

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Vol.1. No.6

November, 1953

Editorial

HALF WAY

This issue brings the Newsletter to the mid-point of its first year, and it is appropriate that we should pause to look back at its brief history. I think it may be said with modesty that it seems to have had a fair measure of success in most of its aims as described in the first Editorial. Nevertheless there are no grounds for complacency. "Oreads in Shorts", our gossip column, which to my mind is the most important section, is poorly supplied with material. You can put that right yourself - if that yarn was worth the telling in the pub last night it is worth jotting down, and we want it in the Newsletter. "Profiles" are in short supply, a suprising fact in view of the number of unusual characters we have in the Club. Well, I can't write them all myself, even if I did slander Pettigrew last month. You must know someone who is a likely subject; get cracking now and put it in tomorrow's post. And so far there's been no criticism and no letters to the Editor. Surely there is some topic you want to air your views about, a column you'd like to see the end of, or some brilliant new feature you want to introduce. Or maybe you just want to be funny. Righto! It's all yours! Blimey, what did you learn to write for?

Before I sign off, I'd better announce that I've now moved to Manchester. My new address is: 11A Cavendish Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester 21. Make a note of it, because that's where you're going to send those literary masterpieces.

D.C.C.

DO YOU KNOW?

By the Vice-President

1. That it was Albert Shutt who, whilst leading Eric Byne and Frank Haley on Raven Crag in July 1951, said: "The bloke who wrote in the guide book that this final pitch is steep, exposed, and on small holds, bloody well meant steep, exposed, and on small holds."
2. That Chuck Cook of the old Valkyrie band once, for a small wager, leapt from the top of Froggatt Pinnacle across the steep gully. No doubt "Cook's Leap" would make excellent bergschrund practice.
3. That Four Jacks' Cabin on Grindsbrook, Kinderscout, derives its name from four Edale gamekeepers, all named Jack, who rebuilt it in 1932. One of these four, Jack Tym, once nearly shot the balaclava from the Vice-President's head. He said he thought it was a hare.
4. That Stoepler, a top grade German rock-climber, led the very severe Gimmer Crack in 1936, carrying an open umbrella.
5. That Goliath's Groove was so named by Peter Harding, who led the first ascent, to commemorate the effort of David Sampson, who as third man laybacked the crack all the way.
6. That the climbing term "to layback" originated about 1921 at Stanage as an American wisecrack by Rice K. Evans, and so began to be used by the Rucksack Club tigers of that period.
7. That Pigeon Corner on Kinder Great Buttress, first led by that magnificent climber V.T. Dillon in 1949, does not appear to have been repeated.
8. That Frank K. Elliott (of Gardom's Edge fame) has been surveying in the Falkland Islands Dependencies since 1946.

A short scramble leads to the terrace across the upper part of the buttress.

First ascent : E. Marshall, K. A. Wright, R. Simpson.
September 26th, 1953.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETS

Craig Cowarch, September 25/26.

Nineteen Oreads and four friends arrived by coach at Dinas Mawddwy at 12.30 a.m. on the Saturday morning. Two of the ladies, after a vain search for an elusive guest-house, settled down in the coach. The main body then proceeded briskly up the Cowarch valley. A skirmish with a bull resulted in the party being split (metaphorically) into two groups. Contact was re-established with the aid of Roman Candles and camp was pitched about 2 a.m. in the field adjacent to Mr. Williams' farm.

Saturday, after a misty dawn, was a lovely day. After the necessary anti-dog precautions had been taken, groups of young enthusiasts led by John Fisher, Ernie Marshall and Colin Morris assaulted the steep walls of Cowarch. It is thought that some of the routes done were new (see p.3), as the heather was not nail-marked. Meanwhile Messrs. Sutton, Gardiner and Falkner, learning that the ladies were going walking, found various excuses for not climbing and accompanied two of the ladies on a pleasant walk up Aran Fawddwy.

On Sunday, the principal climbing activity was a shuttle service up and down the Cowarch Pinnacle. Later the weather began to deteriorate, and everyone departed for Dinas Mawddwy and home.

A most enjoyable weekend.

Photo Meet, Baslow, October 17/18.

This meet was a glorious success. The response exceeded all expectations, in both quality and quantity. On Saturday afternoon over two hundred photographs, almost all of a high standard, adorned the walls of the room at the Prince of Wales. The exhibition showed in a striking way the wide range of the Club's activities. There were photographs not only of all the standard British climbing areas, but also of nearly all the principal Alpine districts, and places as far afield as Spitzbergen and Lyngen. The first prize in the Pictorial Section went to Geoff Gibson for a superb study of the Fygne d'Arolla. Bob Pettigrew won the first prize for the photograph of greatest interest to the Club, with his extraordinary "Moulin Rouge", starring a grotesque simian Brown. In both categories the President and Mike Moore were the runners-up. In the evening, Phil Falkner, Gerry Britton and Dick Brown gave a display of colour slides.

Revelry continued to a late hour on Saturday. Malcolm Padley gave a display of aquatic sports in the horse trough at the Robin Hood. Then at midnight there was climbing on Birchen's Edge by the light of electric torches and occasional fireworks. Somehow a jumping cracker found its way into a tent containing Mike Moore and his lady friend, who had camped far away from the common herd.

On Sunday morning there was the astonishing site of a Viking and a "toff" in tails and a cricket cap climbing the Prom. Conditions were superb throughout Sunday - mellow autumn sunshine, blue skies, golden bracken and warm rock provided an idyllic setting for the day's climbing activities. Details of climbs and parties are not important. Some enjoyed themselves strenuously, others quietly; the overall impression was of a wonderfully happy weekend for everyone.

Congratulations to the many people who helped to make the meet such a success, particularly Gerry Britton and Mike Moore for their hard work on Friday evening and Saturday morning.

Footnote: The exhibition is being kept intact for a while, and plans are being made to show it in Derby shortly. Further details will appear in due course.

P.R.F.

Guy Fawkes Meet, November 5.

Any Oreads who are rash enough to be in Beeston on November 5 are cordially invited to a grand pyrotechnical extravaganza (i.e. firework display - Ed.) at 14 Queens Drive. The show will commence at 7.30 p.m. with a small atomic bomb. Additions to the firework pool and/or the ale pool will be welcome. Burn dressings and bandages will be provided.

P.R.F.

Annual Dinner Meet, November 14/15

Those members who have not yet been to an Oread Dinner are advised not to miss this amazing experience under any circumstances. Note that this year's Dinner is at the Devonshire Arms, Baslow. All other details have already been circulated.

D.C.C.

B O O K S

HARRER H. SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET. Hart-Davies, 16/-.

Harrer was a member of the 1939 Nanga Parbat expedition. He was interned, escaped into Tibet, and eventually became M.T.O. (? - Ed.) to the Dalai Lama. To be recommended.

"WHIPPLESNAITH". NIGHT CLIMBERS OF CAMBRIDGE.

Chatto & Windus, 15/-

A guide, with photographs, to Cambridge college buildings. A book for the gymnast of course.

SCOTT, J.M. PORTRAIT OF AN ICE-CAP. Chatto & Windus, 12/6.

A description of expeditions to the Antarctic, including that by Gino Watkins.

KUNZ, M. (Editor) MOUNTAIN WORLD, 1953. Allen & Unwin, 25/-
R.B.

OREADS IN SHORTS

It is with deep regret that we have to announce the death of Miss Joan Boyd, who was a guest of the Club at the Langdale meet in August. On October 9 Miss Boyd and a companion made an ascent of Clogwyn y Grochan. According to a newspaper report, they had finished the climb and were descending when she slipped and fell to the foot of the crag, being killed at once. The Club extends its sincere sympathy to her relatives and friends.

Doug Cullum has recently been entertained, or feted, by members of the Karabiner Club. They are a grand crowd, just like a bunch of Oreads only more sober.

Conversation between two (male) Oreads :

A: "You know, a fine thing about the Club is that there's not a man among them with whom I wouldn't gladly spend a weekend".

B: "And there's not a woman among them either, with whom"

Nan Axon's twins are both boys. Best wishes to parents and children.

Ernie Marshall denies ever having led Moyer's Buttress.

Quote of the month - Gibson, in a tone of indignation :
"Why, I've only been slewed twice this week!"

ILLUSTRATED TALK, "MOUNTAINS OF LYNGEN", by R.A. Brown and P.R. Falkner at the Midland Hotel, Derby, at 7 p.m. Saturday November 7. Tickets 1/6 each. Have you got yours yet? Geoff Gibson and Phil Falkner still have some left.

PROFILE MOLLY PRETTY

Molly shares with Nan Axon the distinction of being one of the Club's two feminine founder members. She is a woman whose charm has endeared her to many Oreads, and whose intelligence is built into the very foundations of the Club.

One remembers the happy adventures - how she and Harry helped me to pitch a tent in the Allt a Mauillin and then went to the pictures; how she led us blithely across the high pass to Torridon; of a glorious sunny walk from Malham Cove to Ingleton, and Drambuie that night in the "Wheatsheaf" - and a score of other days and nights.

Her 21st, for instance. Celebrated in a haze of rum at our spiritual home, Baslow, this inspired a moonlight ascent by a band of Oreads, not strictly sober, who clawed, hauled, pushed, cursed and sang their way gloriously to the top, Uncle Eric in the lead.

Those alone who shared the Lyngen/51 adventure will know just how much it owed to her help as a typist, and even greater service as hostess to the ever-hungry horde of conspirators who converged on Woodbine Cottage for their meetings. As her friend I know it took courage and greatness of heart and friendship of the highest order for her to approve, and even aid her husband's response to my appeal, "Come North and be damned." Rarely are we privileged to witness such qualities in the normal round of our lives.

In recent years Molly has held office as a Committee member and Hon. Treasurer, and brought feminine grace, and understanding to Committee meetings, not previously notable for their quietude.

Molly was never a Tiger, nor the brightest star in the Oread firmament; that is not her nature - but the Club would be the less friendly and the less rich without her.

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.

LYNGEN SUPPLEMENT

In 1951, as most members will remember, the Oread's first expedition, led by George Sutton, visited the Lyngen peninsula in Arctic Norway. The success of that expedition was one of the highlights of the club's history. This year saw another Oread party in Lyngen. The main party, consisting of R.A. Brown, P.B. Cook and P.R. Falkner, were there for seven weeks. For three weeks they were joined by the Loughborough College section, R.G. Pettigrew and T.S. Panther. The party, as in 1951, was based on a hut near to Lyngseidet. From here, following two training climbs (one of them lasting 20 hours) five camping trips, each of 5 - 7 days duration, were made to various parts of the peninsula. The principal results of the expedition were as follows:-

19 major peaks climbed, 6 of them 1st ascents
at least 7 other new routes in addition to the first ascents.

The mapping of about 150 square miles of mountainous territory in S. Lyngen.

Two of the more important climbs are described here.

THE TRAVERSE OF LENANGENTIND AND 1st ASCENT OF THE WESTERN PEAK

Lenangentind, 5,500 ft., is the highest peak in North Lyngen and perhaps the finest mountain in the whole area. It was first ascended in 1898 by Hastings, Slingsby, Haskett-Smith and their guide, Hogronning, via the Lenangen Glacier and a steep snow couloir on the S.W. Face. We knew of no other ascent since then. From our camp N. of Jegervatn (the Hunter's Lake) we looked straight up at the immense crags of the W. Face. The N.W. Ridge, bounding this face on the left,

offered an attractive route. Dick, Barry, and I left camp at 6.0 a.m. on Monday Aug. 17. A pleasant walk through birch woods and a less pleasant walk up the execrably stony Strupskar valley brought us to the foot of our peak at 7.40. After ascending 1,500 feet of tiresome scree we entered a gully leading to the N.W. Ridge. For a few hundred feet we climbed on good firm snow; then followed a long stretch of wretchedly loose rock. Earlier in the season this would all have been under snow, but now late in a hot summer, the mountains were almost indecently devoid of covering. At 10.30 we gained the crest of the ridge at about 3,400 ft. Ahead of us stretched a succession of rough red slabs walls and arêtes, soaring up to end with a slender spire 2,000 ft. above us. The climbing was never hard, but there were several interesting pitches and a fine degree of exposure. Higher up we traversed a series of tottering pinnacles and at 13.30 arrived on the previously untrodden western summit (5,350 ft.)

After constructing a cairn we pressed on along the ridge; a steep descent of 300 feet, two more pinnacles, then the final arête. On this last section the overhang on our right was altogether astonishing. One sees such overhangs in the more exuberant products of the Romantic painters, but on a real mountain it was scarcely credible. If Wotan and his attendant Valkyries had appeared riding through the Arctic skies, they would have fitted this setting admirably.

At 3.0 p.m. we reached the main summit. From the weather-beaten cairn Dick withdrew a real collector's piece: an 1898 vintage Cross and Blackwell's baked bean tin. A note inside told us that the second ascent was made by a German party in 1933. The Germans had kept Hastings original card as a trophy and had left a copy.

Our ascent had taken 9 hours. We wanted to find a shorter route back and decided to descend the S.E. face to the Strupen Glacier, this being Hastings' route of descent. Starting down at 5.0 p.m., we first descended a narrow gully with several nice homely little chockstone pitches, then a steep snow slope. At the foot of this, separating us from the Strupen Glacier, were five of the most enormous crevasses in the world, some of them with small offspring. There was one and only one way through the maze. We balanced along knife edge snow aretes and climbed down short ice walls, reaching the level glacier at 8.0 p.m. Hastings had found no serious difficulties beyond this point, but ice conditions can change a lot in fifty years and our worst troubles were still to come. A high pass, Lenangen Skar, led over to the Lenangen Glacier. Just beyond the pass we were faced with a fierce bergschrund. After some queer manoeuvres in claws on a steep rock wall, we found a place where we could jump across. These operations took an hour and I lost one of my claw points en route. As we descended the glacier the sunset in the N.W. warned us that we should soon be in semi-darkness. As the light failed the ice steepened; and it was not the usual rough glacier ice but the hard, blue, water-worn variety. Even in claws we felt most unsafe and at one point the famous ice peg was called into play. About 1.0 a.m. on Tuesday we reached a point where escape to easy ground was possible; possible that is, by a dash across a slope of snow-ice exposed to fairly continuous stone fall. It was here that we set up an official record for the 100 yards sprint in claws. Two ominous thuds were not, as I first thought, due to falling stones, but were caused by Brown passing through the sound barrier. At 1.30 a.m. we were able to unrope well out of the target area. The long, stony walk back to camp seemed interminable. I was unfortunate enough to reach camp first (4.0 a.m.). The others timed their arrival so that the brew was just ready when they appeared.

THE FIRST ASCENT OF GUKKISGAISSA . AUG, 8th.

Gukkisgaissa (5,000 ft.) rises to the N. of the Gukkisvagge; it culminates in an ice cap and throws down on its southern side a complex glacier system. Supporting this system are three great buttresses. The eastern one, which leads to a shapely foretop, attracted us most. At 11.0 a.m. on Aug. 8th, Trevor and I left our camp in the Gukkisvagge, with this as our objective. After an interesting climb we gained the unclimbed summit of the foretop to see, in the north, tantalising glimpses of the main snowcapped summit through occasional clearances in the mist. Our present summit seemed to be connected with the highest one by four intervening ridges, the first of rock and the last three of snow or ice. Though sometimes narrow and spectacular the route was feasible. Eventually, after a bout of step cutting lasting twenty minutes, we stepped on to the ultimate snow crest. As a defiant gesture to the clinging mist we photographed each other. We left a record of our names in a tin and descended by the same route. Thirteen hours after our departure we reached camp again, and found the pemmican stew left by our colleagues very acceptable.

R.G.P.

ILLUSTRATED TALK ON LYNGEN

200 SLIDES IN COLOUR

To be given by members of the expedition, at the Midland hotel, Derby, at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov 7.

Tickets, price 1/6 (to cover cost of room etc.) from Geoff Gibson or Phil Falkaer.

Lets make this indoor meet a success; its much better value than the local flicks. Remember the date, Nov 7.