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Editorial.

KNOWING THE ROPES.

Easter brought what is by now almost the customary tragic series of climbing accidents. (These included that in which the unfortunate victim fell, according to the papers, from Kern Knotts and landed on Scafell - an extraordinary lateral gravitation of some three miles.) In one case a second man fell sixty feet and was killed, his leader being unable to maintain a secure grip on the medium weight nylon on which they were climbing, in spite of efforts which resulted in serious laceration of his hands. On a less grave occasion, I myself was deposited blunt end foremost at the bottom of Black Crack at Cromford, although my leader had a good deal of flesh stripped from his fingers and palms in his attempts to hold me. We were climbing on medium weight nylon.

Last year there were a disturbing number of instances in which leaders fell, on the same kind of rope, and were killed due to fraying of two strands of the rope, the remainder being insufficient to withstand the strain. Full weight rope would have saved them.

The objections to medium weight nylon, on this showing are twofold - its thinness and its smoothness. The former increases the danger of snapping following abrasion by rock flakes, etc., and in combination with the latter makes the rope difficult to hold when any strain is imposed. The advantages of nylon over manilla are many - lightness, absence of deterioration on ageing, negligible effect of wetting, resistance to wear, and so on. But there appear to be perils involved in the use of the medium weight variety, and it is my humble opinion that the extra safety gained by the use of the full weight material is well worth the extra weight and expense. False security is worse than none at all

A CRAGSMAN IN THE PLAINS

Do we appreciate fully the value of hills and mountains when we spend almost every week-end and holiday period climbing over and around them? Stay away from them for a month or so and it is then that one begins to recognise truly the pleasure that they can give.

Suppose that circumstances make it impossible for one to see the very slightest undulation in the countryside for miles around - surely it is then that the full value of the high places is appreciated. Suppose that the circumstances also throw one into contact with hundreds of people who know nothing of the joys to be gained from rock, ice and snow. Then is the time when the strength of companionship of one's fellow climbers is fully realised.

To find a mountain lover amongst a crowd of jazz, dance and cinema-crazed men is like coming upon an oasis in a desert - stimulating and refreshing. The talk of days spent on the crags, the pipe going well and a glass of ale at one's elbow serve to help bring back some of the bliss to be gained in the high places, to set the mind at ease and fill one with the yearning that only the climber knows.

May it be soon that the writer returns to his fellow 'Oreads'.

P.W.G.

A DAY ON DOW CRAGS, CONISTON.

Our leader Richard was a determined bod of massive calves and a fixation that the weather was of no importance, that vertical slopes should be taken at the double, and that speed was essential. Myself, as second, was determined that these things were subject to modification, and our third in the party, Julie, was notable for her indifference to verticality, rain and mountaineers in general. And in fact, Richard and I were always in doubt as to her presence with us at all, except to point out the errors of our activities.

But enough of these psycho-analyst meanderings; it was, as they say in all good accounts, a day in August 1953, when

we left the Coppermines Hostel, Coniston, to attend to the matter of Dow Crag. I cannot say the Warden viewed our intentions with anything to a Jonah-like aspect, and what is more he all but proved correct. As we crossed over the moor and walked up the walna Scar road, the wind became gusty; soon, as we came to the bridge where the track turns away to Goats Water, the rain became horizontal, a phenomenon not unknown, I believe, hereabouts. However we continued. Richard by this time had bounded away into the mists. Julie and I were accustomed to this activity and proceeded onwards. I was confident of Richard's return anon, since I carried the food in my rucksack.

On our way up the track we were asked by two local lads to carry up some slates to the Climbers' Hut, and I being an Oread member could not refuse; in fact my enthusiasm resulted in the party proceeding with two slates apiece. Our instructions were that the hut was to be found a quarter mile forward, and thinking how we would be able to use the hut for a brew up, we carried those slates cheerily. After awhile we arrived in the area indicated. To our horror we realised the hut required rested 200-ft. higher on a waste slate heap. At this point Julie enquired apropos of nothing in particular why we had carried the slates to a hut apparently resting on slabs of the stuff.

But worse was to come. On the door of the hut we found the mystic legend 'PRIVATE - KEEP OUT.' A perfectly good yale lock reinforced this decision. By now, the wind had increased to gale force. So had Richard's Language, but 'Mes Enfants', we proceeded. An inspection proved that the roof was off, and a tarpaulin was used to make a shelter and the brew-up proceeded.

After gazing at the brooding face of Dow Crag, my heart sank. (Nobody has yet discovered what goes on in Julie's heart.) Richard appeared to ignore the elements, and dashed about like a released flying saucer. And so we came to the foot of C Buttress, Ordinary Route, 370-ft., Difficult. We were, using, for the technical experts, one hundred feet of full weight nylon and one hundred feet of full weight manilla. So Richard began the ascent and matters proceeded much as usual. A feeling of unreality overcame me after the first

hundred feet. Below, Goat's Water lashed itself into a fury, the wind boomed around the crags, and the mist swirled in a Danse Macabre around the buttresses. At one point on an exposed corner, Richard and I performed a Pas de Deux on a sodden six inch grass ledge, with a cavern below us which seemed to me to lead straight down to Hell. According to Richard it was a slightly exposed position; alas, I feared there was worse to come.

It was at this point a gust of wind rocked me on the stance. Mentioning this to Richard, halfway up an exposed slab above me, he replied, "what wind?". I was consumed with admiration at such indifference to the elements. We arrived at Lasy Terrace. Julie as third came as usual with fluid movements and placid expression. The second (myself) tottered away to a corner and lit his pipe (only ten matches this time).

We decided to descend by Easter Gully - "two moderate rock pitches" (I quote). On coming to the first rock pitch, Richard became human and went pale. I went pale also, but this passed unnoticed since it is my natural rock-climbing expression. Richard then took to the grass and rocks above. This proved desperate, thus we returned to contemplate Easter Gully. Now I have an almost pathetic faith in guide books, and this led me into some interesting positions. I became determined that Easter Gully would go. Richard had by now become convinced that we were descending some unknown severe placed at our feet by the local fates. Nevertheless, one rock rib, smooth scoop and a little watercourse later, I stood in the bed of the gully.

Richard, on joining me, denounced all climbers who descended by watercourses. I myself was indifferent. Julie complained of the cold. As we stood in the depths of the gully, a shriek rang in our ears. Pulling Richard off his knees, I assured him it was only the wind. I then ruthlessly dispatched him to descend a simple cave-pitch. It may well be that out of the depths there came a cry, "Joe, hold me!" I did so. Silence descended. Julie and I gazed at each other, meditating on whether Richard had left us for further adventures. But no, a series of groans, yells (and could it be curses?) came from the depths. Alas, the ingratitude of man, Richard was suspended one foot from the ground!

This matter corrected, Julie joined him, and once more despairing cries rose from the depths. Was this Purgatory? And then it was my turn. One look at the slimy wall that went down to the bottom of the cave was enough. In Vibrams, as last man, on an unknown pitch, I abseiled down to rejoin my companions. Richard now began to elaborate on reversing waterfalls as exits, and so we came to Goat's Water again.

My friends, do you realise the point of this story? Had we turned left at Easy Terrace instead of right, an easy rock staircase would have led us down to the foot of Great Gully. But we turned RIGHT, and thereby hangs a tale!

J.J.

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

Dear Folks,

You probably thought, if you ever noted my absence, that I had forgotten all about the Oread. Not so, who could? However as you were careless enough to arrange your Lakeland meet of 1953 for other than my free weekend, you did not have the pleasure of my company.

Now further and greater distance separates us but mountaineering is not forgotten. Only 30 miles away is Mount Cameroon, 13,350-ft., a temporarily quiescent volcano. Two attempts since Christmas to get up it have been foiled. The first time four of us slept at 10,000-ft but we had insufficient time. The second attempt saw me prostrated with malaria at 6,000-ft., leaving me with plenty of time to watch the antics of the chimpanzees while the others went to the top. An attempt to get up must be made fairly soon, otherwise the rains will be starting in real earnest, and that will be the end for the season. We have already had quite a lot of rain but when it really gets going 200 inches or more is the usual in about six months.

Cutting paths through the jungle is 95°F and 100% humidity makes one long for some of those zephyr breezes one gets on Kinder in January not to mention the cosy

bivouacs and camps by Gardoms and Froggatt in February.

All the best, see you next year.

Norman Dobson.

Dear Charlie,

A note from Germany to let you know where I've got to now. There is little I can add to what Dave wrote about the place - flat as a pancake and the highest thing around here is the sausage in the cookhouse. The nearest rock worth the name is a day's train journey away.

Moves are being made at Command level to establish a branch of the R.A.F. Mountaineering Association over here in 2nd T.A.F. It is hoped to arrange trips to the Alps and also provide tuition for any interested service chaps over here.

Hope to be over in July-August and shall try to get up to Skye with Eric and 'Shower'. Think the Vice Pres. will fritter his time away up there if I don't come and dig him out of his pit in the mornings.

Good climbing to all the boys - let me know if anyone does the 3,000 fourteen footers!

Paul Gardiner.

(Paul's address is: 4131997 AC. Gardiner. P.W.,
93 Squadron, R.A.F., Jever, B.A.O.R. 25.)

THE OREAD JOURNAL

The Committee has appointed D.C. Cullum Editor of the Oread M.C. Journal. Keith Axon has put in some good work on this project, but has been unable to get the Journal printed at a price the Club can afford. (It remains to be seen whether his successor will manage to do so.) In spite of Keith's efforts the existing Journal Typescript is rather undernourished and to some extent obsolete, so you are invited to send along to the new Editor, any suitable article, story, poem, new route, or other contribution.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETS

Froggatt - Curbar Meet. April 3rd/4th.

This meet was blessed with fine weather and was well attended by many Oreads and their friends.

Froggatt Edge provided the main source of attraction on both the Saturday and Sunday, but Curbar was visited by only about half a dozen people. As usual the local pubs were visited on the Saturday, the Grouse Inn bearing the brunt of the assault. The next day, spring flowers, were to be seen blooming, on top of Froggatt Pinnacle, of all places. And curiously enough, they were growing in a pot.

As far as climbing was concerned, many fine routes were ascended including a fine lead of the Brain route on Curbar by Ernie Marshall. The piton climb was done by Nat Allen, not a member of the club but a friend of some of the members. Also involved were Derrick Burgess and Fete Janes. An expensive business this piton game, for at least two pitons were left in the crack.

All in all the meet was highly successful, and we left the Edges in the bright sunshine of an early spring evening. It was however a pity that Curbar was not visited by more people. This edge has much to offer, so next year, I propose (if this is not unconstitutional) that there be a Curbar-Froggatt meet.

J.F.

Coniston, April 16th/19th.

Our coach arrived at Torver at about 2 a.m. on Good Friday, and the meet commenced with the leader failing to find the right track for Tranearth, the hut belonging to the Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club at which six of the party proposed to stay. However, after excursions by reconnaissance parties, the hut was located, the hut-dwellers established themselves, and the remainder lay down where they stood on the hillside and went to sleep.

The trilling of larks roused us early, to a day of glorious sunshine in which we basked until a late hour (see Vol. 1. No.1. of this Newsletter). At length, unable to endure the heat of sleeping bags any longer, people began to get up, pitch tents, brew up and depart for the rocks.

The principal activities of the holiday took the form of climbing on Dow Crag. The Hayhursts, with Keith Warren, came up from Coniston; Mike and Roger Turner, Jim Winfield, Denis Badcott, John Ashcroft and Gerald Parsons emerged from the hut; the Cullums, and Colin Morris and Barry Cook with their respective lady friends converged from various camp sites. On Friday night Geoff Thompson and his brother turned up, stayed for a day and then disappeared northwards bound for Glencoe. Mike Moore, Lawrie Burns and John Welbourn, camping in splendid isolation over by Gimmer, did not show themselves among the common herd. At all events, the main buttress routes were all climbed, together with Giant's Crawl, Gordon and Craig's (a magnificent route) and a host of shorter climbs. The Crag was fairly swarming with Oreads.

The weather was perfect, except for a few passing clouds on Easter Sunday; lambs, whose number increased daily, frisked about the hillsides; the rocks were dry and, in the sun, warm to the touch; the grass looked incredibly fresh and green, as did the budding larches and rowans; the nights were clear and starlit, with a radiant full moon. These glad phenomena induced in every member of the company a corresponding spring-time lightness of spirit, which was reflected in the gaiety (not to say frivolity) of the gatherings in tents, in Tranearth, where the six hut-dwellers were royally entertained, and, let it be admitted, in the inns of Coniston and Torver.

Apart from rock-climbing, one activity of note was a "fourteen peaks walk" on the Sunday, by messrs. Cullum (the male one), Morris and Parsons, who went to Scafell via Coniston Old Man, Swirl How, Wrynose Pass, Crinkle Crag, Bowfell, Esk Hause, and all points west. The return route went across Eskdale, down Moasdale, the Duddon valley, and

over the Walna Scar track. They reached camp at 1.10.a.m. on Easter Monday. During the latter part of this excursion, another of a different kind was taking place - a sobering-up expedition up the Old Man, led by Len Barlow of the L.C.C.C. Monday was, understandably a day of rest and reflection.

When we departed, still in perfect weather, all agreed that it had been a very happy meet. Our only regrets were that we had to go home, and that there had not been a larger number of members to share in our enjoyment.

The hut-dwellers wish to thank the L.C.C.C. for accommodation at Tranearth, and for making their stay such a pleasant one.

D. C. C.

Marsden - Rowsley, May 15th/16th.

Last year's Marsden - Rowsley walk, when Betty Wright became only female Oread to have done this marathon, was a great success, and so it is being repeated. There is a plan, incidentally, to start the walk at Colne for those who found the original too easy. Bob Pettigrew is the meet leader.

Sam Silin, June 5th/7th.

This rendezvous proved so popular last time, that it was decided to hold this meet during a long week-end. At Sam Silin one may walk, climb, swim, fish or browse. The Wrights will lead the meet, for which a coach will be run. And don't forget White Hall for the last weekend in May.

TOP PRESS - We have just learnt with regret that the fatal accident on Tower Ridge of Nevis at Easter involved party of our friends the Polaris M.C. The body of Mrs. Betty Emery was recovered by six Oreads (Sutton, Pretty, Cartwright, Falkner, Pettigrew and Jones), with members of the Rock and Ice Club and Polaris M.C. We offer our sympathy to relatives and friends of the dead woman.

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

* Several informal meetings have been held in the "Bell" in Derby. All members and friends are welcome, every Tuesday evening.

A fine display of pegging technique was given at Froggatt on April 4th, by Nat Allen, aided and abetted by (among others) Ray Handley and Derrick Burgess. The show, which was watched by a large and appreciative audience; provoked Pete Janes to utter a Quote of the Month: "Just like climbing a lavatory chain, isn't it?"

George Sutton has succeeded in arranging transport for his expedition to South Georgia next winter.

The perennial question of a Club badge has been revived once more. R.A.B. (Brown, not Butler) has produced an original design featuring Nelson's Monument on Birchen's. As the voting was close on this question at the A.G.M., perhaps you would care to communicate your views to the Editor.

Clive Webb was unfortunate enough to sprain his ankle during the Froggatt meet. This is the second meet in succession at which such an accident has occurred, and members are urged to avoid further repetitions.

Geoff Thompson, Clive Webb, Ron Dearden, Roger Turner, Mike Turner, Bob Parslow, Old Uncle Phil Falkner and all spent a pleasant day at Black Rocks and Brassington on April 12th.

Coming out of a pub (it was closing time) in Coniston, Jim Winfield was greeted by two young ladies who asked, "Are you in the Orrid Mountaineering Club?" The girls names turned out to be Cyn and Virginia - an ill-assorted pair, by the sound of things.

Many Oreads spent Easter in Scotland, Messrs Gibson, Cole, Webb, Dearden and Parslow camped in Glencoe, Harby, Fisher and Burgess stayed at Lagangarbh; and the South Georgia party camped on Nevis. It is hoped to include

reports in the June issue.

Remark by small boy lying at the top of Froggatt, watching Ron Dearden following Marion Cook up a climb: "Oh, look - there's another missus coming up!"

Have you paid your 3/- for Newsletters yet? Better post it today, or you won't get any more. The address is: D. C. Cullum, "Craigmere", 11 Cavendish Road, Gorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester 21.

PRO F I L E.....K E N G. W R I G H T

Ken was one of the earliest members of the Oread, and although not a founder member, has the distinction of being the first of the now famous "Nottingham Shower". Since he made his first appearance, at the Windgather Meet in 1950, Ken has done much to unite and strengthen the Club. A keen committee man, he did much to help the Club through the difficult period of 1952.

His love of gritstone is well known and is only exceeded by his passion for Shipstone (for foreigners - this is a Nottingham brew of ale). His gritstone associations started rather late in life, when, after being demobbed from the R.A.F. he found his way to the Black Rocks about 1946. By the time he met the Club in 1950, he was an occasional V.S. man, and several climbs on Birchen's owe their origin to Ken.

His associations with Bacchus started much earlier in life in the Naafis of England, the wine shops of Cairo and the beer cellars of Nuremburg. But do not get the impression that he spends all his time in Public Houses; like other Oreads, he is never to be found in a pub unless the bar is open. Unlike most Oreads, however, Ken does like exercise, he is a keen swordsman and swimmer, and has a passion for sailing boats.

In all Ken is a fine outdoor type, but the nicest thing about him - and on this all Oreads agree - is his wife Betty.

.. "Ezra".