

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MAGAZINE AKA THE LOCKDOWN TIMES

MAY 2020



Gritstone at its most enticing - last of the evening sun on a deserted Castle Naze 8 April, photo – Snod Helliwell.

Editorial

And so it goes on no sign of return to normal activities any time soon. Hope you are all ok and making the best of this glorious early spring weather - would it be easier to cope with if it was cold, wet and horrid? Less frustrating perhaps – but so much more depressing.....

Coming up soon is the early **May Bank Holiday on Friday 8 May and we have an event planned. See page 2.** This is a virtual event but everyone can take part even without a phone or computer. Get out there camping and send me or Janet a letter, postcard, photo or email so we can all share our experiences – how do I know, after all this fabulous weather, it will be sheeting down? So here is a remarkably well-filled issue – and I've still got some interesting write-ups in hand for next month.

Coming soon – what were you doing when Man landed on the Moon? Directland – sport climbing in Mallorca and snapshots from the very first Oread newsletter, including the Marsden – Rowsley walk, May 1953!

Don't forget to write about that holiday, that perfect route, that mountain day that remains vivid in your mind – that route you are dreaming of and working towards - please share all the good times past and future with your fellow Oreads.

Looking forward to hearing from you all.

Copy deadline for next issue is 23 May.

Forthcoming meets 2020

The meets programme for the coming year is temporarily suspended but will restart as soon as we can.

Michael Moss. Email for Meets Secretary remains oreadmcmeets@gmail.com

8 – 9 May The Oread's first ever Socially Isolated Camping Meet Janet Briggs

It is a Bank Holiday weekend, so please join us for this unique camping meet. Venue: a tent or bivi bag in your garden, or in your campervan on the drive; if those don't work for you how about a sleeping bag on the living room floor.

Once you have your tent set up we will meet for a virtual evening drink get together at 8pm on Friday 8th May. If you have access to Zoom let me know and I can send you an invitation to join an online meeting, if you can't access Zoom send a text or email and maybe a photo at the time so that we know you are with us.

Following our evening drink we will retire to our tents or other sleeping places to prepare for a busy day on the Saturday.

Saturday, after breakfast of your choice at your tent, a variety of activities will be available; maybe a walk, run or cycle ride from your home, if you have a suitable garden pond you could indulge in a bit of open water swimming. If you are feeling less energetic many will have an ample supply of guide books to read and wallow in nostalgia, or dream of better days. The more philanthropic of you may wish to help the camp site management team with a bit of grass cutting or grounds maintenance.

The meet is officially for one night but if you wish to arrive early or stay on longer these options are available with the agreement of your camp site managers.

Please let me know if you are taking part in the meet, and if you will be available for the Zoom meet up. After the meet please send some photographs for the meet write up.

Thank you.

Janet Briggs

Lofoten July 2020? Derek Pike

As things stand at the moment with this virus and its associated travel restrictions and the uncertainty of how long it may continue, possibly into next year, I shall not be taking any more bookings. The Hayes, Briggs and Pikes are already booked onto a site at Kabelvåg for 14 nights from the 22nd July but this may have to be postponed to another year, we will just have to wait and see.

If you wish to discuss please contact me.

Oread in the Times of Lockdown – Nigel Briggs

A report from the President and Committee.

First, I hope you are all well and coping with the circumstances we find ourselves in. It goes without saying that we are all friends and here if you need us. Although we are not going to the mountains or climbing at the moment there are still some things going on (in the virtual world).

The AGM had to be postponed, the reports that were to be presented at the AGM were circulated in the April Newsletter and questions were invited. To date there have been no questions raised, so obviously no answers to be circulated.

The main item on the AGM was to elect the new committee.

There was also an amendment to the constitution, to specify that bank signatories should not be related, this will be held over. Most of the committee were remaining in post, with the exception of Snod's Presidency coming to an end and mine beginning, Phil and Yvonne Waterson stepping down and Michael Moss joining. We have implemented those changes and are moving forward with the new committee. We plan to hold a General Meeting to ratify the new committee positions when we are able to. In the meantime the committee is:-

President	Nigel Briggs
Vice President	Dave Helliwell
General Secretary	Simon Pape
Membership Secretary	Michael Hayes
Treasurer	Janet Briggs
Hut Bookings Secretary	Michael Hayes
Hut Custodian Heathy Lea	Vacant
Hut Custodian Tan yr Wyddfa	Dave Helliwell
Meet Secretary	Michael Moss
Communications Officer	Ruth Gordon

Committee members	Pete Lancaster, Chris Wilson, Ben Wooler
Co-opted committee member	Spenser Gray

Heathy Lea Hut Committee	Steve McDonagh, Michael Hayes, Pam Storer, Rob Beck
--------------------------	---

Tan yr Wyddfa Hut Committee	Dave Helliwell, Chris Eyre, Roy Eyre, Pam Storer, Ruth Gordon, David Appleby, Derek Pike.
-----------------------------	---

The one unfilled position is Heathy Lea Hut Custodian. For the moment the committee and Hut committee will keep 'things ticking over', but we do require a custodian to manage the running of the hut. **The current arrangement is not sustainable.** If you are interested or want further information please get in touch. Finally, I would like to thank Phil and Yvonne Waterson for the work and improvements they have put into Heathy Lea. They have made great

improvements to the hut.

At the moment both of the huts are closed to all, to comply with the Covid-19 movement restrictions. They will remain closed until the restrictions are lifted. We have been informed that the terms of insurance have been altered so that cover will remain valid for an increased period of unoccupancy. We will continue to monitor the position and do what we can to keep the huts in good order. We are also pursuing Government grants that are available for losses and costs that we incur whilst the huts are closed. It is hoped that the financial consequence of the huts being closed will be minimal.

The meets list that was circulated earlier in the year is still in place and ready to go when we are able to. The Glan Dena meet has definitely been cancelled but we all hope we can resume with meets as soon as it safe to do so. The BMC have been sending out frequent email Newsletters giving information, please read these to keep informed as to the current thoughts on travel and access to the hills.

On a positive note we have a 'virtual' May Bank Holiday meet in the planning. Further details are elsewhere in this newsletter. Other virtual events will be taking place to try and keep a social scene going. Keep reading the Newsletter and following the email group chat.

On the 14th April the committee held its first virtual committee meeting using the medium of Zoom. A picture of the event, below, gives a snapshot of the enjoyment. I must say the meeting went better than I anticipated, it goes to show that when there is a will you can find a way!



How about a caption competition?

Member's Corner

Stuart Firth wrote:

Oread Puzzle – Who made this plate?

This plate was presented to an old friend of the Oread - Tony (AJJ) Moulam - at the 21st Anniversary Dinner.



Paul Gardiner now reveals all!

A Unique Plate Full of Memories

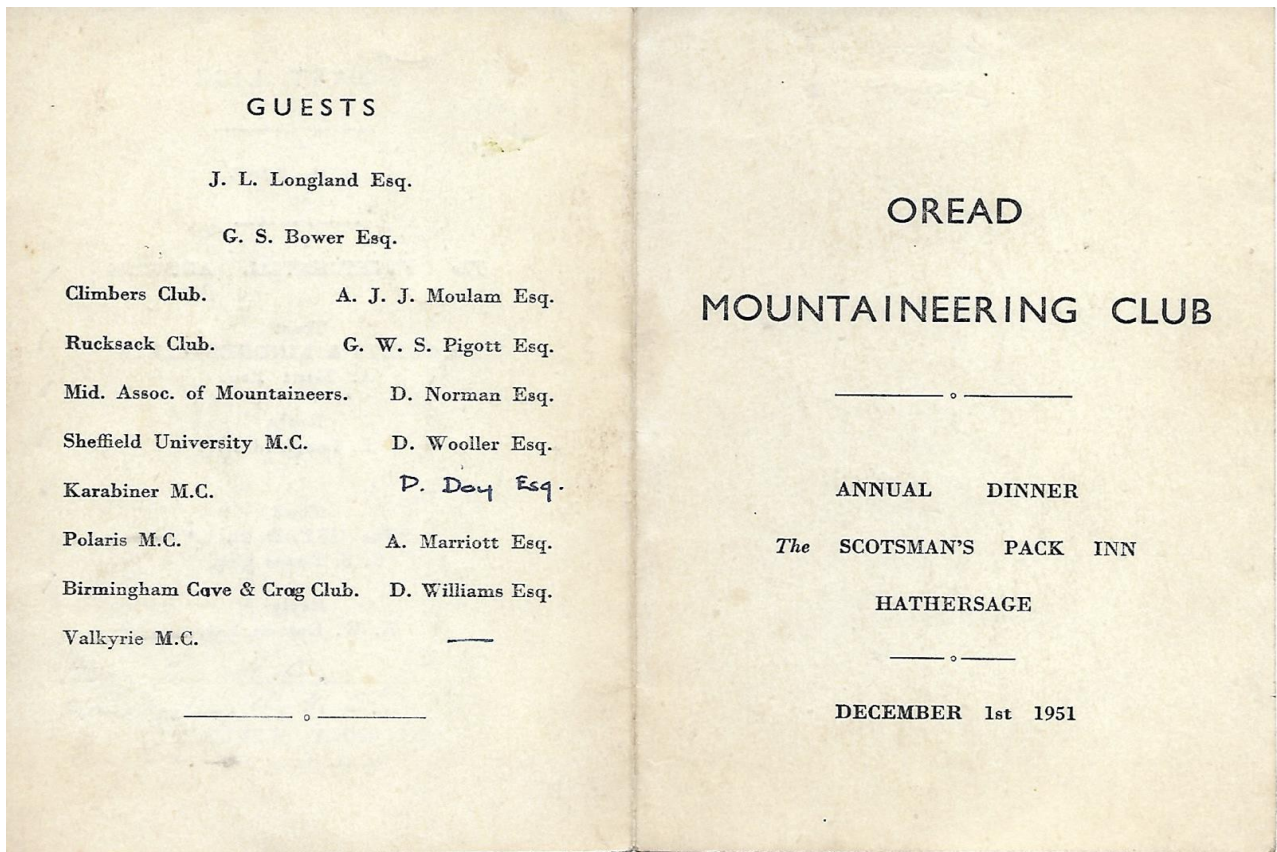
Paul Gardiner

In the April Magazine, Stuart asks the origin of A J J Moulam's Presentation Plate.

I know the full provenance from production through to presentation and it goes like this:

The name Tony Moulam first appears on the guest list of the menu for the Annual Dinner held at the Scotsman's Pack Hathersage on the 1st December 1951. Representing the Climbers' Club, he is listed as A J J Moulam Esq. The principle guest was J L Longland Esq. No menu was given on the 1951 menu. Guess it was still part rationing and we just had what was available on the day!

Tony's name then is on the menus as a guest in '52, '53, '58, '60, '69, '71 and '72. I guess other years as well - for which I have not retained the 'evidence'. It seems he got away without being called to speak in the first few years.



Stuart suggests that the plate was presented at the Club's 21st Anniversary Dinner but this function was held in 1970 – at which time Tony would not have completed his 21 years of dining. So, 1951 to 1972 are the years as given on the plate.

A decision was made to make a presentation at the 23rd Dinner to mark his achievement. This was at The Green Man, Ashbourne. **But present what?**

Here I digress for a moment. I have been considering dates. As the Oread was founded in 1949 there would not have been a dinner that year. The 1950 dinner was held at the Fox House Inn. I have no record of this except what I put in 'Climb if You Will' So, the dinner in 1951, attended by Tony, would have been the SECOND. There is possible confusion arising between Annual and Anniversary. Early menus did not put a figure on the front. Seems to have eventually come right in 1959 with the 10th ANNIVERSARY dinner. Got it right last year for the 70th Anniversary !! Passes the time to split hairs in lock down.....

In the 1970s, the breweries of Burton upon Trent still employed numerous tradesmen to keep the liquor flowing. My employer, Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton Ltd was no exception. Amongst the trades was a considerable band of painters which included signwriters, one of whom was John Giles, a talented artist who I occasionally called on to decorate the somewhat lurid chamber pots presented to one or two notable (notorious?) Oreads.

It should be remembered that, at that time, Annual Dinners were, to say the

least, a bit different. The late, great Sir Jack Longland described them as imaginative and outrageous Saturnalia. Was just reading about paying for the repairs to the gents wash basins at the Devonshire Arms in 1954. Yes, dinners have changed !

I should mention here that, working in the same shop as John Giles, was another signwriter named Brian, the brother of Oread Dave Appleby.

So, back to 1972, and a chamber pot being inappropriate, the obvious choice was a dinner plate which was purchased and handed over to John to be suitably decorated with items relating to food and drink plus attendant waitresses.

I suppose I must have presented the plate but can't, for the life of me, remember doing it. Inexcusable Presidential memory. I expect I'd had a few that night and it is nearly 50 years ago! Perhaps someone else did the handover.

I'm so glad the plate is in one piece and highly valued.



Footnote: I wonder if anyone still has one of the chamber pots? The pot I remember best is the one given to Oliver Jones. There was a huge figure (which he was) playing the bagpipes, probably scenes of Rugby, which he was still playing at age 70 and a big eye in the centre inside looking upwards !! See below for Tony Moulam's own memories of these days.

Finally – can anyone help please? Tony has asked if there was an obituary for Harry Pretty in the newsletter or elsewhere. The club archive is of course in the Record Office and can't be accessed at present. Has anybody kept newsletters from the time? Harry died in July 2002.

News, Articles and Reports from Meets.

Oread outings as an outsider Tony Moulam

My first climbing club was the Stonnis Mountaineering Club, which Peter Harding and I formed in 1945, four years before the Oread's inception. The other founder members were Ronni Lee (Harding's girl friend), Ernie Phillips, Tony Taylor, Johnnie Welbourn, Knobby Milward and Ken Herbert, the club photographer. Alf Bridge was our main mentor and Dick Meyer became another senior associate. About the end of 1947 Ronni changed her allegiance from Peter to Ernie Phillips, which inevitably broke up the Stonnis Club and they, together with Knobby and Johnny Welbourn joined the Oread, when it was formed in 1949.

As this domestic drama unfolded, the army called me away on VJ day and Harding (the club's prime mover) relocated to Shrewsbury Technical College, as an engineering lecturer. When I was demobbed in 1948, I enrolled in his class so that we would be able to continue our climbing careers in North Wales, which was now accessible in Peter's MG TC, petrol rationing allowing.

This plan was thwarted at the end of December, when I set out to hitch-hike to Wales, no petrol being available for the car, and ended up being knocked down by a lorry just outside Oswestry. I spent the next three months in the local orthopaedic hospital, where my leg was mended, and I was eventually discharged with only 30 degrees flexion of my right knee. Before my mishap Wilf Noyce, The Climbers' Club guidebook editor, had asked Harding to produce a Llanberis guide, and me to take on Clogwyn du'r Arddu. As I was hors de combat Harding added Cloggy to his 'bumper fun book' and I was later tasked with the Carneddau.

As a reward for this thankless task, involving tedious walks to Ysgolion Duon, Craig yr Ysfa and other scattered remote cliffs, I was appointed the Climbers' Club's representative to the Oread's third annual dinner, at the Scotsman's Pack. Geoff Pigott, representing the Rucksack Club, gave me a lift there where I met Eric Byne and Harry Pretty for the first time. Much talk was had in the bar before the excellent dinner, the effects of which we were able to exercise away on Kinder next day.

My next appearance at an Oread dinner was the in the following year. My log does not record where it was held, and I had not yet started collecting menus but Alec Ferguson (not that one! but of the Rucksack Club) gave me a lift out, on sometimes icy roads. On Sunday we had a sobering walk along Stanage. Less than a week later I was at Peter Harding's bachelor party, which marked his temporary retirement from climbing, as he concentrated on family life and his career as assistant to Ivan Waller at Small and Parkes.

For the 1953 dinner I caught the train to Bakewell and, walked from there to the Devonshire Arms, a change of venue and, after the usual excellent dinner, was entertained by Dick Brown on Birchen's and Chatsworth Edges.

The CC must have deployed a substitute as I missed the next year but by 1955 I was in the dinner seat again. Alf Bridge was also present and, as I had my three wheel Morgan, I took him home to Dore. Ray Handley and Tony Taylor joined me on Gardom's on Sunday, for old times sake, with Don Roscoe – who represented

the Rock and Ice- doing most of the leading.

Now there was a hiatus until 1958 when I was paired with ABH for another dinner at the Devonshire Arms, or was it the White Lion at Great Longstone, my notes are incomprehensible!

Now a long gap. I next enjoyed the 1969, 1970 and 1971 dinners, which sequence gave rise to the myth that I was a constant attendee, and led to the presentation of my treasured plate by Paul Gardiner in 1972 at the Green Man (and Black's Head) in Ashbourne.

That disposes of the chronology, except for the dinners of 1974 and 1977, the latter a prelude to the Mynedd Fell Race, at which I was an interested observer! So now we can turn to the content. A highlight was always the pantomime, originally orchestrated by Tinsel Allen, and including prize vignettes such as Harry Pretty's believable impersonation of King Edward VII, and Don Whillans as a (very) unlikely fairy clad in pink chiffon! I can't remember if the pantomime came - before or after - the dissertations by Oliver Jones which were always diverting. if not as hilarious as the pantomime.

I had known Harry was a talented draughtsman because of some of his peak district guidebook illustrations but his other work like the print of Cloggy in 1995 as a memorial to Nat Allen (No: 68 of 100), which I bought from Climber and Rambler for £1.00, was a revelation. It was followed by an equally evocative print of An Teallach, which I think was given to me at a Climbers' Club Welsh dinner in 1996.



These art works inspired me to commission a watercolour of Ogof Direct in Cwm Silin. In due course this was delivered together with three or four photographs he had taken, on which to base his work. The two prints and one original adorn my living room wall.

Now to the half century dinner, moved from the usual Peak District venue, to the Royal Victoria Hotel in Llanberis. This was an altogether staid affair than I had previously experienced, as befitted a club coming to maturity. On reflection it has assumed a much more sombre note as it was the last time I saw Peter Harding, Harry and Molly Pretty, 'Mac', Dick Brown and Ray Colledge, all of whom have since died. At least they have missed the Covid 19 lockdown and its inhibiting effect on climbing and mountaineering.

The Dark Arts. A. Non.

When I started climbing I was often warned about a shadowy organisation called The Ethics Committee. The merest dangle on a runner, a crafty tug on a sling, even peering over the top to spy the way would result in the old hands shaking their heads and muttering darkly about a referral. If someone mentioned a top rope these veterans and guardians of the true faith would become positively apoplectic.

Perhaps it is appropriate, in these days of presentation being more important than substance, that top roping has been rebranded. It's called "headpointing" now. It means you can do whatever you like as long as you don't damage the rock and it results (eventually) in a clean lead. I suppose if it was good enough for Joe Brown on Great Slab in the 1950s, it's good enough for an aging punter now.

So here's how it works.

Pick a "project". Something that terrifies you, but that you suspect deep down inside that you probably could do. With a following wind. On a low gravity day. When the conditions are right. When you're feeling good. With the right partner. i.e. never.

Next, go and have "a look". It should be very clear that you're not actually going to do it on this occasion or else you'll be so wound up thinking about the lead that you'll probably screw it up on top rope. Remember that this process is supposed to last a long time - years even.

I had my first look at Project X in 2001. It honestly didn't seem that bad. It even had runners, just not really where you'd want them. I had a fabulous Sunday poking around, doing a few routes and casually chucking a cheeky top rope on it. It went like a dream in the perfect cold conditions. Fortunately it was getting a bit too late for any serious action.

Then I started going to the crag a bit frequently - twice in four days!

It had rained on the way over, but it cleared and we even had some sun by the time we got there. There were friends at the crag who probably wouldn't know or care about headpointing. No pressure, have a fun night out.

But it's there, nagging in the back of my mind.

Sharon and I warmed up on Allen's Slab, which I'm sure I've done lots of times before, then we did Sickle Buttress, which I'm pretty sure I haven't. It was very good!

My turn to pick now. I'll just have another look. I top roped it four times without managing to fall off, but it felt more tenuous than when I top roped it with Andy a few weeks ago. Each try seemed more sketchy, not less!

I scoped the runners and got on with it. It felt a bit tenuous and I didn't really want to do it. Sharon said, "You've got to want it."

I seriously considered not bothering. We could go and have a pint. All this fuss and still no tick?

After a conversation about what I was going to hit if I fell off (never a good idea with Sharon!) I decided to do it. And then climbed back down. The breeze blew and it was a little cooler. Just do it. A struggle to get my foot up. I could reach the sloper but it felt tenuous. Step up. Push. Foot better not pop. It won't. It didn't. The top is easy but I still did it scrappily.

Sharon was a bit cold now so we went to the pub. I didn't tell anyone, it was nice to have it as our little secret!

And if anyone mentions the ethics committee, this is just between you and I, o.k?

Anonymous

The Trilogy by Tim Sellears

When I first applied to become a member of the Oread my climbing experience was described by the then president as preposterous, "How can anyone lead Scottish III and second V6 but only Moderate on rock?" Looking back I can appreciate it was an unusual route into the climbing world, I think basically I enjoyed the suffering!

In recent years European ice climbing conditions have been somewhat variable, however there's nothing like a trip as preparation for the forthcoming Scottish season. It's not just the physical aspect of reacquainting yourself with winter equipment and movement, for me it helps build the positive mental reserve so often required during Scottish winter routes. They also amplify enthusiasm, so it wasn't surprising that no sooner had we returned from Austria that Neil from Lincoln Mountaineering Club suggested a trip to the CIC hut.

Venturing north in winter always seems to be about timing as it requires conditions, weather and work all to be aligned. As it turned out only Neil and myself could take advantage of the two midweek nights (19th & 20th March) at the CIC hut supported by additional nights at the FRCC hut in Kinlochleven. A couple of hours after arriving at Waters Cottage our plans were thrown into question when Neil received two emails; "*all FRCC huts are closed with immediate effect*" and "*the CIC hut will close on Sunday*".

We discuss the growing Coronavirus situation at length and concluded that it was reasonable to continue with our plans since the country wasn't yet in lockdown.

Having dropped our heavy packs off at the CIC hut it felt great to be heading out onto the Ben, even the thought of leading my first Grade V didn't seem to trouble me.



*Agreeable conditions on the North East Buttress
(The Minus face is approximately the second quarter from the left)*

Minus 2 Gully V,5 **** *“More haste less speed”*



Neil's experience shines through when I realise too late that I've broken trail all the way to the base of the crag!

I scan the route description and eagerly head up the first pitch of ice clipping a midway peg to reach the overhang, which I remember should be turned on the left. After 15 minutes searching for a runner and numerous attempts to find a solid axe or crampon placement I down climb to the peg dejected “sorry mate, I'm just not up to it” ... “it doesn't look too great, hang on a minute” comes the reply as Neil digs out the guidebook ... “avoid the overhang by detouring left” ... which, it turns out, is much more amenable! This puts me in the main gully which I climb enthusiastically, placing a couple of

screws and clipping another peg, before entering a narrow runnel with the next belay visible above. Halfway up this the rope unexpectedly goes tight, I look around to discover the weather has closed in and no doubt robbed us of verbal communication.

I start to kick a small ledge to create the belay stance when a gigantic crack sound detonates high above. Realising there's no time to place a screw I adjust my position and brace, the growing rumble a tell tale sign of what's coming. Within seconds of the spindrift hitting me the void between my body and the face is filled and I become buried as it continuously pours over my head. I recall Natalie's parting comment before I left: "don't die and you'd better come back." As it starts to subside I realise that my closed eyes feel frozen, I open them to a wall of white and carefully wriggle to loosen the plug of snow in front of me. I bring Neil up and he leads through to belay below the steep ice pitch, which I opt to climb direct rather than avoid on the left as suggested in the guidebook. As I set off a couple of ropes appear from above belonging to two lads from Harrogate Mountaineering Club. They were none the wiser on the cause of the blast but were glad to be near the top of the route when it happened! (*Discussions in the hut later concluded that the most likely cause was a lightning strike near the summit*)

Neil leads the final narrowing chimney to the left and we reach the summit just as it goes dark. With this in mind we decide to abseil the route using the in-situ peg belays which are set up for 60m ropes. Above the now dark mass of the north face was a clear sky packed with thousands of stars illuminating our way back to the hut. On arrival we were greeted by one of the lads we'd met abseiling the route "do you two fancy chilli and rice, we've made far too much?" ... could life get any better?

Minus 1 Gully VI,6 **** *"Keep calm and carry on"*

Encouraged by our previous day we opt to "go large" with our route choice, especially as the guidebook suggests "not often in condition". I obviously learnt something yesterday as, although I'm again in front of Neil, I'm behind the lads from Harrogate who are heading for Minus 2 Gully!

As we gear up it becomes clear we're already halfway up the first pitch and the peg we've clipped to is a runner not the belay. Neil heads off with the crux in view and in no time at all advises "it's looking a bit thin, though there are a couple of pegs and some tat". A flurry of ice ricochets down and I bow my head to avoid being hit in the face, as I start to look back up I'm suddenly pulled forward as Neil parts company with the left wall. The in-situ gear holds and after a quick check all his limbs are still working he's back on it and through. When I meet him at the belay I notice there's a nice axe pick shaped hole in the middle of his new helmet!



Neil nearing the top of the Pitch 2 on Minus 1 Gully

Next is the steep ice pitch which is a fantastic lead with good ice and great placements all round. Keen to avoid the tight rope situation of yesterday I belay at the top of this as the angle eases off, I've also spotted a peg in the next runnel which will make a good first clip for Neil. He arrives with a big grin on his face "*wow what a brilliant pitch*" ... I'm now not so happy having seen him drop one of my screamer quickdraws!

Arriving at "the meadow" I find Neil at a comfortable belay stance soaking in the magnificent surroundings. It's a snow bay with a mixed ramp that the guidebook suggests leads to a choice of grooves above. I head off and place the all important first runner, unfortunately the ice screw goes in about 50mm and hits rock. After a couple more failed attempts I move to the bay left wall in a bid to find a rock runner. No joy either so I return to the centre and take a couple of tentative steps up the iced rock, my axe and crampon placements feel secure. A few more steps and I try again for a screw placement, the same thing happens but I decide to leave it in, this is repeated until I reach the top of the ramp. I look down and wonder why I've left three useless screws as runners.

My options are now a steep 20m snow corner above or a smooth powder covered rock traverse to the right. I dig around for a rock runner and am strangely calm when one doesn't appear. My axe and crampon placements still feel positive so I head up the corner convinced I'll find a runner on the left rock wall. I don't and at the top of the corner it seems I'm virtually out of options when what looked like a bulge of ice from below turns out to be 50mm thick. Kicking a small ledge to give myself a rest I contemplate the predicament; yesterday's comment to Neil enters my thoughts "*sorry mate I'm just not up to it*". Looking down the corner it

dawns on me that in reality I've just soloed the last 35m and after all it is VI,6 ... obviously I am up to it! The solution becomes clear. I'm in a stable position with two good axe placements so I'll belay off these and get Neil to traverse just below me into the right gully. He does this and after a few delicate steps on thin ice manages to get into an icy groove that will take most of a stubby screw, Neil too is clearly up to it! *(This was a breakthrough pitch for me and I couldn't agree more when someone commented later that "you'll have left a piece of your soul on that route")*

A couple of pitches later we reach the top just as it goes dark. It turns out to be the top of Minus 1 Buttress and not the more useful North East Buttress; which is a challenging powder covered rocky arête away! I spot the tat at the top of Minus 2 Gully and Neil correctly surmises that we can abseil directly down from our stance into the gully below it ... obviously providing I throw away yet more of my gear.

We're not quite so lucky on the food front when we get back to the hut so opt for a big bag of crisps with mature cheese and biscuits accompanied by a large single malt ... life really couldn't get any better !

Minus 3 Gully IV,5 ** *"Respect your elders"*

All thoughts of heading to the Orion face, with just about everyone else in the hut, is soon banished at 6.00 the next morning. Neil thinks it might be the Bowmore 12 yr we celebrated with last night, but in truth yesterday's route had taken its toll. To be honest I preferred our backup plan; though mainly because it gave another couple of hours in bed. As we were finishing our last cup of tea the door opens and in walk a couple of old timers; exchanging pleasantries it turns out they too are going for Minus 3 Gully.

Walking to the start of the route Neil asks if I know who one of them is, I don't but apparently it's Alan Kimber. I solo up the first pitch to the cave and belay Neil who leads through up the crux ice pillar. At the top of the next pitch I catch up with the party in front so dig around on the right wall and managed to find a couple of decent runners. Neil cruises up and through heading for the crest of North East Buttress, we both agree this to be an excellent choice today. Five minutes later Alan arrives and starts scratching around next to me "bloody Ben Nevis rock, it's all so compact". He declines my offer to clip in and we discuss climbing and the current situation, *"we picked this route to be well within our limits, mind you at 74 I guess I shouldn't really be out ... you can see my house from this stance"*. He looks in great shape and I am truly in awe of his passion for the outdoors, I could have stayed chatting all day but I hear Neil shout "Safe". At the crest we consider our options and decided to abseil 60m towards the top of *Slingsby's Chimney II ** where we can see some belay tat.



Neil abseiling towards the top of Slingsby's Chimney

We walked down from the CIC hut knowing that during the narrowest window of opportunity we had achieved a great deal. Back at the van it became obvious that the world was now a different place.

Since the trip I've spent quite a bit of time wondering how I managed to raise my game and why now? Was it the years spent winter walking learning to survive the Scottish weather; the recent European ice climbing trips that have improved my technique; finding a great climbing partner in Neil; being physically in better shape or maybe some encouragement and wise words from a ginger Viking? I didn't come up with an answer but without doubt I was more prepared for the challenge than ever before.

Oh course my previous winter trip to Scotland with the Oread had been memorable ... however it's probably best to gloss over that for the sake of decency !

Hut Bookings.

TAN-YR-WYDDFA

Closed until further notice.

HEATHY LEA

Closed until further notice.

All queries and outstanding payments should be addressed to Michael Hayes, the Hut Bookings Secretary: 179 Starkholmes Rd. Starkholmes, Matlock DE4 5JA

Mobile 07771 700913. Email: michaelhayes6688@gmail.com

Information on Member Activities

Welcome to new full member Rachael Walker We hope you will enjoy many happy days with the Oread – before too long!

Applications for full membership have been received from Clare Foulkes and Pamela Postans, to be decided at the May committee. If you would like to comment on these applications please contact a member of the committee.

Rusty's Puzzle Corner

Re February's puzzle – Dennis Gray writes:

Dear Ruth,

Wharncliffe, despite the claims by Eric Byne, was not the birthplace of gritstone climbing.

Cecil Slingsby began his climbing career on gritstone in 1864.

When I wrote up Crookrise for a Yorkshire Gritstone Guidebook, I contacted his daughter, Len Young, Geoffrey Winthrop Young's wife, and she confirmed her father started climbing on the outcrops around Skipton in 1864, including Crookrise. At which outcrop his chimney is still a tough Very Difficult. He enjoyed an outstanding Alpine career with Mummery, Ellis Carr, Hastings and Collie, and he is seen as the father of mountaineering in Norway. His book, 'Norway the Northern Playground' has been reprinted several times, and is still in print with a foreword by Tony Howerd.

Himmelswillen (Heaven's Above) was first climbed in 1933 by Tom Stobart, who read Zoology at Sheffield University 1933-6 and was a member of the SUMC. He went from there to Cambridge and from there to the first ever course in documentary film making at Dartington. He was the David Attenborough of his times and the Director of the 1953 Mount Everest Film.

I hope this is helpful in clearing this matter?

Best wishes, Dennis

PS Len Young was one of the founder's of The Pinnacle Club.

Last month's puzzle solution:

One answer was received as follows:

The photo is Wetton farm taken from the path above. The place in Derbyshire Life will be Thor's cave. How much climbing is done there now I don't know but West Window groove was good. I doubt anyone has done Starlight and Storm since I did them with Gobbo 30 years ago - but he likes loose grassy rock.

The stairs by the gritstone wall are going from the Roches lower tier to the upper. I think they were done for a visit by the Princess of Teck and a seat was cut at the top of Teck crack.

Teck crack is a tricky little number for HVS as are the other HVSs on the lower tier, Mincer, Matinee, Valkyrie direct and Ackit.

I couldn't find my protractor but I have a copy of "School Mathematics" by H. E. Parr liberated from Firth Park Grammar school complete with log tables. Using sign of a public house the bearing to the Roaches is 214 degrees. I'll leave out the 24' as it is outside the limit of measurement accuracy. The distance is 6 miles 72 chains.

Rusty threw a curved ball as Thors' cave is due south and 58 chains away. Snod.

The correct answer was:

The steps illustrated in Derbyshire Life were of course at the Roaches and the similar ones I had in mind were at Ludd's Church. The photograph was taken looking down on Wetton Mill tea rooms. The map references are as follows

	Easting	Northing
Roches	000	634
Ludds Church	986	656
Wetton Mill	100	561

It follows that Ludd's Church is 1.4km west and 2.2 km north of the Roaches hence the distance is 2.6km and the bearing 328deg

WM is 7.3km south and 10.0km East of the Roaches hence the distance is 12.4km and the bearing 126deg

WM is 9.5km south and 10.1km East of the Ludds Church hence the distance is 13.9km and the bearing 133deg.

Rusty's assessment of Snod's answer was:

Snod had two of the three venues correct. I don't feel that the approaches to Thor's Cave could be described as a Pucka staircase sanctified by time, comparing the steps at Ludd's Church with those in the woods below Thor's Cave is like comparing a '50s Vauxhall Victor rust bucket with a '20s eight cylinder Bentley. However, his bearings and distances look correct to me for his chosen venues and it is a class act to use logarithm and quote the answer in chains, (49.709 chains per kilometer.) I leave you to award him a generous mark albeit less than 10/10 and I am pleased someone at least showed interest.

This month's puzzle is a triple bill! Well we all need something to occupy the mind.

First comes the photo puzzle from Rob Tresidder.

Following on from Snod's historic tight trousers, may I offer this as an entry in a future competition.

- Q1 Name the climb
- Q2 Name the climber (hint: a current Oread, but not when picture was taken)
- Q3 Name the year.



Then the numbers puzzle from Rusty:

A locked down mountaineer also interested in carpentry decided to use his enforced home time to make an octagonal picnic table for Heathy Lea, using some quality wood which he had kept and seasoned for future use.

As a social gesture to keep the youth of the neighbourhood away from crime and dissolute behaviour, he farmed out the job of rough sawing into planks which he then proposed to put through a planing machine with a view to doweling and glueing so as to achieve a number of tight, scarcely visible of joints. The proposed dimension was 1800mm across the parallel sides of the table top. Unfortunately when the timber was initially assembled it became clear that there had been an error at some stage of the process. Whereas there was enough material to obtain the specified length, and the width was correct at one end when the planks were cramped together, but there was a 5 degree taper to the outer edge on one side. Clearly the dimensions of the finished job had to be marginally reduced, and our man's pride required him to adhere strictly to the octagonal shape. What was the greatest width across the parallel sides which could be achieved with the material as cut?

Well – I think that is one for you Rob!

And finally a memory of times past and a puzzle to provide more memories of these photos kindly supplied by Janet Reynolds.

We see the installation of the first wood-burning stove at Heathy Lea, photos by George Reynolds.

John Shreeve took the plaster off to fit the stove but George did all the stonework, pointing it and fitting the stove. He wanted to open the fireplace through so the stove would heat both rooms but they decided against it because of wanting to keep the original black lead kitchen range. He also did the

windowsills in stone to match and to save painting.

Later, after the cash box had been stolen, he set the replacement into the stonework for security. When was the stove installed? We think pre 1999,



certainly before July 2002 because that is when Harry died.

Janet once met a woman and her daughter who used to live in the cottage when it was really basic – just the old range and no toilet of any kind. They later moved to Edensor. They had a little rockery garden which Janet uncovered and planted with bulbs. In their time the area was very open, and lots of heather which is why it was called Heathy Lea.

George Reynolds and Harry Pretty at work.



Dave Weston, John Shreeve and Janet admiring the work in progress.

Editor: Ruth Gordon, 4, The Terrace, Upper Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbys. DE4 5LB
Tel. 01629 56636 07999 857 922. Email alistair.ruth@btinternet.com