

O R O A D M O U N T A I N E E R I N G C L U B

M O N T H L Y N E W S L E T T E R

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April, 1954.

Editorial

Perhaps the most notable things to have emerged from the Sixth A.G.M. are Geoff Gibson's retirement from the Secretaryship and the introduction of a charge for the Newsletter, each in its own way being something of a shock. Geoff has been almost the perfect Secretary. He has earned a rest, for he has spared no effort during his two years of office, and it is no denigration of his successor to say that he will be sorely missed. I should like to repeat here, both for the Club and for myself, the thanks which were expressed to him at the A.G.M.

Since the Newsletter came into being the average cost per copy has been about 2.2 pence. Now that Geoff is no longer responsible for the production end of things, costs will inevitably rise, and it is expected that the charge of 3/- for a year's copies will not quite cover expenses. There will almost certainly have to be a small subsidy from Club funds, though nothing like the £10 a year (approximately) previously expended. We're very sorry, but everyone wanting the Newsletter is required to pay this 3/-, members and non-members alike (excepting secretaries of other clubs and one or two others who will continue to receive complimentary copies). However, Betty Wright (who has generously undertaken to type the stencils) is willing to deal with more than the customary eight pages, so you will get more for your money; as in this issue, we shall in future be able to expand when the material is available (and that's up to you). On the committee's recommendations you have up to April 30th to pay, and the flow of Newsletters will stop if you don't. But if you pay later, you will receive any back copies you may have missed in the mean time.

Please send your money to me, not to Ken Griffiths, and please make postal orders payable to D.C.Cullum, not, repeat not, the Oroad M.C.

D.C.C.

SONGS OF A MOUNTAINEER

2 - FILL THE PEWTER. (Tune, "Phil the Fluter")

1. The fortunate philanderers and the hapless occupied
Say the time is coming round again, 'tis almost Eastertide
So we'll summon our society, and hasten one and all,
To spend our happy holiday, in climbing up a wall !
So they all came up, the barefoot and the best of them,
Manoeuvring by the motor, or the misty mountain top;
With beds for the proud, and blankets for the rest of 'em,
The mattress in the Shanty and the shakedown in the shop.
2. Though our starts cause indignation in the bosom of H.V.,
By five we're back as prodigals, all postulating tea;
If the interval for dinner is occasionally long,
We're repaid by Mrs. Owen's soft fandango on the gong !
Though you can't lead a climb you'll watch Herbert dance
a saraband,
On footholds that he testifies are generously rich;
Though you can't sing a rhyme you can boisterously hear
a hand
In shouldering the chorus up the customary pitch.
3. There are buttresses on Tryfan, most enchanting to the
feel;
The descent is not a stiff un if you play the "rimless
wheel" -
They will haul us up steep angles, on a day of rain and
cold,
And bid us as we dangle, do exactly as we're told.
And when our toes get freezier and freezier,
And fingernails are cautiously a-clutching of a rope
We're abandoned on slabs growing gradually greasier,
With a perforated bootnail as our solitary hope.
4. There are lily hands that languish, at the tango-tea and
ball;
We prefer our finger anguish on the palpitating wall!
Let them sing of Phil the Fluter under rockeries and glass;
We would rather fill the Pewter to the rocks at Pen y Pass;

And however much we suffer, on a snowy or a soppin' day
Returning ragamuffin-like and draggled through and through,
Yet we all appear at dinner, like a purple passage popinjay
With a honorific chorus for a Concoriffic Crew.

(Words by G. W. Young.)

"Of Mountains, and a Little of Men."

When winter is with us, when snow and ice are on the ground and when the North or East wind is howling around the corners of the house, summer seems a long way away, and the only answer to the wintery blasts is to move up even closer to the fire and dream.

Some people dream by closing their eyes, others by sitting staring into space and others look into a fire and let the firelight weave strange patterns. Dreaming is a habit which most of us indulge in during the winter, to think of the Roches on a boiling hot summer day, when one has sat on the Pedestal and looked over the Cheshire and Staffordshire Plains; of Tryfan, that beautiful mountain in the Nant Ffranceon, which has delightful rough rock and routes of the standard of the Terrace Wall Variant.

Other thoughts of mountains in summer come and go - of the first glimpse of the Inner Hebrides from the train going to Mallaig, of lying in the lochan in Upper Corrie Lagan, letting the water sink into the bones, after being grilled by the sun all day whilst climbing on the Inaccessible Pinnacle. That unforgettable "bivvy" at Shining Clough, sleeping in the weather and seeing the sun catch the big East Buttress at about 5 a.m., to herald another climbing day. All these thoughts are of the summer and the mountain in sunshine.

Yet the mountains give most of us pleasure all the year round. If we never left our fire and our dreams we should never ski in Edale making "sitzmarks" every two or three hundred yards, never cut steps in ice and then flog down the huge cornice on Ben Nevis, never appreciate a return to either our tent or our hut in the valleys after having had our heads nearly blown off by a gale on the tops. We should never

realise what exquisite agony the last few miles of the Colne to Rowsley walk are, after they have been staggered to the conclusion.

The mountains are nearly human and they never reveal the whole of their natures. Bill Murray was very right when he said, "You can look at a mountain every day, you can climb it every day, but you will never know it, the colours are never the same or there is some other subtle change, of which one is always aware".

Never let us take the mountains for granted. They provide many of us with our greatest joys in life. Do not scoff at Kinder Scout because it hasn't the height of Bowfell - it has a beauty all of its own, and remember it is quite as capable of killing as the North Wall of the Eiger.

Remember too, whilst you weave your dreams or ransack your memories, friends who have been on your rope, who have saved your life, or whose life you have saved, and other friends who no longer tread the mountain paths (in this world at least). Be tolerant; you never know when you may shout for a top rope, or be pleased and thankful that some decent types have carried a stretcher five miles over a moor to get you to hospital.

Yes, when one thinks about the whole subject, of mountains and men, we who climb the mountains and associate with the men are indeed fortunate that we have had that call of the distant places, and the companionship of real men, and we can only feel sorry for those who will never taste the joys which only nature can offer.

The mountaineering brotherhood is a grand thing and while it exists, let the good club exist too; let them flourish and let everybody enjoy mountaineering in his own way and not in the way other people think he should. Let us be tolerant of each other and of the mountains and I am sure we shall all enjoy our mountaineering so much more.

M.H.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETS

Glan Dona. March 5th/7th. Joint Meet with M.A.M.

This meet was remarkable for the appalling weather conditions on the Saturday, the shocking nature of the vast amount of snow, and the determination on the part of everyone (excepting the leader and his friends) to go out and commit suicide by drowning. People swam up gullies, floated on

buttresses, and in fact did everything in order to reach a stage when they could not possibly absorb more moisture. Only the leader and his two companions went out and returned dry, simply by following the A.5 to its appointed end at Holyhead; and then visiting South Stack, where, in a howling gale (without rain) they descended and ascended the 380 steps on the face of the tremendous sea cliffs near the lighthouse.

Glan Dena on the Saturday evening was an appalling sight, the whole hut being used as a drying room, but fortunately the Sunday brought better weather and a drying wind, during which the fence at Glan Dena proved its worth as a clothes line.

Parties climbed, if they could find clothes not too repulsive for wear. Little Tryfan attracted the 'tigers' who were led by a Buxton man adorned with pitons, hammer, etc., who mysteriously whispered of smooth overhangs and unclimbed bulges.

Others from Tyn-y-Shanty or Gwern-y-gof Isaf barn came to the hut to dry out, and by the time the coach was due to depart practically everyone was more or less organised.

A great feature of the weekend was the clash of what Stan Moore has usually referred to as "Bynesmanship" and "Chunleymanship". This resulted in a victor, for the "Oread" for "Chunley" was seen to bring round the morning cups of tea, a service for which he received due recompense at the 'tea-house' in Shrewsbury - trust "Chunley" for that!

An enjoyable weekend, which because of the weather saw more of a social side than would otherwise have been possible, the greatest feat of concentration being that performed by Molly Pretty and Hank Haley who combined forces to subjugate Glan Dena's giant jigsaw puzzle.

Someone, by mistake, departed with Julia Hayhurst's ice axe and left an inferior one in exchange. We hope this will be put right!

E.B.

The A.G.M., Baslow, March 20th/21st.

The sixth Oread A.G.M. was a much more placid affair than its predecessors. Not a blow was struck, not a drop of blood was shed; there were no alterations to rules, no points of order, no matters of constitution.

About 35 members and a large number of guests filled the usual room at the P.O.W. (i.e. Prince of Wales). The Hon. Sec. read apologies for absence from Eric Byne and Albert Smit

and proceeded to the minutes of the last A.G.M.

The President spoke next. He said that during the last year coach meets had been run regularly, and the Newsletter and the Hut Fund had been started and were doing reasonably well. He repeated that donations to the Fund should be sent as soon as possible so that we could make a definite offer in any negotiations for a hut. He praised the retiring committee with special mention for Geoff Gibson, Phil Fallner and Doug Cullum. His announcement that Geoff was retiring from his position as Secretary was received with regret by everyone present, and he went on to suggest Clive Webb as a "possible" for the post.

George then devoted a few words to his own plans for South Georgia. No previous expedition had gone to the Antarctic expressly for mountaineering, and South Georgia offered many virgin peaks. But he was up against transport difficulties - a whaler was the only hope, and so far there had been no offer of a passage. He mentioned Pip Styles' expedition to Nepal, now under way, and quickly passed over Ken Griffiths' suggestion that we should help farmers on off days, the existence of the Broad library and the small use made of it by members, and complaints of the alleged "low tone" of the Club made by a correspondent. On the last point he admitted that his official Presidential views concurred with the plaintiff's, but that his personal views would appear in the Newsletter (this issue). He concluded by announcing the introduction of a charge for the Newsletter.

The President was followed by the Secretary, who made a highly original opening gambit, after which there was a short adjournment, followed by a more orthodox Secretary's Report. Twenty-two new members (plus three elected the same evening) and four resignations brought the present membership to 80 - an increase of 15 in the last two years. Speaking of the practice of circulating the names of prospective members, he read a somewhat reminiscent comment: "Personal knowledge of Miss E. T. G. - a smasher!" The meeting endorsed this comment. He next gave warning that an increased subscription would probably be necessary next year. He mentioned the proposed hut to be built in Scotland by the British Mountaineering Council and advised us to send a representative to meetings of the B.M.C. Turning to the

Annual Dinner, he remarked on the poor food, and the slight loss of the informal atmosphere which had characterised earlier dinners. He attributed this to our growing membership and suggested the non-removal of shrubs as a means of avoiding "fouling our own nest". We had entertained representatives of other clubs, and had been represented at the dinners of Manchester U.M.C., Sheffield U.M.C., Barnsley M.C., and the Peak C.C. He thanked the President, the committee and the general membership for their support during his two years of office, and finally introduced the three new members (Elaine Lye, Pete Janes and Jim Kershaw) and quoted Shipton on encouraging newcomers to find a "first vision".

The Treasurer Ken Griffiths was brief. Our bank balance stood at £12.9.6d and cash in hand amounted to £6.17.10d. 26 members had so far paid this year's subscription. There had been a slight loss on coaches, but recent coach meets had shown a profit. The Hut Fund had reached £37.19.6d. In conclusion Ken reminded us to keep ordinary subscriptions separate from Hut Fund donations.

Phil Falkner, the Meets Secretary, spoke of a good past year, in which all the meets had occurred (in some cases at a substitute rendezvous), and recalled that the favourites would be repeated this year. Two coach meets had to be cancelled and on another only a 14-seater was filled. This had led to a loss of confidence in Great coaches, with consequent falling off in bookings. He had had to be drastic to remedy this, and although the Own Silin, Craig Cowarch and Christmas coaches had shown a loss, most of it had been recouped by the Llanberis and Ogwen meets, leaving a net loss of £3.0.0d. for the year. As he had found a cheaper bus company, prospects were bright.

Next we came to the election of officers. George Sutton, Ken Griffiths and Phil Falkner were re-elected. Clive Webb was elected Secretary, and Joe Johnson became our librarian after a somewhat unconstitutional self-proposal. There were no fewer than fifteen nominations for the committee, and eventually Ken Wright, John Welbourn, Ron Deardon and the Cullans were elected.

Under "Any Other Business", Joe Johnson raised the question of a Club badge as a means of raising money for the Hut Fund. After some discussion this proposal was defeated by a narrow majority. Next Dick Brown admitted writing last

December's notorious anonymous letter - as a means of provoking a correspondence rather than as a serious complaint - and apologised handsomely for any offence caused. This was greeted with loud applause and led to a general discussion of the Newsletter during which some very kind things were said about it. It turned out that no-one felt that his literacy had been questioned (except two drunkards whom no-one took seriously!), and the various votes of thanks which followed included those to a much-relieved Editor and to the retiring committee.

A fine photograph of Snowden, by Geoff Gibson, was raffled and the proceeds swelled the Hut Fund to £1.10.6d.

As the finale, the much-appreciated retiring Secretary proposed numerous toasts which were drunk in a tankard of the now traditional rum and orange.

D. C. C.

Coniston, April 16/19th

Last year's attempt to run a coach to Coniston fell through, which was a pity, since it is an ideal spot for climbing, walking or just admiring Nature. Dow Crag is steep, clean and exposed, and occupies a perfect setting, in short it is wholly delightful. There is plenty of charming scenery to look at, and there are lakes for swimming in. All this for only 10/- deposit (to P.R.F. pleas).

Stanage, May 1st/2nd.

Most of you will already know Stanage, but newcomers may like to know that it is one of the most extensive gritstone edges in the country. There are scores of excellent routes of all standards, many of them of unusual length for gritstone. The meet will be led by Clive Webb, our new Hon. Sec.

Apropos of last month's Editorial, you may be interested to learn that on February 24th a gamekeeper was sent for trial, accused of setting a spring gun which went off and injured two ramblers. In fairness it must be stated that the keeper expressed regret and claimed that the loading of a live cartridge instead of a blank was accidental. Nevertheless this is a serious case. There is a limit to what may be excused or tolerated.

"Northumbrian Climbing".

For anyone interested in exploring new territories we can recommend Northumberland and the Border for both walking and climbing. The Cheviot country is some of the wildest and loneliest in England.

The climbing grounds are four in number. Three are described in the N.M.C. climbing Guide "Some Northumbrian Rock Climbs". Two are sandstone outcrops, Wanney Crag near Kildale and Simonside near Rothbury. Both can be reached from Newcastle on Tyne by bus for a day's outing. The walks to the crags (1-1½ hours) are extremely attractive, though rather bleak at Wanney. Both outcrops provide climbs averaging 40 feet in length. The rock is softer than gritstone, but sound and interesting.

Crag Lough (High Shield Crag) is an excellent stretch of Whin Sill and should be visited by every gritstone climber - it is hard and relatively smooth rock. Again, this crag is within reach of Newcastle for a day's outing, but if a longer period is desirable a Y.H., Inn, Guest House and N.M.C. climbing Hut are all within easy reach of the crag. Forty-six climbs are listed in the Guide, but doubtless more have been climbed since 1950, when the Guide was published. The Girdle Travers of the Central Buttress is highly recommended - 175ft. average length of climbs is 60ft., some of its longer are over 100ft. By the way, the Barnsley Boys run a bus at least once a year to Crag Lough for a weekend.

Incidentally, Hadrian's Wall runs along the top of the Crag and various well-known Roman forts lie in the vicinity. Any archaeologists amongst the Vikings?

The fourth main climbing ground, not included in the Guide, lies on Cheviot side, at the head of the College Valley. The usual approach is by bus to Wooler and an 8 mile walk over Cheviot country to the College Valley, camping by the highest farm. The chief granite outcrop lies about an hour's walk from here. A second approach, for those with transport, and courage to face the forbidding notices of the late Sir Arthur Sutherland, is up the valley road to the farm.

These climbs are greater in length than those on other Northumbrian crags, and have as one of their assets the surrounding bleak hag - (not female) ridden Cheviots. Excellent forays can be made over the Border in search of fields of wild mushrooms in September, but the nearest strong

drink lies a good march away.

Jack Wolfe is quite a mine of information on the excellent Border walks, and Brian (Brian Cook, the authoress' Husband - Ed) will give any information possible (illustrated by numerous photos) about the climbs for any interested Oread.

M.C.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Sir,

I had always thought Albert Shutt sufficiently appreciative of the subtleties of life to discriminate between abuse and Harry Pretty's speech at the Annual Dinner (to which I understand his remarks refer). Tut, tut, Albert - the guest most "abused" on that occasion said to me recently "If ever I cannot get to the Oread dinner as my club's representative I hope someone will invite me".

As fo Pretty - a scoundrel, a villain of the deepest dye - that goes also for his friends Richard Brown, Chunky Cartwright and others; a list nearly as long as the list of members! - Pretty has led the club on its retrograde path ever since its second meet. I can only conclude that those who have willingly joined a club in which such a man and his friends exist must themselves be persons beyond saving!

Penlington also; a thoroughly desrespectable character - he ought to be banished to Germany, or Holland - I nearly said the heart of Lincolnshire, but there are deeps to which I will not sink! Forgive me, I just fell off my chair chuckling about our "fount of all wisdom" - I haven't laughed so much since Falkner was washed out of his bag on the Berwyns. Also I remember sitting on a writhing mass of canvas which had once been a tent containing a member of the Metropolitan Police - truly, such a person has no friends. But the charming girl fogave me.

Finally, Albert, you might have accused me of many fullb loaded sins, such as embezzling the club funds, or corrupting the morals of its fairer members, but self-righteousness is a tepid charge. You'll have to do better, Albert; you nearly offended me. Stretch your imagination a bit!

George Sutton.

(Albert Shutt has not replied to the challenge made by the Editor in last month's Newsletter.)

Dear Sir,

I am writing as a student of White Hall, and would like to send an appreciation of the instructors who, I believe are Oreads.

I arrived in Buxton on Feb. 25th with another student and two instructors. One was an Oread but the other would not identify himself. We were soon installed in a Spanish bar, and hours later we arrived at White Hall to the jingle of bottles.

Saturday found three inches of snow outside, and parties were quickly dispersed to Shale Gully and to skiing. I was in the Gully Party. One member wore a boater which stopped falling stones from hitting the last man. In the afternoon we went skiing. The least said the better, although Dick Brown made a ski jump with humorous results. In the evening a slide show by Messrs. Brown and Falkner was followed by a social evening. Stan Moore and Dick Brown did a complete traverse of the lounge. Stan came off, but I distinctly saw Dick Brown using chewing gum and sticky paper.

Sunday proved amusing to the Gully Party. An instructor went crapons over balaclava down the Gully but was not hurt. He said it was a controlled glissade. Over lunch certain Oreads gave imitations of penguins which were very good - at least everyone had indigestion that afternoon.

I should like to thank the members of the Oread concerned for some very useful instructions throughout the weekend.

D.R.Hammond.

O R E A D S I N S H O R T S

An Oread was recently heard to say to George Sutton, "I don't know, George, how you can possibly afford to visit Fort William and South Georgia!".....The A.G.M. was followed by a midnight visit to Birchen's Edge. A large number of ascents were accomplished in safety. Sunday was marred by a mishap - Keith Warren (a guest of Mark Hayhurst) jumped off a wall and sprained his ankle Apologies for the premature confinement of John Welbourn ("O-in-S", March issue). The happy event is not expected for some weeks yet. Ruth Bottger, John's girl-friend, expects to be delivered of an appendix before her better half.....Doug Cullum has acquired a

500 c.c, B.S.A. motor-bike and sidecar. A new campaign to "keep death off the roads" is expected shortly.

P R O F I L E.....KEITH AXON

I first met Keith when I was writing up the Guide to Brassington Rocks. This was just before I joined the Oread in 1949. Quiet, self effacing, his was, nevertheless, a character which subconsciously impinged upon one's memory. His progress as a climber was rapid, and throughout the "Guide book" days of exploration no-one (excepting Dave Penlington) proved more bold in the production of hard new climbs. Who can forget his brilliant first leads of such routes as Horatio's Horror and Nelson's Nemesis on Birchen, or his pioneering of Gardon's Gate and the "Oread" climb on Gardon's Edge, or how he and Nansat rolling cigarettes from their carefully stored tin of "nub ends" whilst sitting on kerbstone waiting for a bus or a hitch.

I remember his brilliant teaching of youngsters at White Hall, his patience and kindness with them; how he and I chased vainly a lamb which was stranded in the overflow slipway at Goyt Reservoir, the speed he showed on the descent of the Alasdair Great Stone Shoot during the Oread expedition along the Duth Ridge; and that remarkable fall from the crux at the overhanging breast of Emma's Dilemma on Birchen's Edge; a fall that was a classic of its kind - two perfect somersaults in mid-air and a perfect landing in the true tradition of the Airborne Paratroopers to which he once belonged.

A great climber Keith, a fine character, a loyal friend and above all a true lover of his fellow men and the "underdog". One of those who made the "Oread" a club of standing and respect.

E.B.

George Sutton writes: "I went as Oread M.C. Rep. to the Barnsley M.C. Dinner and replied to the toast "The Guests", Tony Moulau was Guest of Honour. Another friend of the Oread, George Booson, was representing the Karabiner. The dinner was held in a large room at Marquis of Granby, Bamford, about 45. Members and guests being present. Other speakers were the President of Barnsley M.C. & Peter Wright. A very pleasant function indeed.