Sherpas on their American road trip after the 1963 Everest expedition. Left to right: Girmi Dorje, Ila Tsering, Nawang Gombu, Capt Noddy Rana, Ang Dawa, Nima Tenzing.

On their return, President Kennedy famously declared that AMEE members had pushed 'human endurance and experience to their farthest frontiers'. As a psychologist, Jim's role on the expedition was to identify the personality traits of those most likely to succeed in such a challenging environment. Over the course of a month at advance base he conducted a series of lengthy interviews with those who passed through. However, as Hornbein later observed, he offered so much more. 'He was a caring presence who provided counsel to various members of the team in addition to his research pursuits.'

Caught up in expedition life, Jim paid little attention to those local porters and climbing staff that made such an extraordinary expedition possible. He would correct this oversight later: 'Within the stories of expeditions, one can often glimpse a crowd of obscure figures, mostly in the shadows of the climbers and of the mountain, figures who are absolutely essential to the plot but who seldom get more than a few sentences in expedition narratives. These are the Sherpas, and they deserve more.' And 'more' is what Jim provided. On returning from Nepal, the US government invited five Sherpas, along with AMEE's liaison officer to visit on an all-expenses-paid trip. Jim volunteered as guide and driver and spent two months crisscrossing the country. Whether it was a visit to a ranch or a tour of a coalmine, the group received nothing less than red-carpet treatment. However, Jim quickly learnt that what impressed his guests most was something far simpler. 'They were wild about window shopping, just strolling down the avenue – any avenue – and observing the really fantastic variety of objects offered in the windows. I could make our stay in any town a success by giving them an afternoon on their own for this kind of strolling.'

By the end of their trip, Jim's respect and affection for his charges had grown immeasurably. Later, he would describe their time together as a 'joyful and unexpected bonus, a wonderful dessert after the main meal of Everest.' A further course would be added some 30 years later, when armed with just a group photograph, Jim set off for Kathmandu with the intention of seeking out those Sherpas he first met on AMEE. With the help of guide and interpreter Sherap Zangbu, he was able to meet 10 Sherpas including three who visited the US after the expedition. Their conversations were wide-ranging, from their memories of the past through to plans for the future. From each meeting it was clear that the mountains had played only a small part. What really mattered was the life led in between. Above all it was the relationships formed with family and friends that counted, something Jim wholeheartedly agreed with.

Jim's account of AMEE, the road trip through the US, and his eventual return to the Himalaya have been brought together in *Returning to the Scene of the Climb*. Edited expertly by Jim's daughter Alison Jean Lester, it is a moving account of a life that was enriched by contact with the Himalayas and it's people. It's a book that I would highly recommend.

Jeremy Windsor

Seeking The Light
Climbing All 24 Of New Zealand's Highest Mountains
Gavin Lang
Potton & Burton, 2022, 192pp, NZ$89

Sitting here in south-east London, the Southern Alps of New Zealand feel a long way away. At least, that's how I remember feeling 15 years ago when I was actually in that country, anxious that my first (and in fact only) child's imminent birth might come sooner than expected while I was still far from home, powerless if required to dash to the maternal bedside. Compartmentalising that anxiety, I remember gawping into the emptiness of the Cook Strait from Wellington, wishing my short-term assignment would take me across it and closer to the legendary Aoraki/Mount Cook over on South Island. I came home with the New Zealand Alpine Club's 2001 guidebook, a map of the two national parks it covers and an aching appetite to return, which has never let me go.

That sharp appetite has been whetted again by Gavin Lang's mouth-wateringly beautiful photographic book documenting his project to climb New Zealand's 24 3,000ers. It really has ignited a whole renewal of my passion and planning to get back to the other side of the world and onto these sensational mountains.

Comparison is odious (or odorous, as Shakespeare's Dogberry would have it), but I cannot help likening Lang's work in the Southern Alps to

Spreads from *Seeking the Light*, New Zealand's sumptuous answer to Ben Tibbetts' *Alpenglow*.

Ben Tibbetts' in the European Alps. Tibbetts has been working on his own book of northern hemisphere 3,000ers which is yet to be published, but it's his signature 2019 book *Alpenglow* (a photographic and literary journey over the 82 peaks on the UIAA list of European 4,000ers) that I'm thinking of. *Seeking The Light* is its New Zealand cousin.

There's a kilometre's difference between the familiar 4,000m benchmark covered in *Alpenglow* and the 3,000m that delineate Lang's 24 peaks. Yet even if you've never set foot on them yourself, it's not difficult to accept that discrepancy as being inconsequential when you consider the Southern Alps' orography and proximity to the south-west Pacific Ocean with its moisture-laden airflows plastering them with snow and ice. Lang reminds us that, 'Climbing in New Zealand's Southern Alps is often referred to as a training ground for the Himalaya. The vertical relief is the same from the valley floor to the summit, but without the issues related to breathing thin air at 8000 metres.' They certainly made Edmund Hillary into a worthy partner to the experienced Tenzing Norgay in 1953. Hillary's son Peter, himself a prominent pioneer in the Southern Alps, provides a deeply felt foreword to *Seeking The Light*.

Chapter by chapter and with a variety of strong partners Lang ticks off his peaks, often enchaining more than one into a single multi-day outing, most notably with an ultra grand traverse of Aoraki/Mt Cook, Rakiroa/Mt Dampier, Vancouver and Malaspina and, perhaps even more impressively, with the first winter traverse of Torres Peak and Horokoau/Mt Tasman.

It isn't only toponyms that are rendered into *te reo* Māori. The book is studded with motifs and dual language passages honouring indigenous culture. To Ngāi Tahu (the South Island's principal *iwi* or tribe), Aoraki represents the most sacred of ancestors, from whom they are all descended. Standing at the very top of the mountain denigrates its status and climbers are encouraged to stay off the true summit.

Lang, originally from Ireland, found his true mountain range in 2004 and has lived and guided there ever since. In the book, the partner he ties on with most frequently is Ruairi Macfarlane, another mountain guide, raised on New Zealand climbing and snowboarding and now based mostly in the Canadian Rockies. The Southern Alps are notable for their long, difficult and fast-changing approaches, and for the custom of leapfrogging over those approaches by helicopter. Many of the chapters begin with an environmentally dubious but locally normalised chopper ride. Macfarlane, however, is a stickler, 'not keen to truncate the approach with a helicopter flight.' As he and Lang walk in to their sensational winter Torres-Tasman traverse, their packs are 'a sobering reminder that walk in/walk out affairs are for purists, requiring a fair amount of sweat. But it helped us acclimatise.'

From the comfort of my home in Peckham, it's hard to guess how taxing these approaches and exits really are. Certainly, the wasting of glaciers and erosion of moraine walls is a fast-moving story. The modern NZAC guidebook that Lang recommends more than once (*Aoraki Tai Poutini* by Rob Frost, 2022) is very good on all this, warning where customary approaches have become unviable, forecasting changes yet to come and even in one instance cautioning readers to ignore the map entirely. Having followed Lang's prompt and ordered my own copy, I too (as an armchair daydreamer at least), strongly recommend Frost's very clear, thorough and thoughtful guidebook.

Something else that's hard to interpret from the northern hemisphere is New Zealand's alpine grading. These are grades that have evolved since I first got my hands on the predecessor guidebook in Wellington 15 years ago. Now there are two sets of numbers to baffle the grockle on the other side of the world: an unfamiliar seriousness grade in Roman numerals and another technical grade in Arabic ones. *Assez Difficile* never felt so foreign. For added interest, where Lang writes about pure rock climbing on Magellan, there's the equally exotic (to my ear) Australian Ewbank grading to contend with. (Although neither Lang nor Frost says so in their respective books, the new NZ grades are known as the Frost grading system.) The lasting impression is one of having to travel to Southern Alps to prove the puddings in person.

Lang's stunning photography provides a powerful incentive to do exactly that. Frequently his frames cover whole pages and often stretch across two, inviting not only a rich imaginative diving pool for the far-flung foreigner but also immense detail and visual data for those operating locally. Conditions vary, of course, but each photo is dated for seasonal context.

Outsiders like me, unused to the range's complexity, will benefit from opening Google Earth or having a local map to hand. A very interesting appendix details the camera equipment he carries but the truest photographic insight he reveals is during his account of climbing the south face of his favourite mountain Tititea/Mt Aspiring (in a first ascent achieved in winter with Sooji Clarkson which, like the book, is called *Seeking The Light*): he has the humility and self-knowledge to understand, notwithstanding the excellence and beauty of his results, that 'despite shooting hundreds of images on each trip, they never fully capture the range of experiences I've had.'

Any of us who commits to handling a camera in the high mountains understands that conundrum.

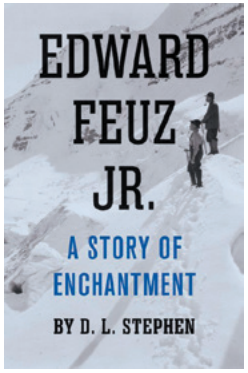
The writing that accompanies the photography brims with vividly rendered action, fascinating technical detail and indispensable local knowledge. And there's a current of personal reflection that shows through repeatedly. The impressive Torres-Tasman traverse unfolds, for instance, while a friend in hospital who looks to be rallying sadly loses her life to cancer, and from the beginning of the book the questions of loss, change and recovery. Lang's own battle with burn-out and the promise of the healing power of climbing ripple across the surface: 'You may have come here for information about the mountains, but what permeates these pages is their value as an element of nature and adventure, in freeing us from mental-health shackles and helping us to lead healthy lives.'

The Southern Alps have a rich climbing heritage and I sometimes wished that editorial prerogatives had allowed greater scope for Lang to tell the reader more of the range's history. The name Freda du Faur comes up a couple of times, for instance. She was one of the party of three who made the first Grand Traverse of Aoraki/Mt Cook in 1913, a globally significant climbing achievement in its time. Lang names her 1915 book *The Conquest of Mount Cook* in his bibliography and maybe I'll read that next. I'd love to know more about her.

When Lang returns to Aoraki/Mt Cook for a second chapter so that he can describe his incredibly bold solo of its (south-east) Caroline face, I was reminded of a tragedy that is genuinely the stuff of climbing legend. He rightly quotes John Glasgow claiming 'a victory for hippies' when he and Peter Gough made the first ascent of the Caroline Face in 1970. Seven years before, John Cousins and Michael Goldsmith had left the Ball hut for a reconnaissance or attempt on this very hazardous aspect and had disappeared. In a rhyme or echo of the mystery surrounding Mallory and Irvine vanishing high on Everest in 1924, the bodies of Cousins and Goldsmith were discovered in 1999. Film in their camera was too damaged to develop, but the fact that they were found *on the other side of the mountain* strongly implies that the first ascent may have been theirs.

Buy this book. Treat yourself to the expert wisdom of a climber who knows the Southern Alps like the back of his hand and who captures them with an exceptional eye. If, like me, you're trapped in a dream of making it back across the world and onto those mountains you'll find yourself already there, where 'warmer air wafts up from the valley below, bringing the scent of lush green rainforest.'

Nick Simons



Edward Feuz Jr
A Story of Enchantment
D L Stephen
Rocky Mountain Books, 2021, 320pp, $28.00

The Canadian mountaineering tradition has its layered origins in the role of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and its employment of Swiss guides, of whom Edward Feuz Jr (1884-1981, originally Eduard) was, without much doubt, one of the most significant of the first generation of Canadian mountaineering. The beauty and joy of Donna Stephen's biography of Feuz is the way she intricately threads together both Feuz's compelling mountaineering life and her own journey of sorts with Feuz and his wife. *Edward Feuz Jr* is both a biography of Feuz and a memoir of Stephen's journey into the enchantment and magic of mountaineering and mountain life and culture via Feuz's Sherpa-like leadership.

Edward Feuz Jr is a companion book and yet takes deeper dives into the Swiss Guide ethos than the path-breaking *The Guiding Spirit* (1986), by Andrew Kauffman and William Putnam. Many of the first-generation guides are aptly mentioned in this admirably personal and focused biography of one the legends in Canadian mountaineering culture. But its evocative beauty is revealed in the way Stephens highlights Feuz's multiple first ascents, significant guiding skills and legendary status along with his personal, private and family character, and his distinctive personality.

Stephens had access to this latter aspect of Edward Feuz because her American family, for decades, had a maturing relationship with Swiss guides and in particular Feuz and his wife, Martha. The history of the Swiss Edelweiss Village in Golden, a heritage site presently threatened by developers, is told in tender detail, while the tensions between the Swiss guides and the CPR are recounted in an equally candid manner. The early years of the Swiss guides and their families was a most difficult one: the British Columbia interior lacked basic amenities and the frigid Canadian winters were in stark contrast to the more temperate and urbanised Alpine life in Switzerland.

Stephen is certainly not shy about sharing in poignant detail many of the challenges faced by Feuz and other Swiss guides in Golden in the early decades of the 20th century. The ample collection of photographs of Feuz and friends, including many with Donna Stephen's friends and family, provide a generous contrast to the text. The photos offer a journey into the emerging generations of the Canadian mountaineering ethos in BC, with the Golden, Rogers Pass, Yoho, O'Hara and Lake Louise mountain paradises worthy of many a repeated trip and trek.

I enjoyed the bounty of this book on several levels. I lived in Alpine Switzerland from 1972-4 and spent much of my time near Interlaken, where the Feuz family is from, and I trekked many of the trails and climbed many of