
 ** O R E A D M O U N T A I N E E R I N G C L U B **
 ** N E W S L E T T E R **
 ** A P R I L , 1 9 7 0 **
 ** Edited by Pete Scott and Chris Radcliffe. **

Contents

Editorial.....Page 1.

The Langdale Meet.....Roy Sawyer.....Page 3.

Easter Meet - Ben Nevis.....Geoff Hayes.....Page 4.

Roaches Meet.....Page 5.

On Falling:-.....Page 6.

Christmas '54.....Nat Allen.....Page 6.

Swanage '69.....Ron Chambers.....Page 7.

A Song of an Oread Warrior....."Shortfellow".....Page 8.

Declevity....."Tricouni".....Page 8.

Dolomite d'Angle.....B.K.Rowland.....Page 10.

Rock.....R.J.Wathen.....Page 11.

Lenspitze - North Face.....Chris Culley.....Page 11.

Spencer Couloir.....Don Cowan.....Page 12.

Climbing Crossword....."Speedy" Smith and Les Porter...Page 17.

Matterhorn Norwand.....Eric Wallis.....Page 19.

Miscellany.....Page 20.

EDITORIAL.

Climbing is generally thought of as an individualistic sport, but in fact most climbers seem to be surprisingly gregarious. This is very evident in Britain where a multitudinous number of clubs exist. The British Mountaineering Council has for some years held a tenuous co-ordinating role, but of late increasing criticism of the B.M.C. has suggested the idea that a National Club should be set up on a par with the big continental clubs such as the S.A.C., C.A.F. and the A.A.C.

In an attempt to find out whether a National Club is really wanted in Britain, the B.M.C. sent a questionnaire to all its member clubs. Initially only 35 replies were received, but since these came from a wide range of clubs, it was thought that they represented a fair sample. Only six clubs supported the idea and of these, five were university clubs. They wanted centrally controlled huts, guide books, rescue services, overseas expeditions, transport facilities, insurance, reciprocal rights in Alpine clubs, etc. Nevertheless they had no concrete ideas how a National Club could be set up or how the additional funds that would be necessary could be raised. Most clubs were against the idea. Whilst some would have liked some central activities, such as the production of guide books, they were sceptical about whether continental clubs would in fact grant reciprocal rights. Above all, those against the idea did not want existing clubs to lose their identity and pointed out that club members can at present enjoy huts and other facilities because of the unpaid work put in by club officials. The report comments that: "the interest and goodwill of the large number of devoted club officials is indeed an essential part of British climbing".

The verdict then is definitely for the status quo, nevertheless several criticisms were levelled against the B.M.C. Basically these were centred round the lack of publicity, hence club members are ignorant of B.M.C. activities, therefore they take little interest and often do not know the nominees to the committees. Smaller clubs have little say in B.M.C. policy and representatives of the large clubs who do have the say, argue among themselves with the result that little gets done.

Despite the apparently stuffy content of its circulars, the B.M.C. does nevertheless provide some valuable services to climbing, in the production of equipment reports (albeit too slow and too late), by voicing British views on international committees and so on. There are obviously areas where it could do a lot more, given the right kind of facilities. One such area is the co-ordination of guide book activity where soon the climber will be victim of a tyranny exercised by competitive guide book tycoons. To do this would probably require full time officials and hence increased funds. These could be achieved if the B.M.C., instead of being mainly sponsored by the clubs with a few associate members tacked on, did instead appeal to individual climbers first and foremost. It could do so by the offer of facilities and perhaps an authoritative and up-to-date magazine like 'La Montagne' produced by the C.A.F. If the emphasis was on individual membership, the B.M.C. would still be not so much a club as an association, to which climbers would be glad to belong in addition to their membership of existing clubs. In this way it would exercise a parallel role in general as the Alpine Club does for alpine climbing.

published

British climbing clubs are many and varied, but basically they can be grouped into four main categories. At one end of the scale are the senior clubs such as the Climbers Club or the Fell and Rock club with large scattered memberships, excellent facilities, considerable resources and an unquestioned, but possibly undeserved, authority. At the other end of the scale are local clubs such as the Nottingham C.C., Rimmon M.C., which have an essentially informal structure, offer little in the way of facilities, but composed of small groups of climbers with like interests, they survive on a surfeit of enthusiasm. Thirdly there are the specialised clubs - in the Universities, the Services and other institutions, which have an essentially transitory membership and an equally chequered history. Somewhere between the first two groups comes the somewhat nebulous fourth category which we can call the Area clubs. The Oread, having of course started life as a local club, has, after 21 years, now outgrown this role and belongs properly to this fourth category. Its survival up to now is evidence enough of a healthy development, but can we look forward to an equally prosperous period in the seventies and eighties? Or are we, in our twenty-first year, going to indulge in a self-satisfied bubble of complacency which when pricked will reveal a skeleton of a club composed of faded heroes, supported by a plethora of beer drinking, peak-bagging, piste-bashing, fair-weather, socialites; a sterile community in which any emergent talent is still-born?

NEWSLETTER - EDITORIAL (SCOTT/RADCLIFFE) - APRIL 1970 (EXTRACT)

~~It does seem unfair, let us check the score.~~ There can be few clubs in the country which boast of two huts; on the one hand this is a credit to the stalwarts who have done all the work to put us in this fortunate position; on the other hand it spells danger when people join to take advantage of the facilities rather than to contribute to the spirit and fibre of the club. We also count ourselves as a senior Peak District club - why is this? Presumably on account of the work done by the club in the development, fifteen years ago, of a few overgraded beginners crags, in the vicinity, appropriately enough, of the Derbyshire Hut. Also, as "Clinker" told us in March, this vestige of authority is attributable to the development work done on some vegetated limestone outcrops on the southern fringe of the Peak. Stirling stuff, but can we rest on such laurels? Modern developments make all this seem as ancient as the Gully era. The Peak District moderns generally operate outside the club context anyway, which begs the question whether the club is an appropriate institution now that everyone is mobile and T.V. has put climbing alongside soccer as an attraction for armchair enthusiasts, and whether the club is in fact a hindrance to a climbers progress - the antithesis of its original conception. This however is a digression.

To return to the point: we are a club with well over 100 members quite widely scattered over the country. I doubt if any single person can put a face to every member listed in the handbook. This may not necessarily matter, but there ought to be some common interest otherwise if we are to constantly split up into cliques we might as well drift apart into various Rambling Clubs, Motoring Clubs and Ladies Debating Societies according to taste. Too many members seem to be pleading family commitments, wittering about obtaining their "passes", rather than getting out and "knocking the crags/hills/peaks dead".

Interesting that many of the climbs on these "overgraded beginners crags" ^{Continued on Page 5 ..} are now ~~to~~ have gone up several notches in grading in the recently published "Chatsworth Area" guide to the area, in a period when climbers are using a ~~a~~ (cont'd)

THE LANGDALE MEET

ROY SAWYER

We awoke Saturday morning to find a surprising number of Oreads scattered around the campsite; such distinguished people as Ray Colledge, John Fisher, Rusty, Lloyd and a special guest appearance of Dennis Gray and Lenni. Our celebrity was unexpectedly accosted by Ron Chambers, who, with a sample of Ford and Weston's hard sales talk, sold him a pair of P.A.'s (autographed, of course!!!)

As everyone was preparing for a hard day, the sun actually began to shine, turning into, perhaps the best two days we have had for a long time.

A party of hard men made up of Derek Burgess, Pete Scott, John Fisher and Ray Colledge, in one group, and Ron Chambers, Dave Guyler and Tom Green in another, went to try their skill in various gullies on Bow Fell and Great End.

The 'B' team led efficiently by Rusty and Reg set off for the skyline ridge. We began by walking up to Pike o Blisco then eventually to Crinkle Craggs and down onto the Band; there the girls decided to end what had been quite a long day, so they continued down to the campsite. At this point there was a divergence of ways followed by the men. Rusty and Reg decided on a circular tour, with the intention of following the ridge round and descending by the side of Raven Crag. Tony Hutchinson, Dave Greenwood and myself walked over Bow Fell and down to Angle Tarn, eventually arriving at the Dungeon Ghyll, tired and thirsty, for a quick pint. Here we met Derek, Pete and John who, although they had had a strenuous day, had decided to finish off by soloing Middlefell Buttress. It was whilst we were all preparing to leave the campsite for an evening of merriment that a tired Rusty and Reg arrived, a little footsore, but very pleased with their effort.

The usual boisterous evening was spent in the Skelwith Bridge Hotel, where it was found that affluence was creeping into the club: two new members had actually dined in Ambleside!! On returning to the campsite even the noise did not keep us awake, after what had been a 'perfect' day.

Sunday dawned bright and sunny again, and the Oread was spread once more all over Langdale; from White Ghyll (where Tom and Dave did what looked like 'Knit one, pearl two' with their rope!) to Raven Crag, Gimmer and Bow Fell.

I would like to thank everyone who attended for making the meet so successful.

Footnote: May it be suggested that the Committee write a strong letter to the National Trust expressing the Club's disgust at all the "F---ing and Blinding" to the accompaniment of transistors which seems to be a regular feature of the Langdale Campsite - particularly during the night time!

→ multiplicity of protective aids. In the '50's we led ~~them~~ most of them straight through ~~the~~ ^{without much} ~~with~~ in the way of intermediate protection (No harnesses, no friends, no nuts or wires) - frequently in boots - and, at the best, a pair of Woolworth's plimsolls. ~~The~~ The Derbyshire hat was not acquired until the '70's - twenty years after the Giggleswick's puny efforts - Ed.

ea
an
Wh
of

me
Ch
Ch
ex
Jo
of
ha
We
on
Ji
wa
in
of
Be
any
and
rou

upo
eve

Ben
Ter
at
Coi
A s
fro
of
man
par
Chr
Wom
par
unt

driv

Mr.
Chr
away

AWYER

EASTER MEET - BEN NEVIS

GEOFF HAYES

Glen Nevis was bleak and white when we arrived in the early hours of Friday. Pete Scott, Chris Radcliffe and Dave Guyler arrived later and made a great effort to wake up the whole valley. When they eventually settled down I retaliated with the help of one of the children who is particularly loud of voice at 4 a.m.!

Friday morning saw the arrival of Mr. X. (see Patterdale meet report in March 70 Newsletter). Mr. X., looking a little like Chris Taylor, brought along Mrs. X., Master X. and Miss seX - Chris's sister. Then Reg and Anne Squires and Tony arrived in an exhaustless Mini Van which DID wake up the whole valley. Howard Johnson and Margaret Day who had been in the area for a couple of days turned up to tell us that the camp-site we had chosen had been a bull-ring the previous day and some tents had suffered. We all moved down the valley a little to a friendly site which only contained one 'wee beasty'. Wendy Allen and Terry appeared, Jim Kershaw kept appearing and disappearing, and Lloyd Carris was seen later. David Brady was observed throwing his tent poles in the river so that he could spend his week-end in the comfort of his parents caravan!

The weather was still dull and snowy so the most anyone did that day was to walk up the valley, through the gorge and across the wire bridge at Steall, returning by a high level route.

At the Argyll Arms in the Fort that evening we all agreed upon an early start the following day. At 6 a.m. Anne Squires got everyone out of bed and away by 7.30 and then went back to bed!

Scott, Radcliffe and Carris climbed Castle Ridge on the Ben in unfavourable conditions. Eight others - Reg, Tony, Chris, Terry, Dave, Roger Kingshott, Anne Hayes and self - took a look at the climb and promptly walked away to the C.I.C. hut, then Coire Leis to the Carn Mor Dearg Arete and so to the top of Nevis. A superbly constructed igloo was found and provided shelter for all from the "white-out" conditions. The descent to Glen Nevis by way of the South Ridge to the little visited Munro of Carn Dearg gave many hundreds of feet of step cutting on good hard snow. The main party arrived back at the camp site at 3 p.m. to find that Chris Radcliffe (surely the first male Oread to be featured in Womans Own) and Pete Scott had departed on a 240 mile trip to a party. They were due back the following day but did not appear until Monday evening - some party!

Sunday was wet. Some went valley walking, others driving and looking around the Fort.

Monday started dull and saw the departure of Lloyd, Mr. X, Howard and Margaret for home and the arrival of Paul and Chris Craddock who took one look at the camp-site and then threw away their tent pegs and joined Dave in the caravan!

eads
dge,
ay
ho,
f
or
ohn
and
the
ly to
what
t this
Reg
e round
nwood
rriving
et Derok,
d to
ired
r effort.
dge
two
mpsite
day.
read
d what
himmer
meet
ter to
g and
egular
ne!
them
lection
ts -
shire Hut
Jeffots - Ed.

Things began to look brighter and before mid-day a large group - Reg and Anne Squires, Geoff and Anne Hayes, Terry, Tony, Dave and Roger - was making tracks up to Stob Ban in warm sunny conditions with cameras working overtime. Terminal Gully on Stob Ban was climbed in rather poor snow conditions. More sunshine on the top and then down towards the start of the Devil's Ridge of Sgurr a Mhain, with hilarious attempts at glissading on the way. The Devil's Ridge proved interesting with quite good snow. A rope was put on when we crossed the bad stop. A good glissado off the peak and every one was back at the cars for 8 p.m. In the pub that evening we once again saw Chris and Pete who had spent the day traversing Bidean. The meet leader then left for Glencoe - Tuesday was wet.

THE ROACHES MEET

A small group of Oreads, plus Nat's XI, gathered for an afternoon 'thrash' on the Roaches on Saturday. This was it; the first grit meet of the year and a chance to get fit at last. Unfortunately the weather wasn't quite playing the game and starting from just plain cold arctic conditions, it deteriorated to cold wet arctic conditions. The meet leader arrived Saturday evening and promptly inflated a large igloo tent from his car engine; Burgess just as promptly installed himself in it! "The Rock" provided a pleasant venue for the evening. A general misunderstanding over closing time resulted in the imbibing of a steady gallon and luckily a school party, camped nearby, rallied to lift Mick's car out of the ditch where he had inadvertently parked on the way back.

Next morning dawned bright, and after extracting Chris Radcliffe's car from axle deep mud, an attack was made on the crag. Hen Cloud was pleasant in the sun and Ron, Burge etc. made the most of it before the afternoon's downpour set in. Numerous Oreads gathered on the Roaches, and although climbing ability seemed to have suffered from the previous night's activities, most of the classic routes were done. As the snow started to fall, Chris Radcliffe and Peter Scott were seen spinning wildly below the main overhang as they carried out a trade test on Derek Carnell's "Dyna climb" prussikers. The snow turned to rain so everyone piled into Mick's tent before finally being evicted. All departed in the rain - the last view being of Burgess drying his plugs over a guttering primus!

Continued from Page 2 ..

The ultimate test of a clubs health in the years to come must be among the younger members who should be setting the pace. But where are these young tigers? For that matter, is the right kind of encouragement forthcoming from the establishment, or is the emergent talent being stifled by a wetter of demogoguary. Recently the committee had to wrangle over new members: questions were asked - what has he done? How many meets has he been on? There is nothing in the rule book which says that there should be criteria of this kind. Nevertheless it is unfortunate that it was necessary for the committee to think in this way. People proposed should be capable of automatic acceptance: their enthusiasm should have been self-evident. This is the essence of a clubs survival - the enthusiasm of its members. Where is the evidence of this in the Oread of today?

Well, there it is Oreads. It's your future. There has been little enough response to previous editorial views, so please now let us have some outraged comments - fire, brimstone, the lot!

ON FALLING

"Climb if you will, but remember that courage and strength are naught without prudence, and a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a life-time. Do nothing in haste; look well to each step; and from the beginning think what may be the end."

(Whymper: Scrambles Amongst The Alps.)

NEWSLETTER - APRIL 1970

CHRISTMAS '54 - NEVIS

NAT ALLEN

There was a great snatch as I took the strain and I was pulled sideways from my steps in the near vertical ice. The ice peg, which was my belay, went next and I was catapulted into space as if on a sling. I remember the gully walls coated in ice rushing past, then a sickening thud as I apparently landed with one leg driven into the steep gully snow and the other boot full of tricounis in the left side of Joe's face. This was his second bounce and I had stopped him in his tracks. Out I catapulted again, a further hundred feet. When the rope pulled me up I was semi-conscious and upside down. Painful cries from above and it eventually occurred to me that I was strangling the 'Baron Brown' as he was wrapped up in my spare rope. Somehow I scrambled back up a little, my dislocated right leg swung back into its socket and I passed out again. Later I sat up with blood running past my eyes; I felt around for "holes and bits" but, apart from the leg and a nose bleeder, I seemed to be O.K.

had been

We ~~was~~ ^{had been} stanced at the top of a 100 feet ice wall pitch on the major difficulties of Point-five Gully, trying for the first ascent. My stance was two footholds and a long channel ice-peg at nose level. Joe traversed leftwards to gain a steep ice rib which in turn gave to a nasty bulge of water-ice. He had placed two ice-pegs for protection to his right, about three feet apart, and was on the tip of the bulge trying to gain lodgement in the snow runnel above. I was thoroughly gripped as I watched the struggle, then there was a sharp "CRACK" and the whole bulge, Brown, ice-pegs and all left the "hill" en-bloc.

Nip Underwood in steep snow at the foot of the ice-pitch, 100 Feet below me, ^{was} third man on the rope. He had a good snow covered rock spike and for a second effort a loop of rope round an ice-axe that I had dropped to him. When he took the strain the sling flew off the rock spike and he rolled over, but the axe held us.

Below us the gully steepend and then ran out in about seven or eight hundred feet into the corrie. Nip was unhurt, but Joe looked as if Nat Allen had kicked him in the face! I was sitting there with a "gammy" leg so they tied my legs together and slid me pitch by pitch on to easy ground at the foot of the gully, then towed me sledge-wise down to the C.I.C. Hut - a case of frost bitten "bum".

In conclusion I suppose if Joe Brown had been a better climber we might have made it!

SWANAGE - EASTER '69

RON CHAMBERS (EXTRACT)

It was hot and the sky was blue. By this time the wives and lovers were esconced sleepily in the suntraps, Nat and I were perched on the stance of 'Thesis' our second V.S. of the day. The Boulder Ruckle far below, the shimmering sea and the rugged Dorset coast line set the scene on this beautiful day for a drama!

We looked around for the continuation of the route.

" This slab over to the right looks as feasible as anything. "

" O.K. have a look at it but be careful, it's usually a bit loose towards the top. "

I set off up the slab, nonchalantly flicking a MOAC behind a flake as I went. After a further 20feet the slab steepened into a wall completely void of suitable nutting cracks. I decided to place a peg and review the situation. The peg went in with a dull thud and I then realised just how much the quality of the rock had deteriorated during the last 15feet - the peg was useless in the event of a fall.

In retrospect I should have turned back at this point but a good corner crack beckoned a further 15feet higher and to the left and the rock friction was very good - I pressed on.

After about 10feet of diagonal traversing on very small and sloping holds I put in another peg runner, then made another delicate move leftwards and was relieved to find a really good undercut handhold at about shoulder height.

" Ah! The secret jug " I told myself, but as I moved across to bring myself into ballance, the hold and a large flake suddenly came clean away from the cliff hitting me on the forehead. I instinctively glanced across at the two pegs as I fell over backwards, as my weight came onto them they flashed out as if fired from a bow. Everything went black.

A few minutes later I regained consciousness to find myself lying on my back staring up at an angelic figure hovering over me with outstretched hand doubtless sent to escort me to the 'Promised Land'. Then to my relief the hazy figure announced that he thought I was still alive and I immediately recognised the impeccable elocution of Ray Colledge.

A crowd of willing rescuers soon arrived and I learned that the rope came tight as I was approximately six feet from hitting the ground, and that thanks to the nut runner and Nat's ability to hold me, I had escaped with comparatively minor injuries. No bones

appe
coul
alon
200f
to P
crac

Summ

of S

that
clim
curs
thos

faint
frant
last
in a

appeared to be broken as I could move both arms and legs, but I couldn't raise myself off my back. A human 'caterpillar' was formed along the 'Ruckle' and a spectacular stretcher raising exercise up the 200foot cliff organised by Don "Chuck" Whillans. I was rushed off to Poole General Hospital where it was found I had a couple of cracked ribs and a compressed spine.

After three or four days they agreed to let Les Peel of the Summit M.C., who had hung on an extra day, drive me home.

So ended a very memorable introduction to the seacliffs of Swanage.

A SONG OF AN OREAD WARRIOR 'SHORTFELLOW'

Up to Stanage, strode Our Hero,
Bold and fearless, strong and hardy,
Through the hords of gauping tourists,
By the side of jutting gritstone.

Armed with bonges, clogs and crackers,
Cramped on feet, his magic booties,
Head encased in spaceman helmet,
Clanked Our Hero to the Dangler.

Up the rock face, sped Our Hero,
Jamming, bridging and laybacking,
At the crux he paused and pondered,
Slotted nuts and then proceeded.

Like a bird, he plunged and yo-yoed,
Upside down just like a chicken,
Lowered earthwards, valiant hero,
Bit the dust, - fini-ha ha!

DECLIVITY TRICOUNTI

It was during a short walk in the lower British hills, that the mind chanced to dwell upon what is, to the mortal climber, the most dreaded of all sensations - that of falling! A cursory glance at the problem produced no more telling thoughts than those expressed by one prominent climber that

" Falling doesn't hurt - it's the sudden stop at the bottom".

However, deep in the dusty recesses of an ageing mind, the faint stirrings of something, somewhere; read or heard, stimulated a frantic search for a long forgotten definition, re-discovered at last amongst the little read pages of nineteenth century theology in a well worn volume of unknown origin.

"The fall:- The act in which it is said the parents of the human race first asserted their own free will, and surrendered themselves and the race from that state of innocence, the distinctive mark of which was childlike trust in a higher power."

The application of this diagnosis to the gender of fall under review is obvious, both in theological terminology, and at a level where the "higher power" is descriptive of "second, leader, rope or self-confidence".

Further ramblings of mind and body however, formulated an interesting alternative as to the driving force behind most, if not all of the uncontrolled descents (which are of course known to be accidental only in conscious mind). In reality, as both Von Raucher and Veducci have shown, the prospective faller is subject to deep mental stresses promoted by Freudian Motivations of a sexual nature! These less obvious connotations are worthy of deeper study!

FALLING TRICOUNTI, APRIL 1970 (EXTRACT)

Ponder for a moment the comprehensive definition of "The fall" extracted from Mr. Nuthalls "Standard Dictionary of the English Language 1899",

- "Fall" - 1. to drop from a higher place; from an erect posture
- 2. to die by plague or sword; to come to an end suddenly
- 3. to decline in power, wealth, glory; to come; to sink
- 4. to be diminished in weight or value
- 5. not to amount to the full; to decline in violence
- 6. to sink into dejection, discontent, anger, shame
- 7. to come unexpectedly; to rush to
- 8. to pass by chance, lot, inheritance, or otherwise
- 9. to become feeble or faint; to be brought forth
- 10. to issue; to terminate

Let us analyse this definition line by line as it affects the OREAD.

- 1. obvious; position 43 The HANLEY-SUTRA
- 2. can be cured; orgasm? Hayes
- 3. not enough vitamins, rich widows, Hooley; ex-president; /
- 4. obviously Chris Taylor
- 5. not John Crosse! ; lying spent
- 6. a summary of Robin Reeves, or possibly Tom Green
- 7. ex-president; Rosie of course
- 8. wife swapping ?
- 9. too much - much too much; Wendy's navel
- 10. ex-president; no comment

A cursary appraisal of the foregoing analysis surely supports the Freudian theory expounded - but should further evidence be needed, consider then the more common cries of the falling leader:

- a) "For Christ's sake hold me!" - confused motivations
- b) "I'm off!" - signifies end of union with the rock
- c) "Knickers!" - obvious

In essence then, the case is proven, confirming the unbalanced sexual urges of those who fall. Little comfort is given to these unfortunates however, who would do well to remember the words of Winnie the Pooh as he plunged from the honey tree:

"Oh! I'm flying - just like Owl!
I wonder how he stops?"

DOLOMITE D'ANGLE

B.K. ROWLAND

An account of an incident which occurred while climbing with Chris Radcliffe in 1966.

'On Dolomite faces, in perilous places,
More safety we all of us find, -
True sportsmen and shoddy - in absence of body
Than ever in presence of mind.'

Still, the mist swirls around and the rain streams down, but the hard pitches are behind us now and it's not far to the top. An easy section ahead, so onwards at top speed; the rope spins down to a companion remote and isolated.

One hundred feet of rope hanging free, but the rock is friendly and the cloud fills the abyss.

Fifty feet to go and there is a peg just above. It sticks out and looks unsafe for a pull, but I clip the ropes in to show the second the line of ascent.

Another ten feet and a steep little wall guards the stance. Perhaps a layback movement will solve the problem - but remember to test the holds, this isn't Tremadoc.

They seem sound, so step up and pull...

Backwards, tumbling, turning: two hundred feet is long enough for a prayer... 'Our Father...' Stopped !

A shout from below:... 'Yes, I'm O.K., climbing again!'

The peg fifteen feet above seems offended and leans sadly from its crack. Quickly, up to the stance, legs shaking, heart pounding.

'Climb when you're ready. Sorry about that, but thanks:...
Both of you !'

ROCK

R.J. WATHEN

No I wouldn't say he was a dangerous climber but he'd lose control of himself, get all worked up with the rock, almost personal, as if he reckoned that if trusted, it might let him down. He'd uncoil the rope at the cliff's foot and banging his hammer on the crack shout "brainless bitch "you're as proud as eternity, you've helped "twenty of my friends drop to their deaths, "yet you can't move around like we can and you can't climb up" - then, scrabbling and grunting, he would make a jump and land at the top so fast there just wasn't time for the rock to act; for his logic was simple, if he could fall off a cliff, he could also climb it. Not like another I knew, who'd coax black rock for hours, as a royal lover will stroke a girl's hair half the night (and only then dare make what in most men's repertoires are the opening moves). He'd fondle the crack with the palms of his hands, lowering each wrist in turn to feed the fingers with blood; finally when the rock lay most relaxed, glide softly upwards like a dancer. A queer thing, but the rock was almost like a woman, forgiving this one his seduction (he died not by striking, but in a snowstorm, peacefully) - and punishing that one's rape by breaking him.

with acknowledgement to STAND magazine.

LENSPITZE - NORTH FACE

CHRIS CULLEY

(EXTRACT)

In the summer of 1964 we were camped at Saas Fee, Switzerland. After climbing a number of minor peaks to become acclimatised, we felt that something of a more interesting nature should be undertaken.

A day of festering was taken and plans laid for the ascent of the Lenspitze. On the following day Guy, Martin and myself took the path from Saas Fee to the Mischabel Hut. A bivouac was made some hundred feet above the hut.

At two o'clock the next morning we began the ascent, following the route for the ridge until branching right onto the glacier and traversing beneath the face. On finding a suitable place we crossed the bergschrund and began climbing the face. Initially conditions were good, hard packed frozen snow and ice enabling us to crampon straight up,

run
was
tra
ena
fro

ice
off
hol

hav
my
inj
bad
som

fal

bet
twe

a e
don
gla

to
jus
to
mak
and

suc
cli
rid
fas
cou
bar
fli
it
six

running out 150feet of rope and belaying on axes or ice-screws.

About midway up the face conditions deteriorated, also debris was falling from the ridge above, we presumed from climbers then traversing it. The decision was taken to move together, therefore enabling us to move more quickly, however we were still being bombarded from above by chunks of ice.

Daylight was now approaching, we were climbing fast on axe, ice-dagger and crampons. I was leading, a sudden jerk and I was pulled off backwards by Martin, attempts to ~~break~~ ^{brake} failed, Guy was unable to hold the two of us. Oblivion.

On coming-to on the glacier floor Guy was already moving about having sustained only minor cuts to his arm. He had put some goggles on my face and attempted to bandage some crampon gashes in my leg; other injuries were a strained neck the glands having swollen up and a badly cut face from the ice. Physically I was reasonably well, mentally somewhat numb.

Martin was dead having been strangled by the rope during the fall.

The fall was of some 1000feet on snow and ice varying between 40° and 60°, we also passed over the bergschrund which was twenty feet wide in places.

Analysis of the fall is difficult as one blacks out on attaining a certain speed, but it would seem a fairly pleasant way to go as I don't recollect much between being pulled off and coming-to on the glacier floor.

SPENCER COULOIR

DON COWAN

For our last route of the season, Eileen and I had decided to climb the S.W. Arete of the Aiguille du Fou. At the Woodman's hut just below the Montever's track we had agreed, a little reluctantly, to allow Pete to join us as third man on the rope even though it would make us a slower party. Later in the evening Dave and George arrived and announced their intention of doing the same route.

The next day the route presented no difficulties, but with such a large party we moved slowly and it was late afternoon when we climbed the summit block. Originally we had planned to descend by the ridge to the Blatiere and then down the ordinary route, but as night was fast approaching we began to consider waiting for the snow in the Spencer couloir to freeze and then to crampon down it. However we had not bargained for the storm which suddenly began to break; as the lightning flickered over the Brevent our one interest was to get off the ridge before it struck us. To our dismay the snow in the couloir was still soft, some six to nine inches of it lying over ice. We hesitated for a while,

WATHEN

LEY

Switzerland.
we felt
ken.

ascent
took the
ome

, following
r and
crossed the
were good,
ht up,

wondering what to do - attempt the ridge or try the couloir. Our deliberations were brought to an end when lightning struck the ridge. We'd risk the couloir.

DESCENT - SPENCER COULOIR (AIG. DE FOV) - (EXTRACT) D. COWAN 1970

After fastening on our crampons we began to descend in the order, myself, Eileen and then Pete as back stop. It soon became apparent that it was exceedingly dodgy to move together, as the snow was balling in our crampons. We were ~~struck~~ off the ridge and felt a little happier for that, as by now the ridge was being continuously struck by lightning.

Darkness, hastened by the bad weather was almost upon us, and it began to snow, causing rivulets of snow to hiss down the couloir. George and Dave were still at the head of the couloir and appeared to be perilously close to being struck by lightning. I remember thinking thank God I'm off that ridge.

I then began cutting steps into the ice below the snow, but almost as fast as I made them, the steps were being filled in, by snow. When it was Eileen's turn to move, the steps were almost eliminated. She managed with some difficulty to reach a spot just above me, where she belayed.

We had no ice pegs and our belays were extremely poor, and I was all too conscious of this fact as Pete started to climb down towards us. He was having great difficulty in finding the steps and was still well above us when a shout from Eileen and a swishing sound from up above announced that Pete was on his way down and pretty fast at that. He streaked by me, feet first and lying on his back. My thoughts at the time were why doesn't he turn over and start braking with his axe, but before I could turn my thoughts into words he'd vanished down the couloir. Almost immediately, the strain came on Eileen, who hadn't a chance of holding him. She was plucked straight from her stance and went by me in a flurry of snow. There was only a relatively short length of rope between Eileen and the axe from which I was belaying her, but the shock, when it came, tore the axe from the ice, and before I could do anything about this, the strain came upon me. Strain is perhaps the wrong word - it was more like being ejected from a catapult. I left my stance and described a great arc before crashing onto the floor of the couloir. I then started to slide down the couloir, when wham, I was launched into space again, as the rope between myself and the other two snapped tight once again. How far I travelled before I hit the deck I'll never know, but the bang on landing knocked the breath from me. I was now sliding down the couloir at an incredible rate without an ice axe. This had gone, but precisely where it and I had parted company, I cannot remember. In some respects the fact that I lost my axe might have been a good thing, as I suppose I could have been impaled upon it. Then came another snatch. I left the surface of the couloir once more, came down again with a resounding crash, and felt something snap in my leg. Ah well, that's my leg broken - surprising how the thoughts run through ones mind - no sense of fear, just one of annoyance at being so stupid as to get killed in the Spencer Couloir

at the end of a holiday. Killed I was sure I would be, as I had few illusions of a gentle run out at the bottom of the couloir. If I didn't bash my head in on the way down the couloir, the ice cliffs of the Nantillons Glacier would soon rectify that.

My progress down the couloir continued in a series of slides and flights through space, whilst all the time I was waiting for the bang on the head that would put me out. I've heard it said that some people see their past flash before them under such circumstances; this was not so in my case, but all the same my mind was very active and I clearly remember thinking "Well I suppose my friends will read about this in the newspapers" and "What will my parents think". Suddenly a tremendous bang and oblivion. That's it, I thought, I must be dead. The sliding, flying sensation had gone, everything was still - no sound - no light and black as hell. No pain even. So this is death - Hell, I'm still thinking, you can't be dead if you're still thinking. Dead or not, it was still as black and silent as the grave, and I couldn't move. How long this lasted for I have no idea, but it seemed a long time - in reality probably a short time. Then I heard a shout, it was Eileen's voice. It couldn't be, surely we'd all been killed. Another shout, this time "Don, where are you - are you alright". My addled brain began to clear, and I began to realize the reason why I couldn't move, and why it was so dark. I was buried, obviously not very deeply, otherwise I would not have heard the shouts. I managed to free an arm, and instinctively probed above my head. The snow above yielded and I saw a lighter shade of darkness and felt the fresh air upon my face. It was incredible - I was still alive after falling some 700 feet and what's more, I was not alone.

Another shout, this time very near at hand. I replied, "I'm here but I can't move". I looked up to see the outlines of Eileen and Pete who were peering down at me.

"Where the hell am I?"

"You're in the bergschrund" came the reply.

"Wait a minute we'll clear the snow from the top of your pack, and then we'll try and yank you out".

"Are you two alright?"

"Yes - are you?"

"No - I think I've broken my leg".

"Well, we'll have to get you out before we can do anything".

Our
ridge.
1970
n the
ame
dge
ng
us,
r and
I
w,
in, by
t
just
r, and
down
eps and
y sound
y fast
My
aking
e'd
me on
straight
s only
rom
e axe
train
like
d a
hen
into
ped
I'll
. I
an ice
company,
axe
mpaled
he couloir
something
now the
Couloir

Eileen's axe, the only one left, was brought into play, and in a few minutes I landed on the edge of the bergschrund.

We began to take stock of the situation. What in fact had happened, was that both Eileen and myself had dropped into the bergschrund whilst Pete had shot clean over it, continuing on his way to the ice cliffs below, until brought to a halt by the rope securing him to Eileen. I had landed in a deeper part of the bergschrund than Eileen had, and the snow which we had disturbed on our way down must have followed us down and then poured on top of me. Examination of my leg revealed no obvious broken bones, but my leg felt numb from just above the knee downwards. I was then hoisted to my feet and told to stand and see how it felt. I managed to keep upright, whereupon the other two remarked "It can't be broken, or you wouldn't be able to stand". I then tried to take a step forward but crashed down into a heap. I had virtually no control over my knee joint. There was however very little pain, although this in itself worried me a little.

Although we were now at the bottom of the couloir and all still alive, the position still looked rather bleak. Here we were in the darkness, high up on the Nantillons Glacier with one ice axe and one torch between us, and a leader who was now a passenger. To make matters worse, I had also lost a crampon in the fall.

It was about this time that we heard a shout from up above and realized that George and Dave were still up at the head of the couloir. We shouted back to let them know that we were still alive and then began our slow way down. With some support from Eileen, and by keeping my leg as straight as possible, I found I could make progress without falling down too often. On the steeper parts of the glacier, Pete would belay and keep a tight rope on both Eileen and myself just in case I fell and knocked her off balance also.

We finally reached the Rognon only to experience the worst static I have ever encountered. Our hair stood on end and the axe and crampons began to hum like a high voltage transformer. We dumped our gear, hastily scrambled off the top of the Rognon and sought shelter beneath a large perched boulder. Unfortunately, the underside of this boulder was inclined at an angle, such that it funnelled a constant stream of icy water down our backs, which rapidly robbed us of body heat. Within minutes all three of us were shivering unctonrollably, but it was going to take more than cold water to get us out from under that boulder. We must have been under the boulder for an hour before the static finally cleared, whereupon we emerged, gathered up our sodden gear, and slowly made our way down the Rognon to the glacier below.

br
qu
sw
sc
ta
ev
li
wi
8
so
an

bu
re

a.
b.
c.
d.
a.
b.

FOO
The
cli
sha
of
ins
out
out
pra
thru
bre
For
slac
held

We finally reached the moraine heaps just as dawn was breaking. What a sorry bunch we looked. Eileen had obviously taken quite a battering, about the face as it was by now looking extremely swollen and bruised. Pete seemed to have got off lightest of all so far as injuries were concerned, but his clothes hung about him in tatters - he never did have a reputation for being smartly dressed but even he admitted that he'd have to get some new gear. As we slowly limped down the track towards Montenvers George and Dave caught up with us and accompanied us to the Woodman's hut. It had taken them 8 hours to get down the couloir. We reached the hut about 08.00 hours - some 30 hours after starting out. All I wanted to do now was sleep and this I did for 24 hours.

The rest of the story is a boring one of doctors and hospitals, but it is perhaps interesting to look back in retrospect and see the reasons for our downfall and ultimate survival.

In my opinion they were as follows:

- a. The decision to attempt the couloir under such conditions was wrong - but we were influenced in this by the storm.
- b. The use of crampons under such conditions made the situation even worse.
- c. The first man to fall did not attempt to retard his progress by using the recognized braking techniques.
- d. Our belays were hopelessly inadequate.

We survived because:

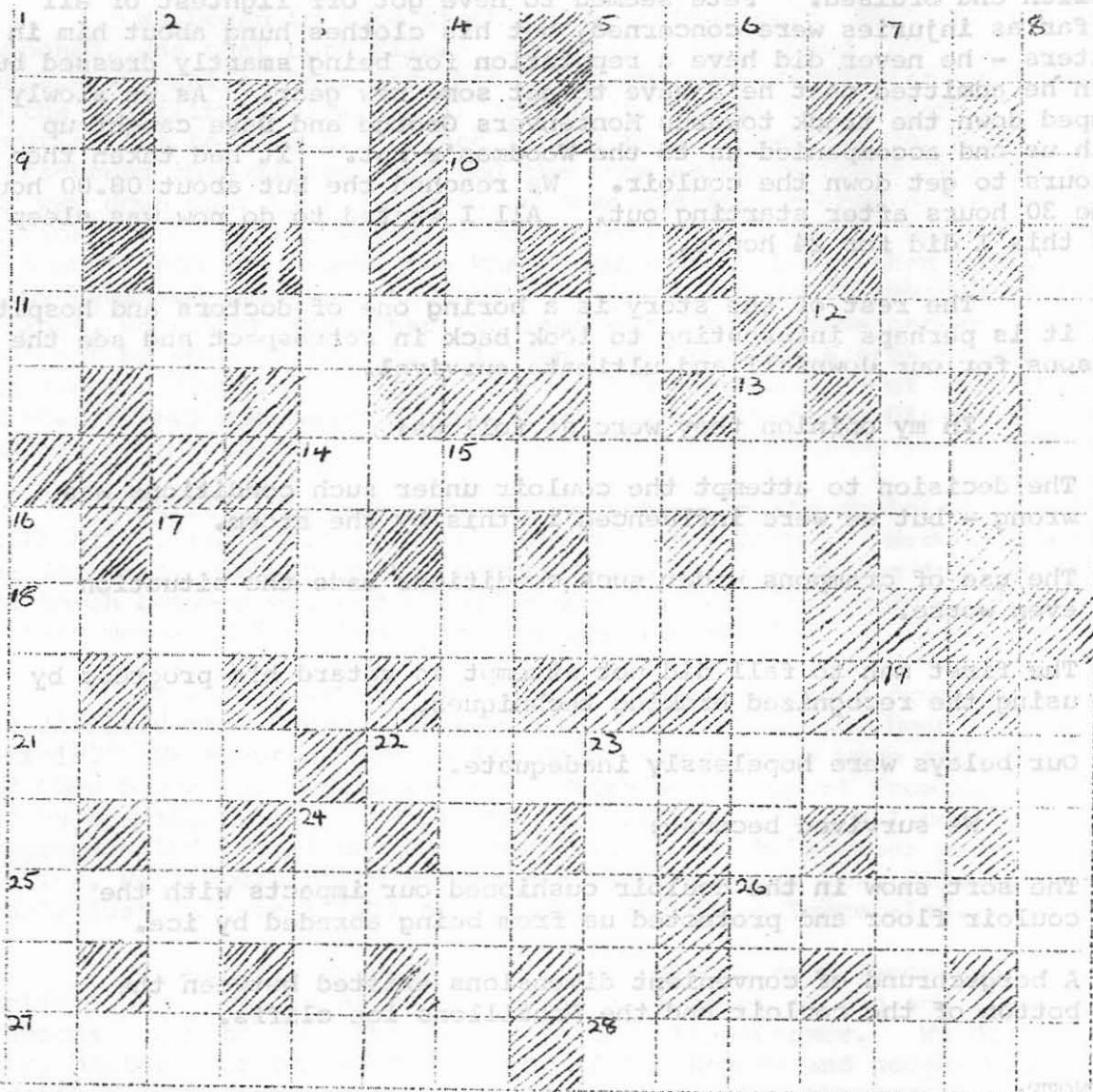
- a. The soft snow in the couloir cushioned our impacts with the couloir floor and protected us from being abraded by ice.
- b. A bergschrund of convenient dimensions existed between the bottom of the couloir and the Nantillons ice cliffs.

FOOTNOTE:

There can be no credit for sustaining a fall, yet it is in the nature of climbing that the finest achievements are separated from disaster by a razor sharp margin. For instance, on Bonatti's solo first ascent of the S.W. Pillar of the Dru, the crux came at the great overhangs above the Red Slabs. With insufficient gear to peg over this barrier, his last resort was to lassoe an outcrop of rock above the overhang and pull himself up to it. Would the outcrop itself support his weight? "One last poignant hesitation. One last prayer from the bottom of my heart, and then, as an uncontrollable tremor ran through me before my forces grew less, I closed my eyes for a second, held my breath and let myself step into the void, clutching the rope with both hands. For an instant I had the feeling of falling with the rope, and then my flight slackened, and in a second I felt that I was swinging back; the anchorage had held!"

CLIMBING CROSSWORD

(Not all the answers are necessarily related to climbing)



ACROSS

- 1. Sharp feature of the eels end in a mess (7).
- 5. 1 of 1 will give you 1 of these, so will rising too quickly (1,6).
- 9. See 17.
- 10. Confused green lady could be mythical (9).
- 11. More than moral supports for the second? (5,5).
- 12. This girl needs soft vessel and a Himalayan mountain (4).
- 14. Scrapes in the snow for a foothold? (4,1,6).
- 18. Nero's cousin is a well-informed expert climber (11).
- 21. Wandering walkers do like the dog without Rex (4).
- 22. Port be fine - but most climbers think this is better (4,2,4).
- 25. He takes good care of you - and shelters as well! (9).

26
27
28
DO
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
13
15
16
17
19
20
23
24

Fel
Edi

- 26. The feature of the horrid geese (5).
- 27. Lost in the snow? Help! Forward Bernard. (4,3).
- 28. To match completely (7).

DOWN

- 1. Times to test non-climbing equipment? (6).
- 2. Greenery without the Queen? Go! (6).
- 3. Wish to fall? It will take some time (4,2,4).
- 4. Little girl wins five nothing - lets salute her! (5).
- 5. Assemble a horse about gate (9).
- 6. Within it is warm and within it has purpose (4).
- 7. Excercising the process of a peculiar drink? (8).
- 8. A wild swinging blow - by one who works while the sun shines? (3,5).
- 13. An essential requirement on a popular alpine climb (5,5).
- 15. Sing O Pigs! You're nattering like a Shaksperian godfather (9).
- 16. Slippery fish? Watch your step! (3,5).
- 17, 19 and 9. Monochromatic Westmorland picture cards of Falstaff's assailants? (6,2,6,5).
- 19. See 17.
- 20. Fly going round before describing climbing without aid (6).
- 23. It has ten going up or down - that's my opinion (5).
- 24. Roman figure aged in common climber's complaint (4).

Here are the answers to the previous crossword published in February. If you think that was hard why not try this months?. Even the Editor can't do it!

* G A S T O N R E B U F F A T *
 C * * P * * A * B * R * * S * C
 H A D E S * N E B * D * * T * R
 R * * C * K G * * A U S T R I A
 I * * T * * A * * * * * A * C
 S P U R * * P * * I * * U * * K
 B * * E * P A S S T H E P I G S
 O R E * * * R * * W * * * N * T
 N * N * * * B * * I * * * N E O
 I N D U C E A F A L L * W * * N
 N * * V * * T * * L * * O B Q E
 G * C * * * * * N * * U * * R
 T R O U B L E * * O G * B * * I
 O * R * * O * C O T * D I D C B
 N * T * * V * O * G * * T * * S
 * H I N T E R S T O I S S E R *

EASY WASN'T IT?

6).

MATTERHORN NORDWAND ATTEMPTED IN WINTER

Eric Wallace spent Easter with Peter Gentil in Zermatt. Arriving on Friday, they climbed up to the Hornli Hut at the foot of the Swiss Ridge taking four hours from Schwarzsee because of deep snow. Conditions on the face looked good so they returned to Schwarzsee for their equipment and next day once again climbed as far as the Hornli Hut where they spent the night.

On Easter Monday they traversed out under the North Face and attempted to climb onto the Upper Matterhorn glacier. At the top of the snow/ice slope leading to the foot of the North Face they sensed a great avalanche danger and reluctantly retreated. They spent the night at the Hornli Hut. Eric writes:-

"The temperature inside the Hornli Hut was -8°C , the same as it had been throughout the previous two days, but the barometer had dropped considerably and outside the snow had been falling heavily since dawn. Visibility was constantly reduced to about 50 feet during the frequent fierce squalls. Our petrol fuel supply was running out! What should we do? At 11 a.m. Peter and I both knew! If we didn't descend immediately we should be stuck in the hut indefinitely. We roped up, with ice-axe in one hand and ski stick in the other, and started our somewhat hazardous descent.

About 9" of fresh snow had fallen, erasing all our previous tracks, and we half staggered, half climbed down the ridge. We were both constantly aware of the consequences of a slip, as with enormous rucksacks, we would stand no chance of stopping ourselves. On the ascent we had both fallen over lower down on the path and had been pinned beneath our sacs, unable to move into a vertical position without help from each other! After an hour and a half we reached the 150 foot traverse. Without the snow it would have offered no problem but now the snow slope, above the line of the footpath and on my right, continued down at about an angle of 50° to a few stones marking the extreme edge of the footpath and then, quite unneringly, dropped almost vertically over the jumbled rocks and snow below. This had been the crux on our two previous ascents and soloing we had made no less than three routes up or across it! Now I wanted to retrace the steps I had stamped out on the very edge of the drop. I unfastened my second ice-axe from my sac and hung it from my left wrist, my hand holding onto the ski stick. After Peter had got a good peg belay I precariously balanced across the traverse. Each step was quite an effort and involved reaching out at full stretch and sweeping the slope clear of fresh snow, then a careful treading action to ensure I had a reasonable foothold so that it wouldn't slide away when my entire weight was transferred to it. At each movement the axe on the upper side would disappear up to its head in the soft snow so that balance was maintained by exerting pressure through the ski stick to the projecting stones at the edge of the drop. About half way along I found some reasonable snow so forced my axe in and clipped a krab and the rope to it so that I had my one and only runner. I felt quite shattered and so rested for a few minutes

before transferring my second axe to my now free right hand. Another fifteen minutes or so and I was over the section and I thankfully dropped my sac, put in a good belay and with relief shouted 'O.K. Peter, over you come!' ".

TOM GREEN FOR BRANTWOOD

Tom is going to work at "Brantwood", an outdoor centre at Cenistone. The Warden is Dennis Gray. Dennis hopes to expand the activities of the centre to encompass canoeing and climbing. All the best Tom!

ERIC BYNE MEMORIAL FUND

The official closing date for sending contributions to the Eric Byne Memorial Fund was April 1st. The Peak District lacks good camp-sites and it is hoped that a permanent camp-site will be purchased and equipped in the vicinity of Gardoms and Birchens Edges. This is a most important development when the general trend is towards restriction of casual camping in the Peak District. No doubt the trustees of the fund will be only too pleased to receive further contributions, especially from members of one of the senior Peak District clubs.

PRETTY POSES ON "SPATZ-M" AT HEATHY LEA

Hut warden Harry Pretty representing the climbing, mountain rescue and all other Oread activities at Heathy Lea was interviewed and photographed by 'K-Foam's' publicity man recently. Naturally the trigger-happy gentleman desired that the spatz-m should appear to be the focus of the new decor at the hut and photographed Harry in various natural attitudes on the metrazenlage.

TONI GOBBI

Toni Gobbi the famous Courmayer Guide died from natural causes in March.

21ST
ANNUAL CLUB DINNER
GREEN MAN
ASHBOURNE
14TH NOVEMBER 1970.

GUIDE BOOKS

Of the New Series of Gritstone Guides it is true to say that Volumes 1, 2, and 3 are virtually out of print but Roger Turner has a few copies of Volume 2 (Saddleworth and Chew) and Volume 3 (Froggat) in stock.

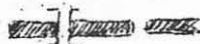
Roger also has stocks of both volumes of "Selected Climbs" and of 1/50,000 maps of Chamonix-Mont Blanc, together the majority of other Swiss and French maps as they come into print.

MAPS

West Col Productions are bringing out what appears to be a sketch map covering the Snowdonia area (1/25,000 approx. 2 1/2" to a mile) It is claimed they are a new concept for presenting the features of British hills and mountains which are important to walkers and climbers. Principally, the additional features on mountain terrain relate to precise identification of many forms of landmarks, the accurate location and topography of cliffs and access routes in cwms and along ridges. In addition to marking public facilities such as car parks, camp sites, hostels, mountain rescue posts, post boxes etc., footpaths are distinguished in four conventions, including public rights of way. A key to the maps is given below.



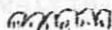
mountain ridge with major and minor summits and spot heights



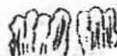
mountain ridge with major and minor cols



triangulation pillar (and summits)



steep rock face



rock face with major gully



metalled roads, MoT classified and others



tracks-paths with public right of way, footpath sign



footpath with access by landowners' permission



indistinct path, practical route



Youth Hostel



Post Office



Car park



Camping site



Post Box



Public toilet



Emergency Shelter



Telephone



Mountain Rescue Post

NT National Trust, always open NT-opening restricted

Heights are given in feet above Mean Sea Level

The representation of paths, other than Public Rights of way, is no evidence of a right of way

Grid North is approx 1° 40' W of True North, Magnetic North is approx. 8° W of Grid North (1969)

Divisions on the margin of the maps conform with the National Grid.

It seems likely that these maps are not meant to be a substitute for O.S. maps but to be used in conjunction. Two sheets sold together in a slip case £1.00 net, also available seperately unfolded £0.35 per sheet.

DERBY SHIRE PEAK DISTRICT

The Oread committee would like to know of the closing down or disappearance of any facility which has occurred in the Peak District lately, e.g. car parking space at open country access points, camping sites etc. When members have supplied the committee with sufficient details they intend to bring the matter to the notice of the CCPR and the Derbyshire County Council. The Peak District Planning Board will also be kept up to date with such information.



Please let Lol. Burns have your annual subscription before June 30th.

ADVERTISEMENTS

WANTED Partner for Chamonix interested in climbing at Difficile on some of the classic routes - contact Trevor Bridges.

WANTED Size 3 climbing/walking boots for lady - contact John Dench.

WANTED Size 8 P.A.'s or equivalent - contact Ron Chambers.

WANTED Climbing partner for mountaineer/climber in middle twenties - must be capable of leading severe/mild VS and willing to go out in any weather - suit newcomer to OREAD not yet made soft - love of cold wet rock essential. Replies please to Editor for forwarding.

FOR SALE Size 6 P.A.'s - good condition - contact Wilf Jackson of the Summit M.C.

FOR SALE Terray Fitzroy Climbing Boots, Size 5 - in new condition, £8 - contact Rosie Grayson.

THE EDITOR'S ADDRESS HAS CHANGED TO:-

92, Russley Road,
Bramcote,
Nottingham NG9 3JE

Sandiacre 4941 (Home)
Derby 61422 Ext. 587 (Work)

Chris Radcliffe:

c/o The Chesterfield Tube Co. Ltd.,
Derby Road,
Chesterfield,
Derbyshire.

Chesterfield 77211 (Work)

Ron Chambers:

755, Harvey Road,
Derby.
