

## Eastern District lectures, 2024-5

The autumn season of lectures will be held as usual in the Quaker Meeting House located at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, EH1 2JL. This is the galleried terrace above Victoria Street and the easiest access is from George IV Bridge beside Pizza Express opposite the National Library. At this time of day, parking is usually available in the Grassmarket at the foot of Victoria Street.

The lectures are sponsored by the SMC, the Edinburgh JMCS and the Alpine Club and I hope all that Eastern District members will come along to support the speakers. Talks commence at 7.30pm prompt as we are obliged to vacate the premises by 9.30pm. The number of excellent hostelrys in the area – the Bow Bar is usually favoured afterwards - should not make this a difficult task!

We will continue the tradition of entertaining the speaker before the talks and if you would like to join us for a meal then please contact the appointed host to book a place.

The following talks have been arranged.

**8 October 2024** – We are delighted to kick the season off with a return visit of **Paul Ramsden** describing his recent ascent of **Surma-Sarovar** (6,605m) with Tim Miller. The team travelled to the Salimor Khola valley in the far west of Nepal, possibly one of the most remote regions of the country. Just getting to base camp was a major achievement with difficult river crossings and earthquakes all posing challenges. From base camp they still had to explore a huge area of mountains before settling on a suitable objective. Paul and Tim managed to make the first ascent which they measured at 6605m, over an eight day outing from base camp. They climbed the mountain over four days via its north face (ED) which is over 2,100m high and highly committing. The descent was long and complex and took a further two days. The evening will be hosted by Tim Elson. Please contact Tim, not later than the day before the lecture, if you want join the speaker for a meal beforehand.  
timmyelson@hotmail.com  
07954 369181

Photo

**12 November 2024** – **Professor Doug Benn** of the University of St Andrews will take us **Under the Ice: Glacier Caving in Svalbard and the Himalaya**. Doug has recently received the Seligman Crystal - the senior award of the International Glaciological Society for making an outstanding contribution to our understanding of glacier behaviour. He has also done much work in reinterpreting the glacial landform record in the Scottish Highlands and I quote from Sarah's note to our Northern colleagues - *Glaciers are beautiful and fascinating places, familiar to mountaineers and travellers in high mountain and polar regions. But there is another hidden side to glaciers. Deep beneath the surface there are networks of caves, vertical shafts and caverns, filled with rushing water during the summer but still and silent during the winter's freeze. In this talk, Doug Benn will recount his experiences of exploring ice caves inside Arctic and Himalayan glaciers, discuss the technical challenges of moving safely through these unstable systems, and explain how knowledge of glacier caves can help us understand how glaciers are adjusting to climate change.*

The evening will be hosted by John Fowler. Please contact him by the day before the lecture if you would like to dine.

johnrrfowler@gmail.com  
07740 684076

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### **10 December 2024 - Chombu - the one that got away.**

We are very privileged indeed to welcome to Edinburgh veteran mountaineer **Mick Fowler**, a man very much accustomed to success. But Mick's talk will focus on the three attempts he made with Vic Saunders to achieve the first ascent of Mount Chombu (6,332m) in North Sikkim since he first came up with the idea in 2016. They made two attempts in 2019 but in the first expedition, they had to withdraw due to bad weather conditions on the mountain. Another attempt in the same year looked promising as weather conditions were favourable but unfortunately, they fell ill because of food poisoning. They had reached 6107m, only 250m from the summit, but had to retreat. The third and final attempt was made in April-May of 2022 but weather conditions were dangerous leading to the expedition being called off midway on May 15. Mount Chombu remains unclimbed.

The host for the evening is Geoff Cohen and if you wish to join Mick and Geoff for a meal beforehand then please contact Geoff not later than the previous evening.

[geoffrcohen@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffrcohen@yahoo.com)

07960 405490

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