

EARTH FOCUS

One Planet - One Community

Produced by the Bellerive Foundation in partnership with the International School of Geneva

Published by Sadruddin Aga Khan

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Eddie the Yeti

Welcome to the first issue of Earth Focus.

Have you ever been up into the mountains and seen something big and furry? Your mum probably said you were seeing things but we know better - *Eddie the Yeti* is back. This gentle giant is out there roaming the mountains. His huge feet shake the ground as he walks up the snowy peaks - they also do a lot of tripping over things! Friends of **EARTH FOCUS** have persuaded Eddie to drop in and help out in the offices here ... now you can guess why this first issue focusses on mountains!

EDITORIAL



MOUNTAIN CODE

1. Take proper equipment: the weather changes quickly. Dress properly, take warm clothes, jacket, waterproofs and hiking boots so you don't slip.
2. Take a compass and map to avoid getting lost. Follows signs when hiking.
3. Have a first aid box containing band aids, cream for cuts and medicine for travel sickness.
4. Do not throw things down the mountain; there might be people below.
5. Respect people's property and wildlife - do not disturb nests or animals and don't pick flowers or plants.
6. Never eat any mushrooms, fungi, or berries unless you **KNOW** they are safe.
7. Do not light fires in danger areas - check first..
8. Take emergency food. Do not litter; take your trash home with you.
9. A camera could be useful - it's pretty up there.
10. Go quietly, walking carefully. Take only photographs and leave nothing but footprints.

- ALWAYS TELL SOMEONE WHERE YOU ARE GOING -

Letters.



Mysteries of our World

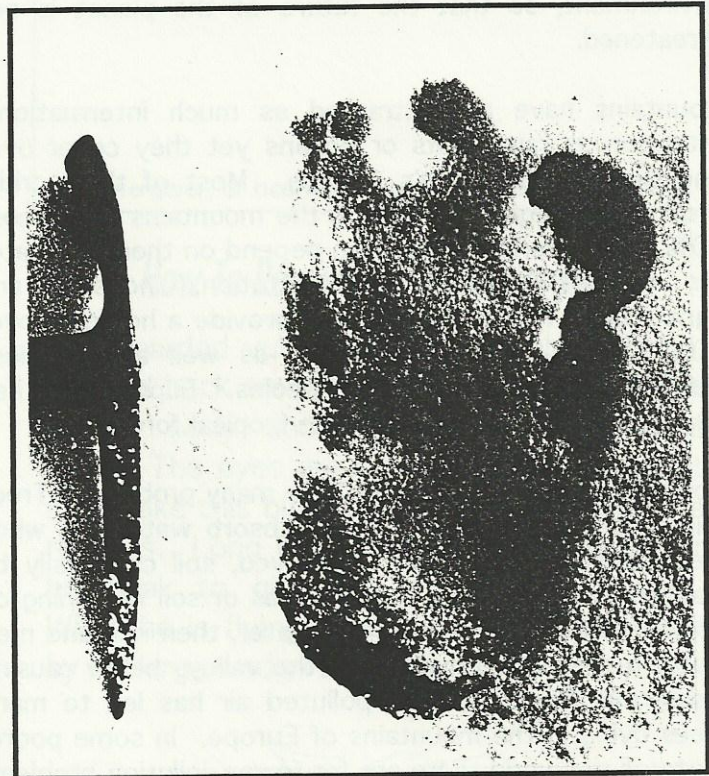
Since ancient times the mountains have been places of mystery and the sources of many myths and legends. Many mysteries remain unsolved



The Yeti Fact or Fiction?

There have been many reports of shaggy ape-like animals being seen in remote mountain areas of the world. The Yeti, or Abominable Snowman as he is sometimes called, is perhaps the best known of these creatures. He has been sighted on many occasions in the Himalaya mountains (*map - arrow 1*) but no one has yet managed to take a photograph of this creature.

Those who have seen the Yeti generally agree that he has a hairless face similar to an ape's, stands around two metres tall, has large muscles and is covered in reddish brown hair. The best evidence that we have to show that the creature exists are photographs taken of Yeti footprints by the British explorer Eric Shipton on the Menlung Glacier, near the border of Tibet and Nepal. This is the original photograph →



Some scientists say that the footprints are those of a bear or monkey that have been enlarged by the heat of the sun. Look carefully at the photograph, what do you think?

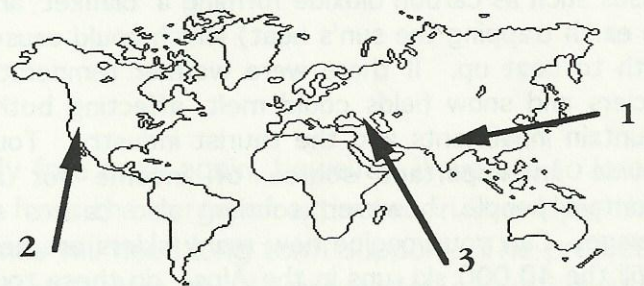
Some scientists are convinced that the Yeti could well be a relative of Gigantopithecus, an extinct giant ape, which has retreated into the mountains to find peace. There are also many reports of another ape-like creature living in the mountains of the western United States and Canada (*map - arrow 2*). He has been given the name Bigfoot or Sasquatch.

Do these creatures really exist? In a survey of 100 children we discovered that 99 believed in the existence of the Yeti. If Yetis were discovered, what do you think we should we do?

DO PREHISTORIC PEOPLE STILL LIVE IN THE MOUNTAINS?

We know that Neanderthals disappeared around 30,000 years ago. Neanderthals were strong, rather hairy cave people named after the valley in Germany where their remains were first found. We do not know why this race of man became extinct, perhaps they were killed off by the cold, although they had lived in ice caves for thousands of years before. Perhaps they were hit by a virus or wiped out by Homo Sapiens (literally "Wise Men" or modern man). Some scientists believe that the Neanderthals and their descendants did not become extinct but moved into the mountains to avoid modern man. A French expedition is now in the Caucasus (*map - N° 3*), in the former Soviet Union, to investigate reports of reliable sightings, footprints, droppings and even a case of intermarriage. These shy Neanderthals are known locally as the Almas.

Map of mysterious sightings



Scientists estimate that there are at least \sim million species living in the world. We have only discovered only a small fraction of these plants and animals - new species are being discovered daily. We would be interested to learn about any mysterious creatures believed to be living in your neck of the woods.

Mountains and the Future

One of the most important items discussed in June at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was the importance given to the sustainable development of the mountains. Sustainable Development is a term which is used frequently these days. Quite simply this means not overusing or spoiling our natural resources, or the environment, so that the future of the planet is not threatened.

Mountains have not attracted as much international attention as rainforests or oceans yet they cover over one third of the earth's surface. Most of the world's great rivers begin their lives in the mountains and almost 50% of the world's population depend on them for water for energy, drinking, transportation, industry and agriculture. The mountains also provide a home to over 10% of the world's population as well as countless threatened animal and plant species. Suprisingly, they also support more trees than the tropical forests.

Today the world's mountains face many problems. Trees and soils are like sponges that absorb water but when trees and their roots are destroyed, soil can easily be washed away. If there are no trees or soil remaining on the mountain sides to trap the water, then rain and melt water rushes straight down to the valleys below causing disastrous floods. Sadly, polluted air has led to many trees dying in the mountains of Europe. In some poorer parts of the world there are far fewer pollution problems but mountain dwellers are cutting down trees, deforesting the land, to collect wood for fuel. This adds to the problems of flooding, landslides and soil erosion.

Scientists are also worried about the 'Greenhouse Effect' (gases such as carbon dioxide forming a 'blanket' around the earth trapping the sun's heat) which could cause the earth to heat up. If there were warmer temperatures, glaciers and snow fields could melt, affecting both the mountain inhabitants and the tourist industry. Tourists provide an important source of income for many mountain people, however, tourism also causes some damage. Can you imagine how many skiers are needed to fill the 40,000 ski runs in the Alps - do these tourists and their cars affect the environment in any way?

The Jura

The mountains, the mist, the panorama.

We were there it was amazing.

The hill we had to climb was frightening and steep.

We reached the top, all I could see was trees,

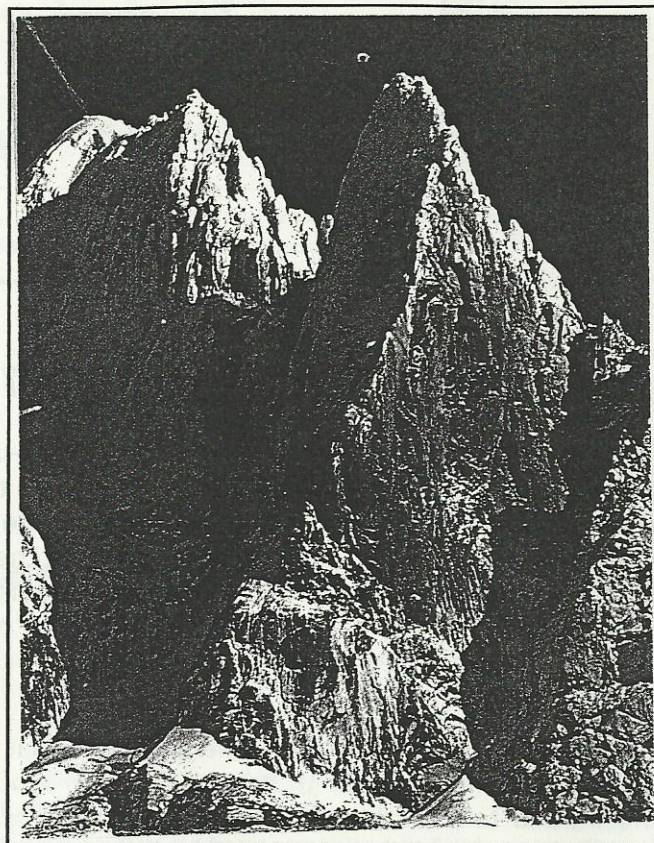
Then ski slopes and big golf balls, the observatory of La Dôle.

A ladybird then another, too many to count.

We ate our lunch, I gulped my drink to quench my thirst.

Onward to the summit a beautiful view.

Jordan Pellew-Harvey.

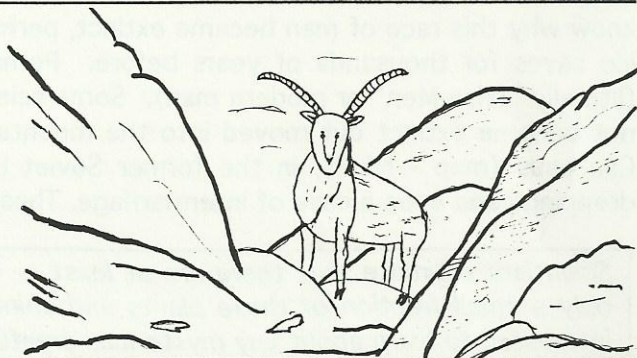


At the Earth Summit, the leaders of the World signed a treaty to limit the amount of greenhouse gases being produced. They also decided on a mountain agenda which outlines various ways of protecting the mountains by stopping deforestation and helping the people who live in the mountains. Earth Summit leaders all agreed that one of the most important steps was to raise people's awareness about the environment and its problems.

By Professor David Pitt.

If you would like to learn more about the mountains and ways you can help preserve the wilderness, support the mountain dwellers and protect endangered species living in these areas, write to:

*Alp Action, rue Muzy 1,
1206 Geneva, Switzerland.*

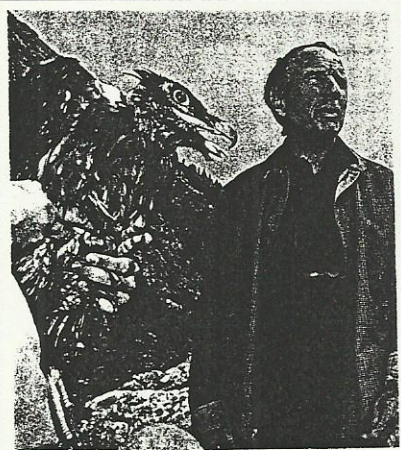


The Lammergeier Returns

The Lammergeier, or bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), must be one of the world's most impressive birds of prey. Imagine soaring above the mountain peaks on a wingspan of 2.8 metres (almost nine feet) and gliding at speeds of over 100 kilometres an hour. People once thought the Lammergeier, or bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), was responsible for carrying off lambs or pushing adult sheep off cliffs. That is why it was given its popular name - Lammergeier is the German name for lamb vulture.

Shepherds believed that these birds of prey had killed the sheep they were often seen feeding on and did not realize until it was too late that the Lammergeier were in fact doing them a great favour by cleaning up dead carcasses and helping to prevent the spread of disease among the flocks. By 1920 guns and poisons had driven this vulture, the largest of all Alpine birds, to extinction.

Twenty seven Lammergeiers have now been released and are flying free over the Alps thanks to the cooperation of a wide range of conservation groups such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature, the Zoological Society of Frankfurt and Alp Action (Bellerive Foundation). Fourteen of these birds are to be found in Haute Savoie, France, there are eighteen in Austria and five in the Grisons National Park in Switzerland.



How you can help:

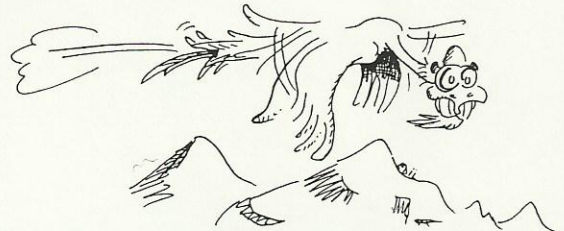
Lammergeiers now fly free once again, however, if we are to keep these magnificent birds from the verge of extinction in the Alps, the reintroduction programmes will need long term support. The projects will only be truly successful when the Lammergeier can reproduce once again in its natural habitat. To discover ways you can help these programmes contact: Alp Action, Rue Muzy 5, Geneva.

Head Shot

Lammergeier, or bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*),

How To Recognise A Lammergeier

The bearded vulture's brownish black wings, tail and back are very different to its brilliant orange body and yellowish, almost white head. The eyes are surrounded by a scarlet ring make this bird look much fiercer than he really is. Long black bristles poke out under his beak to give him a noticeable beard. When he is flying he can easily be identified by his large wedge shaped tail.



Amazing facts ... Incredible but True.



The highest living creature (apart from the Yeti!) is the Yak of Tibet and the Szechwanese Alps, China, which sometimes climbs to an altitude of 6,100m (20,000ft) in search of food.

The fastest bird on the wing is the endangered Peregrine falcon. In one experiment in Germany this bird was recorded flying at a speed of 350 kilometres an hour (217mph).

The number of threatened bird species worldwide has risen in the past ten years from 290 to 1,029 as a result of human activity according to a survey made in 1988.



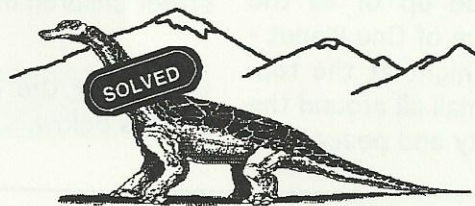
The Alpine marmot takes only two breaths a minute when it is hibernating between the months of November to March.

The greatest concentration of animals ever recorded was a swarm of Rocky Mountain locusts which passed over Nebraska in 1875. One scientist estimated that there were at least 12.5 trillion insects in the swarm which would have weighed 25 million tonnes and covered an area the size of Colorado State, USA.

The oldest recorded tree was a Bristlecone Pine which grew 3,275 metres above sea level on Mount Wheeler, Nevada, USA. It was found to be 5,100 years old. The oldest living tree is a Bristlecone Pine known as Methuselah, growing in California, which is 4,700 years old.

The greatest explosion in historic times happened on August 27th, 1883 when Krakatoa, a volcano lying between the islands of Java and Sumatra, blew its lid. The eruption caused a wave which swamped 163 villages and killed 36,380 people. Pumice was thrown 55 kilometres (34 miles) high and dust fell 5330n (3313 miles) away ten days later.

The Case of the Mountain Climbing Dinosaurs.



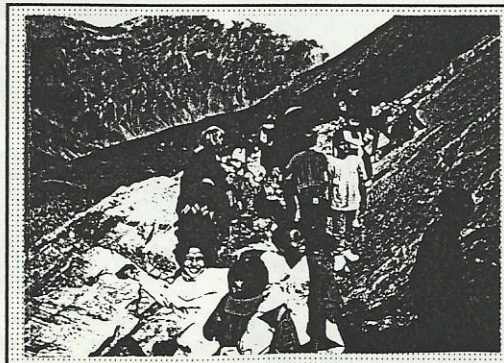
Have you ever wondered how the fossil sea shells near the summit of Mount Everest, and the dinosaur footprints, found high in the Alps, were laid down? Did the shells have wings and fly to the 'roof of the world' - were the dinosaurs talented mountaineers?

The truth is, shells have never been able to fly and the heavy dinosaurs would have had a very tough time trying to climb mountains! The answer lies in the earth's crust.

Around 200 million years ago there was just one 'super-continent' called Pangaea. As Pangaea cracked up, the continents started to shift towards

their present positions. Fossils were lifted as the rocks were folded to form mountain ranges such as the Himalayas, Alps, Andes and the Rocky Mountains.

The dinosaur footprints laid on low lying plains and ancient fossil shells of the ocean floor now lie on some of the highest places on earth. Most mountains are being worn down but some continue to rise Mount Everest is growing almost one metre every ten years!



Students from the International School of Geneva hunting ancient lake shores for fossil dinosaur footprints, 2,200 metres above sea level.

Barberine, Valais, Switzerland.

Climb for the World

Kids climb to a Summit Meeting

On September 21st 1991 forty three people people climbed the Eiger (4470 m/13,036ft), one of the the most notorious mountains in the World. These were not famous climbers but simply people who cared in an unusually daring way. Their aim was to hold a summit meeting on the Eiger to draw people's attention to the environment and to raise funds to help practical United Nations projects. At the same time that the Eiger was being climbed, thousands of other 'climbers' around the world were making their way up local hills and high points to hold overnight summit meetings in support of this Climb for the World project..

The Eiger group split into groups and took four different routes to the summit: the West Face, the South Ridge, the Mittellegi Ridge and the vertical mile of the dangerous North Face. The climbers represented people from a dozen countries and five continents, including a blind man, a poet, several mothers, a sixty year old and two teenagers. The two teenagers, Karma Sandup, 14, from Tibet and Birendra Shrestha, 15, a Nepali, are both studying at the Pestalozzi International Children's Village in East Sussex, U.K. At the summit they planted the flag of flags, made up of all the world's flags to symbolise the existence of One Planet - One Nation. The group camped the night at the top. That evening, on summits large and small all around the world, candles shone to symbolise unity and peace.



Karma Sandup and Birendra Shrestha on top of the Eiger for a Summit Meeting

The focus for the 1992 Climb for the World took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, between June 3rd and 13th. The climb was planned to take place at the same time as the Earth Summit. Ed Drummond (the Chairman of Climb for the World) and Tess Burrows (the Director) spent 10 days climbing the West Face of Sugar Loaf Mountain, on the outskirts of Rio, hauling up a banner which read, "Climb for the World - Help Street Children". Once again this project was supported by thousands of climbers worldwide to help raise funds for United Nations projects and street children in South America.

Join us for the 1993 Climb for the World activities, details below.

Climb for the World. 1993

There will be a special European International Schools weekend Climb for the World in the Bernese Oberland, Switzerland in June, 1993.

Come and join us!

For more details write to:

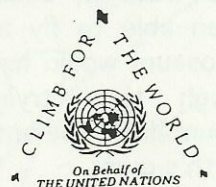
*The Climb for the World Project,
International School of Geneva,
Pregny - Rigot,
11 Avenue de la Paix,
CH-1202, Geneva, Switzerland.*

Wherever you live you can find a high point .. if you would like to help raise funds and awareness for the desperately poor parts of the world and its people by Climbing for the World in 1993, contact:



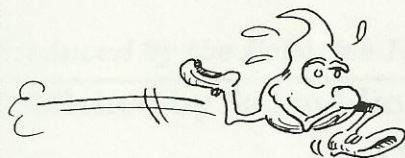
E.I.G. students on La Dole, French/Swiss border, Jura Mountains.

**Tess Burrows,
Climb for the World,
Brincliffe House,
861 Eccleshall Road,
Sheffield s11 7AE,
United Kingdom.**



Global Patrons: Maurice Strong O.C., Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Vaclav Havel, Sir Edmund Hillary and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Jokers Corner.



What runs but can not walk?

- Water.

What do you call a one eyed dinosaur?

- A Doyouthinkhesawrus

What do you call a camel with three humps?

- Humphrey.

What did the Poilceman say to his tummy?

You're under a vest.

What is the best thing to take to the desert?

- A Thirst Aid kit.

What is the difference between a piano and a fish?

- You can't tuna fish.

What did the bee say to the flower?

- "Hi bud, what time do you open?"



What has wheels and roars down the highway?

- A lion on a skate board.



What bird is always out of breath?

- A Puffin

How do you stop a bull from charging?

-Take away his credit card.

What do ducks do when they can't fly?

- They quack up.

What do you get when you cross a camel and a cow?

- Lumpy milk.

Thanks: Joe Hill, Jade Hally, Kees Van der Hoeven, Colin Boggs, Steve Dejong and Nashira Khanna.

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KENYA BRUCE TABLE COOK
K2 EVEREST WASHINGTON
MATTERHORN OLYMPUS ARARAT
WHITNEY LOGAN

Alp Action?

Hippo Letter?

Other?

Bellerive

A Partnership ..

E.I.G.

Kids at Work.



Photograph: Kids at Work.

Membership Details.

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Information on the Bellerive Foundation
and the International School?

Editorial Board.