

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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December 1954

The S.G.M., and the Dinner

The Special General Meeting, called by five members to discuss whether or not the present Committee was representative of the Club, was held on the afternoon of November 13th (a sinister date !). Eric Byne was in the chair, and he took a strong line from the beginning. Feelings were soon aroused, the temperature of the meeting ran high, and there were some sharp exchanges. Perhaps the wisest words were those of Bob Pettigrew, to the effect that the true spirit of the Oread seemed to be absent. At length the chairman forced the Five to admit that the Committee was in fact constitutionally representative, and when put to the vote; thirteen hands were raised in support of the Committee and six against, about a third of the small number present abstaining.

Now there are one or two points to be made clear. Firstly, a letter from Joe Johnson was read, in which he expressed concern that two Committee members had been forced to resign by a current of feeling within that body. Well, Joe, you were seriously misinformed, for both of those members told the meeting that they had resigned for personal reasons, and not through any disagreement, real or imaginary, with other Committee members. Secondly, there seemed to be a widespread impression that the purpose of the meeting was to censure the Committee for co-opting Mick Harby to the Meets Secretaryship (though Heaven knows why). In point of fact, the Committee received notification that a S.G.M. was to be called on October 16th; no decision was made regarding the Meets Secretaryship until November 6th. The two events were therefore unrelated.

But the most disquieting features of the whole sorry affair were the large number of absences and of abstentions in the voting. What is their significance - just apathy, or something deeper? I cannot guess. Perhaps some of you absentees and abstainers would like to express your views in the Newsletter. The correspondence page is at your disposal. Let's hear from you.

If the Oread spirit was absent from the S.G.M., it returned in its full vigour for the Dinner. That function was a roaring success - some have said the best yet. The wine flowed free, the speeches were of a high order, and - it had to happen at an Oread Dinner - Oliver Jones sang his brilliant "homily". Any friendships bruised during the afternoon were speedily restored to health, and when we had to tear ourselves away, and return to camp, everyone was completely happy.

(This Editorial seems to have got a bit out of hand, but please excuse it, for it is after all a report as well.) To conclude - with the Dinner over, we look forward to the other great social event in the Oread calendar, the Christmas meet at Ogwen. But whether you come to the hills or wallow in the flesh-pots at home, may you enjoy a very Merry Christmas.

D. C. C.

BRITISH HILLS

Have you ever stopped to consider how fortunate are we, the mountaineers of Great Britain? We complain bitterly about the distance of some of our peaks from where we live, but can we substantiate our complaints?

Compare the lot of our Club members with one situated say in Brussels. The continental climber has in some cases to travel eight hundred miles to

reach the nearest climbing ground and return home, whereas I doubt if any climber in the country has more than two hundred miles to travel to the nearest crag or hill, and we in Derby have over forty gritstone edges to climb upon and the nearest is some eighteen miles away, as the crow flies.

The West Country climbers have the Cornish cliffs for rock climbing and the moors of Cornwall and Devonshire to walk upon. Routes have been made on the limestone cliffs of the Cheddar Gorge and whilst we are still in the South of England, there are the Sussex Downs and Harrison's Rocks. The Midlanders must consider gritstone as their climbing medium (No, Cullum, not the Tyny Ghost) and I would suggest that cliffs like the Roaches, Stanage, Froggatt, Shining Clough and Laddow provide rock climbs of the highest quality and difficulty.

People who live in Wales and the West Midlands have nothing at all to complain about, unless of course they wish to travel to the hills and mountains at the opposite end of the country. In the south rise the Brecon Beacons and then right up to the North Wales Coast via the Berwyns, Arans, Arenigs, Cader Idris and Snowdonia stretches a hog's back of hills high enough and wild enough to delight all but the super-critical.

From the Peak District and North Wales the Pennine Chain stretches to the border and gives magnificent walking and climbing upon short outcrops along its complete length. It spreads eastwards into Yorkshire where it yields the Yorkshire Dales and moors. It gives us the Trough of Bowland and many more magnificent hill districts. More important it leads us to the Mecca of English climbing, the Lake District.

In the Lakes we have perhaps everything we could require in the way of mountain scenery. Tranquil rivers, soft gentle valleys, lakes and tarns, lovely hills and many mountains. It gives us hill walking of the highest standard, rock climbing which can compare

with anything in the country, good ski-ing grounds and friendly hospitable people with friendly hospitable pubs. In fact virtually everything mountaineers can require except altitude.

From the Lakes we can journey northward to the border country, the Cheviots and Galloway all of which provide good walking. Then we go into the highlands and islands of Scotland. This is the land of the mountaineer, giving rock climbing, snow and ice climbing, ski-ing, hill walking and everything else the mountain lover desires.

A "Holiday Island" in Arran; a rock climbers' paradise in Skye; the highest mountain in the British Isles in Ben Nevis; Glencoe with its Gothic peak, the Buachaille Etive Mor; the largest mountain mass in the British Isles, the Cairngorms. Scotland has remoteness, solitude, superb scenery and kindly folk, who welcome the traveller and who are pleased to stop and pass the time of day.

What more do we want from British Mountains? Altitude? Yes, but we shall never get it. Easy lines of access? Well, we already have them. Anything else? I would suggest we say no, and be grateful for what we already have, grateful for what is our heritage, and let us not belittle our own playgrounds, because in their subtle way, our own hills are as fine as any in the world.

Be grateful when we go into the hills of Great Britain that we are lucky enough to be tying on a climbing rope within an hour of leaving the door. Be thankful Kinder Scout is near at hand, do not sneer at it because it is only 2000 feet high and does not wear a permanent snow cap. Be thankful that you may meet your own Club members every evening should you feel so inclined. Enjoy your climbing - but never sneer at the objects of your own endeavours, for they are of the finest.

M.H.

ANNUAL DINNER MEET, NOVEMBER 13TH/14TH.

The Devonshire Arms stood for it just once more, and put on an excellent repast, with cheerful service and an alcoholic flow that never failed. Uncle Eric and Pettigrew shared the honours for the "Speech of the Evening". The former possesses the superlative merit of brevity, and the equally enviable ability to get a bit of "Ush!" when he wants it. This lasted through the reading of George Sutton's presidential message, but was totally dispelled by the telegram from the South Georgia expedition. Pettigrew indulged in a cheerfully libellous catalogue of our guests, in which he so decried their ability as car drivers that one marvelled to see them present at all. Eric had proposed the toast of absent friends - Pettigrew the toast of "Our guests". John Cook retaliated on behalf of the guests. He had apparently expected to dine with a roomful of bearded ladies from Bertram Mills' circus, and seemed disappointed. Trevor Baugh, who proposed the health of the Oread Club, just steered clear of criminal libel, but laid himself open to several actions for slander. Peter Cole replied for the Club. O. A. Jones also spoke - and there was music.

Sunday on Birchen's Edge was blessed with sunshine, and a considerable gallery watched the proceedings. Above Sail Chimney sat Ken Wright, whose cap gave him the appearance of a Romany Rye about to sell a spavined mare to some unsuspecting Gorgio. At the end of his rope he brought up a queue of Oreads who had formed up in the best bus-stop tradition. On the Buttress, Stan Moore, who had looked, the night before, rather like Darius at the feast, now seemed more to resemble King Sennacherib of the Assyrians, and at times seemed likely to "Come down like a wolf on the fold". He made it, however, while on Crow's Nest, Mike Moore, still looking like a Don Cossack, made the ascent with a certain inexorable gravity.

At this point the day was completely spoiled for our Hon. Sec. and for Geoff Whiteley of the Fell and Rock. Four unattached though attractive girls arrived and

proceeded to climb, with no male help whatever. Brian and Geoff hung around, to lend a helping hand or to give advice. Those exasperating females needed neither - they were completely self supporting. So, like Tom Pearce, Secretary and Guest "just sat down on a rock and cried". By all outward appearances everyone else had enjoyed themselves. O.A.J.

(Editor's Note: during the Dinner, some structural damage was done in the gentlemen's toilet, for which the Hotel manager is to send the bill to the Club. It would be a decent gesture if the people responsible would reveal their identities, in confidence, to Brian Cooke, and pay for the repairs when he receives the bill.)

SPIRIT OF GRAVITY.

The following recipe is given in response to innumerable requests. Though strictly not a spirit, it is of remarkably high gravity, and should enliven Christmas considerably. If you start now, it will be ready just in time. It is B E E R.

Raw materials for three gallons: 3 oz. hops, 4 lb. plain malt extract, 1 lb sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz yeast.

Method of preparation: raise one gallon of water to the boil. Add the hops and simmer for an hour, stirring occasionally. The smell is shocking. Allow to cool a little and filter through fine cloth. Dissolve the malt extract and sugar in water and add to the infusion of hops. Dilute to three gallons with cold water. Crumble the yeast into the liquid, cover the vessel and allow to stand in a warm place for three days. Bottle, ensuring airtight closure. Allow to settle for at least fourteen days (it is advisable to check one bottle periodically for excessive pressure if detected, empty the bottles into the fermentation vessel, allow to stand one day, and re-bottle).

Application: carefully decant the contents of one or more bottles into a large jug, leaving the sediment behind. Transfer to a tankard. Need I say more ?

OREADS III SHORTS.

Ernie Marshall and Alison Harper had an accident on Ernie's motor bike on Saturday, November 20th. They were taken to Ashton-under-Lyne Infirmary, Alison suffering from concussion and Ernie from a broken thigh and knee-cap and other minor injuries. Alison has now been sent home, but Ernie is still there, of course, and would welcome visits by Oreads, who can find accomodation at 11 Cavendish Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, for that purpose. Here's to a speedy recovery, Ernie.

Mike Turner celebrates his 21st birthday on December 5th, and is holding a party on the 4th. Heartiest congratulations, Mike.

Messrs. Burgess and Ashcroft have been called up into the Forces. Mike Gadd is home again after his internment in the Army. Nice to have you back, Mike. Dave Penlington expects to be released soon, too, but at present is convalescing after complications arising from food poisoning.

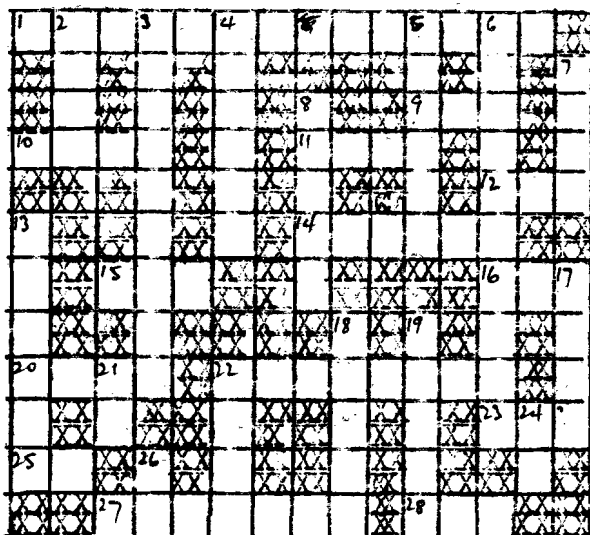
Dai Escott has recently returned from the United States, where he has been working as Camp Leader at a camp in Michigan, on a U.N.E.S.C.O. Travel Scholarship. He has commented briefly but vividly on the absence of mountains in that neighbourhood.

Eric Byne represented the M.A.M. at the Rucksack Club Annual Dinner on November 20th.

Ruth Bottger has passed her final Exams and is now a fully-fledged S.R.N. She served the Oread by ministering to an injured Ed. the day after the Dinner.

AN OREAD CROSSWORD - BY ERIC BYNE

CLUES



Across.

1. Derbyshire Inn, named after a famous racehorse.
 9. The first gritstone club of Mixed Sex. (Init.)
 10. Laughter. 11. Phonetically a Burbage climb beginning in Greece. 12. A Manchester Climbing Club (Init.). 14. Could be a piece of Architecture, or a famous bogtrotter and climber of the past. 15. With rum; a traditional Oread drink. 16. A club of Tigers (Init.) during 1949-51 period. 20. a

- famous Continental Mountain club of pre-war years.
 22. A bogtrotting Innkeeper. 23. A pre-war gritstone club (Init.) 25. Initials of a famous Oread Personality. 27. Pioneer of "Och Aye" on Gardoms Edge. 28. Uncle - ? common with No. 14 across.

Down.

2. Discoverer of Yellowlacks. 3. The biggest crack climb on Stanage. 4. A Blacksmith who gave his name to a gritstone edge. 5. Christian name of the Scotch inventor of a mountain stretcher. 6. An American Doctor who climbed on gritstone. 7. Initials of a Sheffield climbing club. 8. A pioneer of the High Level Horseshoe of the Peak. 13. A diff slab on Birchens. 17. Jack Longland first climbed with them. (Init.) 18. Mountain Nymph. 19. Burbage climb ending in Greece. 21. Premier British Mountaineering Club, (Init.) 22. A V.S. crack on Stanage. 24. Initials of a club which originated in Wales. 26. Organization (Init) with whom the name of Jerry Wright is connected.

(Solutions will appear in the January issue.)

SIX MEN, THREE GIRLS AND A CAR

We came down from Burbage in the dark, with just an hour to reach Grindleford station, three miles distant. It was not going to be easy, with heavy rucksacks. But as we passed through the lower camp, we found Mike Turner and his passengers still packing. I said, "How about a lift for the rucksacks, Mike?" and Mike said, "There's only seven of us - I can take you as well."

Now when I am confronted with the choice of travelling in a seated position in a warm, luxuriously upholstered car, with no weight on either mind or shoulders, and slogging on foot in darkness, with a rucksack weighing several hundredweights - ha, ha, ha! - it's bottom down and feet up for me every time (and you too, you liar!) So we waited for Mike's party, and half an hour later trooped down to the huge Hudson which stood on the waterlogged track. All the rucksacks except our two were loaded on the roof, the first half dozen or so passengers embarked, and Mike started the engine. At any rate he went through the motions. But the engine seemed disinclined to function. With some concern we listened to the strained revving of the starter motor, and at length a High Level Decision (Mike) to try cranking was announced.

Mike cranked till he was red in the face; Glenn took over and cranked till he was blue, thus providing a pleasant contrast. Both ends of the spectrum thus having been displayed, Mike called on the assembled company to give a push. We pushed. The car couldn't care less. We pushed again. The car remained aloof. We pushed again. The car's indifference was absolute. I should explain that we were enjoying this pushing enormously, because it involved splashing knee-deep through muddy puddles; it is difficult to imagine a more delightful way of spending a Sunday evening.

Eventually we reached the road and gave the silent

monster a push down the hill. Twelve and a half per cent of its cylinders spluttered into life. The tail light disappeared into the distance. Too late I realised that two rucksacks were not aboard. Ours.

After walking a few miles along the road (oh, yes, our train had gone by now, ha ha!) we came upon a stationary car. The bonnet was raised and from its depths two backsides peered at us through the gloom. Every picture tells a story. We guessed that the Hudson had lost interest in the proceedings. I placed our rucksacks comfortably on the rear seat. Just in time. "Push!" commanded Mike. We pushed. Miles and miles. Uphill. Mike's Hudson weighs two tons.

We reached the summit. Hillary and Tensing took a back seat (no, not in the car, you fool!). Utterly exhausted, we gave the reluctant vehicle a feeble shove down the other side. To our delight about seventy-five per cent of its cylinders emitted a hoarse but fairly healthy roar, and it leapt away towards Hathersage.

We tottered down the hill, and up a second one. And just over the summit, there was the Hudson, throbbing smoothly, and anxious to show its gratitude for our efforts. And about time too! So off we went, Ken and Betty in front with Mike, Mary on John's knee, myself in solitary splendour (I really am splendid on occasions like this, you know), and Jeanne, Colin and Glenn fighting silently but in deadly earnest in the corner.

Drunk with success, we almost met with disaster. We nearly drove past a pub. But with great presence of mind Mike stopped the now eager car and hey presto! we were ensconced behind enormous foaming tankards. After several pints of supper we felt much restored, (and when you've spent umpteen hours pushing two tons

of inert machinery about the Derbyshire landscape, you need some restoration) and again we jumped aboard. Wonder of wonders! All eight cylinders fired. Must have been the beer.

Mike kindly took us to Bakewell in time for the nine o'clock bus to Manchester. As we said goodbye, we wondered whether we should have told Mike about the Cullum jinx which renders immobile all mechanically propelled vehicles.

The bus started first time.

D. C. C.

Oreads in shorts (Continued)

Just before that great event, Phil Falkner made the Quote of the Month: "They're serving tea in the room where Graham Brown met Pettigrew!"

Adapt this to 'Green

Your Ed. has several Dinner menus, handed to him the next day by the last-named gent. Anyone wanting one as a souvenir can have one on request. *Man'*
Also, Colin Morris has a ground sheet which was left behind at the Devonshire Arms, and will return it to the owner if that person will reveal his identity. *Ashbourne*

Cyril Machin is reported to be looking very well and cheerful after his accident at Castle Baze last summer. He can now walk with the aid of sticks, and is expected to be home in time for Christmas.

PROFILE.....BRIAN COOKE

Brian started climbing at an early age, after evacuation of his school to Penrith, under the guidance of a schoolmaster, Michael Roberts. He became so keen that, despite threat of expulsion (due to an accident that shook the staff - he was "all over blood") if found climbing, he persisted in what was to become an essential part of his life developing into a safe, neat climber with a definite leaning to exploratory climbing.

He widened his climbing experience during his wartime service in Italy, Greece and India, and never fails to laugh at the behaviour of his Indians, who, when "climbing", relied on vegetation, and spoke to him severely for using rock - so unsafe ! He has also gained a small knowledge of Hindustani (any Himalayan expeditions needing an Interpreter ?), and has organised a small trek into the Himalayas.

After his war service, he returned to the Northumbrian climbing grounds and took a part in writing the Climbing Guide to that area.

Any novice or nervous type can be assured of an extremely patient and careful leader with Brian at the front (or back as the case may be), but any walker following Brian may be equally assured of wet feet. And beware his short cuts !

Hobbies - climbing, climbing talk, climbing books, climbing photographs, motorbikes, motorbike talk, and collecting piles of "Motorcycle" (where can they be kept ?) - and the writer - she hopes.

M.C.