

Obituaries



WALLACE MAY
President, 1929-1931, 1943-1945
Honorary Member, 1951

Members will have been very sorry to hear, earlier this year, of the death of Wallace May on May 30th of his eightieth year. Mr. Frank Wallbank, who shared with Mr. May the honour of being an Original Member of the M.A.M., has written as follows:

"If anyone can be said to have been the founder of the M.A.M., Wallace May was that one. He convened the first meeting, through the Press, of Midland mountaineers. The response was surprising, and the club was formed; he became its first secretary, in 1922, only relinquishing that office when elected President in 1929. His was the task of knitting together a group of experienced mountaineers, mostly strangers to each other. In this he was very successful, friendships being formed which have never been broken. To celebrate our 21st anniversary he was elected President for a second time, in 1943.

His interests lay in the milder side of mountaineering, for rock faces and Alpine peaks held no great attraction for him. He would walk prodigious distances in all weathers, roaming the hills and crossing mountain ranges with the skilful use of map and compass. In particular he loved the Alpine passes when the spring flowers were coming. We shall miss him."

He occupied the chair on the occasion of the first Dinner in February, 1931, when 150 members and guests assembled at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, the evening being a conspicuous success. When the idea of acquiring a Club Hut in North Wales was first mooted he was among the small group of enthusiastic members to push forward this project until Glan Dena became an accomplished fact. In the 1962 edition of the Journal, an article which was written to mark the fortieth anniversary of Mr. May's opening act contained these words in connection with the opening of Glan Dena:

"Mr. Grosvenor performed the opening ceremony, and the first to step inside was Wallace May. Considering that his was the inspiration that formed the M.A.M. and his the constant work that contributed in such good measure to the expansion of the M.A.M., no gesture could have been more appropriate."

Those contemporary with him will remember his genial companionship and his love and enthusiasm for the hills. His presence at Meets and Meetings was always a delight, as he had that capacity to radiate in a humorous and charming way the force of his personality, contributing something vital and interesting, whatever the occasion or wherever he was.

He will be remembered by us with affection, not only for his many distinguished services to the M.A.M. or as a wise counsellor in all matters affecting the high standing of our Association, but for his endearing qualities as a man. We can never forget that he was the Founder of the M.A.M. or how dear to his heart were its interests. His late wife and son also derived much joy from their love of mountains and their membership of the Association. We shall be saddened by the thought that Wallace May is no longer in our midst.

ERNEST EDWARDS, O.B.E.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Ernest Edwards, who joined the M.A.M. in 1945. He was more particularly known to the London Section, with whom he climbed actively up until about eight years ago.

He will be remembered as an extremely friendly and charming man, and it was a disappointment to his friends that he was in latter years not able to join in London Section activities. He was also interested in the water, both as a yachtsman and as a member of the select company of Ogwen bathers.

He lived in London, was employed in the Civil Service, and was awarded the O.B.E. for public services. He leaves a wife and family, to whom we extend our sincere sympathies.

RICHARD SOUTHALL

Members will have heard of the sad death of Richard Southall late last year. He was a man who gave greatly of himself in everything he undertook. During the last few years the cares of his business, his home and large garden and his many voluntary local activities took so much of his time that we did not see as much of him in the hills as those of us who knew him would have wished.

Richard Southall's instincts lay off the beaten track. He knew the hills of Wales intimately, particularly the more unfamiliar areas of Central Wales such as the Great Desert. His urge to explore led him to Yugoslavia, and many members will remember his description of the descent of the Drina River on a log raft with which they concluded their climbing holiday. He went to the Pyrenees, to Norway and recently twice to Spain. Always he found new places and experiences. He was a superb photographer and an excellent lecturer; he invariably had a good story of his exploits to tell us on his return. These trips were all done with small parties and were largely due to Richard's initiative.

He was a keen and powerful skier; as one would expect, his interest lay in ski-touring rather than the piste. Although like many people he had to make the difficult choice between skiing in the winter or spring and summer climbing he did manage two seasons recently, on one of which he traversed the high level route under very icy conditions.

We will remember especially the walks he led on the Malverns which he knew so well, and the welcome he and his wife gave us at their delightful home at Cradley afterwards.

He was a well known figure in his part of the county. He took a large part in the creation and running of the most successful Malvern Film Society to which he gave unstintingly of his time. He was treasurer of the local church. In spite of all his activities he still managed to find time for opera and concerts on which he was very keen.

He was a loyal friend and a staunch and unselfish companion on the hills and it is tragic that he has gone from us in the prime of life. Our sympathies go out to his wife Irene and her son and daughter in their great loss.

R.W.W.