



Newsletter

MATTERHORN 2015

Post 7 — Friday July 14th 1865
from Zermatt

The Matterhorn is Conquered!

150 Years Ago — First Ascent of the Matterhorn

It is Summer 1865

And how many un-climbed 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 scribblings 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

In Chamonix, first and second ascents of the Aiguille Verte were celebrated with canon fire and Champagne.

Now focus has turned to the Matterhorn. The guide Jean-Antoine Carrel is organising an assault from Italy and is already on the mountain. Edward Whymper and Lord Francis Douglas met by chance in Breuil, have crossed to Zermatt and will make an attempt from Switzerland that might outpace the Italians. We are not sure yet



Rev. Charles Hudson
—
English country vicar and
ambitious mountaineer

of the whereabouts of the other team, Charles Hudson, Thomas Kennedy and Joseph McCormick, who also aspire to reach the peak that has held out against so many assailants.

The Matterhorn is Conquered!

An hour ago the brave band of men who departed Zermatt on yesterday's dawn stood together on the top of the Matterhorn! Lunch was not quite over but we rushed onto the street to see. Seven men stood aloft, so I guess that one of the Taugwalder boys also went to the top. What a day for a young lad!

How long it might take for them to make the descent we can but guess, but their arrival will surely be met with one of the greatest celebrations this town has ever seen.

A Haphazard Series of Events

The chance meeting of Mr Whymper and Lord Francis Douglas in Breuil developed into plans for an immediate assault on the mountain, soon followed by the engagement of Old Peter Taugwalder as guide. Then, as we were dining



On the Matterhorn

at the Monte Rosa, who should saunter in chatting about plans for the Matterhorn but Charles Hudson and the young Douglas Hadow I met in Chamonix.

Charles Hudson and Edward Whymper joined forces.

Random Acts of Planning

So Hudson and Whymper joined forces! Mr Whymper said he considered two separate groups on the mountain to be folly, it would only augment the danger of the enterprise. Then it turned out that Mr Hudson still has Michel Croz in his employ. To climb again with this admirable guide was a strong motivator for Mr Whymper. Hudson seemed quickly to grasp the need for speed. Whymper expressed concern about the inclusion of the inexperienced Mr Hadow, but was assured, he told me, that Mr Hadow's strong performance on Mont Blanc showed him to be fit for the task.

The party left in the early hours of yesterday, intending a stop at Schwarzsee where

Mr Whymper had stowed provisions including a large quantity of rope of all kinds. They would overnight on a ledge known to Mr Whymper to make the final assault this morning. The weather was perfect.

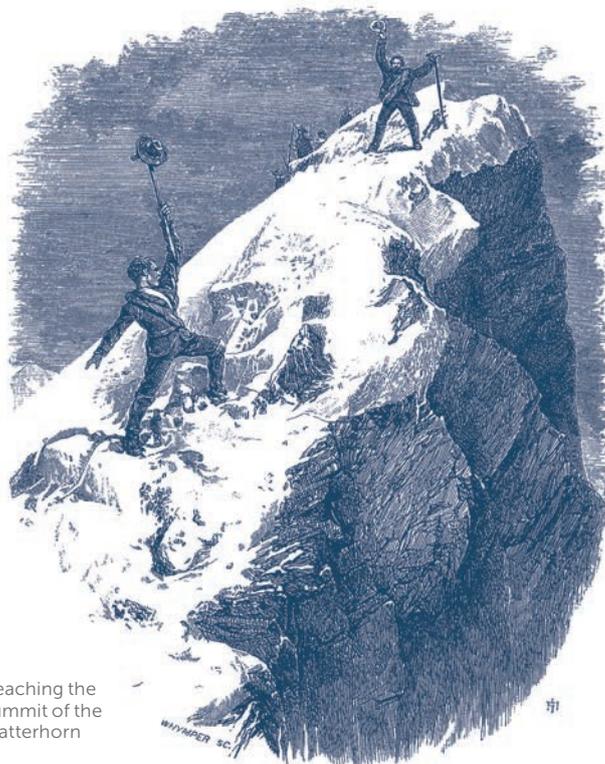
Twists of fate wound this story in their knots

It could so easily have been a different team making that ascent today. The Reverend Joseph McCormick arrived in Zermatt this morning, to take up Zermatt's Chaplaincy AND to meet with Charles Hudson and try for the Matterhorn. If McCormick had not been delayed on his journey to Zermatt by atrocious weather and Mr Kennedy not called back to London by his business, maybe they would now be standing on that summit.



A blue flag...

was spotted on the summit, the Savoyard smock worn by Croz. What a well deserved triumph!



Reaching the summit of the Matterhorn

Another cause for celebration.

Adolphus Moore and Horace Walker, with their guide Jakob Anderegg, made it to the summit of the Pigne d'Arolla a few days ago. What a glorious summer!

Carrel and the Italian climbers must have been thwarted by the snow. It would seem they have spent many nights in their tent on the side of the mountain, unable to progress further. ■



Adolphus Warburton Moore 1841–1887



www.matterhorn2015.ch

Experience the 1st Ascent of the Matterhorn "live" on the web.

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The Chapel at the Schwarzsee (Lac Noir) in 1865