters further to the right on the same West face of the Bhagirathi IV.

That time the mountain allowed us three days of climbing, bivouacking in three in the portaledge for two people, before meeting the fearsome band of black rock that makes up the last two hundred meters of wall. Again, we had underestimated an aspect of the climb: the danger and consistency of this type of rock, a schist completely different from the granite we had encountered on the first part of the route, made up of horizontal layers, like roof tiles, piled randomly one on the other and ready to fall down.

Exhausted from fatigue and altitude, after two almost sleepless nights spent looking for the best position in the narrow hanging tent, we decided to give up and bail.

During that descent we perhaps discovered a possible solution to our problem, the line that maybe would have allowed us to climb this wall.





Starting the climb

We identified an exposed 60-meter horizontal beam that led to another system of diagonal cracks: we would have had to cut the entire wall to be able to reach a section where the schist strip was 50 meters high or slightly more.

But alas, our chance was over that year: the weather had changed and the snow started and settled on the walls, and a muscle injury forced me to rest for ten days.

In the head there was the idea to try again, maybe ... one day ... who knows when ...

Many times the most difficult step is precisely the first, the start, to decide to dedicate another summer season to a project that has already rejected you and where you are not so convinced that you can achieve the result.

It's true that we had seen the line that we should have followed, but there were two unknown factors that held me back: the first was to find



the weather conditions suitable for free climbing, the second was the overcoming of the final schist band, which although it was about 50-60 meters, it left many doubts, since a few meters were enough to stop us in our 2015 attempt.

Between one expedition and another, between a referral and another, four years had already passed since that attempt and I soon realized that we were losing the train, so when a few months ago Luca said to me: "How about returning to the Bhagirathi this year?" I thought the time for excuses, postponements and other projects was over.



The traverse

I immediately accepted that proposal because I understood that both Luca and Giga would have been determined and motivated at least as much as I, perhaps occur more, to climb that wall and that maybe a similar occasion would never occur again; and because in 4 years I wanted to see if we had made progress (alpinistically speaking) or if our abilities had remained unchanged. Seeing improvements in oneself in an activity in which one has worked hard for years - in our case mountaineering - is



one of the most satisfying sensations that a person can experience and I was firmly convinced that we would have experienced it.

This year, at least, we had clear ideas on how to organize the expedition. Maybe too clear since we had studied everything to the smallest detail, without even considering a “plan b”.

Things would have started exactly the same way as four years before: the flight to Delhi, the transfer to Gangotri and then the two days of trekking to get to Nandanvan, that is the place of our base camp, green balcony with perfect view on the Shivling ( 6543m) located at 4400 meters altitude. The tents were in the same place four years before, we had the same cook, at times it seemed to me that I was living a déjà vu.

So our program included an acclimatization phase divided into two steps: first we would bring the portaledge and part of the climbing material up to the base of the wall at an altitude of 5400 meters; then we would have climbed the Bhagirathi II from the East side, reaching the altitude of 6500 meters.

Acclimatization is perhaps the most boring part of an expedition, especially



Climbing up



when you already know the place and have clear ideas about what to do. But it is as boring as it is necessary, and in spite of the certainly not optimal time, everything went exactly according to the schedule set at home.

On September 3, 2019 things are going well. All three of us feel in full form and even the monsoon has been over for a few days, the copious rains that had accompanied us in the first two weeks of shipping are now nothing but harmless fogs, which envelop us in the evening hours. It is hot, too hot and we cannot explain how only 4 years before we could get cold in this same place and at the same time of the year.

We are at the advanced camp at 5000 meters of altitude, the long-awaited day of putting our hands on the Bhagirathi IV is about to arrive. While I am absorbed in my thoughts it is Giga at some point to call my attention:

“Look! ... Teo Look!” His voice is alarmed and I leave the tent in a hurry. Just in time to see the show that leaves me speechless: big blocks like cars are bouncing exactly along the line that we should have climbed the next day. They split into a thousand pieces and then still roll down, covering the entire wall with debris until they reach the plinth and then the stony ground.

Ten minutes later, I’m still amazed and the show repeats itself and this time I also look at it in the front row. Other rocks come off the final shale band of the Bhagirathi IV, bounce and channel themselves right on our way: I see the debris travel along the two dihedrals, then the slabs and then on the easier approach.

No one dares to breathe. There are no half words to describe what happened: if we had found ourselves on our ascent line at that moment, we would probably be dead, crushed by the mass of newly fallen stones.

What did we do after witnessing a such a show? Well, what any human would have done: we have not attacked the route and we have returned to the base camp with morale at its lowest.

It’s September 14th 2019 and eleven days have passed since the moment which changed our expedition. “That rockfall...” I kept telling

myself and my companions “it changed all our plans ... if only ...”.

Fortunately with the “if” you do not go anywhere and in the meantime we also made a failed attempt on a line more direct and repaired, but maybe too hard: it rejected us once we reached the base of a completely blind dihedral after 3 climbing days.

Yet we are still there at the same point. Luca, Giga and I at the advanced camp to stare the West of the Bhagirathi IV.

Crazy when I think, that only two days before we had brought down all the material and declared our expedition closed. But then that night an idea perhaps insane started to creep into my mind, it took root in the depths of my thoughts and didn't let me sleep, making me think of every single detail, of every scenario that we could face. When I showed it to my companions, I didn't know what to expect ... would they immediately reject it or would they find a brilliant idea?

“Guys, one last speed attempt. In a day and with the minimum necessary. It seems impossible, but we might as well try it “.

We start at midnight from the 5,000 meters of our advanced base camp. At 3 o'clock, with about ten degrees below zero (in the meantime the temperatures have finally fallen) is Luca starting to climb. After 6 long pitches my turn comes: the climb sucks, nothing to do with what it was in 2015. Or rather, it would be beautiful vertical and overhanging crack pitches on 6c / 7a, except that everything is covered or clogged with dust and debris from the rockfall.

The only positive thing is that I don't feel the 5,900 meters of altitude, it seems to me to be on the Grand Capucin and I don't make too much effort, on the other hand we have been in this place for almost 30 days now!

After 10 pitches, a 60 meter traverse awaits us, there I say goodbye my ultralight camalot two, sacrificed for a pendulum that makes us earn precious minutes.

We are outside the rockfall area, now the rock is clean. However, the rocks start getting worse with several unstable blocks. Giga follows fast with a heavy bag, he has the hard task of sacrificing himself for



everyone's success, this is the real work and team spirit. A few more pitches and I pass the lead to Luca for the icing on the cake: one last section on granite before chasing two pitches on the layers of friable



The route



shale that made these mountains famous.

He manages to climb the first pitch with the light, while he climbs upwards, the movement of the rope is enough to drop on us a rain of thin, flat stones like the tiles of a roof, then luckily he crosses to the left and after endless minutes builds an anchor. He climbs the second and last pitch of the schist in the dark.

Now the snow: to be as light as possible we have a pair of crampons in 3, but it's not too bad. I take the lead, patiently try and find a way to make decent anchors for my friends who go up jumaring.

At 11.00 pm we all touch the 6.193 meters of the summit. We are so euphoric that we no longer even feel tired.

We then rest a few hours in our sleeping bags, before starting the descent from the East side.

*Ed. Note : 2019 Significant ascent mentioned in Piolets d'Or.*



Team members at Base Camp



## Mountaineering Expedition to unnamed and unscaled peak –Harsil Horn (4880 m / 16010 ft)

*Col. Amit Bisht*

The aim of the expedition was to do the first ascent of an unscaled peak of height 4880 m in Harsil Chamoli area of Garhwal Himalayas and carry out calibration and marking of most feasible route to the summit.

This expedition is indeed a very special one; as team successfully scaled the virgin peak in a very short duration of 9 days with a small team of 5



Team at summit

climbers during the COVID -19 pandemic effect and National lock down in the uncharted Harsil Valley of Garhwal Himalayas.

The ten member team reached Harsil road head and immediately commenced induction to Ratha Camp on 22nd June 2020 for first stage of acclimatization, stayed in the camp for two nights, carrying out load ferries to the Base Camp. On 24th June the team reached Base Camp



Summit Camp

(3620 M). On 25th June, a small team under Lt Col Yogesh Dhumal, Dy team leader carried out a recce of the route to the Summit Camp (4387 M). The route was a mix of initial grasslands and bushes, and the final part being a mix of snow covered steep slopes with occasional rocky outcrops in between. After load ferry to the Summit Camp on 26th June, the complete team shifted to the Summit Camp on 27th June with minimum required ration, tents and fixed ropes in the initial part of the route. The final push to Summit was commenced on 28th June at 4:00 hrs. The negotiation of the route involved near vertical climb in hard snow, traverse route on a highly exposed slope with a mix of snow and rocks and the last patch with pure rock at almost 60 to 75 degrees gradient,



where sharp boulders and rocky ridges made the climb even more difficult. The climbing technique used for ascent included fixed rope in few patches and roping up with anchoring at few places. After deliberate safe climbing along the arduous terrain, the team finally achieved the first ascent of the peak at 4880m on 28th June at 9:30 hrs. Team stayed at the top for 30 minutes & clicked photographs & recorded GPS shots. I nailed a prayer flag and a snow stake with NIM painted on it, on the summit as proof of ascent. By this time the weather turned bad and after negotiating extreme weather conditions the team reached back safely to Summit Camp at 11:45 hrs and on the same day descended to the Base Camp. The team further took two days to carry load ferry to the road head at Harsil and completed the de-induction on 30th June.



Enroute Summit Camp



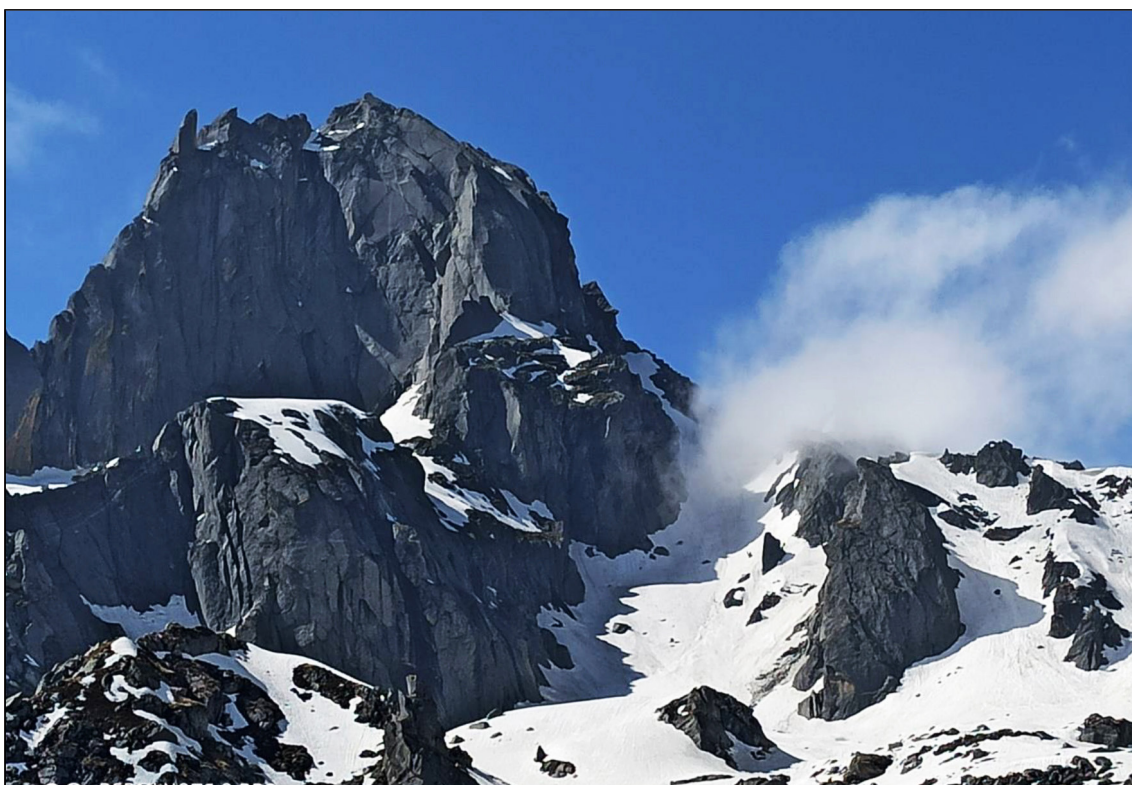


Ascent towards summit



Climb towards summit





View of summit point



Enroute Summit Camp





Peak view from the way to summit

## **Article**

### **[Friendship Peak Speed Ascent](#)**

*Kieren Dsouza*

#### **Friendship Peak Speed Ascent**

I did a reconnaissance on the 14th of June till just below the col, on the route I was going to climb. I was carrying my gear bag which contained my boots, crampons, waterproof jacket, pants and a pair of gloves. I stashed it carefully at Lady Leg ridge knowing that I would need it on the day of the attempt. The 4Play team was divided into two, one would document and support me on the road and the other on the mountain. After the recce, the mountain team camped on the mountain while I headed back to Manali. On 16th June, at 1:02 AM, I started from the Mall road (Rambagh chowk) in Manali. I ran via Old Manali, Goshal, through the village trail to Shanag, continuing via Bhurva to Solang. I reached Solang in about 1 hour 11 minutes. From here I again ran till Dhundi – the road head for Friendship peak, where I arrived in 1 hour 55 minutes (from the start time). I continued following the regular trail till the main river crossing for Bakarthach campsite. However, instead of crossing over to the right bank, I continued on the left bank. This trail





Kieren training in his backyard, Nasogi (Manali, HP). (*Nitish Walia*)

opens up just before the climb to Lady Leg. I began the climb up to Lady Leg ridge right away, with no rest. I reached the top of the ridge in a total of 3 hours 45 minutes from the mall road; this is where the snow began. Here I stopped and had a sip of water, and collected my pack that I had left on the 14th.

My next stop was at the col at about 5 hours 4 minutes. I changed into my boots and crampons, waterproof jacket/pants and continued to move up. I probably could not have asked for better snow conditions. It helped me move up fairly smoothly and at about 7 hours 16 minutes (from the start time) I was at the summit. I stayed at the summit for a 15 minutes break, did an Instagram live, took a couple of videos and then started climbing down with Aditya Bikram Pande (part of the high altitude filming crew) who had climbed with me from the col to the summit. I was back at the col after a slow descent, at about 8 hours 36 minutes (from the start time). I had left my original pack here, which I had carried since the start at 01:02 AM, on the way up. So I stopped, changed back into my running



Kieren running near the summit of Kanamo (5974m), Spiti (HP). *(Abhijeet Singh)*

shoes and started to run down.

I left my climbing boots and crampons for the filming team to carry back. I was back at the lady leg ridge at about 8 hours 56 minutes (from the start time). I stopped, had 2 glasses of soup provided by the 4Play team, changed into my running shorts, left my waterproof jacket and pants here with the team, said bye and ran down the lady leg ridge. I was back in Dhundi in about 9 hours 58 minutes. I continued on to Manali. I was at Solang in about 10 hours 35 minutes, and took the same way back to Manali. After crossing the Old Manali bridge, I ran through Nature Park and not the road, as I had done when I started, for the sake of capturing better footage for the film. I finished at the same place I had started at, on the Mall road, in 11 hours 45 minutes 50 seconds.

### **The Idea Of Self-Sufficiency**

There are various ways in which the styles can be combined, which makes the definition of 'self-sufficiency' even more confusing. My definition of self-sufficiency primarily relies on one's own ability to move over the



climbing medium (be it rock, snow or ice). The clothing and equipment should be the bare minimum that anyone would need in order to make progress and to survive in the conditions he/she finds himself in. I want to cite my own run as an example so others who love the outdoors or who relate to a minimalistic ethic can improve on the idea. I covered a distance of 53.38 kilometres on foot in a total time span of 11 hours 45 minutes and 50 seconds. Alongside, I gained a total 3,657 metres of elevation during the project, and lost 3,623 meters mostly during the descent. My final run on the 16th produced 7 plastic wrappers (5 gels and 2 bars) that I carried all the way back home. The team on the mountain was provided packed food by the chef at the 4Play office, Ram Singh. All garbage generated by the team, including packets of instant noodles were brought back to the roadhead; along with the pieces of plastic that were found while hiking.



Kieren on the upper slopes of Friendship. *(Mohit Sharma)*



Kieren reaching the Col on Friendship. *(Mohit Sharma)*



Kieren running back to Manali after climbing Friendship. *(Sankash Sood)*



## **News and Personalities**

### **Catherine Destivelle Earns Piolets d'Or Lifetime Achievement Award**

Destivelle becomes the first woman to receive the award since it began in 2009

*Bennett Slavsky*

The Piolets d'Or jury has chosen Catherine Destivelle to be the recipient of their 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award. Since its inception in 2009, the Lifetime Achievement Award is meant to honor climbers who's careers serve as inspiration to following generations, and has been awarded to legendary climbers such as Walter Bonatti, Reinhold Messner, and John Roskelley. Catherine Destivelle is the first female recipient of the award..

Destivelle was born in 1960 in French Algeria. Her family moved to France when she was a child. She began bouldering in Fontainebleau when she was 12 years old. As a teenager, Destivelle got a taste for mountaineering in the Alps, but in the 1980s turned her attention to sport climbing—a rapidly growing discipline in Europe at that time. She was the first woman to redpoint 8a (5.13b).



Catherine on Sishapangma (8015m) (*Erik Decamp*)

Destivelle was one of the pioneers of climbing competitions as well. She won the Italy's Sportroccia in 1985, the first international climbing competitions. Throughout the late-1980s, Destivelle and Lynn Hill often rivaled one another for first place at international competitions.

Though Destivelle was a top-tier sport climber, her true passion was alpinism, which she made a triumphant return to in 1990 with a solo ascent of the Bonatti Pillar on the Petit Dru. In 1992, she became the first woman to solo the North Face of the Eiger, which she completed in winter. The following year, she did a winter solo of the Walker Spur on the Grandes Jorasses, and a winter solo of the Bonatti Route on the North Face of the Matterhorn the year after that. Destivelle then took the skills she learned in the Alps to the Greater Ranges, climbing high-altitude routes in the Himalaya and Karakorum.

Catherine Destivelle crushed the stereotypes that top level sport climbing and daring alpinism were reserved for men. She is one of the most well-rounded climbers of all time—from the boulders of Fontainebleau to the Himalaya—and her storied career serves as inspiration to climbers everywhere.

**Read the full Piolets d'Or announcement below :**

We are happy to announce that the Piolets d'Or 2020 event will go ahead as planned during the 25th edition of the Ladek Mountain Film Festival in Poland. Access to a large area and the adoption of precautionary measures will allow us to safely welcome over 1000 members of the public.

We also have the immense pleasure of announcing that on the 19th September, during this festival, the 12th Walter Bonatti - Piolets d'Or Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Catherine Destivelle.

Catherine Destivelle started making a name for herself in the climbing world during the 1980s, a time when sport climbing was exploding in popularity and grades were rising rapidly. The media focused its attention on this new discipline, ignoring the fact that Catherine had been an alpinist from a young age. Shortly after discovering climbing at Fontainebleau at the age of 12, she was tackling big routes in the Mont



Blanc massif. However, by the mid-1980s she had started participating in sport-climbing competitions and her success in these, and the fact she became the first woman to redpoint 8a, turned her into a rock climbing star. But few people knew that as a teenager she had climbed some of the biggest routes in the Alps.

In 1990, the rock star made her mountain comeback with an impressive solo ascent of the Bonatti Pillar on the Petit Dru. This finally gained her recognition as an alpinist. She went on to open a new route on the west face of the Petit Dru over 11 days, before completing a solo winter trilogy; the north face of the Eiger in 1992, the Walker Spur on the north face of the Grandes Jorasses in 1993, and the Bonatti route on the north face of the Matterhorn in 1994. This latter route is still rarely climbed today. It was her second big Bonatti route and the first time a woman had climbed at such a high standard in the Alps. However, Catherine didn't just want to be known as an accomplished female climber, she wanted her performances to be measured against those of any alpinist, no matter their gender. How many people could claim to operate at this standard? Catherine had proved that women could climb just as hard as men.

*Courtesy - Climbing*

### [Mount Everest: Chinese team summit during pandemic](#)

*Navin Singh Khadka*

A team of Chinese climbers and surveyors scaled Mount Everest on 26th and 27th May, becoming the only climbers to summit the world's highest peak during the corona virus pandemic.

Chinese media report the team is there to re-measure the height of Everest, which is on the border with Nepal.

Until now China has put the height at 4m lower than Nepal does. The huge 2015 earthquake may also have had an impact.

This year both countries banned foreign teams from climbing the mountain due to corona virus travel restrictions.

China permitted only its citizens for the climb this spring season, while

Nepal cancelled all expeditions.

The Chinese team began their ascent in April and summit bids were thwarted by bad weather.

“After summiting, team members began erecting a survey marker on the snow-covered peak, which measures less than 20 square metres,” Xinhua news agency reported.

Climbing guides were able to fix ropes to the summit, allowing the rest of the team to ascend, Xinhua said.

“Two professional surveyors had been withdrawn from the peak-climbing squad due to uncertainties about the weather and insufficient supplies such as oxygen,” it added.

Mountaineering record-keepers say it is a very rare case of Chinese climbers being the only ones on the peak.

“In spring 1960, only the Chinese reached the summit. The Indians tried, but failed,” said Richard Salisbury of the Himalayan Database, an organisation that keeps records of all expeditions in the Himalayas.

“There were various Chinese recons, research and training climbs from 1958 through 1967 when nobody else was on the mountain, but no ascents by any of them.”

The all-Chinese summiting of Everest comes just when China is celebrating the 60th anniversary of its first successful ascent of the peak.

*Courtesy : BBC World Service*

## [20 Years of Mountain Heritage Trust](#)

*Kelda Roe*

It's 20 years since the foundation of the Mountain Heritage Trust and they are sharing their work through a new short film.

Made possible through a grant from The National Archives and produced by Land & Sky Media, the film features interviews with Sir Chris Bonington, Doug Scott and BMC President Lynn Robinson. It offers an insight into the value of the Mountain Heritage Trust's work and includes

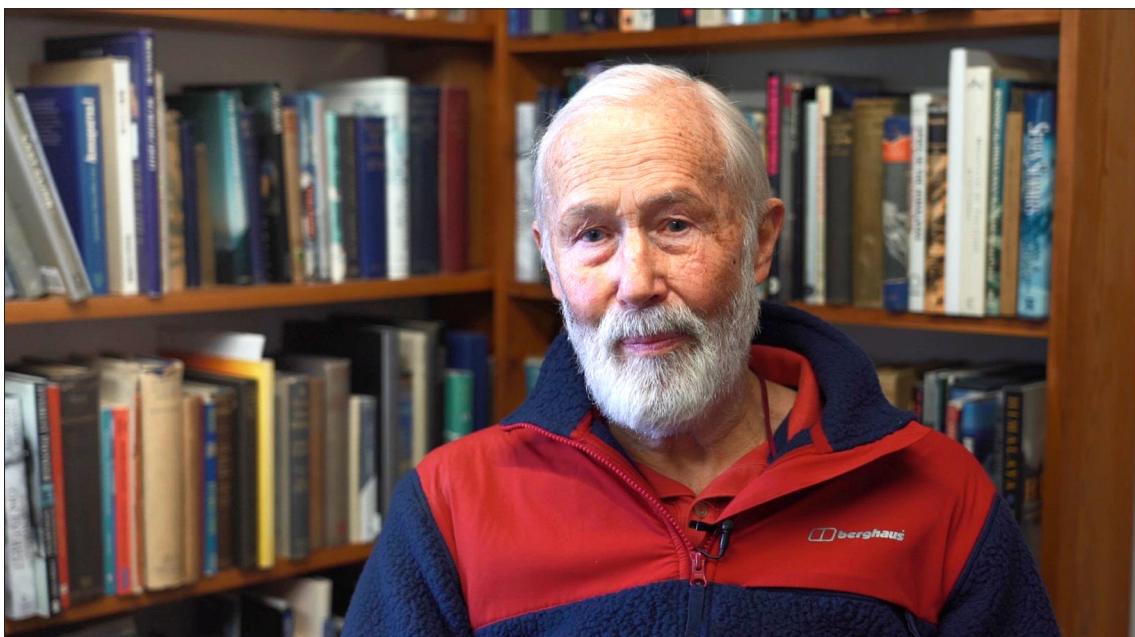


behind the scenes footage of their efforts to preserve and share Britain's extraordinary mountaineering and climbing heritage.

Based in Cumbria, UK, the Mountain Heritage Trust is a registered charity who care for some of Britain's most significant mountaineering and climbing collections. They are currently fundraising to secure the



Archive Store



Chris Bonington film still

future of the Trust – donations can be made at <https://www.justgiving.com/mountainheritagetrust>.

Images Courtesy @ *Mountain Heritage Trust*

## [Himalayan Mountaineering Institute](#)

*Manik Banerjee*

Premier mountaineering training establishment in Asia - Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) in Darjeeling West Bengal, took novel measures to tackle the condition emerged out of countrywide lock down caused by the Corona virus outbreak.



Trainees at H M I Darjeeling undergoing sessions of Yoga

HMI Principal Gp Capt Jai Kishen informed that a total 75 trainees including 53 in Basic Mountaineering Training Course and 22 including two women in Search & Rescue Course were undergoing field training at an altitude of 14,500 feet in Chourikhang at West Sikkim from March 10 and 14 respectively. They completed their training on March 24 and the countrywide lock down was declared from same midnight.

The principal said that “with great efforts the trainees were safely brought back from the Base Camp at Chowrikhang to the Institute campus in Darjeeling under special arrangements with Governments of Sikkim and West Bengal.”



As per schedule, the course would have been over by 29th March and the trainees would have left the Institute after the graduation ceremony the same day itself. However, in view of the countrywide lock down the Institute made special arrangements to keep them at the Institute considering their safety and vulnerability of getting infected with Corona virus and further spreading it if they were asked to leave the Institute on completion of the course, he said.

Gp Capt Jai Kishen said the Institute made adequate arrangement for food, medical and other essential items. Their medical fitness is being closely monitored by the Institute doctor and nursing staff. HMI has made all necessary and possible arrangements for their boarding, lodging and



Physical Training and Prayer during Covid 19 lock down

safety at the Institute at no extra cost.

Principal Jai Kishen intimated that in order to keep morale of the students high, make them occupied and at the same time utilize their talents and interests in productive ways, the Institute during this period of lock down designed a special programme and a competition titled “HMI 21 DAYS’ BIG BOSS CHALLENGE”. The programme include various events like prayer, yoga, meditation, cleanliness, gardening, group discussion on various topics, poem/essay/articles writing, story

telling . He said that adequate safety measures were being followed during the conduct of this programme.

All the students after the restrictions on movement and lock down eased left for their respective homes in different parts of the country.

*Images Courtesy : Himalayan Mountaineering Institute*

### 2020 Piolets d'Or Honoured Ascent

MARK RICHEY - STEVE SWENSON - CHRIS WRIGHT - GRAHAM ZIMMERMAN (USA)

FIRST ASCENT VIA THE SOUTHEAST FACE, 2,300M, AI4 M6+ 90°, JULY 31-AUGUST 8 ROUND TRIP FROM AN ADVANCED BASE AT 4,700M.

Another much-coveted problem, this time in the eastern Pakistan Karakoram, Link Sar had received at least eight attempts before 2019. But the difficulties are not just about climbing the peak: the Indo-Pakistan conflict has made this region an on-off affair (largely off) when it comes to obtaining a mountaineering permit.

Steve Swenson first attempted Link Sar in 2001 with a strong American team, and then again, after a number of failed permit attempts, in 2017 with Chris Wright and Graham Zimmerman. Having now discovered a feasible line of ascent, these three decided to reinforce the team in 2019 with the addition of Mark Richey.



Mark Richey

Six days after setting out from Advanced Base, they reached the top. During that time they had waited out a 36+ hours storm, and on the summit day recovered from a 35m leader fall due to avalanche and overcome an upgradable final pitch of deep, steep and unstable





Steve Swenson

“Peruvian” snow. A little over two days were then needed to reverse the route. These climbers succeeded because they were persistent, used their 126 years of combined climbing experience, and understood what partnership meant.

Courtesy : pioletsdor.net



Climbing above Camp 3 (Steve Swenson)

*Ed. Note: Mark Richey and Steve Swenson are both Honorary Member of The Himalayan Club and we the members are proud of their achievement. This is Steve's second Piolets d'Or.*

## **REMEMBRANCE**

### World Renowned Mountaineer Martin Moran

*C S Pandey*



It is with a sense of deep shock that we received the news that Martin Moran died whilst climbing in Kumaon region of Indian Himalaya along with 7 other climbers. Born on 19th February, 1955, Martin grew up in North Tyneside. He met his future wife Joy when they were both 18. He took a degree in Geography at Cambridge University and later qualified as

a Chartered Accountant in Sheffield. During the winter of 1984/85 he completed all of the Munros in a single round. In 1985 Martin qualified as a British Mountain Guide and he and Joy started a mountaineering instruction and guiding business based in Lochcarron in the NW Highlands of Scotland. Martin ran summer Alpine mountaineering courses based in Argentière, France and then in Evolène, Switzerland for 20 years.

I first came in contact with Martin during Year 1990 for organizing his expedition to Indian Himalaya. Our friendship continued for almost 30 years until this news of him with other seven mountaineers gone missing came to me during last week of May 2019 which was unbelievable because he was always thinking of safety first while on outdoor activities. In Year 1991, Martin started planning to take his commercial mountaineering expeditions to the Indian Himalaya and I was associated with him in this mission as his ground handling agent in India. After more than 40 successful commercial (often pioneering) expeditions the company Moran Mountain is known as one of Britain's most experienced mountain adventure companies. Martin, a British and IFMGA Mountain Guide, had been leading an expedition to climb Nanda



Devi East along with seven other climbers and were acclimatizing on an adjacent un-named peak (6477m) where they were reported missing during last week of May.

As a friend, guide, mountaineer, writer, Martin was a long-standing trustworthy friend and ambassador for me and my organisation. He was also an inspiration to many and his talent as a climber was unquestionable, having pioneered numerous routes in the Himalaya.

But it was the sheer breadth of his achievements in the mountains that stood Martin apart and made him one of the most influential mountaineers of the world. Martin's team were engaged in the type of adventurous, exploratory mountaineering that he had built a reputation for over three decades as a mountain guide and safe climber and team leader. He was a man whose reputation for getting the most out of both clients and conditions was the stuff of legend. He was not after a leisurely breakfast but instead dawn-till-dusk adventures making the most of the big mountaineering challenges.

He was an acknowledged authority on the mountains of Northern India, leading exploratory climbing trips to the area for both work and pleasure, and making notable first ascents along the way. He delivered lectures about his mountaineering trips in India at Indian Mountaineering Foundation, Delhi and The Himalayan Club, Mumbai and had high reputation amongst HC & IMF members and officials.

According to British Mountain Association, Martin went through the very rigorous process of becoming an IFMGA Mountain Guide, an international qualification recognized across the world and known by all to represent the highest standards of competence and professionalism. He was the very embodiment of a British and International Mountain Guide, highly respected and a consummate professional.

In 2009 he attempted Nanda Devi East with clients and returned to try a new route on the same mountain in 2015 (reaching 6,865m on the unclimbed North East Ridge). Highlights in India included the first ascents of the South Face of Nanda Kot, 6,861m in 1995 and the West Ridge of Nilkanth, 6,596m in 2000, along with a dozen other pioneering ascents. He also led trips to Kamet and Trisul etc., also in the Uttarakhand region.

None of us would have thought in our dreams that such mishappening will took place especially with THE MOUNTAINEER MARTIN MORAN. Martin, you will always remain in my heart as a sole friend whom with I used to share the same frequency of thinking and that made possible to work with you and to continue 30 years of friendship and promoting adventure sports in Indian Himalaya.



Shivling from Base Camp of Bhagirathi IV (*Arianna Colliard*)

Edited by : [Nilay Chakraborty](#)

Email: [nilay24@gmail.com](mailto:nilay24@gmail.com)

**Published for The Himalayan Club**

Himalayan Club Centre, 314, Turf Estate, Shakti Mills Lane,  
Off Dr. E. Moses Road, Mahalaxmi [West], Mumbai 400011, India.

Phone: [91-22] 24912829

[www.himalayanclub.org](http://www.himalayanclub.org)

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