



## Planning for the Centenary

Notes by John Barnard (Club Archivist)  
with updates following comments from Declan Phelan (President)  
Updated 24 January 2023

The Club's centenary will be in 2025. This document outlines a few significant dates in the origins of the club, the ways in which previous significant anniversaries have been celebrated, and makes some suggestions for appropriate activities and events for the centenary, and proposals for a working group to oversee them.

### Significant Dates in the Foundation of the Club

- **3 December 1925:** Ad hoc committee meeting at 50 Manchester Street, London W1U 7LT (near Baker Street) "resolved to form at Maloja the Maloja Ski Club".
- **24 December 1925:** First "tour" made by club members from Maloja Palace Hotel to a tea shop in Sils (an almost completely flat itinerary)
- **27 December 1925:** Official joining date of the Original Members of the Club
- **3 January 1926:** First AGM at the Maloja Palace Hotel (election of officers and committee) adjourned to 6 January (approval of Rules)
- **21 June 1926:** First London Dinner at Kettner's restaurant
- **15 November 1926:** Committee meeting in London adopted new Rules changing objectives of Club from racing to touring
- **4 January 1927:** Second AGM at the Maloja Palace Hotel approved new Rules and changed name of Club to Eagle Ski Club.

Thus the Club's first ski "season" was actually 1925/2026, and arguably the main centenary celebrations should therefore be in 2026 (or should continue into 2026). This might be an idea to hold in reserve in case of a resurgence of Covid or other disruption to the 2024/2025 season.

- Club remained headquartered at Maloja until 1930/1931 season
- Abeyant for two years due to the Great Depression
- Two years at Sestrieres (1933/1934 and 1934/1935)
- Settled at Grindelwald for 1935/1936 season until at least early 1960s

### Previous Anniversaries

#### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1975)**

- Dinner at Grindelwald (24 Jan 1975, Bahnhof Hotel) – no current members were present
- Dinner in London (1 Nov 1975 at Quaglino's) – attendees included Mike and Sue Esten, and Tony Gueterbock (now Lord Berkley), who are still members. Guest of Honour was Major James Riddell, former Olympic skier and chief instructor at the Mountain Warfare School
- The Yearbook contained several articles related to the club's Golden Jubilee, which were reprinted in a separate special publication

## **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2000)**

- Dinner at Schweizerhaus Hotel (NOT the Palace), Maloja (1 April 2000), organised by Nigel Estlick – 75 members and guests attended, at least 20 of whom remain members. Guests included representatives of the Maloja Tourist Board and Maloja Ski Club, and a former employee of the Palace Hotel from the time of the club's formation.
- Several tours starting or finishing at Maloja, on the weekend of the dinner
- Expedition to climb the Kedar Dome (6830m) in India

## **Possible Centenary Events and Activities**

These are very much preliminary ideas of my own intended to get the brainstorming/discussion going. Some may prove unworkable or attract little support. Other people may have other ideas to suggest.

### **Dinners**

- London – perhaps on Wednesday 3 Dec 2025 to coincide with original committee meeting, and perhaps in the same part of London
- Alps – presumably during main 2025 ski season. Could be in Maloja (as for 75<sup>th</sup>), Grindelwald (as for 50<sup>th</sup>) or Argentiere (used for popular dinners in recent years, which have particularly attracted younger members)
- Scotland – Annual Club dinners in Scotland only really got going in the 1990s, initially at the Athol Arms Hotel, but have been a mainstay of the club calendar since then

At least one of these dinners (perhaps the London one which, coming at the end of the year, could be the culmination of the celebrations) could be “formal” with speeches (though probably not “black tie”). A long-standing club member (the earliest remaining ones joined in the early 1960s) or eminent skier/mountaineer could be invited to speak.

### **Tours and Meets**

- An expedition to the Greater Ranges or polar regions with a significant objective
- A tour (or perhaps a series of linked tours) linking the centres particularly associated with the club's history – i.e. Maloja, Sestrieres, Grindelwald, Argentiere. The Eagle Ski Club chair at the Konkordia Hut should probably be included in the route. Unfortunately these centres do not form a natural itinerary, but it would be worth discussing with members such as David Hamilton who have undertaken long trans-alpine tours in recent years. The route need not be completed in full by any one individual, but a “baton” or other symbol could be passed from team to team.
- A (probably quite small) group staying at the Maloja Palace Hotel incorporating the day of the centenary of the club's foundation (i.e. Sat 27 Dec 2025). The hotel has both standard hotel rooms and small apartments with kitchenettes (sleeping 2-4), though the prices are quite steep, especially for New Year's Eve.

### **Publications**

- Some form of centenary book, perhaps containing an outline of the club's history (NOT a potentially turgid “History of the Eagle Ski Club”) and specially-commissioned articles on aspects of the past, present and future of ski-touring (perhaps emphasising issues such as climate change, equipment, and training) along with reprints of selected articles from past yearbooks, illustrating the club's activities over the decades.

### **Lectures, Webcasts, Exhibitions, Symposia etc.**

- Lectures or webcasts in the club's programme could focus on the centenary, with talks about the history of the club or about tours or expeditions undertaken several decades ago (perhaps contrasting snow conditions with those prevailing today). Another potential format would be interviews with long-standing members about their touring experience.
- A ski-mountaineering symposium, following on from the successful ones held in 1995 (Castleton), 1997 (Ambleside), 2003 (Leicester), 2011 (Capel Curig), 2016 (Capel Curig) and 2019 (Bristol). Involving Mountaineering Scotland (and holding it in a Scottish venue) might assist with the organisation
- The Pinnacle Club celebrated its centenary in 2021 and had a most impressive array of activities, including a dedicated website ([www.pc100.org](http://www.pc100.org)), compilation of oral histories by interviews with members, etc. and a travelling exhibition. They were aided by substantial grants from several organisations, the club's unique position in women's mountaineering, and the fact that they have several individuals who have been members for over 70 years (we have none beyond about 60 years). Nonetheless we may be able to draw on their experience, especially as one of those involved (Adele Long) is an Eagle.

### **Merchandise**

- Special centenary clothing (buffs, hats, sweatshirts, fleeces, etc.) or other material (ski ties, stickers for skis or helmets, patches for rucksacks, etc.) with specially -designed logo

### **Centenary Working Group**

A smallish group of members will be needed to oversee the planning for the club's centenary celebrations. I have been asked by the President to co-ordinate the formation of this group, and the following notes outline the requirements as I see them. Other people may have other suggestions.

- The work of the group will fall into two phases: initially ideas generation (for which I have made a start above), and then actual organisation of the various events and activities. These two phases will not necessarily involve the same individuals.
- Establishing a schedule of events will be necessary at an early stage in order to avoid time catching up with us.
- Close liaison will be needed with the Touring Committee, and so a member of that Committee should probably serve on the working group
- Liaison with the Yearbook Editor and Events Co-ordinator are also important, and they should probably be *ex officio* members of the group, and receive all its discussion papers
- The working group should reflect the diversity and full age range of the club – the celebrations should emphatically not be just for long-standing members
- The working group should ideally involve one or more of the people involved in planning the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, who can advise on issues that arose then
- As the group moves into the second phase of its activities, individual members will take charge of organising particular events and activities
- The activities to be undertaken will be heavily dependent on the availability of volunteer resources to organise them, and it will be important to avoid over-reaching ourselves. The Club is probably in a position to provide some financial resources, though the case will need to be made to the Committee

**Anyone interested in joining the working group, please contact John Barnard  
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