

O R E 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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Editorial.

Now that winter, in the mountaineering sense, is upon us, the dismal annual procession of accidents upon our mountains has begun. Already there have been two deaths in Scotland, and a number of injuries there and in Wales. In Great Britain, almost every such accident is the result of lack of foresight, or carelessness, or downright foolishness. Foresight will tell you when the hills are blanketed in snow or armoured in ice, you will require a rope, an ice-axe, extra clothing, and maybe claws. (Yes, claws - remember that terrible Easter not so long ago when Snowdon had a 500-foot ice-cap. Claws would have saved many of the lives that were needlessly lost in those few days.) It is careless to climb a rock or pitch of even moderate difficulty unroped, or on an old, worn rope, or without a sound belay. If there is no belay, bang a peg in - you can remove it afterwards, you needn't tell anyone, and it may prevent a catastrophe. And it is foolish, for example, to glissade down a gully which runs out over a precipice.

There has been no climbing accident in the history of the Oread. Let you and me do our damndest to keep things that way, and be proud of that record.

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On page 6 of this issue is a letter from Dave Penlington, languishing in Germany. Will you drop him a line sometime soon? His address is 22855513 Cfn. Penlington D., 53 LA/A Regt., R.A.; L.A.D., R.E.M.E.; B.A.O.R. 41.

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I must apologise for the late appearance of the January Newsletter. At the time of writing (Jan. 20th) the duplicated copies have not reached me, having apparently got lost in the post. It is hoped that they will be recovered before you read this.

D.C.C.

Concluding FROM ROMSDALSHORN TO TIRICH MIR.

NORWAY'S FLAG AT 7300M.

The first Norwegian expedition to the Himalaya was in the autumn of 1907 when C. W. Rubenson and Monrad Aas attempted to climb Iabru, 7320m., in the Kangechenjunga area. On the 7th October, with 14 porters, they left their base camp and began to climb. At a height of 6000m. they were delayed by a great glacier which took five days of strenuous cutting to surmount. From their highest camp at 6900m. they made an attack on the summit. A sudden change of weather forced them to retreat when they were within sight of the summit. Snow made the last few metres impossible. They reached a height of 7300m., an altitude record which stood until 1909, when the Duke of Abruzzi visited the Karakoram with a large expedition and reached a record height of 7500m. on Bride Peak.

From 1904 until the First World War Norwegian mountaineering developed steadily. From 1935 until 1944 it went through another change with regard to technique. Arne Naess, who had had experience in the use of pitons while climbing in the Dolomites, introduced their use to the Norwegian climbers.

In the last 20 years Arne Naess has been the indisputable record breaker in Norwegian mountaineering circles. His energetic contribution to Norway's Himalayan venture was crowned with success after the 1949 reconnaissance expedition when he led the expedition which climbed Tirich Mir, 7700m., in 1950.

(Translated by John H. Welbourn from the Norwegian, "Fra Romsdalhorn til Tirich Mir", written by Per Hohle for the magazine "Hjemmet". The first two instalments of the article appeared in the December 1953 and January 1954 issues of this Newsletter.)

A GUEST'S IMPRESSIONS OF AN OREAD CHRISTMAS MEET.

When one has known the Oread Club for several years, the stories that circulate of the Christmas Meets, held at Tyn-y-Shanty in North Wales, are great in number and dubious in origin. However, I had never been invited to one, so my mind was obviously pure and untainted. A friend, who shall be nameless, decided that this state of affairs would have to be rectified, and in due course I received an invitation to the 1953 Christmas Meet, which, with a certain amount of trepidation, I accepted.

It was obvious from the start that everyone was determined to enjoy Christmas, even to the extent of climbing rocks, instead of sitting in repose drinking whatever was put in their hands. However, this is not an attempt to describe the Meet, but only to pick out the most vivid impressions which remain in my mind.

The highlight of the whole weekend was the Christmas Dinner. A bevy of Oreads plus odds and ends descended into Capel Curig and raced into an hotel, which establishment had apparently, in a rash moment, decided to accept the booking. Quiet quickly reigned, only to be broken when somebody came up for air from a foaming tankard. The meal was consumed without great incident and then, as if by magic, the whole room came to life, balloons were burst - this of course is a decided understatement; I should say the hotel was nearly split - nuts, oranges, bananas, tangerines and apples were fought for with ruthless abandon, Fisher lost his "clacker", and a high-pitched moaning noise came from the corner. This, I was told later, was a ballad concerning the deeds of valour which one member performed with the end of his cigar. After more liquid had been drunk, the bus was boarded. During the journey we were entertained in song by a member who invited us to follow him and become men. The company returned to "Tinny", there to sing "carols", drink various liquids and to stroke the beard of the President of the Mountain Club.

Many other things amused me - the visit of a man from another world, who allowed members to photograph him, ghost stories told by the light of a guttering candle, and a member who plaintively announced that he could not finish a chicken, and

when told to save it for the morrow admitted that he had not thought of such a thing.

Whilst so many events were conducted, many routes were climbed on Tryfan and other crags, all the neighbouring peaks ascended and an amazing number of activities engaged in. Even the visitors were expected to put their noses outside the door.

May I take this opportunity of thanking all the members of the Oread for such an enjoyable Christmas, for teaching me several new songs and for making me so welcome. Christmas 1955 is an occasion which will never be forgotten.

M.H.

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RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETS.

Hartington-Lathkill Walk, January 16/17.

On the Saturday there were really two parties. One including Barry Cook, the meet leader, set out from Ashbourne at the appointed hour. The second group, made up of people like Ron Dearden who work on Saturdays, and others like the Meet Secretary, who stay in bed on Saturdays, set out nearly four hours later, and accomplished the later part of the walk up the dales by moonlight. Our President and Celia set off with us, but were lost to view almost at once, and apart from a brief appearance in the pub at Hartington on Saturday evening, were never seen again. Barry found us a highly satisfactory barn for Saturday night, only one minute from the pub.

When we woke on Sunday it was raining heavily. Even when, about eleven, the rain ceased, it was clear that the meet leader regarded his responsibilities as ended with the installation of the party in the barn; he and his lady friend showed no intention of moving out. So that grand old bearded veteran, Harry Pretty, stepped into the breach, and with the unobtrusive efficiency born of years of practise, led his thirsty comrades straight to Jug and Glass Inn. Suitably fortified, we now walked over to Cales Dale and down into Lathkill Dale.

Here a halt and a meal was felt necessary, to sustain us on the final stage of the walk. The party eventually reached Bakewell as intended, having done at least 8 hours walking during the two days.

P.R.F.

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Brassington - Cratcliffe. February 15th/14th.

This is a joint meet with Loughborough College M.C. and will be led by the King of the Arctic, R.G. Pettigrew. The two selected crags are not often visited by the Club, and with their very different character they should provide some good sport. There is probably scope for pegging at Brassington. Incidentally, Dick Brown "first-footed" both crags this year.

Glan Dern. March 6th/7th.

Another joint meet, this time with the M.A.M., who are offering sumptuous accomodation. At last year's meet there was an abortive attempt on the fourteen 3,000-footers (or, as was suggested, 3,000 fourteen-footers), two luckless wretches got themselves hauled up the Grimmett, and D.C.C. was co-opted on to the Committee.

Similar world-shattering events cannot be promised this time, but you might like to try one or two of Uncle Eric's new routes, just across the road.

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ORLANDS IN SHORTS.

These were in very short supply this month, the only item being a statement from Somerset House denying that the 'G' in R. G. Pettigrew stands for "Gukkisgaissa". Have you appeared in "Shorts" recently? We want to know about your activities. Keep the Club in touch by dropping me a line.

D.C.C.

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

Sir,

I am distressed to see that you have published in the Oroad Newsletter a scurrilous and anonymous attack upon the Club, and certain of its members who are my friends. Whilst admitting that we should allow all sides free opinion-expression, I feel that there is a considerable body of opinion in the Club who have been disturbed by this unfounded and ill-informed attack, and I urge that in future, all who would write such material should have the courage of their opinions and append their names. I am, Sir,

Yours sincerely,  
Richard A. Brown.

Dear Charlie,

It's about time I let you have my present address. Bloody awful place, flat as a pancake all round for miles. In fact on looking out of my billet window the only thing preventing me from seeing the plane disappear in the distance is the local dog meat factory.

Have been getting the Newsletters O.K. and look forward to them. It certainly is good to read about the outside world. You are doing a very good job with it, hope you will continue to do so. The silly ----- who wrote the letter that was reproduced in the December issue wants --- ---- ----- (deleted by censor).

Life out here just continues day after day with very little variation. Christmas came and went; apart from a little more food it was difficult to distinguish it from any other day. One thing that did upset us very much was that the pubs all closed down - poor performance, that.

You might like to know I am in good company. An ex-Sheffield University chap sleeps in the next bed to me. He knows Dick Brown and although he's not a mountaineer we have some good nights in a wineshop down town. Drink is cheap out here and ruddy strong too.

Very best wishes for the New Year.  
Dave.

## PEAK PERSONALITIES.

The following personalities are all mentioned in the Sheffield Area Guide Book, on the pages indicated.

HENRY BISHOP (page 7) turned eccentric in his later years. On his death he left notice that he had hidden his will in a stone wall on the outskirts of Sheffield, and only a few yards from a bus stop. They're still looking for it!

ALF SCHAANING (page 8) was one of the great walkers in the Peak during the period 1906-1918. Still alive and now living at Christchurch, he has recently presented me with a fine map of the Lofoten Islands. Any Oread member going there may borrow this.

E. H. PRYOR (page 8) was responsible for the foundation of the Mountain Rescue Committee in 1927. He was accidentally knocked off the top pitch of the Long Climb at Inddow and broke his thigh. The rough carry and handling down to Crowden, with the primitive apparatus then available irreparably damaged the great sciatic nerve. Dr. Wilson Hey, after desperate efforts, was forced to amputate. The Rucksack Club presented Pryor with a car.

ERIC BYNE'S (page 10) great grandfather is reputed to have emigrated from Norway. Believe it or not, there is a place in Norway called Byneset.

HARRY SCARLETT (page 10) set off in 1939 to walk round the world, selling picture postcards of himself. He reached Naples and climbed Vesuvius, then Hitler intervened.

PETER HARDING (page 12) did his first climb in January 1944 - Sand Gully at Black Rocks, accompanied by Ronnie Lee, now Ronnie Phillips of the Oread. Believe it or not, Harding states that it took him well over an hour to do this climb. Ronnie, incidently, is the only girl to have climbed Suicide Wall at Cratcliffe.

Boyd's Crack on High Neb was named after A. W. BOYD (page 21) of the 1913 era. During the 1914/18 war he served with distinction at Gallipoli, and General Birdwood, congratulating the Manchester Fusiliers on the gallant capture of a crater, named it Boyd's crater.

E.B.

PROFILE ..... DOUGLAS CHARLES CULLUM.

When, in September 1945, Charlie Cullum was inveigled into accompanying me on a short holiday in North Wales, he could hardly have known what he was starting. With great trepidation we ascended the North Ridge of Tryfan, and a couple of days later, with even greater trepidation, we traversed Crib Goch. Before we realised it we were incurably afflicted with dementia montis. The following year, having borrowed a rope, we began our rock-climbing career with the Ordinary on the Milestone, Charlie in the lead. In the years that followed, Charlie became an accomplished all-round mountaineer, with a strong predilection for camping in remote places in any weather. In addition to doing nearly all the climbs in the Ogwen area, he visited Glencoe, Nevis, Skye and Torricon, and developed a sound snow and ice technique during a series of Easters in Scotland.

Charlie is always at his best when faced with really difficult problems. He has no time for the merely tiresome. A recalcitrant primus is hurled, spluttering ignominiously, into the nearest stream. But a pitch of steep ice in a Scottish gully, with twilight not far away, calls forth his best qualities of courage and leadership. These qualities, coupled with a superb sense of humour, have won him many friends in the climbing world.

But Charlie is not just a good climber. He is a man of many parts (and quite large parts too!). Apart from chemistry, his job, his interests include music, art, literature, photography and drinking - serious drinking, I mean, as opposed to mere celebratory drinking.

Early in 1952 Charlie joined the Oread, and soon became one of its staunchest supporters - a pillar of truly Doric proportions. On June 14 of the same year he married Mary, and his marriage brought him a new happiness and contentment. June 1953 saw the production of the first Oread Newsletter, a venture for which Charlie has earned the congratulations of the whole Club, last December's anonymous letter notwithstanding.

Perhaps the best description of Charlie is a man who for nine years has been one of my stoutest friends, and who, as the years go by, becomes even stouter.

P.R.F.