



# Newsletter

MATTERHORN 2015

Post 5 — Thursday July 6<sup>th</sup> 1865  
from Chamonix

## Second Ascent of the Aiguille Verte

# 150 Years Ago — First Ascent of the Matterhorn

## It is Summer 1865

**And how many unclimbed Alpine peaks will have been conquered by the time the cool damp air of Autumn returns?**

Mountaineers, many of them British, are planning their routes and engaging their favourite local guides to assist. So I, whose scribbles usually cover London society events and gossip, have packed my notebooks and pens with my climbing ropes and nailed boots. I will follow those

intrepid climbers, witness their achievements and post back my reports. Many of the summits of Europe have been conquered over the last fifty years, those left must rank as among the most challenging. Grandes Jorasses, Aiguille Verte, Matterhorn – who will be the first to set foot on your proud peaks?



## The Story So Far

Edward Whymper has increased his tally of first ascents by reaching the summit of the Aiguille Verte as well as the Grand Cornier, although his forays on the Italian side of the Matterhorn were repelled. Now, other British mountaineers are joining this energetic campaign. The camaraderie enjoyed among climbers such as Messrs Kennedy and Whym-



The Town of Chamonix with Mont Blanc above

per is high, unlike the rivalry between the Alpine towns on whose mountains we trespass. Calm has been restored to Chamonix but it feels like a fragile peace that any untoward event might break.

## Second Ascent of the Aiguille Verte

**T**he Reverend Hudson and Mr Kennedy (and, apparently, his dog) were also determined on an ascent of the Aiguille Verte. John Birkbeck should have been in the party but he fell ill en route to the mountains and has returned to England. In consequence, he has passed his engagement of Michel Croz to Hudson. Yesterday, Hudson and Kennedy with their friend Hodgkinson, achieved that 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent, after

Whymper's 1<sup>st</sup> just a few days ago. The guides were Croz, Ducroix and Peter Perren from Zermatt. Of course, Mrs Kennedy and Hudson's young companions, Hadow and Campbell, remained in Chamonix to watch the ascent from powerful telescopes.

They took a slightly different route to that ascended by Whymper last week, ascending a rocky ridge



The Ascent



On the Mer de Glace

they call Moine. It sounded a long and difficult climb. All six (excluding Mr Kennedy's dog who must be the first canine to have stood on that summit) roped together for the descent, Croz at the front and Hudson at the rear, a strategy that is becoming increasingly the norm on tricky stretches of rock.

### Changes to the company

So poor John Birkbeck's ambitions for this summer have been thwarted. The Reverend Joseph McCormick, a great friend of Hudson's, had also planned to join the attack on the



Roped together on a snow slope

Aiguille Verte. But he had to travel from Grindelwald where he is Chaplain for two weeks. After completing his Sunday ministrations he departed Grindelwald at midnight so that he could join the climb. After 30 hours of travelling, he arrived at

### Young Mr Hadow is delighted.

Argentière to find a note from Hudson that they would start from Chamonix. Eventually he caught the party, but was so debilitated by the rigours of the journey that he had to turn back with Mr Hadow and Mrs Kennedy when they reached the point beyond which the weaker members of the party would not go.

Messrs Hudson and Kennedy will spend some time on less ambitious adventures, and will scale the snow slopes of Mont Blanc. Young Mr Hadow is delighted that this

time he will join the attempt for the summit. His first visit to the Alps was last year, when he spent many days trapped at the Riffel above Zermatt participating in little action due to the weather which was dismal. The famous Matterhorn declined to show itself fully during the whole of his sojourn. He hopes to see more this time around.



The Valley of Chamonix

### Yet Another New Pass!

Edward Whymper left Chamonix on Monday planning to find a new route, faster and quicker, over to Courmayeur. Fortunately, he left at precisely the same time as a fellow English climber, Arthur Girdlestone, who was taking the traditional Col du Géant. We wait with anticipation to find who arrived in Courmayeur first.

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I must depart Chamonix in order to inform myself of what is happening elsewhere in these Alps. Last week, Messrs Moore and Walker made a First Ascent of the Piz



Courmayeur – under the rocky divide between Italy and France

Roseg, an achievement that has astounded Pontresina and beyond. They plan next somehow to get over to Zinal, and have in their sights a few more summits. ■



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