

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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June, 1953.

Editorial

In presenting this, our first newsletter (which, it is hoped, will subsequently appear monthly), a few comments seem necessary concerning its functions, its raison d'etre, and the nature of its contents.

In a small club, where there is plenty of contact between all the members, the personal touch needs no refreshing. It generates a spirit of intimacy embracing its whole membership, thus closely uniting the club. It is this, in fact, that makes a club a club, and not just a crowd of individuals, and it is what we call the club spirit. To my mind this is the most delightful and the most valuable benefit we derive from membership, whatever the nature of the club.

Recently the Oread has been growing rapidly, and shows every sign of continuing to do so (in fact, it may be said that we have left infancy behind and are commencing adultery!) With this rapid growth, we have inevitably lost something of this closeness; for one cannot possibly follow unaided the many and varied activities of our present seventy or so members. The broad functions of this newsletter is to help to restore and maintain the close personal relationships which make membership of the Oread worth while.

It will attempt this by providing news about members' activities, notes about past and future meets, brief book

reviews, a correspondence column, and any other features you may desire. I must emphasize here that it will not trespass on the provinces of the Journal, nor will it replace the first-rate circulars issued by our Secretary and others.

Its news will consist mainly of gossipy items - the particularly bright remark "A" made; how "B" led his first V.S.; how "C" fell off a moderate; how "X" spent the weekend with Miss "Y", etc.; in fact any anecdotes which might interest or amuse readers. To a great extent I shall have to rely on you to let me know about these things.

The notes on meets will deal with such topics as where to find the best climbing, the best camp sites, what happened last time, and suitable tales about the meet location, e.g. how we put condensed milk on Dick Brown's beard.

The correspondence column will provide a forum in which members may ask questions or express their views. Letters may be serious or frivolous in their contents, and all opinions, common or controversial, will be welcome.

Here it is, then. Remember, its largely up to you to keep it alive, and lively, be sending me any bits of club gossip you may come across. All suggestions for improvement will be considered. I have tried in this issue, and in this unconscionably long editorial to give a lead. Now, over to you.

D.C.C.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETS

Baslow, May 2nd/3rd.

This meet which replaced the feebly supported Ogwen Meet, was blessed with perfect weather, and many were the severes and very severes which fell beneath the victorious boots of the oread horde.

Gardom's seemed to be the favourite rendezvous. Here Johnny Fisher did a fine lead on Och Aye Wall, which he now agrees is best done in cragions. Elliot's Buttress is now minus its ironmongery, thanks to the same gentlemen. Ernie Marshall was plastering the Edge with new routes, much to the detriment of a certain nylon rope.

Chatsworth Edge was also visited. 'Ph' Phalkner went up the Empress's Crack, and the Emperor's too, "after the manner of his kind".

Those who camped behind Frogatt's farm, were beset at sunset on Saturday by an enormous swarm of large flying beetles. An expert coleopterist who was present identified these as dung-beetles. No conclusion can be drawn from this fact.

Later there was a gathering in the "Robin Hood" but the singing was not of its normal fine quality. It seems that new songs are urgently required.

Dave Penlington visited us for a short time on Sunday. I gather he doesn't care for the Army very much.

Colin Morris and other newcomers were also around, doing great deeds. Watch this lad - he'll develop stripes any time now.

Some of us did pay Birchen's a brief visit. When the last of us departed the Edge had a strangely forlorn look. And, in accordance with tradition, a good time was had by all.

D.C.C.

Marsden - Rowsley. May 16th/17th.

Late on Friday night (May 15th), nineteen hooded figures having unsuccessfully sought shelter first at a fairground, and then on a football pitch, slept in a field just outside Marsden.

They started the long trek at 7 a.m. on Saturday, Ken and Betty Wright having got away even earlier.

At Woodhead the party split into a speed group headed by Dave Penlington and Bob Pettigrew, and a larger group consisting of the idlers. The weather was cloudy but fine. Black Hill and Holme Moss fell behind, then Bleaklow via Wild Boar Clough, with a shower (of rain) on top, then sunshine and the Snake Inn.

Here the Hon. Sec. accidentally trod on the Hon. Ed's. face and broke his pipe.

At 4 p.m. the main group ascended Kinder - the speed group having crossed Featherbed Moss, and the main plateau - then along Seal Edge and Blackden Edge, and (well strung out by now) the slow final pull up Win Hill. A meal followed, then a drink at the Yorkshire Bridge, and a bivouac in "a pine wood half a mile up the road" (Penlington). This half mile took 35 minutes - and the wood was nearly vertical.

After a damp start on Sunday, a highly extended party strolled gently via Stanage, Longshaw Park, and the Edges to Baslow, in warm sunshine. Most people finished here in order to catch buses home.

As far as is known, all nineteen Oreads and friends "made it". A special word of congratulation is due to Betty Wright, the only lady in the party, for an exceptionally fine performance.

D.C.C.

Cwm Silin Meet. June 13th/14th.

The crags of Cwm Silin, in the Nantlle district, lie beneath the summit of a peak, unnamed on the O.S. map, for which the name Pen-y-silin suggests itself. The most impressive feature of the crag is the great nose of Craig yr Ogof, still a "last great problem" for tigers. To the right of the nose is the justly famous Great Slab, four hundred feet high. This provides a magnificent route of Difficult standard and several harder routes. The crags include many other buttresses and gullies which have not received the detailed exploration accorded to the more popular areas. It is still quite possible here to find new routes which are neither desperately difficult, nor absurdly artificial.

There are charming camp sites by the two little llynau (i.e. lakes - Ed.) below the crags.

This meet will therefore provide a rare chance to climb in an impressive and unduly neglected locality.

A coach will run at the usual times on the Friday evening - Nottingham Midland Station 6.30 p.m. Derby Market 7.10 p.m; Burton (Queen's Hotel) 7.40 p.m. Friends and guests are of course welcome. Deposits of 10/- should be sent to P.R.Falkner, 14 Queens Drive, Beeston, by June 6th at the latest.

P.R.F.

(Owing to force of circumstances, this notice replaces the customary circular. - Ed.)

Coniston. July 10th/12th.

The Meets Secretary fears that as this meet comes in the middle of the holiday season, it will not be well supported. This would be a great pity, for it offers splendid possibilities. Dow Craggs provide magnificent climbs of all standards of difficulty, on clean steep rock in a most charming setting; there are a number of good walks, easy or strenuous; and if you prefer to lie and bask (and there are quite a lot of idle baskers in the club) there's always Coniston Water.

We're hoping to have the use of two huts, and there are plenty of good camp sites. You will receive details in the circular.

My own memories of Coniston are particularly sunny ones - one brief weekend in the winter of 1950. Perfect weather, just a dusting of snow; several first-rate climbs and a moonlight ridge-walk of superlative beauty; large cups of sherry at midnight and condensed milk in R.A.B's beard. The July meet can be equally enjoyable.

So don't let it fall through, will you?

D.C.C.

OREADS IN SHORTS.

Sayings of an expeditionary: "Old Bob would have his budgie if Anne knew that he snored". - S.G.Moore.

"How can you be christened Nobby Clarke?" -
Knobby Clarke.

Quote of the month: "Of course, I feel that bread is essentially a platform for butter" - Geoff Gibson.

PROFILE GEORGE SUTTON

The man who, in 1949, gave birth to the Oread and, in the doing of it, discovered that although he had been delivered of persistently tiny baby it was, equally persistently, a noisy, argumentative, and troublesome one and, above all, remarkably virile for its size. It is apt that he should be President in a year when a fine growth of membership has lent some authority to the original and still extant virility.

A man whose life has been a constant search for the solution to a series of unusual and highly original problems. Of the earlier of these, little is known, beyond the fact that they appear to be connected with the more dubious parts of Rangoon, Singapore and other points east of Bombay.

More latterly there was an attempt to penetrate into the mountainous parts of New Guinea, followed by the founding of this club, and the conception of an Oread expedition. It is no small thing that George Sutton inspired, planned and led a mountaineering and scientific expedition to Arctic Norway in 1951 which has been described by an authority as, "one of the most efficient of small British expeditions of more recent times". In 1952 he led the British Spitzbergen Expedition with a party of five Cambridge Scientists. If in Lyngen he had produced a lyric, in Spitzbergen he achieved an epic.

Somewhat gaunt in appearance and ascetic by nature, (he was once called "a learned old gentleman") he is, on any kind of rock as a second, the answer to a leader's prayer. On snow or ice is apt to be a different person, and only thoroughly happy when leading. Once led a horrible ice-pitch on N.E. Ridge of Nevis, and had to give a top rope to several following parties - wrote delirious letters to his friends on the subject.

Is alleged to have saved Bob Pettigrew's life in

a bog - but has now almost succeeded in living it down.

It is good to know that our President has, in the field of mountaineering, his biggest problem yet to solve, but, whatever the outcome, he might be remembered as the man who could in the misfortune of 1950 write - "The north - and be damned", and I'm damned if we weren't.

(It is hoped to include a "Profile" in each issue, if this should prove possible. Any member wishing to contribute a "Profile" of a friend is invited to submit it to me. Not more than 400 words, please! - Ed.)

I M P O R T A N T !

All kinds of news about climbing and associated pastimes will be of interest to other members.

Details of new rock routes; location of recently discovered or little-known barns and bivouacs; notes on any new gadgets or equipment; dates and destinations of private expeditions; great or small, particularly those who would welcome additions to the party - these are the kind of things that people will want to know. You can probably add half-a-dozen topics yourself. If you have anything of this nature to say, let me have it at once. No contribution is too trivial.

Accounts of new routes should be in the conventional guide-book style, i.e. location, standard, length of rope required, and a short description of the climb.

Don't put it off until tomorrow - get your pen (or pencil or piece of chalk or whatever you use) and paper out NOW and drop me a line. The address, in case you've lost your list of members, is

D. C. Cullum,
14 Queens Drive,
BEESTON,
Notts.