

OBITUARY

WALTER FREDERICK WINTER (1932-1964)

By his sudden and tragic death in the Kaikoura Mountains, this Institute has lost one of its most promising foresters. After graduating from the University of Wales in 1954 with 2nd class honours in Forestry, and a period of National Service, he came to New Zealand in 1956 to work in forestry and to climb mountains. He spent 1957 at Kaingaroa Forest learning the practical side of New Zealand forestry, and 1958 at Rukuhia Agricultural Research Station as a result of an interest in farming. At the beginning of 1959, he re-joined the Forest Service at Canterbury as Assistant Forester and spent the next five and a half years devoting his working time to forestry and his spare time to climbing.

Derek's quietness and modesty had kept his positive qualities generally unknown until the epic feat which last year made his name more widely regarded outside his immediate climbing circles. This five-day traverse from Haast to Cook with one companion and embracing the four highest peaks in New Zealand must rank as one of the greatest climbs ever undertaken in the Southern Alps.

However, it is matched by an impressive list of his other climbs, including the Coxcomb Ridge of Mt. Aspiring, the south-east ridge of Tutoko, the second ascent of the south ridge of Green, the east ridge of Cook, a first ascent of the north wall of Mt. Grave and a three-day traverse from Tasman to Dampier in 1963, and ending in a forced descent in very fierce weather down the Linda Face. Many climbs were unrecorded: the Spensers, Rakaia, the Arrow-smiths, Clyde and Havelock, the Hopkins, Matukitiki and the peaks of Arthur's Pass were all within his range. His love of mountains had frequently taken him climbing without a companion. Although this trait has been criticized, his extreme modesty disarmed his critics. At the same time his lone ascents of such peaks as Glacier and Douglas, from de la Beche Hut, bear witness to his great courage and self-reliance.

A member of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club, the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Canterbury-Westland Section Committee, he was a fine hut companion and a staunch leader on the rope. His quiet voice and slow smile will take long to fade from the memory.

To Shona, his wife, and to his parents back in Wales, we express our deep sympathy in their loss.