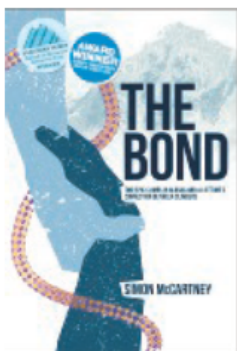


Some Good Reads

The Bond: Two epic climbs in Alaska and a lifetime's connection between climbers

By Simon McCartney

Reviewed by Mike Nash, Caledonia Ramblers



The Bond: Two epic climbs in Alaska and a lifetime's connection between climbers by Simon McCartney appeared in August 2016 with a hint of becoming a classic. Three months later it began to realize that potential by winning both the Mountain & Wilderness Literature Non-Fiction Award at the Banff Mountain Book Festival in Canada and the 2016 Boardman Tasker Award for Mountain Literature at the Kendal Mountain Festival in the UK.

The Bond is the story of two epic first ascents in Alaska by a British-American climbing partnership, and the lifetime ties that bound climbers after a near-calamity high on the previously unscaled southwest face of North America's highest peak. After coming perilously close to death from high altitude cerebral edema, capped by a complex retreat and rescue operation, Simon McCartney abandoned contact with the climbing community for 30 years. Knowing that he had reached a pinnacle of personal achievement, he put aside climbing and the community that had previously defined him as he sought a new personal and professional life in Southeast Asia. He turned his risk-taking spirit to other on-the-edge recreational pursuits such as cave diving in Australia, and to becoming a successful business entrepreneur in China. Meanwhile, his erstwhile climbing partner, Californian Jack Roberts, went on to make climbing his life's work, never ceasing to speak of McCartney as the strongest and best climbing partner he ever had.

It was inevitable that McCartney's deep-felt mountaineering experiences would resurface, and a series of chance events in Hong Kong in 2009 and 2012 caused him to reconnect with many of the people he had been involved with during his climbing days and in his rescue on Denali. He was to be consistently surprised by the immediate bond that he found with climbers he had known so many years before, as well as with others in the climbing community he had never met. With their help he began the challenging and cathartic work of researching and writing the account that became *The Bond*.

Published in hardcover with many original and contemporary photographs, *The Bond* is a beautifully designed and compelling page-turner with a strong and positive message. There has evidently been much good research, as well as unique editorial and artistic design put into this work, which draws not only on McCartney's narrative but on the journals and photographs of others involved in his climbs and his rescue. I suspect this remarkable book will become required reading for those interested in mountain adventure. ■

The Bond: Two epic climbs in Alaska and a lifetime's connection between climbers by Simon McCartney; Vertebrate Publishing, July 2016; ISBN: 978-1-910240-66-3; Hardback, 352 pages + two 16-page colour sections.

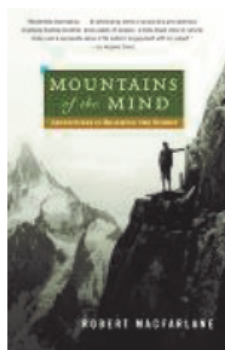
Mountains of the Mind: How Desolate and Forbidding Heights were Transformed into Experiences of Indomitable Spirit

By Robert Macfarlane

Reviewed by Ron Dart, ACC-Vancouver Section

O the mind, mind has mountains
- Gerard Manley Hopkins

From death in valleys preserve me, O Lord
- Robert Macfarlane (p. 9)



Have men and women, throughout the long stretches of human history, taken to the mountains the way we do in our time and ethos? Have white-crowned peaks, rock diadems and spear spires always drawn the curious, energetic, skilled and interested? Have mountains always been a place of allure, delight, charm and attraction? Or, is the passion for the mountains and out of doors hiking, climbing and glacier traverses more a product of the last few centuries? If this is the case, why is it? And, deeper

yet, what are the reasons (complicated and diverse though they might be) that women and men take to the mountains, challenging rock rims and high perched peaks?

Mountains of the Mind attempts, in a variety of ways, to answer these questions. Such abiding questions, though, are not merely answered from the safe confines of the academic and library chair. Robert Macfarlane, to his credit, attempts to scale the peaks of such answers from a variety of routes. Macfarlane is Scottish, a climber and international in experience and interest. He has taken to many peaks, and his answers to the questions raised above emerge both from within himself and the multiple voices from those who have taken to the peaks in the past. *Mountains of the Mind* is as much about the internal ascents, hard places, difficult routes, worrisome crevasses, long trails, and fears and insecurities that dog one and all as it is about the external and hard realities of real mountains and packed snow places.

Mountains of the Mind is divided into 9 compact and enticing chapters: 1) Possession, 2) The Great Stone Book, 3) The Pursuit of Fear, 4) Glaciers and Ice: The Streams of Time, 5) Altitude: The Summit and the View, 6) Walking off the Map, 7) A New Heaven and a New Earth, 8) Everest and 9) The Snow Hare. Each of these compelling chapters, story told well, draws the reader more and more into the world of mountain lore and legend and the reasons why many turn to such places.

Macfarlane is never shy about telling his tale and trips to the high regions, his conscious and subconscious reasons for turning to such alluring and evocative places, and what other mountains have taught him about such a journey. *Mountains of the Mind* is also about cultural shifts that began in the 17th–18th centuries in the west, and how such cultural shifts have