

The Story So Far

Mountaineering this summer is reaching new heights as unclimbed peaks and passes fall to some intrepid climbers.

Edward Whymper made a first ascent of the awe-inspiring Aiguille Verte with Christian Almer and Franz Biner. He was soon followed up that mountain by Messrs Hudson, Kennedy and Hodgkinson, guided by Croz, Ducroix and Peter Perren. But now sights



Bivouac on a mountain ledge, complete with can to warm the soup or wine

are turned to the Matterhorn and some new players are joining the field.

Newsletter

MATTERHORN 2015

Post 6 – Tuesday July 11th 1865
from Breuil

Whymper's Next Move

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 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?



Whymper's Next Move

The traverse over a new Col, the Talèfre, from Chamonix to Courmayeur took Whymper, Almer and Biner a staggering ten hours – this must be a record! En route to Val Tournanche they reached the summit of the previously unclimbed Ruinette. But neither guide has the heart for the Matterhorn. So Mr Whymper sought out Jean-Antoine Carrel, who, it seemed, had a few days spare. Carrel is one of the few guides gifted with the strength and skill demanded by the Matterhorn. Perhaps more importantly, Carrel believes that the proud mountain can be climbed. Few others share this belief.

But I had forebodings....

There were whispered rumours in the village that Carrel, with his brother and some other local men, reached somewhere high up



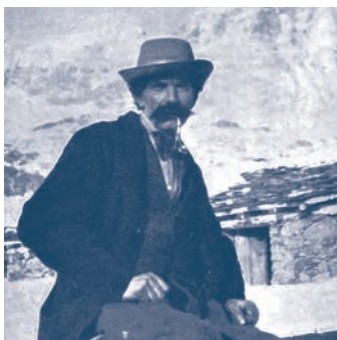
Jean-Antoine Carrel

their Monte Cervino just last Thursday, before being repulsed by atrocious weather. Then, a great caravan with mules and porters carrying parcels that looked suspiciously like ill-disguised paraphernalia for climbing arrived. In the company of this procession was no other than Signor Giordano. Now, Mr Whymper would not recognise this gentleman, nor does he have

the Italian to interpret the murmuring that flutters around the village. But I do.

Carrel started out to scale his beloved Monte Cervino for the glory of Italy.

Sr Felice Giordano is a founder of the Italian Alpine Club, whose members have their hearts set on achieving some feat that will bring honour to Italy. I met him last year, in Zermatt, and I suspect he was then considering making the Matterhorn that target. Carrel is a patriot. Putting together these factors made me fear that things were not quite as Mr Whympfer believed.



Jean-Antoine Carrel

Carrel's real plans laid bare

Mr Whympfer passed the next days of filthy weather preparing for an ascent he believed to carry a chance of success. But early this morning, Carrel started out to scale his beloved Monte Cervino for the glory of Italy. He will fix ropes to prepare a way to the top for Sr Giordano of the Italian Alpine Club, which has been funding him all along. I have been unable to discover more as Sr Giordano hides in his room, trying to ensure that Mr Whympfer remain ignorant of the plan.

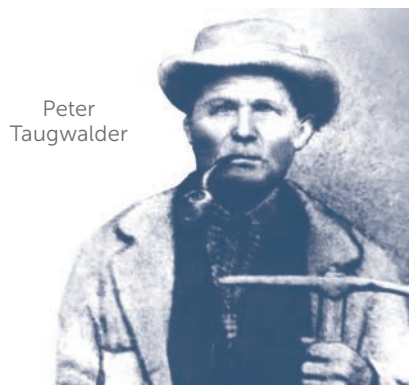
New plans for the Matterhorn – from Switzerland!

After his disappointment, it seemed that Mr Whympfer was stuck in Italy. No guides or porters could be found. All were busy with Carrel or, most mysteriously, had important tasks like making cheese or hunting marmots to prevent their employment. Then, as the sun tried to show its face, a party appeared over the Col Théodul. It was Lord Francis Douglas, of the Queensberry clan, with a porter from Zermatt, Joseph Taugwalder. Lord Francis is scouting out the Italian side with a view to trying the Matterhorn next year himself.



Lord Francis Douglas

At the sweet age of only 18 Lord Francis is a strong and capable young man. Last week he climbed the Obergabelhorn with Peter Taugwalder, young Joseph's father. He had hoped for a first ascent, but I can report that Adolphus Moore and Horace Walker had achieved that acclaim a few days previously. Lord Francis and Mr Whympfer



Peter Taugwalder



Mules and passengers – a well equipped party arrives from the valley

hit it off immediately and they were conversing merrily all afternoon. Out of this a plan emerged. The Matterhorn! Post haste!

Front page: Storm on the Matterhorn

I shall accompany the mountaineers over the Pass.

Carrel's strategy requires much groundwork that will slow his progress. There might be time for Mr Whympfer and Lord Francis to overtake the Italians. They will cross to Zermatt and engage Old Peter Taugwalder. I shall accompany the mountaineers over the Pass. Tomorrow evening we arrive at Zermatt. ■

Old Peter Taugwalder has just finished a 3 week engagement guiding Lord Francis

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