

'My most memorable climb with him, which might well have been my last, was Zero Gully on Ben Nevis. On Thursday March 16 1951 Anthony and I left the hut at 5.00 a.m., to attempt the first ascent of Zero Gully. It was a difficult and dangerous climb though we were scarcely aware of this at the time. The ice was steep, making it necessary to cut careful foot and hand holds. Little avalanches of powder snow kept pouring over us — not serious but enervating. Throughout all this Anthony remained a tower of strength and cheerfulness. We had made four long pitches, say 250 feet of vertical progress, when I fell. I was too badly concussed to have any idea of what actually happened. The ice pitons (it was long before the days of ice screws) came out "like buttons from a dress shirt" one by one and Anthony and I fell all the way down, and beyond to the Allt a' Mhuilinn where we lay in a pile of tangled rope both seriously injured.'

Their spectacular fall of some 800 feet was luckily witnessed by John Sims, and a stretcher party came up from Fort William in time to get them to hospital before midnight. One of Anthony's favourite stories was of his reaction when the nurses were preparing him for the operating room. Having slit and removed his ex-army anorak, they came to a Shetland wool sweater, an expensive item for a hard up student, and remarked what a pity it was to have to cut it. "No you bloody well don't", said the patient — who up to then had been unconscious for hours and was thought to have a damaged skull — then sat up and removed the previous garment over his head, collapsing immediately afterwards and having no memory of the incident next day.