

Fellow members and friends,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I respond to the request of our President for a message on the occasion of the festivities at the Hermitage to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Club. In retrospect it seems only the other day that I was composing a similar message for the most successful gathering at the old Hermitage in 1951, in which such a prominent part was played by Arthur Harper, Dan Bryant, and Peter and Alex Graham, all of them now heroes of the past, whom we remember with affection and admiration. These 15 years have witnessed a quite astonishing growth not only in the numbers but also in the activities of the Club. Since 1951 your tigers have made major contributions to Himalayan history in many fields, alpine, scientific and educational. I will only mention the epic feats of Ed Hillary and George Lowe on Everest, and the many great ascents over the years of fierce peaks with exotic names, Mukut Parbat, Baruntse, Ama Dablam, Kangtega and Tamserku. In the Andes of Peru New Zealand feet have left their mark on the proud summits of Huascaran and Cayesh and Pumasillo. In the Antarctic with Ed Hillary and George Lowe again to the fore in their respective Odysseys to the South Pole your members have won high distinction as mountaineers and explorers and even as cricketers. On your own enchanted mountains your exploits have been equally remarkable. I recall especially the wonderful season of 1952-53, when you gave such a royal welcome to my old friends, Geoffrey and Len Young, when the sun shone for weeks out of a cloudless sky, as it never did for me, and that magnificent climb, in which I should love to have participated, was accomplished, the first traverse of David's Dome (I refuse to call that beautiful mountain Hicks) of David's Dome, Dampier and Vancouver from the head of the Hooker to the Linda glacier. Other great feats, which have struck my imagination,

are the traverse of Elie de Beaumont by the Maximilian ridge, and the 100th ascent of Mt Cook in 1955 repeating for the first time the original route of Fyfe, Clarke and Graham in 1894. I should like too to congratulate the enthusiast who in 1960 won the coveted record of being the first man to stand on the summit of every one of the revised list of Tenthousanders, all 27 of them, and also those men of steel, the modern ice-experts who stormed the seemingly impregnable eastern ice-faces of Cook and Tasman.

My wife and I much regret that we have never been able to revisit you since the war ended, as we would have wished to do. But you must not think that we have ever forgotten you. How could I ever forget some of the happiest days of my life, when every day at home I dress and undress surrounded on my walls by Charles Beken's glorious enlargements of my pictures of Tasman and Cook, Silberhorn and Aspiring and other magic peaks, and by the whole range of the literature of the Southern Alps ancient and modern, from Green's High Alps of New Zealand to Peter Graham's autobiography, arrayed on my bookshelves. For most of these years too I had the pleasant task of summarising annually all the doings of N.Z. mountaineers at home and abroad for inclusion in the Journal of the Swiss Stiftung, edited by Marcel Kurz, where they appeared side by side with the reports from Zermatt, Chamonix, Courmayeur and the other great centres where climbers congregate. We have been cheered too by the friendship of a number of your younger members, stationed from time to time at Oxford or Harwell, who have helped to keep us in touch with you, and we hope that yet more of you may seek us out at our home in a Berkshire village. Finally I would like to take this opportunity to express once more my gratitude to your President and Committee for the

great honour they have conferred on me in making me a life member. It has given my wife and me intense pleasure, that you have paid me this tribute in my old age and after an absence of thirty years. Be assured that we will be with you in spirit at the Hermitage on the night of May 28th, wishing you all as individuals and as a very lively and vigorous Club health and happiness and good climbing.