

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

For me the most remarkable feature of the Dinner was the letter signed by three Brazilian ladies and read to the assembled multitude by our President. (How gratifying to learn that the fame of the Oread has spread so far, and that our "big English sporting journal" finds readers in such distant lands!) These ladies apparently blame me for the failure of a party of Brazilian school-mistresses to climb the world's seventeenth highest peak (by the way, can you name it?). I hasten to assure the ladies that in bringing this failure to the notice of the O.M.C. I intended no slur on Brazilian womanhood. However, as their letter seems to call for a point-to-point reply, here goes.

Firstly, the pictures of me alleged to have been sold to the ladies by a man with "much hair and glasses". I cannot imagine what was the object on my chin, said to resemble a dirty rabbit's tail, unless it was a fault in the negative. The wearing of rabbits' tails on the chin is certainly not an English habit, even among mountaineers. However, the fact that the ladies were "very disappointed senhoritas" leads me to believe that the pictures were not pictures of me at all. For how could any lady be disappointed by a picture of me?

Secondly, I must flatly deny the accusation that I said Brazilian mistresses were inactive in their sport. I said "schoolmistresses" (a totally different thing, in England if not in Brazil) and I said "our sport" (which may or may not be the same thing). I have never doubted that Brazilian mistresses are indeed "very serious in their sports" and "have mucha action". But rather than give the ladies proof, as they demand, that they are not active women, I demand proof that they are.

Thirdly, regarding the claim that I am known in Europe as a fast sporteman and have much influence - this I admit.

Fourthly, a simple matter of scholarship. "Monstrum nulla virtute redemptum a vitiiis" does not mean "a monster whose vices are not counterbalanced by a single virtue", but rather "a giant (i.e. a great man) whose virtues are unsullied by a single vice". Modesty forbids further clarification of this point, but really, ladies, if only you knew me.....

But just a moment.....one hesitates to impugn the integrity of our President.....but why is the envelope containing the famous letter addressed in correct Portuguese to "Senor H. Pretty" while the missive itself commences in Italian, "Signor Presidente"? And why is one of the stamps on the envelope Brazilian and the other Mexican? Could we - all who were present at the Dinner - have been the victims of a hoax? Could it possibly be that the President's three Brazilian mistresses are not real people at all? D.C.C.

A LLANBERIS WEEKEND.....

.....by HARRY PRETTY.

In the valleys they were saying that it was a dinner to honour the name of Brown - Joe Brown & and Llanberis was agog. There was a little more to it than that, of course, but in essentials perhaps the gossips were nearer the heart of the matter than they knew.

They were saying that it was to be a star-studded night.

"There iss to be a great num-ber here tonight," said Jones butcher. "Briggs can-not get them in. It iss this din-ner at the Victoria for Joe Brown and the climbing club who climbed the mountain in the Himalaya, you know." And after a pause, "It iss a great cliff, that d'ur Arddu."

On the Friday night P.-y-G. was crammed. McKinnon and others were signing the Kangchenjunga panel in the Everest room. Charles Evans had been showing the film he made and the dining room door was forever opening to admit or eject someone. "What is going on in there?" said one. "Kangchenjunga politics," said another. There was a lot of noise.

In the hall a tired-looking youth was murmuring sadly about a new route on the Grochan to a short individual, scruffily attired, who, if anything, looked even sadder. He had one arm hooked in a sling and to all inquiries muttered darkly about Phantom Rib.

Occasionally the dark face of a Sherpa appeared, grinning, somewhere about the level of George Band's waist, and no-one was cover sure for two consecutive minutes whether Alf, the ubiquitous Bridge, was behind you, in the dining room or in one of the other rooms.

Some said there was going to be a fight for beds at Ynys Ettws, but there was a big list of those booked in and Jack Longland was going to keep order - in theory anyway. In strong moonlight Ynys and environs could well have been mistaken for a joint meet of the Racing Drivers' Club, the R.A.C. and the Camping Club of G.B., and the illusion was only dispelled on Saturday morning when the Kangchenjunga team, Sherpas and all moved off in the direction of Cwm Glas and Crib-y-Ddisgl, Alf firmly in the lead and Joe thinking aloud that it might not be too bad for Cloggy after all.

Tony Streater, after the summits of Tirich Mir and Kangchenjunga and a near miss (in more senses than one) on K2, was to be initiated in the art of "real climbing" - "and we'd better make it a good do!"

Dick Brown and Ian Brooker appeared from the direction of a tent by Cwm Glas Mawr and said they were intent on enjoying the delights of two police-women and "something on Tryfan". So Jack Longland and Alan Hargreaves took me to Lliwedd. If there had been three policemen the story could have been different.

Roof Route on Lliwedd, Stan Moore with two ladies bellowing in the bowels of Shallow Gully, and Nobby Clark being intimidated by J.L. into the swing on Garter Traverse provided excellent entertainment (not to mention a thirst)

prior to a night of serious endeavour.

Somewhat alarmingly the apparent tone of events jumped several degrees on arrival at the Royal Victoria, Llanberis - a new arena for the C.C. Welsh Dinner. The car park gave it the appearance of a diplomatic reception. There were even spectators on the side-lines, although I regard with some suspicion the report that R.G. Pettigrew arrived standing in the back of an open saloon which, coming from the direction of P.-y-P., is alleged to have driven slowly down a street lined by an enthusiastic crowd of sensation-seekers.

In the foyer there were certain static groups. In the specially-constructed basement bar there was a tremendous crowd. Any similarity to a diplomatic reception vanished somewhere between the car-park and this lower room where the bar, according to Brooker, was 25 yards long, and he is something of an authority since he almost certainly covered every inch of it personally.

Small men (I even found myself looking down on one) with large press cameras were ferreting among the crowd for personalities - "Has anyone seen Sir John Hunt?" - "Could you possibly tell me which is Charles Evans?" - "Is it true that Robert Pettigrew, the Arctic man, is here tonight?" The last of these questions is said to have been addressed to Cortland-Simpson.

One continually saw vaguely familiar faces and, infrequently, faces quite familiar, whilst occasionally one saw a face that could only be described as over-familiar.

The two Sherpas appeared, dignified by ceremonial attire, complete with tall fur-lined Tibetan hats, and very rapidly there was a steady stream of "pints for the Sherpas".

The dinner itself was very good but for the life of me I cannot remember what we ate - I rarely can anyway.

I mostly remember the eating period by reason of a waiter (or waitress) who hovered behind, continually filling my glass with an alternate succession of red and white wine whenever I was engaged with Longland on one side, or with Joe Brown and George Band on the other, or with Wynford Vaughan Thomas in front.

W.V.T. held the attention of everyone within microphone distance for most of the meal with a marathon description (amazingly well executed) of the truly fabulous Forest Hills Cemetery, Hollywood, U.S.A., interrupting himself occasionally to rush down thw room, rally a group of waitresses and return with a caravanserai bearing beer by the jar.

The speeches were of a very high order - Jack Longland, Herbert Carr, John Hunt and Charles Evans, and were magnificently timed to allow for another good hour at the bar.

The last major event of the night (or rather of the morning) was a snooker contest between the Browns - Joe and Dick - not assisted by others who were staging a times-trial around the table on a child's tricycle.

During the remainder of Sunday several other leaders fell off - from Dinas

Mot to Clogwyn y Grochan - but Brooker, Brown (R.A.) and myself contented ourselves on Carreg Wastad, on a jungly, greasy piece of verticality apparently known as Main Scoop. Dick led it easily, Brooker fought it occasionally and I had to be assisted with a shoulder on the last eight feet. As we came down towards the road a man said, "Aleader just fell off 'Brant' or 'Slape' - his rope snapped at the karabiner - but he seems all right." And added as an afterthought, "There's a party on every XS on the Grochan!"

It was the first time I'd climbed serious (or semi-serious, according to your point of view) rock in Llanberis for two years and on thinking back it seems to me that the number of climbers who consider themselves fit for Three Cliffs XS's has multiplied exceedingly in that short period - and so has the number of leaders who suddenly find that only their seconds, a nylon rope and/or a convenient tree span the infinite gap between an evening pint in P.-y-G. and a stretcher administered by the same hand.

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IN A MINING CAMP.....by PETER COLE.

Away from the bar, gin and blare
I gaze at the tropical night.
Do those same stars, weeping there,
yet give that shrouded light
which, in another world, witnesses the setting out
of youth's bravery, still furled
in sleep-bemused, devout
step, on to the glacier?

Enclosing all, the jungle, voracious
with black movement, would dispel
this stored treasure, gracious
in that ability to quell
a despair of damp, heat-sodden ways,
and make of these a boulder
to surmount with memory's days
of rock and ice, rose-tinted - a white shoulder
of rest, pleasures won.

No - in some small act,
some form, some thought,
does each day refract
the encompassing greenery, and abort
the russet ways which ever sleep
in the mind's most precious keep.

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RECENT MEETS.

GARDOM'S EDGE, OCTOBER 15/16.....by MARION COOKE.

The Saturday turned out rather cold, and most people had come prepared for a warmish night. There was a sharp frost, and ice formed on the water in the buckets. The air was so still and the frost so sudden that the leaves were continually falling from the trees overhanging the Bowling Green. Our tent was under one and we got used to it. One male member reported the next day that during the night he had heard the patter of tiny feet. Not till the next day did he realise his mistake. (Or was it premonition?) Continuous mutterings during the night - one heard across the Bowling Green, from a female member: "Darling, I'm cold. Come closer!"

On the Sunday, which was not only cold but also windy, not much climbing was done. But the party was honoured by the presence for 10 minutes of Stan Moore, who in those 10 minutes was on and off a climb - for the second time according to Stan - in this case due to a hand-hold preferring Stan to the rock - piece of bad judgment! He moved on and was only seen once more on rock. Again he retreated - properly, this time. One wonders if he ever reached the top of the crag that day!

It rained in the afternoon and much tea was dispensed in the tents.

(A correspondent reveals that during the very cold Saturday night the authoress's husband was heard to complain several times about his feet being cold. Eventually he was obliged to get up and make some porridge - but whether he ate it or used it to bathe his feet is a matter for conjecture.)

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CADER IDRIS, NOVEMBER 1/2.....by MIKE TURNER.

The meet was very well attended, a total of 31 members and friends being present. This, I think, proves that the Oread is now capable of transporting to the Welsh meets all who want to attend them. Organising the cars tends to be hectic towards departure day if everyone is to be taken.

We arrived by the light of a very bright full moon and had to restrain the President from setting off up Cader at that very moment. Phil Falkner and Ernie Phillips with their respective parties were already in residence and we were soon followed by Mark Hayhurst and passengers, and Dave Penlington and Ernie Marshall on Dave's bike. Gerald Parsons unfortunately had a blow-out and did not arrive until early next morning.

Saturday started fine but turned to rain with snow on the top later. A large number of people did the route, Dave Penlington and Ernie Marshall went in search of virgin rock and hard routes, and a few less ambitious types went walking. In the evening Pete Jones and Ray Handley arrived and a pleasant hour was spent at the local, this being better than the usual Welsh pub.

Sunday was a very fine day and most people did a little walking, with one or two climbing. The day finished with a very fine sunset, and the moonlight journey home was one of the best I remember.

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

The Guy Fawkes meet at Erward Hall was a great success. There were plenty of fireworks, of which the most notable was a device called a "Wakey-Wakey". The conventional pyrotechnics were aided and abetted by a number of Very cartridges, fired at intervals by a gentleman renowned for his Arctic exploits. Mick Gadd provided a huge box of brandy snap, which had the merit of producing a tremendous thirst. Sunday was a shocking day and those of us who spent the weekend at Mick Harby's house nearly died laughing at the thought of the rest of the party who were camping. How did they cope with those soaking tents?

Judy Handley was recently overheard in the Bell saying, "Oh, we went to Brassington. It was dreadful. I had to climb with Ray - there was no-one else there!" Other members will sympathise with Judy in her terrible predicament.

Ruth Bottger is intending to visit her family in December.

The Cookes recently attended the F.R.C.C. Dinner and reported a very enjoyable evening.

The following was found written on a menu card after the Dinner, of which a full report appears next month:

Out in Tibet
There's no publicity yet.
Hence the Yeti who
Had never heard of Pettigrew.

Well, that's your lot. I can hear you saying, "Cor, it's a thin one this time!" Well, it's your fault and you know the remedy. The next Newsletter will be the Christmas issue - if there is a next one. There's nothing on the files and the typing and duplicating of our Great English Sporting Journal take a good deal of time. So if you want a good fat Christmas issue get cracking now. You can write something - an article, a story, a poem, a letter to the Editor, a joke, a Profile, an "O. in S." etc., etc. Nothing is too trivial, nothing is too ambitious. If it's worth telling at the local, it's worth writing in the Newsletter. POST EARLY FOR CHRISTMAS!

(Just a note at the end. Tony Smith recently left some gear lying about at Bryn-y-Wern and a week later it had disappeared. Now that won't do. An Oread ought to be able to leave gear in his own hut without fear of it's being knocked off, even accidentally. If you've got his slings and karabiners, or know who has, see he gets them back, will you? And please be more careful next time.)

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