



OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

NEWSLETTER OF THE OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

January 1994

I don't have a general message about meets this month except that the snow seems to be back this year, let us make the most of it, and where better than Wasdale or the Snowdon gullies from Tan yr Wyddfa. Instead I will use the Club's space to say that despite occasional strife about print deadlines etc., I have so far enjoyed doing this job as it helps to get to know a wider range of club members, and thank you all who have sent me cards and messages without receiving individual replies. I am sorry that the format of the Newsletter has been inconsistent these last few months, I did the Summer Newsletters with a borrowed printer which I later had to return, and then had problems marrying the software to a new printer. This month I have returned to single column format to match Harry's fine appreciation of Sir Jack Longland, and to try to achieve a homogeneous document. No doubt Dawn, Doreen and others will continue to let me know of any failures to achieve the requisite standard!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Summary

14-15 January Brackenclough, Wasdale
23 January (Sun) Winter Walk (Churnet Valley)
28-29 January Tan yr Wyddfa
1 February Indoor meet (Ockbrook)
11-12 February Little Langdale

14-15 January Brackenclough, Wasdale Rob Tresidder
I have booked places for 9 males and 7 females in Brackenclough, the Fell and Rock's spacious hut situated on the lower slopes of Scafell close to Wastwater. If you want to hear more about the cradle of English Rock climbing, or just want to get 1994 off to a good start, then ring me on 0629 823126 (24 hr), or see me in the Brunswick for lifts and beds.

23 January Winter Walk (Churnet Valley) Clive Russell
This meet is an attempt to vary the walking terrain and re-ignite interest in an area where some old Oreads carried out early exploration, and also a not-to-strenuous outing with an excellent lunch stop, suitable for the full gamut of ages. Such meets, at a time of year when good weather cannot be taken for granted, have been well supported in the past. Meet at the bridge over the River Churnet, just N. of Alton (m.r. 071427) in time to move off at 11 am. sharp. Reg, if he comes, might catch us up by travelling downstream on the S. bank 1 mile, crossing and circling round Alton park to re-cross the River opposite Smelting Mill (062432) and lunching at the Rambler's Retreat before returning via Staffordshire way.

28-29 January Tan yr Wyddfa Roy Darnell
The Oread must be hard up for meet leaders to be asking me. Still it is nice to be asked, Rob.

I shall be there Friday night hopefully with the fire going. I've decided that the weather forecast for the weekend will be good, fine and sunny for the walkers and climbers, sorry no snow and ice. Contact me at 15 Gwernydd, Gerlan, Bethesda, Gwynedd for beds etc.

1 February Indoor meet (Ockbrook)
February's indoor meet will be "A load of old rope" by our old friend Dennis Gray' and clearly requires no other recommendation.

11-12 February Little Langdale Peter Amour
Good grief! good month, good scenery, good valley, good potential, good huts, good pub giving good atmosphere. Sounds good eh?

If you want some of these goodies you'd better ring me, like a good chappie (or chappess)

Try 0773 826219 after 6pm. if you would like a place or can offer lifts

let's make it a good weekend

PAST EVENTS

December Committee Meeting

The committee met at 8pm. on Tues 14 Dec. The committee heard reports from officers and hut sub-committee. The point was made that all hut users should check that the Elsan toilet at Heathy Lea was left in a fit state for the next users, and the bucket emptied if more than half full.

The annual dinner made a loss of #130.00

Details of Salford University's climbing wall were received.

The Welsh Highland Railway and the Ffestiniog Railway were continuing discussions about ownership of the track bed of the railway adjacent to Tan Yr Wyddfa

SHORT NOTICES

Dave Penlington has written stating that he intends to return to Russia West Yien Shan next year (ie.1994?) and if 12 people could be gathered together then an economical flight would make a meet a possibility' for a 3 week period, or for any who wished to stay longer, a 6 week period. A round trip of 3 weeks would allow 17/18 days in the hills. Peaks are 4000/4500 metres, very much like the alps with plenty of N, faces and snow and ice, mostly unclimbed. It is also a very good walking area and treks of 3 to 7 days abound. There is very little published information so it is attractive from that point of view. Anyone interested should contact Dave on 0539 732791

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Ian Sutton, Brampton, 5 Church Rd., Old Skelmersdale, West Lancashire, WN8 8ND (tel 0695 29880)

HUT BOOKINGS

Tan Yr Wyddfa	!	Heathy Lea
Jan 8/9 Vacant	!	Feb 5/6 Trent College
Jan 15/16 Croydon M.C. 16 beds	!	-
Jan 22/23 Loughton M.C. 16 beds	!	-
Jan 29/30 Oread meet	!	-
Feb 4/5 Orpheus C.C. 16 beds	!	-

NEW HUT FEES (PER NIGHT) HEATHY LEA

	HEATHY LEA	T.Y.W.
Members and clubs with reciprocal rights	#1.75	#1.75
Members children under 16	#1.75	#1.75
Provisional members	#2.75	#3.25
Visitors	#2.75	#4.25
Day fee, use of cottage, parking etc.	#0.50	N/A

SIR JACK LONGLAND - An Appreciation

Jack Longland died on November 29th at the age of 88 and the obituaries are being written. They will remind us of his brilliant scholarship; a double Tripos at Cambridge, of his remarkable feat on Everest in 1933 in bringing down eight Sherpas from camp 6 at 27,400 ft. in blizzard white-out, a 36 hour ordeal. They will list his accomplishments and his (now) unfashionable idealism, the social awareness that illuminated his professional life as an education administrator. We will remember his brilliant chairmanship of the old radio show My Word and the lacerating wit that could outdo the likes of Muir and Norden.

But the older Oread will mostly remember him in the context of White Hall, near Buxton, as a scintillating after dinner speaker and, most importantly perhaps, as representative of that gifted group who first ventured onto the empty spaces of Clogwyn du'r Arddu. Pigotts on 1st May, 1927 and Longlands, Whitesuntide 1928 (in which Pigott also took part) were enormous extensions to the contemporary limits of the justifiable - much greater in effect than the next great leap of the post war hard men.

He wrote: "In a year or so ladies will climb the West Buttress of C. . . du'r A and marvel at the difficulties we encountered" always percipient

J.L. (together with Alf Bridge) was elected an Hon. member of the Oread in 1956 and I was delighted to make the announcement at the Annual Dinner. It was something of an occasion for a club only seven years old since also present at the Rutland Hotel, Bakewell, was R.A. Hodgkin, together with Cyril Machin, our first President and first Hon. Member. C.M. was making his first appearance since his almost fatal fall on Castle Naze.

I know for a fact that J.L. was particularly happy in his association with the Oread. With Peggy he regularly attended Annual Dinners at the Green Man, Ashbourne, and he considered the bawdy pantomimes, combined with the mostly irreverent after dinner speakers, to be a high point of his social calendar. He was also an aficionado of the more ambitious and often outrageous panto performances at Ilam Hall on the eve of the Dovedale Dash.

It is perhaps not often remembered now that his setting up of the first Local Authority run Open Country Centre at White Hall was remarkably innovative at the time, and totally experimental insofar as it depended for its general instructors on members of the local Derbyshire mountaineering clubs who acted on an entirely voluntary unpaid basis. It is inconceivable in these days of certificates and paper qualifications that small hordes of children could be entrusted to the care of young climbers whose inexperience of teaching was only matched by their enthusiastic exploration of Castle Naze and Windgather. But for many years it worked, and we all know now that it was the foundation of a veritable educational industry. He never forgot the support that he had from his "young climbers" although, in later years, I sometimes wondered whether or not he suspected that the original idealism had been thoroughly sublimated by the education machine.

Many of us who were captive to his influence and his magical ways with words and ideas will remember his genius for reducing a mish-mash of half formed opinions into a simple incisive statement of alternatives. Always stylish and enhanced by a wicked sense of humour he seemed head and shoulders above the rest. But the often laconic manner could change to withering scorn in the face of pomposity and self serving rhetoric.

All these things would be said better by those who worked with him at a professional level. At a more personal level I have always thought he deserved his eminence in the Oread for his influence on the rapid expansion of new mountaineering clubs during the immediate post war years. With Alf Bridge (exploder of myths though author of his own legend) he perceived the aspirations of those hundreds of newly demobbed with a recently acquired taste for adventure, and he realised that the pre-war rather stuffy inward looking senior clubs could not, and would not want to cope with an enormous increase in membership. It was the encouragement he gave to newly formed clubs like the Oread that brought him very forcibly within our rather lowly orbit. It is easy to forget, in this era of universal climbing opportunities, the social stratification of the climbing fraternity in the post war years. The B.M.C., founded in 1944, led to J.E.Q. Barford's Climbing in Britain that we carried in our sacks and consulted before abailing off some gritstone crag. We

had no instructions from members of established senior clubs, but were self taught from a slim but remarkably comprehensive paper back. We were of humble disposition so that a letter received on B.M.C. notepaper was the equivalent of hearing from God. But J.L., a grandee of the climbing establishment, was always accessible. He frequented the Old Bell Snack bar at lunch times and anyone was welcome to chat over a pint and cheese sandwich. He was, through those early years, a potent force in bringing together climbers from widely separated streams of social life.

In his Cambridge days he was an outstanding athlete and although by the 1950's his great climbing days were over there was still an athletic suppleness to his movement on rock. Towards the end of 1955 he drove me to the C.C. Kanchenjunga Dinner in North Wales in his not very common Jowett Javelin. He drove very fast on a dark wet night but with the instinctive skill of a man familiar with the ways of Ivan Waller. He sorted out an anarchic mob of would be gate crashers at Yns Ettws in the early hours with the skill and judgement of Solomon and, prior to the Dinner, took me off to Lliwedd with A.B. Hargreaves. We doodled about pleasantly on Roof Route and various continuation bits and it is a day I have never forgotten - not so much for the climbing as for the delight in the conversation. His understated tale of the first ascent of Purgatory with Laurence Wager in 1928, the very essence of his style, came to a splendid climax when we spotted Stan Moore trying to coax two females across the swing on the Garter Traverse. It seemed an age ago then but, on reflection at this distance, I realise that in 1955 it was a mere six years since Penlington and I first ventured onto the east buttress of Lliwedd, just five months after the Oread was founded.

ⁱⁿ Other Oreads who were present at the A.C. Centenary Dinner at the Hyde Park Hotel, the infamous occasion when one R.H. demolished Whympers original tent, will possibly recollect a typical slice of J.L. humour when he introduced us to the Bishop of Leicester (I think) in full figure - black silk stockings and red episcopal frock coat, as the master of the Alpine foxhounds. Even Janes couldn't top that.

Perhaps I shall best remember him from the 70's, and the occasional summons to walk a bit of Derbyshire - his favourite Bakewell half

circular, a pint or so and perhaps a scotch in the Pack Horse at Little Longstone, on to Millers Dale, Deep Dale and the high plateau to Moneyash (would the pub still be open?), and back down Lathkill to Over Haddon. He loved that piece of country as I always remember whenever I am within sight of Magpie Mine or other landmarks. Most certainly one cannot forget the easy casual warmth of the welcome from Jack and Peggy if, on chance, you dropped in at Bridgeway - the finest salon for serious conversation or simple mountain gossip.

That he was a man apart few will dispute. Never less than controversial and, to my generation, a man who could effortlessly reach across the age divide and make an indelible mark.

Only two things I regret. How was it that this marvellous communicator with such mastery of the English language has not left (so far as I know) any substantial written record of his times. In these days when a profusion of the second rate could fill our shelves it seems a waste that we have never had the chance to enjoy what might have been. My other regret is personal - that in the last years of his long life I did not make more of an effort to visit him. Perhaps I subconsciously thought he would always be there.

HARRY PRETTY
1st December 1993

RILEY'S OUTDOOR CENTRE, and TRACK AND TRAIL, ASHBOURNE, have both offered a 10% discount to club members, on production of a membership card, on purchases over twentyfive pounds.

NEXT EDITION

I hope to publish this on Tues 1 Feb. Please let me have written material by Mon 24 Jan. I look forward to hearing from Nick Evans, Chris Johnson, the Tresidders and Colin Barnard.

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