



# OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MAGAZINE

**JUNE 2021**



**Lunch at Totley Moor Trig point on the Boundary Walk, 24 April. Photo Chris Radcliffe.**

## **Editorial**

Lots of meets coming up in June and early July, climbing, walking and cycling in the Peak, Teesdale and Northumberland. Campsites are busy so if you want to go on the away meets do book in early. We still need a meet leader for the Longest Day – midsummer weekend. Perhaps it really will be summer by then?

Write ups include some enjoyable and sociable walks, plus one of the few really beautiful evening climbing meets of this wet and chilly May. More memories of our Honorary Members from both John Fisher and Tony Moulam and a warm tribute to Janet Ashcroft with memories of early Oread alpine meets. Oh – and the photographer of Harry Pretty's Oread group is finally revealed!

**Copy Deadline 20 June.**

## Forthcoming Meets 2021

We have camping meets coming in June in Teesdale and in Northumberland, thanks to Pip, Pete and Spenser for leading these. Sandwiched between these we have the midsummer weekend, a volunteer to lead a meet, which could be in the Peak, would be very welcome.

The relaxing of Covid restrictions appears uncertain, so we have decided to be UK based for the “Alpine” meet. So, if you have something you would like to see the club do let me know, or better volunteer to lead it. The Lakes, Snowdonia or Pembroke sea cliffs perhaps?

On a more optimistic note, clubs are starting to accept bookings for huts and some hut bookings have been included for September, October and November.

**Mike Moss: email xxxx**

June	9	Wednesday walk	Ladybower	John Gwyther
	11-13	Camping meet	Teesdale	Pip Leach
	19 -20	Midsummer Meet	Peak	<b>Leader needed</b>
	24	Short walk	Winster	Ruth Gordon
	26 -27	Camping meet	Northumberland	Spenser Gray
	26	Weekend walk	Venue TBD	Pete Amour
July	2-3	New Members meet	Heathy Lea	Ben Wooler
	3-4	Summer hike & bivvy	Bleaklow	Pete Amour
	7	Wednesday walk	Bonsall	Sue Todd
	13-17	Working Party	Tan yr Wyddfa	Snod Helliwell
	17-18	Barbecue meet	Tan yr Wyddfa	
	24	Peak District Boundary Walk finale	Heathy Lea	Paul Gardiner
	24 July – 15 August	Alpine meet replacement	Long weekends in UK TBD	<b>Leaders needed</b>
August	4	Wednesday Walk	Cat & Fiddle	Rusty Russell
	21-22	Weekend walk	Venue TBD	Chris/Jan Wilson
	28-30	Summer BH meet	Baggy Point, Devon?	Venue could change
September	8	Wednesday walk	Tideswell	
	10-12	MAM Hut or Camping	Ogwen	
	24-25	Lowstern hut Clapham	Yorkshire Dales	Nigel Briggs
	25-26	Weekend walk	Venue TBD	

October	2	BARMY competition	Peak District	
	6	Wednesday walk	Ashover	
	9	Working Party	Heathy Lea	Chris Wilson
	16-17	Curry meet	Tan yr Wyddfa	
	23-24	Weekend walk	Venue TBD	
	29-31	Strawberry Cottage	Glen Affric	Graham Weston
November	3	Wednesday walk	Brassington	
	5	Bonfire	Heathy Lea	
	13-14	Cwm Eigiau TBC	Snowdonia	Janet Briggs
	20-21	Weekend walk	Venue TBD	
	26-27	Fylde MC hut swap	Little Langdale	
December	1	Wednesday walk	Wetton Mill	
	4	Annual Dinner	Fox & Goose	Chris Radcliffe
	10 -12	Bullstones		
	15	Black Rocks evening meet		
	18-19	Weekend walk	Venue TBD	
	24 – 3 Jan	Christmas/New Year	Tan yr Wyddfa	
January	1	New Year's Day walk	Peak District	

## **9 June Wednesday Walk Ladybower John Gwyther**

The plan is to meet at Fairholmes car park 10.30 (£5 all day), though I think you can still park along the road for nowt, and walk up to Alport Castles, descend to Alport Farm, cross the A57 and walk back on the old Roman road on the north side of Kinder. It is 13Km 610m ascent, good woodland and moorland tracks, dirt tracks (no traffic) and seven stiles. No loos or refreshments en route though Fairholmes has a kiosk and toilets.

John Gwyther email xxxxx

## **11-12 June Durham Dales Pip Leach and Pete Masters**

The Durham Dales are England's secret gem, situated just north of the Yorkshire Dales but within striking distance of Cumbria and Northumberland. Teesdale itself boasts possibly England's most beautiful river, with waterfalls at High Force and Low Force. The Pennine Way passes through here.

This is a meet for walking and cycling as there isn't climbing in the near vicinity. (the nearest is Holwick Scar – but access is very sensitive).

The camp site is;

Daleview Holiday Park/Campsite

Middleton in Teesdale

DL12 ONG

Please go on their website to book yourself in. They take motor homes and tents.

I don't know how they allocate pitches but if you put Oread on the booking, they may put us closer together. Also, please let me know if you intend coming, so I have an idea of numbers.

Peter has offered to lead a walk along the upper Tees to Cauldron Snout (an easy scramble) and also a mountain bike ride (not for the faint hearted) if anyone's interested, as it is his local area.

Pip Leach email xxxxxx

## **19-20 June Midsummer weekend**

A volunteer to coordinate activities for the longest days of the year would be very welcome. Keep an eye on Facebook and the email group for any plans.

### **Thursday 24 June Winster Short Walk Ruth Gordon**

Meet at the car park on the outskirts of Winster (on the Wensley – Winster road ) SK 246 606 for an 11.00 am start. We will head towards Birchover and Stanton Moor, a route with stunning views but no really steep sections. All welcome.

Ruth Gordon email xxxx

### **25-26 June Northumberland Spenser Gray**

I am booked onto Pitch 153 of the Budle Bay campsite, near Bamburgh, on one of the Grass Electric Pitches (these are the ones for campervans even if you aren't using electric). Grass (No Electric) is for people with tents only.

There is lots of excellent single pitch climbing in the area, boat loads of bouldering and some very remote feeling walks/ MTB rides in the Cheviots.

Anyone wishing to come should email the campsite (online booking not available). If full try Springhill Farm or Clennel Hall. Unfortunately the crowds who would normally be in Spain etc seem to be visiting places like Northumberland which has made all of the campsites very busy!

The link for the campsite's website is here:

<https://www.budlebaycampsite.co.uk/tents>

Given current concerns about COVID spread I won't be organising car shares, however an indication of who is coming would be helpful.

My plans for what to do are flexible, however if you want to lead E4 and don't have another partner you will be abseiling for your gear!

Spenser Gray email xxxxxx

### **Saturday 26 June Loping along the Limestone Way Peter Amour**

I intend to again promote the area bordering the Staffs/Derbys boundary with a meet up time of 10-00 am at the car park by St Peter's Church, Ellastone GR SK 115 434. Boots should be active by 10-15 am and heading in the direction of Norbury - Roston - Marston Montgomery and then arcing on a course for Rocester by briefly making contact with the Staffordshire Way.

From Rocester (capital of JCB digger land) we shall make our return route along the Dove Valley by use of the southern-most stage of the Limestone Way, and may even take to calling at the Duncome Arms, Ellastone for a jar.  
(About 10-11 miles)

All things are Covid -19 guided, if interested please let me know by e mail,  
xxxxxxx

## **2-4 July New Members Meet Ben Wooler**

It feels like only yesterday that the 2020 new members meet was cancelled and now we find ourselves heading into spring 2021!? I think we can all agree it is about time we dusted off our ropes and shoes for a slightly delayed new members meet to see just how weak our fingers have become.

The format of the weekend will likely involve a small group out climbing on the Friday evening then retiring to the Heathy Lea via the Robin Hood. Saturday morning we will then head out to a local crag to be confirmed nearer the time although probably Stanage.

Saturday evening will include a hearty meal provided by the club. The Chef is still to be determined and if no one volunteers it will be the meet leader (to everyone's risk), any budding caterers are encouraged and will be rewarded with beer. **Please ensure you inform the meet leader in good time if you are attending the meal and of any dietary requirements.**

Sunday will once again see us out at a local crag before heading home when enthusiasm or daylight fails.

The cost of the two nights in the hut plus Saturday's evening meal will be £10 payable on the weekend. Please come along and support your club, even if just a few hours out on the crag one day. These meets have brought many new members to the club and I think we can all agree it would be a good chance to get out and see some familiar faces without a webcam!

If you wish to attend or if you are a new member and would like any further information on what you may need or what you can expect please get in touch with the meet leader on xxxxxxxxxxxx The hut tends to fill up fast and will be allocated based on first come first served basis.

**Please note this meet will only go ahead in this format if national restrictions allow and we may need to adjust depending on the situation at the time.**

## **3 -4 July Summer Hike and Bivvy Bleaklow Peter Amour**

Due to a couple of factors the planned Welsh weekend will not now happen.

Namely, having difficulties in accessing the Berwyns to recce it for a possible barn if the weather was wet on the Friday night, and ongoing Covid restrictions to the possible booking of the bunkhouse, which would have had shared toilet facilities. Instead, the meet will take place on Saturday 3rd and have a one night bivvy at Lower Small Clough and Sunday, 4th being a return walk.



*The Lower Small Clough Cabins, the planned location for the bivvy for Saturday, 3rd July. Brian West carrying a quality control inspection*

## **Wednesday 7 July Walk Bonsall Sue Todd**

Meet in Bonsall village by the Fountain Cafe grid ref. 281580 for a 10.30 departure. Early arrivals might want to take advantage of some quick refreshment, or, possibly at the finish depending on time. Plenty of free car parking next to the recreational ground opposite the cafe, or street parking. Please bring own packed lunch.

We will be walking in the hills and dales to the west of Matlock, and hopefully see some deer in Clough wood.

I'm assuming we won't be restricted by rules on numbers in July, but a text, phone call or email, to let me know you intend coming, would be very helpful so we don't leave without you. Thank you.

Sue Todd xxxxxx

## **Saturday 24 July Peak District Boundary Walk Final Celebratory Leg Paul Gardiner**

The guide book says Millthorpe to Beeley 10.6 miles but the intention is to terminate at Heathy Lea as the final section of the walk has already been covered.(26.11.17). This brings the distance down to about 6 miles, i.e. a short day out. So, the start will be from the Royal Oak in Millthorpe at 11.15 with some options to show up there by whatever means you choose. e.g. Super Fit - Start from Heathy Lea, walk to Millthorpe and back again. I shall not be in this group ! Bikers - Stash bikes at HL, drive to the start and bike back to vehicles. I do not have a bike.....However, to make a longer walk I propose to start from the car park at Shillito Woods (GR 295750) moving off at 10am for a walk to Millthorpe via Moorhall and Hollin Wood, about 2 1/2 miles arriving for the 11.15 start.

At Millthorpe any Doctor's Notes will be scrutinised and those pronounced fit will be issued with a chit for a complimentary drink at the Robin Hood as we pass through to HL. We will proceed via Smeeckley Wood and Hewetts Bank to pick up the road for a section to join the A621 and then across the moor on the bit that I suppose everyone knows. The post walk get-together at Heathy Lea could be the first proper social gathering since the lock down. Cream teas will be on offer so, whether you have done the whole circuit or a few stages or even none, do turn up. Some indication of attendance about a week before the event would be helpful to ensure sufficient victuals

Paul Gardiner: Phone [xxxxxxx](tel:xxxxxxx)

### **Women's Trad 100 – postponed to September!**

[This meet](#) is now fully booked.

## **Members Corner**

### **Sally Dipple writes:**

Hi All (who know us). This is a long-overdue note to club members and friends who know Tim and me, most of whom know we have left the country but not much else! I didn't make it very widely-known when we planned to leave last year because I was never sure we would actually make it, what with the enormity of the project and a global pandemic. However, with a bit of planning and a lot of luck, we did manage to sell up and move across the Channel.

We were then in rented accommodation for about seven months - and it still felt a bit unreal, so I still didn't send out a communication. Now however, we have our residency cards and have just moved into a new home, so it feels safe to tell everyone!

We are in a town/large village called Lérans in the Ariège, 09600, in SW France. It's a bit south of Mirepoix and a bit north of Foix, sort of en route to Andorra. We have access to cragging from here to the Pyrenees, and skiing too. It seemed worth trying to squeeze this chapter into our lives before we get too old for either activity! (And before the Transition Period of Brexit ended, as we succeeded in

getting residency under the old EU membership terms having arrived before the end of last year).

So, this is a bit of a goodbye as I have asked to be taken off the Oread email list now. We are no longer Oread members so it's inappropriate and pointless (!) to receive them. Although it's always nostalgically fun to read them!

However, I hope that everyone who knows us, and who wants to, will stay in touch by phone or email, and we will be very pleased to see you if you are coming our way. Plenty of room in the new house and parking for vans. I do miss you all, and aspects of home, naturally. All the best - wishing you all some excellent days out this summer.

Sally (and Tim says hi to everyone!)  
Sally M Dipple  
xxxxxxx  
xxxxxxx

## News and Reports from Meets

### 24 April PDBW: Ringinglow to Millthorpe Chris Radcliffe

Initial light cloud gave way to clear skies and full sun – a great day for finally being able to walk the penultimate section of the Peak District Boundary Walk. The pandemic had forced us to cancel the meet twice, but now we were treated to ideal walking conditions.

The latest BMC advice was that as an organized club meet we were not restricted on numbers (providing we had a risk assessment in place and everyone was



properly briefed). Twenty-one members and friends assembled at the Norfolk Arms, an excellent turnout. It was great to see three generations of the Gardiner family represented on the meet.

It was busy at the Norfolk Arms, but it

soon thinned out as we set off along Houndkirk Road and once we turned off over Houndkirk Moor we encountered few other folk, although we were passed by a group of mountain bikers descending into Blackamoor Plantation. We climbed back up past “The Bench” where we paused briefly before continuing up the flank of Blacka Hill and traversing around Wimble Holme Hill.

Continuing along the edge of the moor, we climbed up to the Totley Moor trig point. There was an excellent view here over Sheffield and the eastern Peak and



*The team contouring Wimble Holme Hill – John Green in the lead and the remarkable Paul Gardiner in high spirits.*

we stopped here for lunch. (Photo on page 1.)

The track continued below Flask Edge and we crossed the Owler Bar road close to Barbrook Reservoir, pausing to check out the 1709 Stoop (Guide Stone) and the nearby Companion Stone (millennium project). We descended through Greaves Piece into the Cordwell Valley, but there was one last climb up Horsleygate Lane before the final descent along Grimsell Lane to Millthorpe.

Kudos to Pete Amour who left Millthorpe at 6am to walk to the Norfolk Arms and join the rest of us for the walk – a sterling effort; also to John Gwyther who cycled to the start from Millthorpe. The rest of us made various arrangements to car share in our bubbles.

Most of us went to the Royal Oak for sustenance. Service was slow, but it was pleasantly sunny – a good end to a very sociable day.

Many thanks to all who joined me on the meet: Stuart Firth, Sue Todd, Angela Milne, Ellie Reynolds, Pippa Leach, Rachel Walker, Louise Amandini, Peter Amour, Nicola Bashforth, Michael and Helen Hayes, Chris and Jan Wilson, Paul, Douglas and William Gardiner and friend, John Gwyther, John Green, Gill Radcliffe. Also to Stuart Firth and Peter Amour for the photographs.

**Paul Gardiner adds:** “I would just like to add my thanks to the people who picked me up and sorted me out when I took a tumble”.

## Wednesday Walk Millers Dale 12 May Stuart Firth



When I was a lad my ambition in life was to become a bread-butterer in a Subway sandwich shop. Imagine therefore how appropriate it was that I became what was known as a thick sandwich apprentice at Rolls-Royce and Associates, the design authority for HM submarine power plants.

On induction we were told to beware seductive foreign agents laying honey traps. Things were definitely looking up. Alas these daydream thoughts came to nought. Instead we learnt such arcane techniques as “Critical Path Analysis” and “Programme Evaluation and Review Techniques. What, you may well ask, has this got to do with this particular Wednesday Walk? Quite a lot actually.

### *Huffing and puffing out of Millers Dale.*

On arrival at Millers Dale car park, it became evident that the ticket machine was so complicated that a PhD would have come in handy. There was even a flow chart displayed with about a dozen stages at the end of which one might be lucky enough to win a ticket. Happily after three or four goes, not only did I win a ticket but I felt sufficiently confident to try and help a rather exuberant and garrulous Liverpudlian cyclist apply himself to the task. This was probably a mistake.

The machine was like a cross between a fruit machine and a game of snakes and ladders. One mistake and the process was brought to a juddering halt and one was sent back to the beginning. The trouble was the cyclist was incapable of keeping his hands off the machine buttons while it chuntered agonisingly slowly to the next stage of its convoluted process. Consequently he kept being sent back to the start.

By this time there were seven frustrated people behind him in the queue. I tried pinning his arms to his side to speed things up. However, his eel-like slitheriness enabled him to flash his card at the reader at an inappropriate moment so that he was about to be awarded a one-hour ticket instead of the full day one he wanted. There was now a crowd of twenty three other punters. We jointly wrestled him to the ground and successfully managed to complete the process on his behalf and sent him on his happy way. So it was in a slightly flustered state that the day's activities began.

We climbed steeply out of Millers Dale up seemingly hundreds of steps whose "rise" was twice their "go" and whose "go" was too long for a single stride and too short for a double. There was a lot of good natured huffing and puffing and we soon completed the major climb of the day.

Once at the top, the views opened up and in good Buddhist style we walked in a clockwise direction linking up various farms along the way: Highcliffe, Fivewells, Chelmorton, Topleyhead, Calton and Cottage Farm. The terrain was never difficult and offered extensive views often including distant quarries. Rusty opined that the quarry industry at one time employed 15% of the Derbyshire workforce.

We came across Grove Rake - an impressive lead mining site which looked like a massive ditch and was home to a delightful clump of yellow violas. At the end of the Grove lay Illy-Willy water, aka Bank Spring pit in Chelmorton. We took lunch in the delightfully atmospheric church graveyard where we discovered the Lord's Chair.

After lunch, John Gwyther was pleased to shift the scale on a 44 tonne weighbridge. He had had a good lunch.

On our return, above Chee Tor, we came across a Sheffield University archeological team surveying the settlement marked on the map. We received an interesting impromptu lecture on the Roman (lead-mining?) remains from the supervisor who appeared himself to be of Italian extraction. Maybe his ancestors had built the place. And the vertiginous climb at the start of the day.



*Left: Grove Rake. Right Illy Willy Water. Photos courtesy of Nicola Bashforth.*



*Nicola leads the mindfulness class.*

Back at Millers Dale station, we enjoyed the refreshments on offer and I discovered - stuck in my back pocket - the car park ticket I had been so pleased to "win". Fortunately, there were no traffic wardens that day...

## **One Wednesday evening Dave “Snod” Helliwell**

Despite the dire warnings from the grinning weather man and in the middle of this unsettled spell a group of Oreads had a magical evening on Froggatt. True it was breezy but that had dried out the rock and lo – the sun shone.

I met Simon at Sunset Slab and Sunset Crack was soon despatched. We then saw Michael (Hayes) Roland and Angela and Jay heading to the far end of the crag where we soon joined them. It was there we met aged Gandalf\* and his carer and two young damsels, Harriet and her friend, climbing Gren Gut. All the standard routes were enjoyed while Roland and Angela, with Paul Eastwood tackled some sterner stuff.

As the sun began to set, giving a golden glow to the sky, we made our way back leftwards to do Heather Wall where we met Rachael and Pippa with Tony Walker. As we all ambled back we passed a herd of deer, I have never seen any here before.

We even rounded off the evening with a trip to The Grouse and as I headed westward to home there was still a warm rosy glow in the sky.

\* Those who have not seen Roger Larkam and son, Tom recently may be confused by this latest nickname – the snowy locks and grizzled beard are a sight to behold.

### **The Goes Wrong Show:**

#### **A Highland Fling (1984) Ruth Gordon**

*In this tale disaster struck early on – but by a combination of good luck and persistence we managed to keep to the original timetable and achieve most of our objectives. The loss of one day would have put us out of key with the weather pattern and the outcome would have been much less satisfactory – though perhaps less exhausting!*

Why would you? Driving well over 1,000 miles in a week, all the hassle of timing, planning, booking ferries, sacrificing a week's precious holiday to attempt one HVS route of dubious quality but undeniable appeal in the Land of Eternal Rain? For myself I'd never have got round to it but with a dedicated Hard Rock Route Ticker eager to fill a car I was talked into it. So, one Friday night in June 1984 we found ourselves - Martin Lancaster, Tony Fidler, Freddy Phillips and your Hon. Ed. eating fish and chips in Disley and arguing about whether we had time for a beer. Fred said he was on his holidays and he was definitely having a beer. Martin could sit in the car if he wanted. This was the first of several similar conversations.

Well, soon we were cruising up the M6, Tony's elderly estate car loaded down with food, tents, gear, all under control, until somewhere south of Kendal the

temperature gauge shot off the scale and steam gushed alarmingly in all directions. Once it had cooled a bit we drove, at a very stately pace, to a hotel just off the motorway. Luckily I had personal RAC membership so we called them out and after much thought the guy diagnosed a blocked radiator, phoned a garage just down the road where they not only had one in stock but were actually willing to fit it at 9.30pm on a Friday night!

Spirits began to rise a little as we got underway again at 11.30 pm realising that if we could just keep driving we should still catch the Orkney ferry. I woke up as we left Glasgow with dawn already breaking at 2.00 am. Broad daylight by 4.00 when I took on driving – all was well till I tried to brake. As we coasted on towards Inverness I gathered that, with all the weight we had on board, anticipation was the order of the day. Wonderful road, completely empty, (just as well because I kept waking up on the wrong side of it) By 6.00am Martin and I were only managing 15-20 miles at a stretch before sleep but knowing we were going to make the ferry with time to spare.

On board the St Ola we settled in a sunny corner on deck but once underway the mist came down and the sudden chill drove us into the bar where we pressed our noses to the window squeaking with excitement – or was it terror – as the Old Man itself hove into view.

We hung around Stromness til 5.30 when the little boat came to take us from Mainland Orkney to Hoy. A magic journey, 30 minutes, the sea quite rough, the mist lifting and swirling and the huge rusted wreck of a wartime tanker, sunk to keep submarines out of the harbour, looming unearthly out of the cloud. At the other side we climbed a ten foot metal ladder onto the quay and, lo and behold, the taxi was waiting as arranged. A beat-up Hillman Avenger that didn't look as if it could possibly carry us and all that stuff. He left us at Rackwick Bay, agreeing to pick us up at 4.30 pm on Sunday. We set up camp and cooked a meal, in the course of which Fred's gas stove committed hari kiri and nearly burned the tent down as we all cowered behind a wall waiting for the explosion that never came.

We woke at 6.00 and it was drizzling – by 8.00 it was damp but improving so we set off. All too soon the dreadful thing appeared, looming horribly above the cliffs. We geared up hoping we had forgotten the rope, the rock boots – anything for heaven's sake – but no – we had to start picking our way down the lush vegetation and sticky red mud of the cliffs.

Standing beneath, it seemed ludicrous, surely we aren't really going up there? But Martin set off and soon we were all belayed on a comfortable ledge, much adorned with rusty ironmongery and tatty slings. Here we fixed one end of the spare rope, and following the others, Fred led across the traverse to the main crack. Here the exposure hits you – as you move away from the landward side you are already a very long way above the sea. The next bit, up the wide niche was hard and a handy wooden wedge offered protection and, for me, a sneaky bit of aid! At the belay above we fastened off the spare rope and continued up two easy but insecure scrambling pitches. It was green and smelly but the seabirds

seemed unperturbed by our presence. I was last and the fulmars had run out of spit by the time I appeared in range. At last there was just the splendid, juggy final crack. As I gained height the sea was visible through the back of the crack and I tried not to think about the stability of the structure.



As I led up the last few feet Martin and Tony were already slinging the ab ropes down, It was 2.30 pm - two hours to get the taxi. We gave ourselves a few minutes to admire the view, the position, our own cleverness, to play to the audience of about 20 gathered on the headland opposite, and to make the acquaintance of the Razorbill which strutted arrogantly three feet away, looking down its beak at us.

We left it to its solitary splendour and hurtled off down the five abseils. My moment of glory, as resident caving expert, was to clip into the tied off rope with a krab on a sling, and down the free abseil until the sling pulled tight, clip the jammers onto the fixed rope and udge myself leftwards till I could heave myself onto the belay ledge. I towed Martin across and we

grabbed all the gear we could and dashed back to strike the tents and persuade the taxi driver to hang about. Tony and Fred just managed to drag the ab ropes down in time and we were back in the Avenger in time for the 5.00pm boat.

We stank. Oh Lord how we stank. A fishy, seaweedy, birdy, rotten, horrible stink. We sat by the harbour at Stromness stinking, waiting for the pubs to open. Martin went walk-about and discovered the perfect doss – the school bike shed! We were glad of it as it poured down overnight and we boarded the St Ola in heavy drizzle, realising how ridiculously lucky we had been to hit the fine weather window.

Back in the car and off to Aviemore to stock up on food and catch the ski tow. It had stopped raining by the time we set off in early evening to flog over to the Shelter Stone. It was utterly beautiful and lonely, the splendid crag, the last of the snow still lying and the loch curving out of sight. We had the bivvi cave to ourselves.



Next morning dawned fine and the Hard Rock bashing continued with a general assault on Needle – to my mind the finest route of the week -all 800 magnificent feet of it. Martin and Tony went on to do Steeple which they said was much harder but superb. Four lads turned up to bivvi that night but they were unlucky because the morning was wet and dreich. Martin, nothing daunted, insisted it was just the day for a bit of Classic Rocking - “Come on, it'll never be nearer than it is now. Can't be that hard.” Clean Sweep on Hell's Lum. H.S. As I front-pointed my way up the permafrost in my rock boots towards the yawning bergschrund with only a nut wurdler for aid I was doubtful. As the rain flowed down the slabby first pitches Tony and Freddy, leading, were more than doubtful, they were justifiably terrified – but then the sun came out and perhaps it was all worthwhile – but still the hardest route of the week!

Back in Aviemore we stocked up with food and decided to reward ourselves with a pint in the Winking Owl. Shock, horror! We were confronted with a notice pointing out that they do not care to serve persons of scruffy, dirty appearance in shabby or torn clothing. Had they posted identikit pictures of ourselves the message could not have been clearer. We slunk off to somewhere less salubrious. Then we drove the 80 miles to Braemar, loaded the sacs and set off on the six mile walk in to Craig an Dubh Loch. It was never really dark so we could see to pitch the tents in so far as the howling gale permitted us to pitch them. It was a case of hanging on to the flapping nylon and heaving boulders into place. It worked in a fashion and we collapsed exhausted around midnight.

Thursday was beautiful, if cold and windy and we had the whole vast crag to ourselves. We all did King Rat, a strange and un-reassuring route with dodgy protection. Martin and Tony did Goliath as well. Friday was bitterly cold and very windy. Martin was sure it was just the day for Eagle Ridge on Lochnagar. We all

walked up there but, looking at the snow banked up at the foot of the ridge, Fred and I wimped out. Martin, waving his indestructible socks, insisted it would be fine, Many hours later they returned, Tony was almost hypothermic. The indestructible socks over the rock boots had saved the day – but had perished in the battle. “Must look out the guarantee.” muttered Martin.

Saturday was so cold and windy we packed up and walked out and then it turned to heavy rain so we headed home, needing another holiday to recover from this one. Comparing notes with Tony the following Wednesday it turned out he and I had both fallen asleep at work every day that week!

## **Past Times and Old Friends**

### **Bower and Byne plus. John Fisher**

I much enjoy Tony Moulam's reminiscences in the newsletter. His recent contribution which included George Bower and Eric Byne was particularly interesting.

The former, in 1950 or thereabouts, caught myself and Alan Jones, a fellow laboratory worker at British Celanese, climbing on Brassington Rocks in **nailed** boots. Having delivered a well deserved rocket to these vandals he was kind enough to lead us up the rather strenuous Snuffer Chimney.

In later years Doug Cook and myself enjoyed his eponymous route on the remote Esk Buttress. As Tony points out, Bower was of that inter-war generation which made many fine first ascents of hard climbs in the Lakes and elsewhere.

As for Eric Byne, I knew him well, our first meeting I think, again in the 1950s, when, as an instructor at White Hall, the Derbyshire Outdoor Pursuits Centre, he taught this tyro how to climb on gritstone. Off and on we met on the crags but mostly my personal connections were when, as a student in Birmingham, I frequently cycled over from Sunny Smethwick to his home in Rednal opposite the Austin Motor Factory where he worked. There I enjoyed his interesting company and sometimes food.

He collected items connected with mountains and remote places, stamps etc and I gather Joe Brown gave him a piece of rock from near the summit of Kangchenjunga. He got me to send him special stamped and franked envelopes from Tristan da Cunha. Eric died in early 1967 just after I got back from the island.

If my memory serves me correctly the variety of followers at his funeral ranged from climbers to stockbrokers and Trade Union officials. Eric influenced a lot of people.

### **Honorary Encounters: – Tony Moulam**

The brightest star in the firmament of the Oread Honorary Members is, without doubt, Jack Longland. Scholar, athlete, rock climber and rock gymnast, as well as renowned mountaineer, educationist and broadcaster he was eminent

in many fields. His climbing career began, in a modest way, at Ivy Scar on the Malvern Hills near Worcester, where he attended the King's School. From there he became a Rustat Exhibitioner and scholar at Jesus College, Cambridge. Before graduating he won a blue for pole vaulting (his joint place of 3.5 metres in a national Amateur Athletics contest was only four inches short of the then British record). What, however, is certain is that Jack was the only practitioner to demonstrate his technique in Tibet. This was during the approach march to Everest in 1933, at Tengye Dzong, improvising equipment from a radio mast!

His scholastic record includes a first in the history tripos followed by a special distinction in English then, more mundanely, service as Treasurer (from 1925 to 1926) and, later, President of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club. In these years he sowed and nurtured his alpine talents with routes accomplished with many and varied companions including Lawrence Wager, Gino Watkins, Wyn Harris, Spencer Chapman (The Jungle is Neutral) and Ivan Waller. All this cementing his claim to a place alongside the experienced altitude men in the Routledge Expedition.

Before looking at Jack's Himalayan experience it is meet to consider his rock climbing. Whilst at Cambridge, as student or fellow (of Magdalene College) he visited Black Rocks with Ivan Waller and Alf Bridge. In 1928 he made the first ascents of Birch Tree Wall and Lone Tree Groove - the latter led by Ivan with his ice-axe to the fore in the turf that then engorged it! In the same year at Easter he started to explore with Frank Smythe and T Graham Brown the West Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu. They hoped to twin the climb up the East Buttress done by Fred Pigott and his party in 1927 but, after some progress, abseiled off as the weather worsened, and returned at the Whit weekend. At the foot of the proposed route Jack, and his companions Ivan Waller and Peter Bicknell, encountered Pigott's party and Fred, in his gentlemanly way, insisted that Jack should lead - as he had prior claim.

Another, much less heralded rock climbing feat was Javelin Blade, on Idwal's Holly Tree Wall. Jack claims that 'he had got lost' when he led it in 1930. He had not realised that one was supposed to go right from the famous thread belay but that his strong fingers, due to his pole vault prowess, made the strenuous pull-out onto the blade acceptable, 'as I had a belay 40ft below me'. Thus casually an E1,5b pitch was achieved when the upper limit was generally reckoned to be VS. and I admit to underestimating the route when I did it for the 1958 Cwm Idwal guidebook; but that was probably because Johnny Lees had led!



*Longland's is the thin slab on the left.*

I first climbed with Jack at Easter 1949 when convalescing from my hitch-hiking accident the previous December. An operation had left me with very limited flexion of my right knee. I had, with extreme difficulty, managed Branch Chimney and Pirate's Staircase at Black Rocks and Alf Bridge, witnessing my struggles, had prescribed a trip to Ogwen Cottage. So it came to pass that I met Bob Newton of the CCPR at Derby market place on Maunday Thursday and was driven there, in comfort.

AB (Alan Hargreaves) organised the meet from Helyg, where he stayed in Spartan splendour, eschewing the sybaritic lure of Ogwen Cottage and arranged for me to partner Jack. Early on Good Friday Jack led me, and his teenage son John, up the Arete and Slab Climb on Bochlwyd Buttress, AB with his son Richard followed us on a second rope and we all then decided to go up onto Tryfan's East Face. We set off up Gashed Crag but, being the Easter weekend, this ever popular route was congested. Impatiently Jack led his motley party across broken ground, continued up Arete Climb but moved onto South Rib when his way was again impeded by slower parties. In the end we moved back right to finish, satisfyingly, on the South Peak!

Having been discharged from the Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital on 15<sup>th</sup> February I had spent most of my time walking and cycling to build up my wasted muscles. These work-outs had obviously paid off as I was able to perform

reasonably well, despite my unbending leg, and AB pronounced me fit enough to go on 'a proper climb'. This meant that Saturday and Sunday would be devoted to Lliwedd's intricate and deserted cliffs. The same parties were deployed, first on Craig Aderyn with the Three Pinnacle Start and then the great classic Horned Crag. Though neither route is very hard technically they are both serious undertakings, but on this occasion relieved by the continuous light-hearted chatter from John contrasted with the taciturn no nonsense approach of Richard. Success was later suitably feted at the Cobden's Arms in Capel Curig before returning to Ogwen for our last supper of the weekend.

Just three years later I was fully recovered and was to have a much more exciting day with Jack. It was again Easter but this time we were staying at the Pen y Gwryd hotel (I was in the bunkhouse) which allowed us, tempted by a glorious morning, to do Carreg Wastad's Wrinkle before breakfast!

Back at the hotel a full Welsh breakfast followed by toast and marmalade meant we left indecently late for Llanberis and the track for Snowdon. Eventually our mixed party arrived severally at Maen du'r Arrdu and witnessed the sight of the magnificent cliff gradually appearing above the lake as we puffed our ways up the scree. By now several teams were already spread about the crag, but luckily none was on Longland's, which was our aim, and we assembled in an uncomfortable group at its foot. We were six; two (not so old) masters, A B Hargreaves and Jack, Jack's elder son John, Johnny Churchill, an American who worked at their embassy (when he could spare the time from climbing!), Val Jones, one of Chris Briggs' nubile trainee girls from PyG, and me.

Whilst not a strong party I was climbing near my best and the two senior climbers had sufficient cunning to overcome most trouble. At first all went well with only occasional damp spots on the rock. However, as I reached the crux and my followers were extended over most of the height of the crag, it started to pour with rain and I resorted to socks once I had surmounted the 'faith and friction' slab. My log records, 'others had quite a lot of difficulty' and 'heard Mac had fallen from Central Rib after nearly completing the West Buttress Girdle with Geoff Francis'.

We were kept busy getting our bedraggled party to the top, and then down the Western Terrace but there were many other competent rescuers on the cliff. We saw Des Birch in nails abandon his ascent of Narrow Slab to shepherd Mac to the summit via Great Slab.

The excitement over, our sopping sextet trailed across to the track, from where we got a lift down to the valley, nine up, steaming the windows of a V8 Ford Pilot driven by Frank Mayo, a Cambridge friend of Jack's who had been with us on Carreg Wastad earlier that distant seeming morning.

It later emerged that Mac had climbed onto a boulder that then became unperched from its resting place on the high angled slab. He had ridden it, toboggan like, until he wisely abandoned it and left it to career noisily on until it launched itself into space and found a final resting place on the scree below the cliff. Mac's 200 foot flight ended at the bottom of the forty foot corner with

nothing more serious than a broken big toe, and a compelling story on which to dine out for many weeks.

It is now appropriate to regress 20 years and consider Jack's contribution to Everest 1933. All the pre-war attempts were by this route, during which Mallory and Irvine were lost in 1924. The establishment of Camp V had been followed by high winds and much snow. Eventual improvement saw Jack, Wyn Harris, Wager and eight porters installed Camp VI at 27,400ft, below the North East arete. As they began their descent a sudden blizzard wiped out visibility and Longland led them almost too far to the east but found the north ridge in time, and returned them all safely to the North Col, Routledge remarked in his account for the Alpine Journal, 'this was a performance of which any mountaineer might be justly proud'.

Next day Wyn Harris and Wager mounted the first assault and, traversing diagonally upwards they found after about an hour, an ice axe which must have belonged to Mallory or Irvine. They continued and attained the west wall of the great couloir, where powder snow treacherously lay on the outward sloping ledges. Good views had been gained of the first and second steps and they concluded future attempts would be better following Norton's route by the Great Couloir.

Unfortunately, but predictably, the weather continued to deteriorate and the expedition was wound up from 21st June. Jack did not go on Everest again, although Tilman asked him in 1938, he had just started a new job and felt unable to accept.

For the years since 1930 Jack had lectured in English at Durham University. He moved from there in 1936 to be deputy, and then, director of Durham's Community Service Council. In 1940 he made his first move into educational administration, as deputy education officer for Hertfordshire. In 1942 he became Dorset's director of education and a final move to Derbyshire came in 1949. He stayed in this last post until retirement, in 1970, when he was knighted.



*The photograph shows Jack with Prince Philip at Castle Naze, watching an early Whitehall course.*

The high point of his tenure, from the climbing point of view, was the establishment of the Whitehall Outdoor Pursuits Centre, the first to be funded by a local authority. It proved very successful if controversial and, supported by volunteer instructors (some from the Oread), its small cadre of professionals introduced countless youngsters to enjoyment of the open air.

As a performer on a larger stage Jack was a frequent radio broadcaster from the late 40s as chairman of Country Questions and participated in other programmes. In 1957 he followed John Arlott as chairman of the panel game My Word with Frank Muir and Denis Norden until he retired in 1977. During his public life he sat on countless committees, commissions and advisory bodies and chaired the Mountain Leadership Training Board.

Jack's last few years were marred by the rapidly successive deaths of Peggy, his wife, and John his son. The final indignity was a couple of strokes, frustratingly hindering the activities of a vital and active man. I am proud to count him among my friends.

### **Tony Smedley's books Nigel Briggs**

There are still books available for claiming from Tony's collection, they are now available on 'first come first served' basis. We hope that you make a voluntary donation to the Derby and Burton Hospitals Charity (Haematology Department) in his memory.

There are some 'classic reads' available, many members will already have their own copies of the books but others will not. This is a great opportunity to get hold of some great mountain literature, support a good cause and remember a friend.

The full list was published in the April Newsletter, have a look at the titles, ask me if still available and we can arrange to get them to you.

### **Janet Ashcroft: a tribute**

#### **Colin and Uschi Hobday's memories of Janet**

My (Colin's) most memorable occasions with Janet were on our first alpine holiday in 1959 to the Zillertal Valley together with Ruth and John Welbourn, doing a Hut to Hut and climbing peaks in between. After a week Jack and Janet Ashcroft as well as June Walker joined us at the Hut. Having already climbed the Olperer (3476m) the previous day, the Ashcroft party said they too would like to do the Olperer, so I volunteered to do the peak a second time. Janet proved to be a very competent climbing companion, she made short work of the rocky section up to the summit. She was also a good companion. The following day we moved to the Spanagel House which was fully booked, and we had to make do with the very cold winter room. Next morning we woke up to nine inches of new snow. Luckily a local guide descended to the valley to Hintertux, so we followed in his footsteps as the footpath was totally obliterated. Again Janet as well as Ruth and June took it all in their strides.

The following year Jack and Janet organised a trip to the Bernina, we flew from Southend airport in a BMC organised charterflight? (Dacota) to Switzerland and from there by train to Pontresina, where we met John Fisher, who was stationed in Germany at that time. The first disaster was that Jack had misread the guide book and got confused with the times for up and down from the hut.

Consequently we got benighted. Luckily a farmer from one of the Alms we passed, guided us in the dark to the Benami Hut, where we arrived at 11.00 pm – needless to say the Hut Warden was not amused. Janet as ever took it all in her stride. The rest of the trip was uneventful, the highlight being the ascent of Piz Bernina 4049 m and the traverse across the shoulder of the Piz Palu returning to the Marinelly Hut.

Two years later in 1962 when Uschi and Anne (Michael Hayes's Mum) arrived in England and discovered the Oread at the Bell in Derby, Jack and Janet, John and Ruth Welbourn as well as Chuck and Margaret Hooley took the girls under their wings, and took them out into the peak district or invited them for tea.

Some time later, when Anne was courting Geoff Hayes and Uschi and I became an item, we were often invited by Jack and Janet for an evening meal, the evenings were usually accompanied by good food and classical music. Janet at that time was working as a Maths Teacher at Derby High School. Over the years we spent many a weekend together walking or climbing or camping on a family meet. By that time Jack and Janet had three lovely boys. Sadly work took Jack and Janet to Sheffield, so we did not see so much of them. Janet was a very sociable and likeable person, always there to help, advise or just be good company. She was a very strong walker with her big love being the Scottish Highlands, which Jack and Janet often frequented.

## **Hut Bookings.**

**Both huts are now available for booking in accordance with current Covid 19 legislation.**

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](mailto:michaelhayes6688@gmail.com)

Our preferred method of payment is via bank transfer to our Lloyds account – Sort Code 30-98-97 Account number 62584068. Please use the 'Reference' box to say what the payment is for. **In particular please say which hut, ie Hut fees HL, or Hut fees TyW.** Your name is not necessary in the reference, unless it is different from the bank account name.

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

## **Information on Member Activities**

Welcome to new Provisional members Louise Amandini and Catherine Hocking . We hope you will enjoy many happy times with the Oread.

## Rusty's Puzzle Corner

### Last month's puzzle solution:

By pure chance my puzzle features Jack Longland, subject of Tony Moulam's memoirs in this month's issue. I asked for two very different routes first ascended by Honorary Oreads. Ruth and Snod both separately identified Longland's on Cloggy at 410 feet as the multi-pitch but incorrectly picked Apple Arete on Gardom's, first climbed by Dave Penlington as the single pitch.

I asked What adjective could be applied, **without any possible contradiction**, to both routes? Their choices of "bold" "classic" or "enjoyable" are arguably correct but are all subjective. As I did Longland's in my youth it can only be considered as "slightly bold".

The route I had in mind was Alan's Slab and the adjective **eponymous**. Plenty of other options would have qualified – Penlington's Progress, Byne's Crack etc.

Snod claims he was disadvantaged because doesn't know any fancy words like that.

### This month's puzzle

The Oread were involved in an indoor climbing competition, a series of 1 to 1 heats against other clubs with 3 points for a win, 1 for a tie and nil for a loss. With 2 heats to go., the FRCC had 29 points, CC and Oread 28 each. The Oread were way ahead on bonus points for style, to be used as a decider in the event of equal scores (the others must have been bloody awful). Each of the leading three were scheduled to complete their programs against clubs other than the top 3, all of whom were mathematically too far down the table to be possible winners. What is the probability of an Oread win?

### Harry Pretty's photograph of an Oread outing.

Jack Ashcroft writes: The photograph on page 20 of the May magazine was taken by me. I distinctly remember a little difficulty initially in squeezing everyone into my camera view finder. With a word or two people closed in!

As regards location I have some idea – though not definite. The photograph was taken at Grindon with various groups having walked in from Warslow, Hulme End and Wetton Mill. The whole group then walked over Grindon Moor to a lunch hour break at Onecote. It was not an orderly group – different people wandering their own way back in the afternoon.

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