

# OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MAGAZINE

**MARCH 2018**



**Jeff Ingman on the top pitch of Dancing Fall, Les Orrs, Ecrins. Photo by Spenser Gray.**

## **Editorial**

Lots of meets and events coming up including a trip to Patterdale, the next stage of the Boundary walk and a Spring Stride. Indoors we have the last winter lecture and a couple of dramatic-sounding film events. Then it will almost be Easter and Cornwall calls. Here too are outline details of the summer Alpine meet.

Write ups include a snowy Boundary Walk with some atmospheric photos, a very well attended meet to the Newlands valley and some stunning ice-climbing in the Ecrins. Finally we are honoured to have a contribution from a guest writer – Terry King who dishes the dirt on his, Snod and Gobbo's ascent of the Old Man of Hoy last year. Tales of fun in the Spanish sun will have to wait for the next issue!

As well as all the usual features there is a plea for information and photos from people who stayed in the old Bullstones cabin and we launch a new “Members' Corner” - featuring this month some items for sale.

More seriously, the AGM is coming up soon, the papers accompany this newsletter. There is still time to propose topics for discussion and to nominate yourself or anyone else for committee posts. Remember you must have paid your subs if you want to vote.

# What's On

March		Thur	1			
		Fri	2		George Starkey Hut, Patterdale Stuart Haywood	
		Sat	3			
		Sun	4			
		Mon	5		Climbing Unit, Derby	
		Tue	6			
		Wed	7		Yahoo Group (evening)	
		Thur	8			
		Fri	9			
		Sat	10			
		Sun	11			
		Mon	12		Climbing Unit, Derby	
		Tue	13			
		Wed	14		Yahoo Group (evening)	
		Thur	15			
		Fri	16			
		Sat	17		Peak Boundary Walk (stage 3) - Winster/Roystone Grange Gill Radcliffe	
		Sun	18			
		Mon	19		Climbing Unit, Derby	
		Tue	20			
		Wed	21		Yahoo Group (evening)	
		Thur	22			
		Fri	23			
		Sat	24		Oread AGM, Robin Hood, Baslow	
		Sun	25		Spring Stride Rusty Russell	
		Mon	26		Climbing Unit, Derby	
		Tue	27			
		Wed	28		Yahoo Group (evening)	
		Thur	29			
		Easter	Fri	30		Cornwall, Derek Pike
			Sat	31		
	Sun		1			
April		Mon	2			
		Tue	3			
		Wed	4		Yahoo Group (evening)	
		Thur	5			
		Fri	6			
		Sat	7			
		Sun	8			
		Mon	9		Climbing Unit, Derby	
		Tue	10			
		Wed	11		Yahoo Group (evening)	
		Thur	12			
		Fri	13			

- **See below for details of these meets.**
- *Use your Yahoo group to see what members are doing on a day to day basis.*
- *See the Oread website <http://www.oread.co.uk/> for the full meets calendar.*
- *Help your club by leading a meet. Contact Gil Male - tel. 07958 169389 – email : gilemale @gmail.com.*

## **Evening meets:**

Do come along to the evening climbing wall sessions:

**Mondays at the Unit** from 7 – 9.00 pm and after at the Wilmot Arms, Chaddesden. (Often there are people there in the afternoons 1.30 – 4.30 as well.)

**Wednesdays at Wirksworth wall** from 7.00 pm then the Royal Oak on North St.

## **Tuesday 6 March Lecture, Royal Oak, Rob Tresidder**



Pete (Spike) Johnston will present an illustrated talk entitled: Ski Tour in Tafjordfjella, his account of a ski tour made with fellow Oreads, Helen Griffiths and Pam Norris in April 2016 in Tafjordfjella Norway. They started with a big team trip to Danskehytte with the Hjørungavåg turlag (a local outdoor group), and

then just the three of them for a week of touring to three other hytte, bagging peaks in weather ranging from fog, to brilliant sun.

Tuesday, 06 March at 8 p.m. in The Royal Oak, Ockbrook DE72 3SE

Rob Tresidder: email [Rob61.Tresidder@virgin.net](mailto:Rob61.Tresidder@virgin.net) tel. 07951 625378

## **9 -11 March George Starkey Hut, Patterdale Stuart Haywood**

After a brief hiatus the March Patterdale meet returns to the programme, albeit a week later than our normal slot in order to avoid a repeat of last year's unfortunate episode.

Accordingly at the moment ABMSAC George Starkey Hut is booked for the nights of Friday 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March, but dependent on weather conditions etc. as usual we have the option of prolonging our stay. I think everyone will be aware of the possibilities this hut offers and over recent years dependent on the weather, climbing, walking, mountain biking, canoeing, gear shopping and even fishing have all featured during this traditional Oread Meet.

Over the next few weeks I will endeavour to contact the 'usual suspects' but in the meantime if you want to book a berth please call me on 07774 – 859553; 01332 882331 or e-mail [stuart.haywood8@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stuart.haywood8@yahoo.co.uk) I will of course reply to all e-mail and voicemail messages to confirm bookings. Also if you are looking for, or can offer lifts, please let me know.

Stuart Haywood

## **9-11 March The Sheffield Adventure Film Festival**

The BMC is proud to present the 2018 Sheffield Adventure Film Festival (ShAFF) for the second consecutive year. With films reflecting the full range of activities that the BMC represents, from mountaineering and bouldering through to trail running and hiking, we hope to connect with as many of our members as possible. Make sure you don't miss out, use the code **BMCSHAFF1315** and get 15% off the price of tickets. For full programme information visit [www.shaff.co.uk](http://www.shaff.co.uk)



## **17 March Peak District Boundary Walk 3 Gill Radcliffe**

**Winster to Roystone Grange (Gotham car park).**

**Saturday 17 March 2018 – 10:30 am start.**

This will be the third in the series of Oread walks circumnavigating the 190 mile Peak District Boundary Walk. We will meet at Winster market hall (GR SK 242606) at 10:30.

This is a linear route so some car shuffling at the beginning and end of the walk will be necessary. The route is generally easy underfoot and makes use of the Limestone Way and the High Peak Trail. We'll walk to

Bonsall village and the hamlets of Ible, Grangemill and Longcliffe covering a

distance of about 10 miles / 16 km. We may stop at the Holly Bush Inn in Grangemill if the weather is inclement though it's best to bring a packed lunch with you.

Please contact me if you intend to come along as this will help to finalise car sharing. Gill Radcliffe: [gill@farfields.co.uk](mailto:gill@farfields.co.uk) Phone: 01246 569134 or 07816 072138.

Map: OL 24 Peak District

Book: Peak District Boundary Walk; Editor Andrew McCloy. Amazon £10

## **17 March The Banff Mountain Film Festival Buxton Opera House**

A collection of brand-new films starring the world's top adventurers and most fearless film-makers in the most isolated corners of the planet! In this adrenaline-packed night out, expect spectacular cinematography, extreme expeditions and inspirational characters all coming at you through the big screen!

The events have a real community feel, and there are free prize draws at each show too! The show starts at 7:00 with doors and the bar open an hour before and there are discounts on tickets for groups of six and more.

More info and bookings at [www.banff-uk.com](http://www.banff-uk.com)

## **24 March Annual General Meeting Robin Hood Baslow**

The annual general meeting of the club will take place at 8 p.m. on Saturday 24 March at the Robin Hood PH below Birchen's Edge.

Please send any motions for debate to me by 10 March. These will be included in the agenda.

Nominations for officers of the club and other (3) members of the committee are very welcome and **must be submitted by 10 March.**

The Minutes of last year's meeting and Agenda for this year will be distributed in a separate email very shortly. Those receiving a printed newsletter will get them by post with their newsletter. The annual accounts have not yet been approved by the Auditor. They will be circulated as soon as they are received.

Nigel Briggs, Secretary

41 Belfield Rd., Etwall, Derby DE65 6JN email [nigel.briggs@btinternet.com](mailto:nigel.briggs@btinternet.com)  
tel. 01283 732925

NB The Robin Hood will need to know numbers wanting food before the AGM and have asked for two weeks notice. Please contact them to book in. Tel 01246 583186.

## **Renewals for 2018 Membership**

If you have not yet renewed your annual subs you **must** do so before the AGM to retain your membership and right to vote at the AGM. Please refer to recent

newsletters for the form and price information or contact Michael Hayes, 32 Hawthorne Drive, Thornton, Leicester, LE67 1AW. Email [hayes\\_michael\\_j@cat.com](mailto:hayes_michael_j@cat.com) tel 01530 231401 mobile 07771 700913.

## **25 March Spring Stride C. Russell**

Once again I am proposing to tour the less frequented western part of the Peak National Park. As always, we need to consider the availability of car parking and so we shall meet at Wetton at 10 30. There is a reasonable sized car park, and if this is full there are plenty of places at the road side where vehicles can be left, so we shall actually assemble, on foot, at the green opposite the Royal Oak. After a circuitous route round Wetton and Ecton Hills we shall drop down into the Manifold Valley and we may have light refreshment at Wetton Mill. There is some scrambling and light amusement to be had on the rocky bluff around the cave behind the tea room, and this will be opportune if we arrive there fairly early in the day. Afterwards we shall ascend the slopes west of the river and amble in a generally downstream direction before re crossing the river in the neighbourhood of Thor's Cave and returning to Wetton.

Contact Clive (Rusty) Russell for further information on 01335 390369 or email [zrussell2@googlemail.com](mailto:zrussell2@googlemail.com) or just turn up on the day.

## **30 March – 3 April Easter in Cornwall Derek Pike**

This year's walking, climbing and chilling out meet will be based near St. Just at the Trevaylor campsite, well known to the Oread and other clubs as it is an excellent site with all amenities including a bar and restaurant. Its other main attraction is its proximity to the coastal path and sea cliffs such as Bosigran, Kendijack, Sennen, Lands End and Chair Ladder. I have been there many times sometimes just for a long weekend in spite of the long drive and have never been disappointed, the climbing's the best, plenty of golden granite along with a few other offerings, an excellent coastal path and plenty of pubs along the way, something for everyone. The sun may even shine. If it doesn't, move to the other side of West Penwith, the climate is strangely variable, sea mist on the North coast bright sunshine on the South or vice versa.

I shall be there from the 29<sup>th</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April probably staying longer. If you require any more info just ask.

Derek. E-mail, [derepike1234@btinternet.com](mailto:derepike1234@btinternet.com) Phone 01332670459

You will need to make your own booking direct to the site, they know we are coming, so mention my name or the Oreads.

[trevaylor@cornishcamping.co.uk](mailto:trevaylor@cornishcamping.co.uk)

Phone bookings 01736 787016 or 0781699251

Site is at G.R. 369325. Sht S.W. Lat 50.1348097 Long -5.6835324

## **27-29 April Kendal Meet (Coordinated with BMC AGM) Spenser Gray**

The BMC's AGM this year is going to be in Kendal. I have arranged for myself to stay at the Natland Park Farm campsite and would appreciate some company over the weekend of 27th-29th April.

This year's AGM will be significant for the BMC as it looks likely to be dominated by the results of the Organisational Review Group's activities which are intended to modernise the organisation and to ensure its ability to continue to serve the interests of all hillwalkers, rock climbers and mountaineers active or resident within the UK. There will likely also be some entertainment on the Friday evening in the form of a evening lecture from an accomplished climber.

For those who are not interested in attending the AGM please feel free to come along and visit the South Lakes Limestone/ Yorkshire Limestone/ Armathwaite areas for some early season cragging.

There will be cake for those attending the AGM/ voting on the issues by proxy.  
Spenser Gray Mobile Number 07534821500

## **5 - 7 May Bank Holiday North Pembroke Michael Hayes**

More information coming soon.

## **21 July to 5 August Bregaglia and Bernina Alpine Meet Michael Hayes**

We will once again be staying at the fantastic campsite Mulina in Vicosoprano close to the Swiss Italian border; surrounded by the superb Granite climbing of the Bregaglia and within an easy drive of the snowy mountains of the Bernina. From single pitch sport routes in the valley to 20+ pitches on the Piz Badile or the stunning Biancograt on the Bernina, there is something for everyone.

If you want to join us then please let me know.

Michael Hayes: email [hayes\\_michael\\_j@cat.com](mailto:hayes_michael_j@cat.com) Tel 07771 700913

**Copy deadline for next issue is 25 March.**

## **Members' Corner**

Here's the new regular spot to share info, ask for hints and tips, put your For Sale and Wanted ads, write open letters to the committee and generally make your voice heard. All non-libellous contributions welcome!

### **For Sale.**

A guide for mountain walkers "**The High Mountains" of Britain and Ireland by Irvine Butterfield**. Very good condition. Published by Diadem 1986. £6 Must be collected as it is a very heavy book.

Margaret Gadsby. Tel: 0115 9227012. [m.gadsby17@gmail.com](mailto:m.gadsby17@gmail.com)  
4 Rookwood Close, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1FS



### **DMM Alien 50cm ice axe.**

As new. Best offer received by 31 March.

Ruth Gordon – contact details at end of newsletter.

## News, Articles and Reports from Meets.

### Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 2. 21 January 2018



*The strong multi-national Oread team at Rowtor Rocks.*

The forecast was perfect - for those with a propensity to put their heads back under the duvet cover. However, heavily falling snow and tricky road conditions did not prevent a strong and enthusiastic team assembling at Massarella's cafe in Rowsley. Once Snod and Ruth had found each other, we set off in the wrong direction. We soon corrected, only to be confronted with the challenge of communicating our lunch requirements with the pub; there was no mobile signal and the phone box had no phone. Nor a defibrillator to reset the meet leader's heart beat.

The snow continued to fall and turned the scenery into something quite magical. Wandering up through the woods we visited some old quarries but there were no takers for climbing the impressive rock faces.

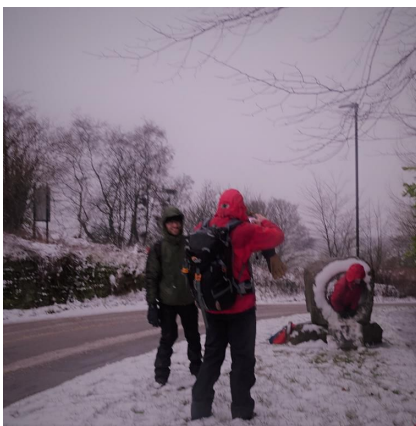
Once we reached the Nine Ladies on Stanton Moor, our own Oread ladies posed for a group photo, a snowman was built and a friendly snowball fight commenced. The descent and re-ascent to Winster was as muddy as usual.



*Ten Ladies gauge the spirits of the Nine Ladies on Stanton Moor*

The Miners Standard provided us with a great, warm environment for the consumption of magnificent BLTs and chips and a convivial time was had by all.

We returned via Rowtor Rocks at Birchover. There was a lot of fun exploring the folly houses and tunnels and various attempts were made on the bouldering climbs. Possibly a good venue for an evening meet for the wall climbers?



Leaving Birchover, various members felt it desirable to pass through the hole in the boundary stone, causing much merriment.

Once back on Stanton Moor, the youngest member, William Gardiner 16, demonstrated his climbing prowess by ascending the Via Ferrata in full winter conditions. More experienced members thought better of it.

Back at the Nine Ladies we were surprised to find no traces of our snowman. Perhaps the whacky energy lines had spirited him away? Who knows? Descending back to Rowsley there was plenty of opportunity for glissading, slipping and plastic bag sledging. All arrived safely back in Rowsley just as it was getting dark. Everyone seemed to have had a fun day out and it was great to see such a good turnout. Special thanks to Michael Hayes for getting support from the newcomers.

Attendees were Ruth Gordon and Snod Helliwell, Colin and Uschi Hobday, Pam Storer, Francesco Comin, Pete Amour, Chris and Jan Wilson, Michael Hayes, Emanuel Savy, Angela Milne, Phil and Yvonne Waterson, Mary Haslam, Nigel and Janet Briggs, Paul, Douglas and William Gardiner, Kasia Sajdok, Ewelina Czaja, Ashley Kitchen, Michael Percival, Sue Todd and Stuart Firth.

Once again Paul was the oldest (founder) member and his grandson William 16 the youngest. The best hat was definitely Mary's; other contenders had decided to keep theirs dry for the next occasion.

## **Ecrins Ice Climbing 14-21 January Jeff Ingman**

*Brackenclose, Wasdale, September 2017*

“So Jeff” said Spenser, “are you going to organise a European ice climbing trip or not?” We continued our conversation and mutually came to the following conclusion: there’s no point trying to second guess the popularity or otherwise of a meet to a ‘new’ area, just advertise it and see who puts their hands up. Having being put on the spot I decided to give it a go and assess the interest within the Oread. Spenser, thank you for the nudge!

From three previous trips to the Ecrins I knew that the club could have a really good time there in the depths of winter. The ice is almost guaranteed and the quality of the routes is well known. The chosen base was Gite Moulin Papillon in L’Argentiere la Bessee run by Benedicte Voruz: she is a keen local ice climber and a great source of information on climbing conditions so I knew that we would be



in good hands. She and her staff are also pretty handy in the kitchen and knocked out a sequence of fantastic three course meals each night for 30 or so people, so there was no hardship on this meet and suffering was kept to the minimum. Even the house red wine was Mowbray-esque in quality.

The choice of L’Argentiere la Bessee over La Grave suited the aspirations of the small group that formed for this meet, with Spenser still to lead his first ice pitch and Tim looking to test himself on steep ice. Whilst the runners would be ice screws, I knew that the belays were mostly bolted - which gives added reassurance.

Since my last visit to the area the local guides have been very busy. At Pelvoux they have created a new ice climbing venue by routing stream water through hose pipes to a crag next to the road. This has produced six routes adjacent to the parking lot that are ideal for beginners or those who, like us, were feeling rusty after a long day of travelling. This new venue proved to be the ideal start for Spenser, Tim and I to begin our ice climbing holiday.

*Tim climbing on ‘manufactured’ ice at Pelvoux*

We continued our adventures over several days at the world class climbing area of Ceillac (say-yak) were Tim managed his hardest ice lead to date on “Sombre Heroes” and Spenser led his first ice pitch on “Holiday on Ice”. We also tackled “Forms du Chaos” later in the week in less than optimum conditions with



Spenser again leading a high quality ice pitch.

*Tim on “Sombre Heroes”*

*Spenser on “Forms du Chaos”*



*Team photo of the “not so sombre heroes”*

We got the word from our host Benedicte that an area called Les Orres was in good condition, particularly a route called “Dancing Fall” which was up at the top of my tick list. On a previous trip I remember that Pete Holden and Dick Turnbull had done this route or got very close – I couldn’t recall which, but I knew we’d have to go and have look at it. It’s basically a two pitch route with the second pitch providing a steep crux pillar. However, the first pitch is 60m of steep water ice and worth at least Scottish V in it’s own right so the route had some real meat to it. Tim stepped up and made a big, magnificent lead of the first pitch. It was the hardest winter climbing that he’d ever done and he smashed it, as the youngsters say. We all managed the second pitch with a bit of

jiggery pokery and descended the route by abseil, which provided us all with another close look at that first pitch - Tim's big lead!

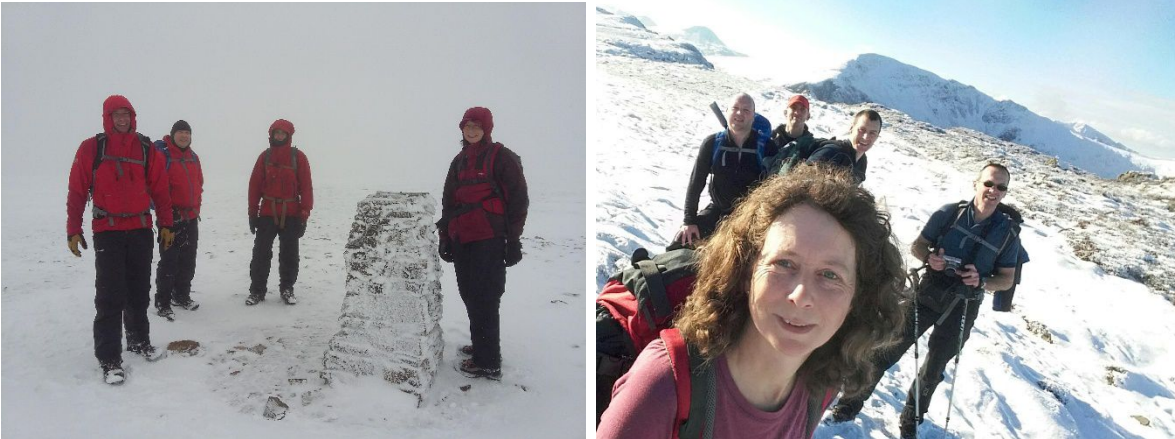
*Tim's pitch – steeper than it looked!*

So, we achieved a few things in the Ecrins. Spenser got on to real water ice for the first time and led his first ice pitches, Tim stepped up and surprised himself with what he could do, and I got to see the obvious joy that all this produced, whilst doing lots of ice climbing for myself.

Just a note for the future; these meets take a bit of planning and the booking of accommodation has to be done early because of the popularity of the area. I know that a couple of Oreads will be disappointed that I couldn't include them on the meet at a late stage, but.....the Gite was full. So don't follow the herd, plan early and get some ice climbing done!

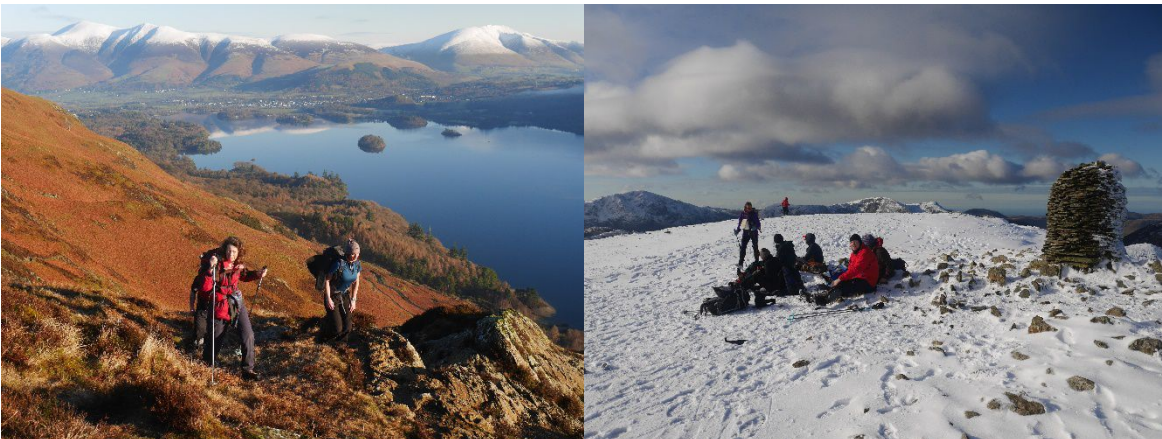


## Stair Hut meet - Newlands valley 2-4 February Michael Hayes



What a weekend of contrasting weather and a great turn out for a winter weekend in the Lakes with 18 on the meet.

On Saturday the cloud was down to the valley and the tops threw blizzard conditions at us as a group of five of us headed up Rigg Beck to Sail and Crag Hill before descending down Coledale to Braithwaite and then squeezing in three pub stops and a rugby match on our way back to the hut, perfect timing ensured we arrived back last and just in time for Spenser to serve up a communal bean chilli for all of us.



Sunday by contrast was a perfect winter day with snow above about 500m, almost no wind and bright blue skies. Spenser took a team to Shepherds Crag, others disappeared into the hills and we headed off up Maiden Moor, over High Spy, Dale Head and back down via Robinson.

Thanks to all who came and made it such an enjoyable social weekend.

### Then and Now. Terry King

Some people go quiet when they get scared. Others make a noise. I hadn't been climbing for over thirty years but I had agreed, in a moment of rash enthusiasm, to return to The Old Man of Hoy and do a fiftieth anniversary ascent with the

same two guys I had done it with back then. At the start of the first real difficulty, an exposed traverse, I had gone completely silent.

....If I didn't move quickly my strength would simply run out but trying to persuade myself to commit to the traverse wasn't going well. Every time I pushed my right foot out towards the foothold I needed to stand on, it came straight back to me, making no attempt to stay there. I used to glide easily over this sort of ground, mind and body working in effortless cooperation. Now my foot had a will of its own and between my ears was a hiss like an undetected gas leak.

In 1967 I was seventeen, John and Dave, always known as Gobbo and Snod, were twenty one and we had roared up to Orkneys on motorbikes. Driven by the certainty of youth and honed by years of hard practice on the gritstone crags around our home town of Sheffield we did a very early ascent of the Old Man, which had only been climbed for the first time one year earlier. For three youngsters with no track record of that kind of undertaking it had been a bold stroke.

As we came together to do it again and drove the long miles north, we wondered at the audacity of our younger selves and tried to recall whose idea it had been in the first place. None of us could remember but we did have to stop for a pee at regular intervals. Snod and I hobbled around to restore some mobility to our bad hips and Gobbo did exercises for a stiff neck, a sort of repetitive nodding that had the smack of a malfunctioning robot with grey hair and varifocal specs.

....These were the septuagenarian super heroes who were going to be my guides. They had kept climbing in all the intervening years and now, in their retirement, with more free time, they were going really well. I hadn't been out for three decades. The only preparation I had managed was couple of days on Hen Cloud where we did a few VS's which I found pretty taxing but Snod was adamant that there wasn't going to be anything harder on The Old Man.

"You'll be fine..." he kept saying "you'll be fine..." and Gobbo said the same when I spoke to him on the phone and quizzed him about the level of difficulty. "You'll be fine...you've kept really fit...you'll fly up it...don't worry."

"You'll be fine..." I tried to convince myself as I stalled on the traverse, "don't worry..." Some chance.



We had all been saying that it didn't matter if we didn't get up it second time round. The whole trip would be worth it just for old times' sake and there was no point in taking chances if conditions weren't right. I was encouraged by this. Icy tendrils of morbid anticipation had been snaking around my guts for a while and they had increased no end when we glimpsed the totem pole of rock that is the Old Man of Hoy as the ferry from

the mainland sailed right past it.

My anxiety levels took another leap when the weather forecast, which had consistently predicted high winds and rain, suddenly offered us a one day window of opportunity. We took the ferry to the tiny Island of Hoy, ready for an early start. There's a bothy at Rackwick Bay, the jumping off point for the walk over the moors to the Old Man. We had been told that it was basic but there were a few mats to sleep on and a stove, so we could make tea.

The scattered collection of low cottages at Rackwick Bay would score highly in a competition for the most remote settlement in Britain. The wind and the ominous clouds that hugged the cliff tops and skidded across the horizon only added to the desolate atmosphere.

But it wasn't all poetic landscapes. The stove turned out to be the relic of an old wood burner but there was no wood and we hadn't brought any matches.

I didn't sleep much. A thin mat on a stone floor made my hip hurt if I lay on my right side. If I lay on my left side my bad shoulder hurt and if I lay on my back, thinking about the coming dawn, it forced me to turn over and the whole cycle started again. A quick carton of juice and some chocolate biscuits passed for breakfast.



The wind was still very

strong and I was harbouring a secret hope that this would be enough to scupper our chances of even making a start.

Snod was not so easily deterred. He was beginning to display symptoms of the kind of grizzly determination that can blind itself to anything but the goal. As we trudged over the moors towards the cliff top where the descent to the base of The Old Man starts, we saw a stream cascading over the edge and down to the sea hundreds of feet below. Except it wasn't cascading down. It was being blown straight upwards by the wind. Blown vertically into the air. This was surely the signal that further progress could only be judged as reckless.

"Wow..." I said "look at that!" Neither of them answered, they were slightly ahead of me on the path, maybe the wind was snatching my words away. "Look at that! " I tried again, louder. Still no response so I yelled at the top of my voice. "Can you not see that!" Snod looked back over his landward shoulder so that he couldn't see the water careering skywards.

"You what?" He beamed, his hair blowing wildly in the gale, "this wind should be drying it out nicely eh?" I knew the drill. There was a time when I too could pretend to see no ships. That was then.

The descent from the cliff top, down steep grass that was wet and muddy, above almost vertical drops to the sea, with the wind tearing at us at every step



was pretty scary. Snod shot up the first pitch and I followed. It wasn't hard climbing but the rock was damp and sandy. Gobbo came up to join us and Snod set off to examine the traverse, out of sight around a corner, which leads to an overhanging crack, the crux of the whole route. If it was still damp then this would be a golden opportunity for an early return to base. He was surely going to be as good as his word and take no chances.

"It's shit," he called back, "there's sand all over the holds...it's like a beach." Choirs of angels began to trumpet in my head. One straightforward abseil from here and we'd be back on the ground. Bingo. But while I was luxuriating in the comfort of retreat and already composing the text home saying I was safe and sound but sadly failed due to atrocious conditions, I became aware of

Gobbo yelling above the gusts of wind.

"Nice one Snod! What does the crack above you look like?" It began to dawn on me that Snod had actually got across the traverse and my heart sank. "What does the crack look like?" Gobbo shouted again.

"Shit..." came the almost inaudible reply but soon he was moving again and all contact was lost in the flapping wind. There was nothing to be seen or heard of him except the rope snaking slowly out as he climbed higher and higher up the crack.

Then it was my turn.

I had to get across that traverse. I had to move. I didn't have the reserves of strength I used to have and if I didn't climb without a pause my meagre ration would be used up before I'd even started. I tried to coax my foot towards the foothold again but it felt as if I was trying to balance an empty shoe, tied to a trouser leg full of billiard balls, on a small, sloping, slightly damp shelf that was also covered in a thin layer of sandy granules. Two days practice on Hen Cloud felt hopelessly inadequate.

The traverse tip toed above huge overhangs with nothing between the soles of my feet and the rocky sea shore way below. The giddy air seemed to swirl like an invisible whirlpool dragging me towards it and my foot came straight back again. I kept telling myself to calm down but the only voice I could hear properly belonged to the doctor I had seen a few months earlier.

"I've got the results of your hip X Ray." His words replayed in the back of my mind.

"Yes." I had agreed at the time. No surprise so far, that was why I had been called to the appointment.

"There is virtually complete loss of the anterior aspect of the right hip joint...mmm" he fiddled with his computer mouse and appeared to be trying to

remember, as he shot furtive glances back at me, whether I had managed to get into the surgery under my own steam or someone had wheeled me there.

"Well...let's start at the beginning...how far can you actually walk?"

"I can run...I go running."

"You run!" he barked, as though I had confessed to heavy drinking shortly after a liver transplant.

"Yes."

"You go running?" Later he admitted that they did recommend gentle exercise for arthritis but it was clear he didn't mean the kind of exertion that I was in the middle of. He went onto offer a hip replacement, which I thought was a bit melodramatic at the time but the prospect of my hip just ceasing to function, suddenly felt very real.

Fear can pack a lot of impressions into a fleeting moment. I seemed to spend an age at the beginning of that traverse but the stream of doubts and internal debate lasted no more than a second or two before instinct took over and I was moving. A part of me that had lain dormant for over thirty years materialised like a genie from a bottle and took control. The holds weren't bad but they were damp and sandy and it felt precarious but the other me unlocked the puzzle of how to climb it and all I did was repeat to myself, keep moving, don't stop, keep moving, don't stop.

Then came the overhanging crack above it. There were foot holds on the side walls to bridge onto, they were still damp and sandy but at least there was always a crack of some kind and anyone brought up on gritstone will always feel secure with a hand jammed into a crack no matter how long the absence. Holding my weight on the jams hurt an awful lot more than I remembered but the protecting callouses on the back of my knuckles, the result of years of climbing in all weathers on forbidding gritstone outcrops, had faded a long time ago.

Although my hands had gone soft the genie hadn't and I was making good progress. By following the subconscious dictates that rose from somewhere deep inside me and repeating over and over, keep moving, don't stop, I gained height steadily. The pitch went on for longer than I was expecting and by the time I arrived at the tiny stance where Snod was belayed I was breathing hard and the fingers of my left hand were starting to get cramp but I had made it. He was sitting down, squashed into the back of a small triangular niche trying to keep out of the wind.

"Great lead Snod," I said as I joined him, "really good lead." He looked happy, with a wizened grin on his face, as if he was watching the world go by from the entrance to a little cave with a jolly greeting for anyone who passed by. He had good reason to be pleased.

In 1967 he had been the last to set off up the crack. We had planned to haul a sack but before Snod could attach it, the haul rope somehow came free and flew out into space. So he followed up the crack with the sack on his back until a chockstone he was pulling on came out and the weight of the sack yanked him off backwards.

Gobbo had held him while he got back onto the rock but even after fifty years the memory still rankled and the grim determination to lead that pitch, despite the weather, despite the conditions, had been brewing for all that time.

I wondered if there was any chance that he might now feel sufficiently vindicated to be thinking, as I was, that an immediate retreat, direct from there,

was actually the most sensible option available to us. The crack had been damp but the next section was going to be out and out wet because it wasn't as steep. Surely the pair of them would see sense. When we were all three reunited, it quickly became clear, without a word having to be said, that the daredevil pensioners had got the bit between their teeth and nothing was going to stop them.

It was Berlin or bust and I was with them for the ride whether I liked it or not. Gobbo collected the gear from Snod and set off with purpose. The cherished possibility of an early return to the chocolate biscuits, waiting for us below, vanished as he disappeared from sight. If my ability to climb had mysteriously come back at the beginning of the traverse, then the knack of keeping a lid on rampant anxiety during the periods of waiting was as far from my grasp as the biscuits were.

There were no rescue facilities here, no phone signal, nothing to fall back on. There was no way of getting out of trouble except what we could effect by ourselves. We were on our own. I used to enjoy that kind of commitment. I used like the feeling of being out on a limb, of being where the currency of everyday life had no value, of having to rely your own resources. Now I could see very clearly why Snod's mum had always taken a much gloomier view of the potential hazards.

"You'll brek yer silly necks," was her constant refrain as she flapped around trying to do six things at once and Billy the budgie chirped away in the background and Snod and his Dad shouted "what's up Billy?" in unison before his Mum chimed in once again with, "you'll brek yer silly necks...you will...you'll brek your silly necks." Maybe her pet prediction could yet prove to be uncannily near the mark. Just half a century out.

You would never have guessed from his Dad's quiet, slightly retiring manner, that he had been a soldier in the deserts of North Africa, fought through Italy and then across France and beyond. Our parents never mentioned the interruption to their own young lives but were happy for us to enjoy the freedoms they had won.

And we did. We ran wild across the moors and hills that were no more than a bus ride away. We hitch hiked, we walked, we carried everything we needed on our backs, we bivouacked in caves and under boulders below the crags where we climbed. Snod was the first to get a car and we would hurtle down Borrowdale with two or three of us standing on the running boards on each side, hanging onto the grab bars on the roof, leaning out on the corners, like motorised yachtsmen, helping to drag it around the bends while the opposite side leant in.

I don't suppose you would get away with that now. I don't think many people sleep in the caves that we used to either, they're probably at a gym, or on a climbing wall. A few days earlier we had visited a sports centre in Kirkwall, on the main Island, hoping to while away a few hours on their climbing wall as we waited for the weather to clear but they wouldn't allow us to use it because we hadn't done their safety assessment.

Where was Health and Safety now as Gobbo inched further and further away from the solid ground that I yearned for. I should have done an assessment for this, a refresher course in how to be shit scared without showing it. The hardest part of the climbing was probably over but what was more unsettling, even though we were only half way up, was the nagging prospect of the startling abseils we would have to do on the way back down.

The rope went tight and I began to climb. I couldn't hear Gobbo or see him but I followed anyway, diagonally to the right across a series of brittle ledges where the rock was green and loose, interspersed with wet sloping sections where the holds were at times almost sludgy. It was another really good lead. Long, loose, insecure and under the conditions, really testing. Gobbo was belayed at the base of the final right angled corner below the summit. It was the only place on the whole climb that was actually sheltered from the howling wind.

When Snod arrived he took over the lead again and battled his way to the top. When he got there he sat down to belay and didn't move from that position until it was his turn to start down. I found the final corner much harder than I was expecting, perhaps because the cramp in my hands was gradually getting worse. My index and middle fingers kept locking and twisting around each other as if I was crossing my fingers in hope.

On the final section of the crack it opens out and you can see right through to the other side of the Old Man. The wind was gusting loudly through the gap and as I clambered onto the summit it got louder still. I sat down next to Snod and like him I didn't move. Gobbo was braver, he strode around, oblivious to the wind, taking photos. Fifty years ago we had bathed in glorious sunshine and seemed to spend hours up there. We built a cairn, inscribed our names onto a slab of sandstone and waved at the ferry as it came in close and gave three toots on the horn. I don't remember being the slightest bit concerned about the descent.

Now we were grimacing into the teeth of a gale and I couldn't think about anything else. I couldn't wait to get on with our escape even though the thought of actually submitting my weight to the rope made my stomach lurch. It was a hell of a place to relearn how to abseil after a thirty year gap. Gobbo was in charge of getting us down. He reached the bottom of the first stage with no fuss. I shut my eyes, metaphorically, and committed myself to a slow, cautious, descent, worried that the cramp in my hand would prevent me from gripping the rope tight enough to stop it from sliding too quickly through the descender and I would lose control.

The second half of the abseil slanted diagonally to the left. Pushing across on the wet rock was worrying but my hand was still holding up as I got down to where Gobbo was waiting. There remained a chasm of a drop below but we were on our way. Snod arrived and we set about retrieving the ropes. I held my breath. What if they jammed and we were stuck there. What if we dropped them and had no way of getting back down. Together we hauled on the rope like press ganged sailors and slowly, inch by inch, the knot came towards us and the ropes came tumbling down with no mishap.

Compared to 1967 this should have been a piece of cake. We had no descenders then, no friction belay plates, no harnesses. We tied the rope directly to our waists, we belayed around the waist with an extra twist around our arms and Gobbo had negotiated these intimidating abseils in the classic style by wrapping the rope around his body. Snod and I were thoroughly modern, we used a long sling to improvise a sit harness fastened together with a karabiner. We passed the rope through the karabiner, then over our shoulders and off we went into the void without a care in the world. If only I felt as self assured now, festooned with all the advantages that modern technology could provide.

Gobbo started down again. Another diagonal slant but it was harder to push side ways without skidding. We all had worrying moments and skinned our shins when we were dragged back towards the fall line of the rope but we made it to the top of the difficult crack. We pulled on the ropes once more. As the knot moved slowly and the final abseil was being prepared I might have started to believe that safety beckoned. But this was the section that had been alarming me most. The ropes now hung free down the bulging crack and plunged into space over the huge overhangs below.

The whole of this abseil would be hanging free, twisting and spinning on the rope. Gobbo took a long time to get to the bottom which did nothing for my peace of mind. When my turn came I began gingerly. Only a few feet down and my feet were no longer touching the rock. I didn't like this sensation even when I was climbing regularly but now, as I swung further and further out into thin air, I urgently needed something to take my mind off the gut wrenching exposure. Without consciously choosing to do it I found myself reciting a nursery rhyme.

"One two buckle my shoe..." I whispered as I dangled in the abyss, hoping that my hand wouldn't get cramp and lose the capacity to grip, "three four knock on the door..." as the rope spun me around like a spider on a silken thread, "five six..." but all of a sudden, before I got anywhere near nine ten, a big fat hen, I forgot how to count. The ability to remember what came after six just vanished into the ether and I was left wide eyed and opened mouthed, suspended in a vacuum, expecting the screaming to start any any moment. An easier mantra saved the day.

"Here we go...here we go...here we go..." kept repeating mindlessly, over and over in the back of my head as the floor slowly got nearer and I landed with a gentle bump. A wave of relief gushed through me. I was down. I'd done it. I'd done it! We'd done it. Well, actually, Dave and John had done it and I was dragged along in their wake. Well done boys, you did really well and I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Not one tiny bit of it. Not one moment. I was willing you on from the beginning, you know I was, of course I was, urging you upwards, every step of the way. Honest.

## John Dench



Among the Oread slides taken over the years by Gordon Gadsby, which Margaret so kindly presented to the Club, are two of characterful portraits of John. The first, taken in February 1969, shows him in company with Reg Squires and Robin Reeve. The second, dating from October the same year shows him in action – the venue and route name are not recorded. Can anyone remember or recognise the location?

## Len Hatchett

Former member and Club Secretary Len Hatchett died recently, in his late 90s. His funeral is at Markeaton Crematorium at 2.20pm on 2 March. Memories of him would be very welcome for a future issue.

## Hut Bookings.

### TAN-YR-WYDDFA

2-3 March	Emma Howard Whole hut
23-25 March	N Moyes 2 beds

### HEATHY LEA

2-3 March	Claire Walsh K Fellfarers
23-24 March	Oread AGM
6-7 April	Mary Haslam
13-14 April	Panther Owners Club

“Whole Hut” includes the Oread room!

“Sole use – children present” means you may not stay overnight, even in the Oread room.

All queries, payments and bookings should be addressed to Michael Hayes, the Hut Bookings Secretary: 32 Hawthorne Drive, Thornton, Leicester, LE67 1AW.

Tel. 01530 231401 mobile 07771 700913. Email: [hayes\\_michael\\_j@cat.com](mailto:hayes_michael_j@cat.com)

Our preferred method of payment is via bank transfer - Sort Code 05-04-07

Account number 45028744 You must put your name **and either TYW or HL as a reference**. Otherwise Joan cannot allocate the payment to the right hut.

Please follow up with an email to Michael to let him know that you have made a payment and what it was for.

Alternatively you can post a cheque, payable to Oread MC, to the above address.

## Hobday's Humour



*With a boot that size it must be the Wilsons' new grandson!*

## Information on Member Activities

Welcome to new Provisional members, Ewelina Czaja, Adhe Koukoui, Yuqi Cong, Ashley Kitchen, Emily Ross, Emily Major. and Full members Michael Percival and Christine Renouf. We hope you will enjoy many happy days with the Oread.

Applications for full membership have been received from Franzi Schrodtt-Williams, Chris Williams, Charlie Taylor, Rory Morris and Douglas Gardiner. If you would like to comment on these applications please contact a member of the committee. These applications will be considered at the April committee meeting.

## Bullstones Cabin: Request for memories and photos

Dear Oread Members,  
I am a long-since retired General Secretary of the Mountain Bothies Association with an on-going interest in the heritage of bothies and other forms of simple accommodation, and I try to get suitable information more widely available by writing up articles for the MBA website. I have recently typed up a 1991 article about the use of Shooting Cabins in the Peak District as overnight accommodation. the following (now all gone) Peak District Shooting Cabins



are mentioned : Abbey Brook, Bullstones, Bank Top Farm, Ashop Clough, Seal Edge and Lord Edward Howard's. The article is also about hostels in the Peak District (most now gone), walking equipment of the time and walking habits when Saturday morning work was the norm., An electronic copy of the article will willingly be provided to any of your club members who makes the request to my e-mail address. I attach a copy of a photograph of Bullstones Cabin, which you may reproduce in your Newsletter. It was taken in December 1954 (I was one month old!), by the late Donald Rich (one time, Northern England MBA Area Organiser). The inevitable internet search for Bullstones Cabin turns up references to the Oread M.C. Can any of your members who used the cabins for overnight stays help with information, memories and particularly any photographs of the cabin. Communication by e-mail is my preferred method. Your help will be appreciated,

Richard Genner: email [rgatrg11@gmail.com](mailto:rgatrg11@gmail.com)

If you would like to reply but do not use email please write to or phone your Hon Ed. Ruth Gordon: - contact details at end of newsletter.

## **Rusty's Puzzle Corner**

### **Last month's puzzle solution:**

Plausible solutions were received from both Roger Chapman and Digger and I am pleased that my light hearted puzzle received attention. Both, I believe, took into consideration the inward projection of the anchor bolt. The overturning effect of this is in my view nullified by the horizontal component of the tension in the rope where is inclined on the inside face.

The stability of the parapet should be considered as a whole, including the anchor bolt and the rope itself. The only external forces acting on these are the tension in the abseil rope when in use, and the stabilising force of gravity, due to the weight of the parapet acting vertically through its centre. The weight of the anchor bolt and the rope are negligible, and the rope hangs down vertically on the outer face of the parapet which would, were it to overturn, rotate about its lower front edge. The eccentricity of the rope tension about this point, if the radius of the rope be disregarded, is zero and so the rope tension necessary to cause overturning, from rigorous calculation, is infinity or in other words incalculable.

In real life, the edge of the parapet masonry would crumble so the point of rotation would not be precisely on the leading edge of the masonry and so the position of the point of rotation would need to be estimated. Also, there would be some horizontal forces due to the abseiler swinging about due to wind etc. All in all a load test would be the only safe option.

After some dialogue, Roger rightly added a caveat that, wind or not, an abseiler would normally lean out from the face of the parapet at the start of his descent, thereby creating an overturning effect as his/her centre of gravity moved outward from the face of the parapet.

To sum up, the academic answer on the strict terms of the puzzle should be "incalculable by strict mathematics" or "infinity."

### **This month's puzzle.**

This month's puzzle will be of different style, requiring no numerical working.

Early schoolboy-schoolperson knowledge of physics and alphabets would however be an advantage. The text will also be brief in an effort to combat the growing tendency towards prolixity, in mountaineering circles as well as ordinary society. A knackered old ex climber trundled out to Heathy Lea, accompanied by his two geriatric mates and, eccentric to the last, his three semi feral pet cats. Lacking the energy to make even a pretence of any activity, they lounged in the sunshine and watched as the cats sprang up and one after another began to traverse the sloping conservatory roof. Unfortunately one of the cats slipped down and tripped over the gutter but fortunately landed on its feet without being hurt. Which of the three cats was this?

## Forthcoming Meets 2017/2018

This is a work in progress – several more meets are at the planning stage.

**Please support your club.** More meet leaders are required for 2018 and 2019 (UK and abroad). If you fancy leading a meet please contact Gil Male to discuss ideas or for more information- email [meetsec@oread.co.uk](mailto:meetsec@oread.co.uk)

<i>March</i>	<i>9-11</i>	<i>George Starkey Hut, Patterdale</i> Stuart Haywood
	<i>17</i>	<i>Peak Boundary Walk (stage 3) – Winster/Roystone Grange</i> Gill Radcliffe
	<i>24</i>	<i>Oread AGM, Robin Hood, Baslow</i>
	<i>25</i>	<i>Spring Stride</i> Rusty Russell
	<i>30 Mar – 2 Apr</i>	<i>Easter Weekend – Cornwall</i> Derek Pike
<i>April</i>	<i>20-21</i>	<i>New Members Meet, Heathy Lea</i> Spenser Gray
<i>May</i>	<i>5-7</i>	<i>Early May Bank Holiday – N. Pembroke</i> Michael Hayes
	<i>26-28</i>	<i>Spring Bank Holiday – Mid Wales?</i> Spenser Gray
<i>June</i>	<i>8-10</i>	<i>Kids Meet, Heathy Lea</i> Neil Weatherstone
	<i>8-10</i>	<i>Joint Meet, Midland Association of Mountaineers (MAM)</i> Chris Radcliffe
	<i>15-17</i>	<i>Fylde Mountaineering Hut, Little Langdale</i> Dave (Snod) Helliwell
<i>July</i>	<i>5-6</i>	<i>Tan yr Wydfffa Working Party</i> Dave (Snod) Helliwell
	<i>7-8</i>	<i>Welsh 3000s Walk</i> Derek Pike
	<i>21 Jul – 5 Aug</i>	<i>Alpine Meet Bregaglia</i> Michael Hayes
<i>August</i>	<i>17-19</i>	<i>Galloway</i> Spenser Gray
	<i>31 Aug – 2 Sep</i>	<i>Walk &amp; Climb the Edges</i> Gil Male
<i>October</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Peak Boundary Walk (stage 4)</i> Chris Radcliffe
<i>November</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Oread Bonfire Meet, Heathy Lea</i> Neil Weatherstone
	<i>4</i>	<i>Peak Boundary Walk (stage 5)</i> Pete Amour
	<i>11</i>	<i>FRCC Remembrance Meet</i>
	<i>17</i>	<i>Oread Annual Dinner</i>
	<i>18</i>	<i>Post Prandial Walk</i>
<i>December</i>	<i>7-9</i>	<i>Bullstones - TBA</i>
	<i>12</i>	<i>Black Rocks Night Climb</i>
	<i>22 Dec – 1 Jan</i>	<i>Christmas/New Year Meet</i> Rock Hudson

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