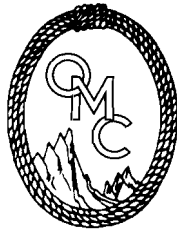


OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

*50th Anniversary
Journal
1949-1999*



*Edited by
Harry Pretty*

Published by the Oread Mountaineering Club.
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ISBN 0-9535736-0-5

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Dust jacket from a watercolour of An Teallach and other sketches by Harry Pretty.

Prepared for printing by Journal Co-ordinator, Colin Hobday.
Printed by Bemrose Security Printing, Derby.

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APPENDIX

EDITORIAL

When I took on the production of a Journal to celebrate fifty years of Oread history I was under no delusion as to the nature of the task. On reflection, perhaps I had been subconsciously preparing for some considerable time. But, in this context, nothing is certain. I only knew that the Oread Mountaineering Club had been at the centre of my life for many years and, with some certainty at last, I knew that there was a story to tell.

I was not universally encouraged and have been made aware that the mere telling of mountain exploits, however distinguished, is not a compelling reason for such effort and, at worst, takes on the mediocrity of recounting what we have been doing on our hols, for fifty years. I had, and still have, some sympathy with this point of view but have remained convinced that the telling of the Oread tale could be elevated beyond the level of sad nostalgia.

The period 1949-99 occupies a particular niche in the development of British mountaineering. As others have recounted the enormous influx of would be climbers in the aftermath of the second world war presented the older establishment with a problem. How were they to accommodate this mass of half rebellious youth, who, radicalised by recent experience, viewed the pre-war insularity of the senior clubs with something of a jaundiced eye? But the young men solved it themselves. They founded their own provincial and regional clubs throughout the U.K. They taught themselves to climb and set the post-war climbing scene firmly in the direction of egalitarianism. They did not need to wait upon selection for expeditions by the great and the good. They simply went and did it themselves.

Jack Longland said in his Foreword to 'Climb if you Will' in 1974: "Born of a mixture of ex-servicemen and their girls and some Technical College students; with tents, anoraks, and probably ropes, all ex W.D., the Oread came into existence pat on cue. The men (and the women) matched the need, and they were inspired by a fanaticism about mountains . . . but always mitigated by a humour which would not let them take themselves too seriously, by a Rabelaisian anarchism which inspired their doings in huts and pubs, by the civilising influence of girlfriends and wives who sometimes climbed as well as they did".

As usual J.L.L. got it about right. The historical differential is that of the many mountaineering clubs founded in the late '40's. The Oread is one of the few to survive as we approach the Millennium.

After some early theorising I found it impossible to visualise a definitive format. 'Climb if you Will' was inspired by the life and early demise of Geoff Hayes, with a smaller narrative section on Oread history, 1949-1974, by J. Ashcroft, P. Gardiner and the late Jean Russell. I have found it a useful reference. But the format of Oread 50 occupies a different spectrum and, in truth, is not the result of any detailed plan. It has simply grown organically from constant reference to what already exists. It has been mined from the rich veins of Oread writing, from fifty years of Newsletters and Journals, and supplemented by contemporary essays, some of which look back, while others contemplate the present, or even the future.

Seeking further inspiration I have admired the gravitas, and the style, of the recent C.C. Centenary Journal, but have not emulated Terry Gifford's method of selection by recommendation from a "panel of readers". The written word that tells the Oread story has been chosen entirely by myself and therefore, in my Editorial capacity, I have to take sole responsibility for its quality and suitability for its purpose. In doing this I have to be grateful for the unique nature of Oread records since the early '50's. Most mountaineering clubs who have maintained any literary record have only produced, at best, an annual Journal, whereas the Oread, for more than forty years, published monthly newsletters (with occasional gaps) that provide substantial written evidence of all that has transpired during this period. News, gossip, meet reports, politics, letters, verse, opinionated essays, and character assassinations have all been grist to the mill.

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There is a general chronological sequence but, more significantly, the separation of various eras has occurred almost naturally and follows an order that is in step with the influence of Newsletters and their respective editors. Thus the initial high dictates of Charlie Cullum are essentially apposite to the Golden Oldies, and the intense energy of Geoff Hayes gives way to ambition and the special achievements of Chris Radcliffe and Peter Scott. The Oread, from the earliest years, has always been susceptible to real and imagined fault lines. Navel gazing, the angst of self criticism, and barely concealed defamation, are all represented in these pages. But so is the humour and barbed wit which in general are the chosen weapons.

So eighteen months later, it is finished. From our domestic moors and gritstone edges to high adventure in the great ranges, from Arctic to Antarctic, from winter epics on the Croz Spur to summer adventures on the Eigerwand (three separate Oread ascents), all part of this story; for Oreads have planted boots world wide – and, in the 1990's they are still at it. From the Andes and the remote Tien Shan of Central Asia, from Greenland, the States, Canada and the Ruwenzori, from Karakorum to eastern Nepal, there are still post cards from the edge.

But in many ways the essence, the "gay audacity" that others have identified, shines brightest in less exalted places. Somewhere between Penmaenmawr and Cwm Pennant, perhaps in the great empty quarter of Central Wales, amid the spatial distances of Bleaklow, or walking south from Marsden, or north from Edale, on a winter's night through snow filled groughs. There are ghosts and shadows in Lower Small Clough, Poltergeist Barn, and Bullstones, and in the verse of Jim Kershaw, and the prose of Brian West and others, you will surely find them.

*Harry Pretty
Holbrook, January 1999.*



George Sutton, Founder Member, on gully approach to Sugartop, South Georgia, 1955.
Photo: J. M. Brooker.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee (President, Clive Russell), after a hesitant start, have provided funds, without which this book would not have been possible and furthermore, exerting minimum influence, have left me to get on with it. Committee members Shirley Wainwright (Honorary Secretary) and Colin Hobday have been particularly encouraging throughout. In the final stages Colin Hobday, applying his professional skills, has organised and co-ordinated the entire technical process from earliest text to final print.

By solving one of my earliest problems I have to thank Andy Oakden's friend John Lee, and his assistants Jane and Lynda, for providing extended free access to photocopying facilities. They transformed a boring chore into a pleasant task.

For the arduous transcription of original text into hard copy I am specially indebted to Pam Weston, Uschi Hobday, Barbara Smedley and Mike Hayes – Oreads all.

Although selection of written work has remained an Editorial function throughout I deemed it wise to co-opt Colin Hobday, Gordon Gadsby, Jack Ashcroft and Chris Radcliffe to form a Picture Selection Committee "Good historical action shots . . . celebrate in visual terms your club's main achievements" advised Ken Wilson, and we have agreed. But persuading members to dig into their files, and the ultimate whittling down, has been hard work and occupied many months. In the same context I am grateful to Terry Gifford for sharing some of his problems as Editor of the Climber's Club Centenary Journal.

For the loan of photographs: J. Ashcroft, P. Bingham, R. A. Brown, Dr. I. M. Brooker, D. Burgess, K. Bryan, R. Colledge, D. C. Cullum, J. Fisher, G. Gadsby, the late G. Gibson, D. Gray, D. Guyler, C. Hobday, P. Holden, C. Hooley, J. Hudson, G. Male, M. Moore, A. J. J. Moulam (K. Broadbent), M. Padley, D. Penlington, R. G. Pettigrew, C. Radcliffe, G. Reynolds, P. Scott, R. Sedgwick, T. Smith, Tom Weir, D. Williams, J. Winfield, Derby Evening Telegraph, the Indian Express.

I am particularly appreciative of the Foreword by His Grace the Duke of Devonshire who generously acknowledges a long association with the Oread, its activities, and its Derbyshire home on the Chatsworth Estate. Further distinction is provided by introductory words from that long respected guru Peter Harding, and my old friend Tom Weir whom I first saw with some surprise as a mysterious dot on an arctic glacier in 1951.

Molly Pretty has continued from where she started in 1949, to provide general secretarial assistance throughout. John (Rock) Hudson has delved into the voluminous archives to provide facts and figures, and a sharp commentary on routine activities in his Rites of Passage.

At the risk of over extending my privilege I thank young Michael Gregson for allowing me to end in a vein of youthful optimism but, of course, my final dedication must go to George Sutton for inserting an advertisement in the Burton Daily Mail in March, 1949.

Harry Pretty

Chatsworth,
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Nearly forty years ago the Oread M.C. invited me to become Patron of the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition 1961 and, after meeting the team at Chatsworth in late 1960, I was pleased to accept.

They were very typical of the young ex-servicemen who had founded the club in 1949 and I was interested to learn that as early as 1951 and 1954 previous OREAD M.C. parties had climbed and explored in places as far apart as Arctic Norway and South Georgia (Antarctica). Some years later, in 1967 I believe, there was a further connection between the Chatsworth Estate and this very active mountaineering club. Chatsworth is at the heart of gritstone country that has played a significant role in the history of British rock climbing. Members of the Oread M.C. were very welcome when, thirty years ago, they established a Derbyshire home on the Chatsworth Estate. The association still prospers.

It is, therefore, a pleasure to recommend this volume, put together by Harry Pretty, a Founder Member, in which reminiscent tales from distant mountain ranges mingle happily with contemporary adventures closer to home. It is a book brimming with universal enthusiasms; middle-aged men climbing the north face of the Eiger, septuagenarians exploring remote parts of the Tien Shan in Central Asia, but always, and inevitably, returning with equal enthusiasm to the crags and moors of their native Peak District.



The Duke of Devonshire

FOREWORD . . .

It pleases me greatly to contribute a foreword to this special edition of the Oread Journal marking attainment of the club's first half century. Not only is the book a fine record of development for a climbing club which like many others was founded shortly after the second world war, it also reveals much about the club's character. From its 300 or so pages one can see why the Oread has outlived many of its contemporaries to come of age as one might say, a localised junior club whose activities and achievements have brought it to wider seniority. Maybe those early expeditions, to Lyngen and South Georgia, laid the foundations and created tradition. Certainly these events, more than anything else, distinguished the Oread from other small clubs formed around the same time. In reading about those early pioneering efforts, then tracing the club's subsequent history, one may well reach such a conclusion; but I will leave that to the reader. Finally I must say that this bound collection of stories, anecdotes and illustrations, mostly from earlier Oread journals, is a production of which the club and its editor can be justly proud. In its pages lies that magic recipe for longevity in a climbing club – an unquenchable quest for adventure among its youth, the endless supply of youthfulness in its elders and a touch of good humour to go with all this, and of course, the club's own hut in the hills.

Peter Harding

. . . AND SOME FURTHER WORDS OF INTRODUCTION

On Jekkevarre, as we ate our last sandwich we were looking at three sets of footprints on the north-east summit,¹ and decided we would follow them, hoping they would lead us to an easy way down. They didn't. But we did find a route through the massed pinnacles of a huge ice-fall overhanging the crags of the southern flank and it was a relief at last to reach level glacier ice, then rock slabs, giving way to moraine screes. At that moment we heard whistles, and bearing down on us were a couple of bearded climbers, their curiosity about us, as thoroughly aroused as our own. Then a mutual cry of recognition, as Adam Watson and Dick Brown recognised each other, having met in the Lofotens the previous year, and soon, we were shaking hands with him and Nobby Clarke. They must have sensed our weariness when they produced a bag of raisins and invited us to partake . . . It demanded will-power to take only a few for we were starving.

Back in the Oread camp we didn't need any pressing to have cups of sweet coffee since it was 11 p.m. and we had been on the go for 23 hours of first class rock and ice climbing. As for the cheerful Oread expeditioners, as well as climbing, they had been mapping the ridge lines and the movements of its glaciers past and present, and they had left Harry Pretty, and his plane table, at the head of the Lyngsdal Glacier when they had spotted us as three small dots descending the ice fall.

That was in 1951, and three years later Douglas Scott and I, were to have the pleasure of meeting up with some of the Oread in Glasgow, at Princes Dock, where the *Southern Opal* whaling ship was tied up, and about to take Sutton, Pretty, Ian Brooker, Webb and Dick Brown to South Georgia.

I have a recollection we managed an evening, rock scrambling on the Whangie, 12 miles north of Glasgow, which overlooks Loch Lomond and takes in a great sweep of peaks from west to east. I'm truly sorry North Wales is not nearer, or I would be at the 50th Anniversary din-din.

*Tom Weir
Ross Loan, Gartocharn*

¹ The footprints on the north east summit of Jekkevarre, partly followed by Tom Weir's party, were left by Dick Brown, Phillip Falkner, Nobby Clarke and Harry Pretty during first recorded complete traverse (West to East) in 20 hours, 23.07.51 — *Editor*.

*In the
Beginning
1949-1953*

“Begin at the beginning” the king said gravely, “and go on till you come to the end, then stop”.

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*.

Now a whole is that which has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Aristotle, 384-322BC, *Poesy*.

OREADS REGARDLESS 1949/50

GEORGE SUTTON

Soon after the war a minor social phenomenon took place with the emergence of many small climbing clubs, of which the Oread Mountaineering Club was one. Not that its Founder Members, when they first met to climb at Black Rocks in early Spring 1949, had any percipient thoughts of starting a club that would last for fifty years, or of forming friendships that would hold true for a lifetime. The more likely scenario was of early death and disaster, so brash was our daring, so vast our inexperience.

I was not new to the mountains, having rambled solo in Scotland and the Lake District. I belonged to several clubs, and had joined some of their outings. One in particular left me sceptical as to whether or not to continue climbing. It was a training weekend at Glan Dena. Two young men, full of enthusiasm, took me on my first granite climbs on Tryfan and Craig-yr-Ysfa. Easy climbs for them, but exciting and exhausting for me. The third man on a rope, climbing just ahead of us, suddenly peeled off and swung out over my head, and over a lot of space. "He's not encouraging me", I said to my leaders, which made them laugh. But at night my sleep was haunted by dreams as I climbed the day's routes all over again. Would I ever be as safe and nonchalant as my leaders? A few weeks later, these same two men, full of joy and promise, were killed on the Munich Climb, on Tryfan.

Wisdom advised me not to continue climbing, but the pull of the hills was like a drug. Mountains held my spirit in thrall, but I knew that I must improve my skill and stamina if I was to become a sound climber. Such dedication would mean climbing often, and learning techniques. The only way it was possible for me would be to climb on the Peak District gritstone, which was near and with experienced climbers. There were three fine climbers in my hometown. Peter Harding I already knew. He was at the height of his prowess in 1949, had pushed up the then standard of climbing and helped to produce the current Guide Book to Black Rocks. But although he gave me encouragement, he could not spare the time to train the group I had in mind.

Dr. Norman Cochran, with whom I had climbed on Ben Nevis, was Medical Officer of the town and his time already over-booked, and Wilf White who was described to me as one of the 'tigers' of the new Valkyrie Club, I had no contact with. Help came in the end from an unlikely source. A young man, Barry Tipper, in his late teens, was trying to teach me how to ride a motorcycle. My mother thought that all my leisure activities favoured congenial ways of committing suicide.

Barry said that he had two friends, also teen-agers named Paul Gardiner and David Penlington, who were very keen on climbing. We met, all four of us, at Paul's house and between cups of tea arranged a day visit to Black Rocks for Sunday March 20th 1949. Barry said there were two other men who might come also, "one is an ex-Paratrooper – and he knows Wilf White!" So, I had a new hemp rope, clinker boots, three teenagers, and possibly an ex-paratrooper for companions, – what more did I need? Some might have said courage, luck and a psychiatrist.

The day dawned cool and bright. Armed with sandwiches provided by my anxious mother I met Paul and Barry at the Bus Station. In Derby we were joined by Dave and a bonny, flaxen-haired young woman named Nan Smith. We were silent on the bus to Wirksworth, and not more talkative on the walk up to the crags. We hardly knew each other and had no shared experience. As we stepped off the bus and through the gate, another world embraced us; a jungle of shrubs and trees out of which, at the top of the hill, jutted the aggressive buttresses of the rocks, even in the brittle March sunlight looking dark and sinister.

We came across a mess of green canvas, much like another rock but purporting to be a tent even if sagging and unloved. Out of it fell or rolled two men. The unshaven one in monstrous camouflage anorak was introduced by Barry as Keith Axon, "The ex-Paratrooper". I felt the explanation was hardly necessary. The shock of tousled hair that followed him out was yet another teenager, Eddie Say. We

shook hands all round. Keith rolled himself a cigarette, scowled at Nan, and nodded up the hill, "Wilf's up there, he's got Nat Allen with him".

The Black Rocks, or Stonnis, as they were called in 1822 when Rhodes visited them, were amongst the earliest gritstone outcrops to attract climbers. J. W. Puttrell climbed on them around 1890, as also did the great O. G. Jones. There followed several waves of climbers over the next half century, each adding new. More difficult climbs, and raising the standard of gritstone climbing in the process. In the 1920's came Fred Pigott, Morley Wood and George Bower, adding Lean Man's Climb and Lone Tree Gully. In the years of which I write, the British mountain world was still an intimate circle, and paths often crossed. So I frequently met George Bower, finding him a tough, friendly old man. Later came Jack Longland, Alf Bridge and Maurice Linnell, opening up Birch Tree Wall and Lone Tree Groove.

In 1933 came Eric Byne and Frank Elliott, adding yet more new routes. Some fifteen years later I was rather forlornly watching members of the Midland Association of Mountaineers climb on Black Rocks, when I was pounced upon by a man in a jacket, spectacles above a smile in a lean face. shock of greying hair topped by a flat cap. "Want to climb?" he said, producing a huge ancient hemp rope that probably started life with Edward Whymper. I climbed for several hours with him, being led up various old favourites, including Blind Man's Buttress. Other climbers sought his advice on standards. Afterwards I asked Harold Restall who he was. "Eric Byne", said Harold. Eric wrote of Harold as "the kindest and most generous personality I've ever met". Well, it had rubbed off on Eric. He would have made a brilliant youth worker. Both Harold and Eric were to be my sponsors for joining the Midland Association of Mountaineers – two finer men I never knew.

That meeting with Eric had been a year earlier, but today we did not have his strong personality with us to give confidence. It did not matter. Wilf and Nat took control of the situation giving up a day of their time to helping a group of beginners. This may not sound a big sacrifice, but the keen young men of the Valkyrie M. C. were in their turn the standard setters, and they wanted to get on with solving some of the unclimbed problems remaining on Peakland grit. We were divided up, roped up, and then coaxed, bullied and dragged up climbs varying from easy to very difficult. There was Sand Gully, Queens Parlour Gully, Fat Man's Chimney, and the amusing inside route of Queens Parlour Chimney. Dave showed a natural flair for rock-climbing, and soloed up the Stonnis Arete, and there was something in the way Keith was frowning at the rock that suggested a determination to lead as soon as possible. Eddie, Paul and I struggled manfully and were pleased with our day, even if we had lost skin in the process. "Gritstone rash", said Wilf, looking at the grazes.

There was a moment of mixed farce and drama which did much to bind us all together as a group and install Nan as our heroine. Wilf had decided to take Nan up Central Buttress, a pleasant route of about 70' with several short pitches. Nan had taken a rest in the Sentry Box, and had moved out on to the slab, finding it beyond her competence at the time. "My legs aren't long enough," she said, dolefully. We assured her, perhaps with a lack of delicacy, that there was nothing wrong with her legs. She did a desperate manoeuvre and arrived in an impossible position for tackling the slab, with her back to the rock, her toes stuck out in space. Nan's plight drew all to the scene, to advise, laugh, cheer. Wilf gave a quick squint from the top, rolled his eyes in astonishment and tightened his grip on the rope, "Can you turn, Nan?" said Dave. "No", decisive. "Can you put your left foot on that hold?" said Paul. "No" sharp edge to voice, implying what a fool idea. "Can you step down?" said Eddie. No reply, just a severe look at the speaker. "Jump off – Wilf will hold you"! Neither Wilf nor Nan thought much of that idea. Eventually, Keith moved up below Nan and with Wilf tugging and Keith pushing, Nan was able to turn and finish the climb.

The day was wearing on. Wilf and Nat moved off to climb together. "Care for a brew?" asked Keith. So, joyfully bearing our heroine with us, we achieved a further impossible task squeezing seven of us plus primus stove into Keith's tent.

We finished the day by taking it in turns to fall off the severe route on The Railway Slab. There was more loss of skin, and bruises, but gain in laughter and companionship. Somewhere along the way a club had been born, with a few lifelong friendships. Stangely, Barry never came out with us again,

although he had been the catalyst that set all in motion. Wilf did not join the club, but we met often. Nat joined the club in later years, becoming its very popular president for a time. We went home in different mood; gone was the reserve; had we not suffered and triumphed together?

Two weeks later we converged on Black Rocks. We were joined this time by Harry and Molly Pretty. From this time on we mostly taught ourselves, learning from every climb we led, or did on a top rope. Dave and Keith led some of the climbs we had done on the previous meet. Harry soon showed that he intended to be a fully paid-up member of the outfit, by doing some climbs solo and following on others. Towards the end of the day he announced from the top of the crag that he was going to do an abseil. We were impressed. "Have you done one before?" I shouted. "Yes, dozens", cried Harry jauntily. "Last night", whispered Molly to me, "off the back of a chair". "Would you like a lifeline?" normal practice for a first abseil. "No, I'll manage." a bit edgy as he fussed about, fixing the rope. He re-appeared with coil of rope like knitting round his body. "Doesn't look right to me," I warned. "Well, it's got to do," said Harry crossly, and dropped off into space. I saw him hurtling down and hastily got out of the firing line. There was a jerk, as Harry braked, but he kept falling. No one had allowed for the elasticity of his new nylon rope. Feet short of the ground the rope held him and he came to rest, gently bobbing beside me, giving a breathless grin. "Bloody hell," said Keith, casually rolling a cigarette; it was the nearest Keith came to showing he had been startled, that and a wry smile at Harry. Everyone laughed; Harry had well and truly joined us. And for Harry and me it was the start of a climbing partnership which lasted for many years, on many a long trail, and in many a wild camp.

All through that summer, golden not just with sunshine, but with youth, we went weekly to the crags. Many were our adventures. We explored other outcrops, such as Stanage Edge and Roaches. We learned about chimneys, and laybacks, and lightweight camping and bivouacs. We did join meets with the M.A.M. to Cratcliffe and Kinder Scout. We tried ourselves on the tiny dolomite crag at Brassington, and retired, found wanting, to an old lady's house where we drank tea in the company of asthmatic cats. We camped in winter on Brown Knoll and nearly froze to death. New members were not dismayed by our reputation and so Roy Edwards, Frank Ewer and John Adderley and others joined us. We climbed in rain, sun and snow and sometimes by torchlight and moonlight. Harry went to Skye and returned with tales of the Cuillins and worn fingertips and told of how people hid away after dinner lest Cyril Machin should spirit them up another climb. I met Harry most days in a corner cafe, to plan the weekends, holidays, even to speculate on higher hills. There was no other year in my life quite like 1949. At first the club was known as the Burton-on-Trent (Anorak) M.C. But it did not please us. One day I was striving for intellectual challenge, with the 'Daily Mirror' crossword – and came across a clue, "mountain nymphs. I looked it up and found 'Oreads' and put the idea to the others. We liked it and so the Oread M.C. came into being, a club that startled even some members with its stated aim, 'Mountaineering regardless'.

The early Oread years owe much to the contribution made by three very different men – Cyril Machin, Eric Byne and Oliver Jones. Cyril came late to mountaineering, but was soon a legend to his many friends for his enthusiasm, energy, courtesy and exploits. If people said that a climber had come back from a Ben Nevis gully in the middle of the night, or taken a frightened plumber up a rock climb, or survived an avalanche and climbed back up again, we knew it had to be Cyril. He joined many of the first gritstone meets, sharing our climbs, barns, coffee and lives, holding back when our wilder enthusiasms cut across his own gentler views. He first met us as a group on Stanage. Keith and Eddie had chosen to bivouac in Robin Hood's cave, which was several feet up the crag. In the morning, Eddie emerged blearily, having enjoyed a convivial evening in the pub the night before, missed his footing and fell out of the cave. Contact with the stony ground had the effect of almost waking him. An elegant, elderly gentleman bore down on him, hand extended in the famous Machin greeting, "Hello, I'm Cyril, are you Oread?" Eddie, bemused, confessed that he was, "Good, let's do a climb then" said Cyril, which is the only time ever that Eddie did Black Hawk Traverse Right, or any other climb, before breakfast. There was only one thing we could do with Cyril, so we made him our first President, an office to which he brought dignity and style during 1949 and 1950.

As the year advanced, Eric Byne came more into our lives, urging us on to ever more desperate deeds. There was at the time no greater authority on Derbyshire gritstone than Eric, and he was a prominent member of the Gritstone Guide Committee, which was parcelling out the Guide Book work still to be done. Joe Brown, Wilf, Nat and other stalwarts of the Valkyrie M.C. were grappling with routes on the Great Buttre and the rest of Froggatt Edge. Eric thought that Oreads ought to tackle the Baslow area, which included Baslow, Birchen, Gardoms edges and Chatsworth Rocks, a task for which we were not ready as climbers, but we did it. On a hot summer day all of us attacked the bare crags of Birchen and rattled off all the known climbs. Baslow edge took us into the autumn. We were now well known in the Robin Hood Inn, where we congregated in the back room with old Charlie and sang songs not acceptable in other establishments. It seems incredible now to remember that Gladys, a good lady of substantial build, would take our orders and stagger down huge steps into the cellar to get big jugs of ale filled, then carry them back up.

Gardoms Edge was quite a different matter. A long outcrop of mainly isolated buttresses and, with winter upon us, if anything toughened us up, it was Gardoms. Just wading through the dense vegetation to reach the buttresses was energy taking. Eric had named his three Unconquerables – The Unconquerable Cracks on Stanage, The Rivelin needle on Rivelin edge and Moyers Buttress on Gardoms. The unconquerable Cracks were fortunately not our problem, in any case Albert Shutt led the L.H. in 1945 and Joe Brown and Wilf White led the R.H. in 1949. The Rivelin Needle was also out of our area, but then Dick Brown and members of The Sheffield University M.C. managed to lead the Spiral Route without artificial aids. That left us with Moyer's Buttress until Eric discovered yet another unsolved route. He was standing on a massive buttress on Gardoms in the long dark raincoat he favoured. He said it kept the rain away; we said he looked like an undertaker and that's how it got its name, The Undertaker's Buttress. They were quite outside our capability but otherwise we tackled the Edge, week after week; crag after crag.

There were adventures. I shall tell of only one. Dave set out on a top rope to try out a steep wall. There seemed to be some big steps in it, but an enticing looking crack for a handhold high up. Dave, in the fullness of time reached for this crack, and pulled away on it. Next second a huge boulder swivelled out of the wall like a door opening on a hinge, leaving Dave dangling with a half-ton of rock of uncertain temper for company. The rock was finally kicked away but Dave felt that he had done his bit. So Cyril set out on the next attempt. He tried in boots, he tried in rubbers, he tried in socks and finally in bare feet, regardless that it was a bleak November day. Finally he was lowered off the crag, blue with cold and was sick. Then he went back and finished the climb. Hence its accolade as President's Wall.

We had climbed a few times with a giant of a man, Oliver Jones, who in his youth had worked his way round the Canadian Northlands, coming home again with the grand-dad of all rucksacks, a guitar and a stock of ballads, both sad and salty. He fitted easily into our company. I invited him to join a meet at Roaches and Hen Cloud. We climbed all of a hot summer day on those spectacular crags, and, as usual, went to The Three Horseshoes after. We did not know that the most memorable feature of the weekend was still to come. At nearing midnight, the evening was so still and hot that someone suggested a bivouac on Hen Cloud. We gathered candles, water, stoves and food and found a grassy hollow near the summit of the Cloud. No-one who was there will ever forget Molly making pancakes as fast as we could eat them, by the light of the candles set on the rocks, or of lying down to sleep under the stars, and waking in the morning to distant farm noises. Oliver certainly did not.

When Oliver was invited to speak at our first Dinner in November 1949, he asked "Do I need a dinner jacket, shall I bring my guitar, and will I be sleeping on a hilltop?" That first Dinner was at Fox House Inn. Jack Longland and Alf Bridge were the Principal Guests. The price of the three-course meal was five shillings and sixpence, or about twenty-seven decimal pence. Eighteen people sat down to dinner. The radicals of the club had not wanted to toast the Queen, but Cyril felt that it was traditional, so because of that and for love of Cyril, the Queen was toasted. Oliver spoke so well that he was

invited every year after, usually speaking earthy words of wisdom from the Bible, to those who were married during the year and presenting them with a pewter tankard. As we thought, Keith and Nan were the first recipients; June and I still have our tankard dated 1962.

There is, of course, so much left unsaid. How Keith's stove had a habit of erupting in the tent, being flung out in flaming orbit, followed by some pithy adjectives. How we tried to climb Crib Goch at night, on snow, that first Christmas. How Roy Edwards thumbed a lift off a motor-cyclist, as the speed climbed up to 100 mph, Roy asked, "Are you Wilf White?" "Yes." "Well, can I get off then?" And Harry, up to his knees in mud trying to climb the Moated Boulder on Kinder Scout. And so many other stories.

MEET ONE – BLACK ROCKS

DAVID PENLINGTON

Following a letter written by George Sutton and published in the Burton Daily Mail a number of local "mountaineers" were drawn together on a meet at Black Rocks, Cromford.

The Sunday dawned fine and a group made up of George Sutton, Roy Edwards, Harry and Molly Pretty, Paul Gardiner and Dave Penlington boarded the 9.00 am bus from Derby to Wirksworth. We were to meet Eddie Say and Keith Axon at the crag where they had been camping overnight.

Walking up the hill from Wirksworth to Black Rocks it was obvious that each was assessing each other as to ability and experience. Smith, Gardiner and Penlington were known to each other having fallen off various Derbyshire outcrops.

Sutton, recently demobbed from the R.A.F. was the eldest. He was a member of the M.A.M., so must have 'done a bit'. He was dressed in ex army anorak, ARP warden's trousers, tucked into ex naval sea boot stockings and clinkered boots. Edwards, a young chap in cut down raincoat admitted that it was his first time out. Pretty was the big question mark. We quickly learnt that he was going to Skye with the M.A.M. in a few weeks time. He was wearing new boots (Robert Lawrie), a white roll neck sweater (not obviously ex R.N.) and an alpine style felt trilby. He certainly looked the part fitting exactly the description of "the Gen Man", as described by Pete Perkins, a local 'hard lad'; in one of his many tales. He also carried a brand new $\frac{3}{4}$ wt (8mm dia) nylon rope. This was the first nylon rope most of the group had seen and possibly the first one ever to be used at Black Rocks. Less than half the diameter of our hemp ropes and said to be several times stronger.

Axon, not long out of a certain notorious and mutinous airborne division and Say were found on Stonnis Buttress. They were friends of Wilf White another hardman and secretary of the Valkyrie M.C. We climbed and fell off various routes; no one ventured onto any really difficult climbs.

Towards the end of the day our "Gen Man" announced that he must abseil on the nylon rope. We all quickly gathered round. Pretty placed the rope around a pine tree, stood astride it, passed it across his body and over a shoulder, the classic method. Slings and karabiners were quite uncommon in those days. Walking backwards to the cliff edge the rope tensioned, in doing so it reduced to half it's original diameter. None of us had seen the elongation of nylon before. Pretty was now some four to five feet below the top of the crag looking like a yoyo on a string. "He'll cut his leg off," someone said. He then dropped out of sight; the rope was in full tension over the rock edge. He must have swung across below the overhang; the rope moved several feet sideways, in so doing the outer strands of the rope frayed and sprang apart under the tension. "Bloody hell, he's a gonner," cried Axon. Sutton went pale, believing the Club was finished before it had started. Gardiner and Edwards sprinted to the foot of the rocks to pick up the remains. The rope slackened, "Next one" came a shout from below. We looked at each other but someone said it was time to go for the bus. A few minutes later the party was descending the hill back to Wirksworth.

D.P.'s memoir of Meet One is actually a compilation of Meet One (Sunday 20.03.49) and Meet Two (a fortnight later) as described in George Sutton's *Oreads Regardless 1949/50*. I apologise for duplicating the story of the "famous abseil" which has proved too difficult to eliminate without mangling both articles — *Editor*.

48 YEARS WITH THE OREAD

TONY MOULAM

From about 1944, pre-dating the Sound of Music by 15 years, the Derbyshire hills were full of the sounds of climbing clubs being formed. This phenomenon was due in part to the vast post-war increase in the number of active climbers and the difficulty they had in gaining membership of one of the senior clubs. The twin centres of this ferment were Derby and Burton upon Trent and the innovations included The Stonnis (Peter Harding, Tony Moulam, Ernie Phillips, Ronnie Lee, Dick Meyer and Nobby Millward), The Valkyrie (Wilf White, Nat Allen, Chuck Cook and Don Chapman) and The Innominate (Norman Kershaw is the only one I remember, but there must have been more). These three clubs all transmuted into something else, or became defunct, within a matter of a few years but many of their former members eventually joined the Oread which was built to last! George Sutton was the founding father and its nuclear group included Harry Pretty, Dave Penlington and Keith Axon.

I think that I first met Harry Pretty and David Penlington at Pen y Gwrd at the end of September 1949, only about six months after the Oread had been formed in March. I was probably pontificating at the bar, having been in North Wales since August 25th getting the leg I had injured in a hitch-hiking accident fit, so that I could climb when I went up to Manchester University. Harry tells me that I gave him and Dave Penlington the benefit of my wisdom, whether about climbing, as we had just returned from our first attempt on Ogof Direct, or which beer to drink. I do not remember!

Being one of the few members of the CC in the north in those days I first represented the club at the Oread dinner at the Scotsman's Pack in Hathersage on 1st December 1951, the year that George, Harry and several other members had been to Lyngen. Although the food, the drink and the speeches were good, and I think we were treated to one of Oliver Jones' bagpipe accompanied monologues; the talk in the bar of that initial exploit remains with me as the highlight of the evening.

The club grew stronger and more entertaining year by year and made visits to Spitzbergen in 1952 and South Georgia in 1954. The latter trip was enlivened by Dick Brown, a recruit from the SUMC, who, while in the night, allegedly turned over in his sleeping bag on the beach and woke all the penguins, so creating such pandemonium that no-one got any more sleep.

After some tribulation a ground breaking Himalayan expedition was organised with the help of the Mount Everest Foundation and sponsors who donated large quantities of Christmas pudding. By then Dennis Gray had become an Oread, and he recounts that an overweight party left from Liverpool in May 1961 for Kulu. The leader was Bob Pettigrew, because he had been there before and Dennis, Ray Handley, Derrick Burgess, Trevor Panther, Jack Ashcroft and Steve Read made up the rest of what became a very successful and enjoyable exploit.

I must now move forward to 25th November 1972. The occasion was the 23rd annual dinner of the OMC, by now at the Green Man in Ashbourne. David Cox and I were the two main guests and we were well entertained by the now traditional pantomime, with its bearded ladies, other accomplished artists, and Harry Pretty's impersonation of Edward VII. However the evening was made for me by the presentation of a commemorative plate. This is one of my most treasured possessions, and as it is unique, it must be beyond price. It marks the 21st Anniversary of my Oread Dining as although I had not attended every dinner since 1951, it must have seemed to the committee as if I had.

My latest appearance to date was at the 28th Dinner in 1977. This time Harding was an official guest, whereas I had been invited by Jo and Bryan Royle. Johnny Welbourn, another relic of the Stonnis, was there which gave me an excuse (as if I ever needed one) to carouse into the night. The next day saw the Mynnyd Fell race but after the Club's usual generous and open handed hospitality, I sacrificed myself and tried to be a useful marshall counting people in!

I now look forward to the 50th year Jubilee Dinner for a reunion with many friends, and a new generation of Oread, and hope to survive for many more years of association with your vibrant and long lived club, whose motto might, or should, be "Climb Every Mountain".

GEORGE SUTTON

Newsletter, November 1957

I enclose a bill for the Oreads' first Annual Dinner. It will be seen that 17 people attended; that £5.15.6. was spent on Dinners; and £1.13.9. on beer.

IN AT THE DEEP END

CONTRIBUTION TO *CLIMBS ON GRITSTONE*

VOLUME 2, THE SHEFFIELD AREA

EDITED: ERIC BYNE 1949-1950

Extract from Eric Byne's introduction to The Baslow Edges, *Climbs on Gritstone*, Volume 2, published in 1951

"...So began an all out effort on the part of the Oread members, prominent amongst whom were Dave Penlington, George Sutton, Keith Axon, Harry Pretty, Edwin Say, Miss N. Smith (later Axon), Mrs M. Pretty, Frank Ewers, Paul Gardiner, Joe Moor, John Adderley, Cyril Machin, Eric Byne, Roy Edwards and Lorna Peake, the latter proved to be an inspiring influence purely by her presence."

"With tremendous enthusiasm the guide work progressed and climbing took place in heat waves, gales, pouring rain and by moonlight. On one notable day on Birchen Edge, eight hours climbing in blistering heat mopped up these rocks and left but little of the climbers to be mopped. This day saw Keith Axon's two new routes: Nelson's Nemesis and Horatio's Horror".

"The greatest efforts have been reserved for Gardoms Edge. Adverse weather conditions have tended to prevent rubber climbing and this has meant a slowing up of climbing pace and an excess of harder work. Despite this the enthusiasm of Dave Penlington, Keith Axon, Harry Pretty and Edwin Say, whipped on by George Sutton and Eric Byne (hard taskmasters) has led to many new routes. Axon's pioneering of Gardom's Gate and Oread Climb have been a stimulus. President's wall, after attempts in boots, rubbers, socks and bare feet was finally ascended by the President - Cyril Machin. Finally in spring 1950 Dave Penlington capped all his previous efforts by the lead of Blenheim Buttress."

As Sutton has inferred in Oreads Regardless our climbing experience was barely adequate for the harder routes on Gardoms. But it was an intensive work out and at the end of six months, climbing every weekend, we began to feel more like veterans.

Immediately to the north the Valkyrie were operating: Nat Allen, Slim Sorrell, Whillans, Wilf and Mary White, Joe Brown, Janes, Handley and others engaged in the early Froggatt and Curbar classics. Further to the north the Sheffield University M.C. and the Peak C.C. were similarly engaged on Stanage. By the spring of 1950 we all knew each other. We caught the same bus from Bakewell to Derby every Sunday night causing chaos down the centre aisle with our ropes, rucksacks and tents. We sang the same songs and occasionally we climbed together. Nat Allen led me up many routes on Froggatt and Stanage that were beyond my capability as a leader. Not infrequently we encountered the Birmingham Cave and Crag (Stan Moore, Trevor Jones, Peter Knapp, Nobby Clarke), and of course if you were very lucky you came across the Stonnis stars: Peter Harding, Tony Moulam, Ernie Phillips, Ronnie Lee (later Phillips), Nobby Millward, Graham Robinson, Dick Meyer, Dave Sampson etc.

Editor

TREADING WATER WHITEHALL OPEN PURSUITS CENTRE

When Jack Longland, supported by Alf Bridge, outlined his objectives for Whitehall in 1950 before an invited audience, mainly comprising Peak District climbers, his proposal that local mountaineering clubs would provide a core of voluntary instructors was enthusiastically received. In this age when you need a Mountain Leadership Certificate to take a party under instruction over Thorpe Cloud, Longland's faith in his assembled troops was remarkable.

Many Oreads and climbing friends from other clubs were regular week-end instructors and some, notably George Sutton, Cyril Machin, Trevor Panther, Joe Brown and Harold Drasdo, were on the permanent staff for short periods.

Longland's faith in his voluntary instructors was not misplaced. A student was kind enough to acknowledge the quality of instruction received in a letter to the club:

Dear Sir,

I am writing as a student of White Hall, and would like to send an appreciation of the instructors who, I believe are Oreads.

I arrived in Buxton on Feb. 26th with another student and two instructors. One was an Oread but the other would not identify himself. We were soon installed in a Spanish bar, and hours later we arrived at White Hall to the jingle of bottles.

Saturday found three inches of snow outside, and parties were quickly dispersed to Shale Gully and to skiing. I was in the Gully Party. One member wore a boater which stopped falling stones from hitting the last man. In the afternoon we went skiing. The least said the better. In the evening a slide show by Messrs. Brown and Falkner was followed by a social evening. Stan Moore and Dick Brown did a complete traverse on the wall of the lounge.

Sunday proved amusing to the Gully Party. An instructor went crampons (sic) over balaclava down the Gully but was not hurt. He said it was a controlled glissade. Over lunch certain Oreads gave imitations of penguins which were very good – at least everyone had indigestion that afternoon.

I should like to thank the members of the Oread concerned for some very useful instructions throughout the weekend.

D.R. Hammond

Editor

MAKING WAVES

OREAD LYNGEN (ARCTIC NORWAY) EXPEDITION 1951

It was George Sutton's initiative and eclectic research that led to the formation of the Lyngen party in late 1950 and early 1951.

There was little published on climbing in this northern alpine region since A.C. Journals in 1897 and '98 when Haskett Smith, Hastings, W.C. Slingsby, Norman Collie and the Norwegian Hogrenning had explored extensively. Mrs Elizabeth Main, with her guides the Imbodens (father and son), had published a book at the turn of the century on her climbing exploration of the peninsula. Other than that all was silence. Peaks climbed mostly had one ascent only and clearly there were many unclimbed peaks and multitudinous new routes waiting. (We knew nothing of Guy Barlow's solo visits at the time).

The available maps were extremely vague and, in practice, were found to be profoundly inaccurate in many areas. So the proper identification of peaks, glaciers etc. inevitably became a prime object.

The coming together of climbers on the Edges, and at Whitehall, was a significant element in party selection: George Sutton (leader), Harry Pretty, Stan Moore, Ken (Nobby) Clarke, Dick Brown, Phillip Falkner, Bob Pettigrew, together with Patrick Parks and Alick Bartholomew (both C.U.M.C.).

Pettigrew, in the course of National Service, was serving with R.A.F. Mountain Rescue at Harpur Hill, Buxton at that time and was temporarily released on full pay for the three-month period. He was thus the only paid member of the party and thereby deemed a professional. In consequence he was considered to have the status of an alpine porter and was subsequently rewarded as such by presentation at the 1952 Annual Dinner, of a very dubious watch.

The overall activities between June and late August 1951 were described in some detail in 'Climb if you Will', published in 1974, and suffice it to say that approximately 45 peaks were climbed, a number of which were completely first ascents and a great majority of the remainder were new routes. Some serious glacier mapping was carried out and Pretty subsequently produced a ridge line map which clarified previous uncertainties and copies of which were used by many following parties, including Dutch, French and German. The original, and copies of same have unfortunately been lost but a record of peaks identified and climbed was passed to the Norway Travel Association (Per Prag) and was published both in U.K. and Norway.

Further Lyngen ventures by Oread members, R. A. Brown, P. R. Falkner, R. G. Pettigrew, and T. Panther ensued in 1952, '53 and '54 all of which resulted in first ascents and new routes on previously climbed peaks.

Whilst still undergraduates at Leeds, and still unknown to the Oread, Chris Radcliffe and Peter Scott forced some typically hard routes in the Lyngsdal and other areas (Leeds University, Lyddon Hall Mountaineering Expedition to Lyngen 1965).

The glacier survey carried out by Brown and Pretty in 1951 proved to be a useful preamble to the more serious endeavours of South Georgia (1954/55). The Lyngen maps, filed away for forty-seven years, were sent to the Norwegian Glacier Research Institute (Norsk Bremuseum) in 1998, and acknowledged with thanks.

Editor



British South Georgia Expedition 1954/55: Dr. I. M. Brooker, Richard A. Brown, Harry Pretty, Clive Webb, George Sutton, Shackleton's Cross behind. *Photo: B.S.G.E. 1954/55 Collection.*



Oread MC Lyngen (Arctic Norway) Expedition 1951: Alick Børtholmew, Patrick Parks, Harry Pretty, Bob Pettigrew, George Sutton, Dick Brown, Phil Falkner (in front), Stan Moore, Ken Clarke (missing). *Photo: Oread Lyngen Collection.*



Scottish Mountaineers and Oreads meet. Lyngen (Arctic Norway) 1951: Stan Moore, Adam Watson, Douglas Scott, Pat Parks, Phil Falkner, Bob Pettigrew (see Foreword by Tom Weir). *Photo: Tom Weir.*

THE ENIGMA – A SMALL PIECE OF NORTHERN HISTORY

HARRY PRETTY

On Saturday 7th July 1951, in a bivvy tent, well exposed to a bitter north wind, and several hundred feet above the eastern shoreline of Lyngen Fjord, Nobby Clarke woke up at 7 o'clock declaring that since we'd only been in our bags for two hours it must still be a.m. It took some astute observation of the sun to convince him that it was p.m., and we had slept for fourteen hours.

Others of the 1951 Oread party (Sutton, Moore and Pettigrew) were simultaneously engaged in more serious business on the west side of the peninsula among the Jagervasstinder. "You both have damaged ankles" they said, "You might as well get some gentle exercise and do a reccy up the east side". So we'd left with 60lb sacks, a week's food.

We had spotted the peak during the previous night's trek north towards the coastal settlement of Kopang, well illuminated by the glories of the midnight sun. A magnificent spire, far to the west, above rolling snowfields, and a glacier narrowly constrained by coastal peaks, its snout in a deep ravine some 800' above sea level.

Our maps (courtesy R.G.S.), dated 1912-1913, a vague arrangement of contours, were merely indicative. Individual peaks and glaciers, or any separation between permanent ice and exposed rock, was not shown. But months of research among the writings of Hastings, Haskett – Smith and W.C. Slingsby in the A.C. Journals for 1897, '98 (the last known serious exploration of Lyngen) had implanted some knowledge of the main ranges and the most celebrated individual peaks. These early explorer climbers had written of Lenangentind as perhaps the finest of the northern peaks, and I was convinced that the soaring mix of steep ridge and great couloirs, now framed by our tent door, could be none other.

Reconnaissance of the approaches from a 3,800' heap of tot, known locally as Golborre, proved fruitless since cloud enveloped us from the start and our descent of its northern face to glacier margins owed something to divine provenance as the compass needle merely gyrated when required to provide vital information in descent from its tottering ridge. But an ancient card in an old oxo tin provided first evidence that Dr. Guy Barlow had been in the area, and had reached the summit on 13th August 1927. This was, we could only assume, the Barlow who with E.W. Steeple, H.B. Buckle and A.H. Doughty had made first ascents of such Tryfan classics as Gashed Crag (1902), Grooved Arete (1911) and 1st Pinnacle Rib (1914). We were not even sure whether he was still alive.

At 08.00, Monday, 9th July, from a camp in birch scrub behind Kopang we set off for the big one. Previous research provided no evidence that Lenangentind had ever been attempted from the east. The distant magic of the great S.E. ridge, rising from unknown snowfields, would be a first.

It is not my intention to provide a detailed narrative of this splendid day. Within the context of this article a mere outline will suffice.

At 11.40 at 2,200' we were negotiating crevasses in mist, and it was 15.15 before we attained the left hand rib of the S.E. ridge, from where we viewed the major peaks of south Lyngen, and clouds boiling up over Finland and Sweden to the south east. My diary notes " — reached summit at 20.15 after difficult climb, towers, notches, rotten snow aretes on the L.H., hard crusted, with masses of unstable snow on R.H. Cold N.E. wind throughout. Totally clear sky above continuous cloud layer at 3,000'. Main couloir avalanched when we tried to turn steep face. Summit cairn with small tin, indecipherable Norwegian names dated 1937 ('ascent from W. Col'). Also card left by Dr. Guy Barlow, Birmingham University, 03.08.27 ('ascent from W. Col')."



Mount Paget (2,934m), South Georgia from camp on Upper Nordenskjold Glacier. *Photo: R. A. Brown.*



Trollhul, South West coast, South Georgia, Cape Disappointment behind. *Photo: H. Pretty.*

I noted that 03.08.27 was my second birthday. Diary continues “ — Left summit at 21.40 to descend West ridge to Col of previous ascents. Reached Col after tricky descent over ice glazed rocks and treacherous double cornices, verglas very troublesome, very tired. Reached knife edged snow of West Col at 02.10, finishing with a blind abseil of 70', rope barely adequate, but fortuitous small ledge below overhang”.

A steep descent on avalanche debris, some wandering about in mist on the upper snowfields eventually found our old steps of 15 hours ago, and a fast unrelenting descent took us to the glacier snout and its frozen tarn by 04.40. The murderously loose ravine of the Kopang gorge slowed us down and it was 07.45 when we found our tent, with some difficulty, in thick birch scrub, 24 hours after setting out.

One hours brief rest and we were trekking to Kopang, to be ferried by row boat to the little fjord steamer at 19.00. By 20.00 we had landed at Lyngseidet, and were back in base at 21.00, exactly 37 hours after we had departed camp for the ascent.

In retrospect it has to be one of the most memorable mountain days of my life. Not by reason of extreme difficulty but more from the exciting uncertainties of a new route on a superb peak amid the unforgettable atmosphere and colours of those northern latitudes.

That we had climbed Lenangentind harboured no doubts and the others, returning from hard days among the Jegervasstinder, seemed a little put out that, in a few days of assumed recuperation, we had knocked off the plum.

Weeks later, Saturday, 18th August, the team (Sutton, Moore, Clarke, Pettigrew, Falkner and R.A. Brown) on the little Kvaloy, en route for Tromsø and the big ship that would take us south to Bergen. Rounding the northern tip of the peninsula we had a fine view of the major northern peaks, most of which we'd climbed during the past three months. But there was a problem. What was the major peak between Lenangentind (that K.G.C. and I had climbed in July) and the northern Jegervasstinder, where the others had been simultaneously engaged? Among the voluminous clarification and identification of Lyngen peaks, which was a major objective of the party, it was an enigma and remained so for many months. Eventually further research identified two peaks north of Jegervasstind, Lenangentind and Strupentind. Nobby and I had climbed the latter so, among the confusion, no-one of the Oread party had set foot on the much prized Lenangentind. These uncertainties remained throughout the period that I was producing a mountaineer's ridge line map of the peninsula in 1952/53, and were only resolved when, entirely by accident, I met the still extant and very clear minded Dr. Guy Barlow at the North Wales CC Dinner in '53. He identified Strupentind and could not understand that in my diary I had misquoted his 1927 card as referring to Lenangentind – and I have never understood it either.

In November 1953 he wrote to me from Port Dinorwic and it is this letter of total recall that is my main interest in re-telling this small piece of mountaineering history. It has never been reproduced before.

He wrote:

“My climbing in the Lyngen region was in 1926, '27 and '28, with a camp at Kopang in '27 and '28. Strupentind was my first climb from Kopang. In Kopang they told me the name was Kopangtind. Route over glacier up to West Skar (Col – *Editor*) and then by 1,500' ridge to summit. I made the height 5,200'. There was no cairn so I built one, 3-4', at the highest point and put my card in the tin which had been used for a spare film. It would be interesting to know how much of my cairn you found. Also did you have difficulty in making out my note? For actually I wrote 'ascent from Skar on N.W. in eight hours from Kopang', No mention of Lenangentind as your account states. I was in no confusion about names as, at the time, the name for me was Kopangtind. Also I was not expecting to find it the highest peak for, from Kjostind in 1926, I had seen three peaks higher than Kjostind

itself (these included Lenangentind and Strupentind of course). Unfortunately a change in the weather compelled me to start my descent after only 20 mins on the summit. Kopang was reached in 6 hours.

It was almost a year later that I heard from Hastings that he and Hogrenning had made an ascent in 1901. They left a small cairn but concluded that in 26 years it had been blown away. It is surprising that my cairn stood so well.

Hastings said they called it Strupentind, and he made it clear to me that the highest peak to the W. had the name Lenganentind. In 1928 I traversed most of the ridges and peaks S. of Lenangentind but did not get up more than 300' of that peak from its S. Skar. Afterwards I was sorry I did not persist, but it was the end of a very long day. I do not remember seeing any printed account of the ascent made by Hastings but probably there is some note in the A.C.J. It would be interesting to know if you found such.¹ Hastings was the pioneer of Lyngen. Slingsby, I believe, only joined Hastings for one or more seasons. If you publish anything please give Hastings first place.

You certainly would not find any account of my climbs in that region for nothing has been published. In fact since these climbs were done *alone* it did not seem desirable to say much about them – at that time anyway. In later years my interests were deflected to other places.

I hope the above notes may serve to clear up a few points. It only remains to thank you most sincerely for your very kind invitation to your Annual Dinner, but I regret being unable to attend.

Yours truly,
G. Barlow.

P.S. It is not correct to associate Steeple's name with Gashed Crag.

¹ I subsequently found a reference by Hastings in the A.C.J., but I have forgotten the year, but probably 1901.

The book I was working on at this time, an account of the history of climbing in North Norway, was never published, and work on same was subsumed by preparations for the South Georgia Expedition 1954/55. The M.S. still remains, although a section has been lost.

R. A. Brown and P. R. Falkner subsequently made a new route on Lenangentind in 1953 — *Editor*.



THE FIRST MEET IN GLENCOE

JOHN FISHER

This must have been Easter 1952 and the arrangement was that a good number of Oreads would join some Barnsley M. C. people on a coach to Glencoe. The writer, after another 8-4 shift, all packed up and ready for public transport to Derby Station, was much dismayed by the failure of the bus to appear. Full of aggressive enterprise I dragooned a local motorcyclist who had just entered a barber's shop and for two and six (12.5p) got him to take me the two miles to the Station. Thence to Glencoe in sixteen hours, where Gibson, Webb and others camped at the meeting of the Three Waters and the Barnsley crowd, being mainly skiers, walked up with tents and gear to the Meall a Bhuiridh plateau. Our party of Harby (real M.A.M.), Burgess (a.k.a. Handley M.A.M.) and Fisher (a.k.a. Cholmondeley Smith M.A.M.) took up quarters in the S.M.C. hut at Laggangarbh. Neither Ch. Smith nor Handley knew of this misrepresentation. Bill Murray arrived later at the otherwise empty hut and thought it only curious that these English occupants addressed each other with names which did not fit the hut entry. He was a gentleman and did not explore this discrepancy.

That same day of arrival we did two climbs including Red Slab on the Rannoch Wall where we got lost. I became alarmed and leader Burgess placed a peg. In the following days a traverse of Aonach Eagach and all the Bidean summits were done in sunny Alpine conditions. No transport, of course. After Bidean we were potentially too late for a drink at the Kingshouse so Bill Murray and one of his friends (quoted in his books) volunteered to wash our pots! After taking drinks orders from D.B. and M.H., Fisher ran to the Kingshouse to get them before closing time (at 9pm in those days) but forgot the orders. Burgess was rather ungracious when, on arrival, he was offered milk stout, instead of bitter beer. Altogether a memorable and joyful Scottish meet.

LYNGEN – OREAD VENTURE II

Newsletter, September 1953

The earlier party (Phil Falkner, Dick Brown and Barry Cook) has succeeded in climbing the south Face of Jekkevarre. The climb took 11 hours, was 4,000' long, and had some severe pitches. Part of it had been done earlier by an Edinburgh party.

P.R.F. says of the route, "Imagine the Tower Ridge (of Ben Nevis), with the Douglas Boulder enlarged to about 2,200', so that it forms more than half the ridge – that is the Great Ridge or Storeggen of Jekkevarre."

The other pair (Bob Pettigrew and Trevor Panther) have made the first ascent of Skartind and accompanied by Dick Brown have also climbed the infamous "Slangetind".

With two weeks in hand the expedition has ascended ten major peaks, three of them first ascents, and six new routes.

D.C.C.

Storeggen was subsequently climbed by C. Radcliffe and P. Scott in 1965, possibly the second ascent. They were benighted in a blizzard on the summit of Jekkevarre – the highest summit in Arctic Norway. – *Editor.*

*Golden
Oldies
Consolidation
1953-1958*

Although meets and general information circulars were produced during the years 1949-53 the first monthly newsletter did not appear until June 1953 under the editorship of Douglas Charles Cullum.

It quickly established a reputation for excellence which has never been surpassed and was particularly admired for the variety of its Editorials and editorial features, such as Oreads in Shorts, and the often scathing Profiles of sundry members. It was simultaneously serious, informative, comic, and often surreal – *Editor*.

EDITORIALS

(EXTRACTS)

Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1953

In presenting this, our first newsletter (which, it is hoped, will subsequently appear monthly), a few comments seem necessary concerning its functions, its *raison d'être*, and the nature of its contents.

In a small club, where there is plenty of contact between all the members, the personal touch needs no refreshing. It generates a spirit of intimacy embracing its whole membership, thus closely uniting the club. It is this, in fact, that makes a club a club, and not just a crowd of individuals, and it is what we call the club spirit. To my mind this is the most delightful and the most valuable benefit we derive from membership, whatever the nature of the club.

Recently the Oread has been growing rapidly, and shows every sign of continuing to do so (in fact, it may be said that we have left infancy behind and are commencing adultery!) With this rapid growth, we have inevitably lost something of the closeness, for one cannot possibly follow unaided the many and varied activities of our present seventy or so members. The broad functions of this newsletter is to help to restore and maintain the close personal relationships which make membership of the Oread worth while.

D. C. Cullum

Newsletter, January 1954

Whether you prefer to join the ladies on the Marsden – Rowsley walk or Gibson on his pub-crawl, to climb severes in Llanberis or browse in idyllic Cwm Silyn, to follow the trade routes up Stanage or to explore Agden, there is something for you. Let Oread boots tramp every hill, scale every crag! Let Oread tents be seen on every moor, by every lake and cliff! Let the click of Oread shutters reverberate through the land, in preparation for the second Photo Meet! Let our ice axes never rust, our ropes never be coiled, our Primuses never grow cold, and our tankards never run dry, and 1954 will indeed be a Happy New Year!

D. C. Cullum

PROFILES

(EXTRACTS)

GEORGE SUTTON

Newsletter, June 1953

The man who, in 1949 gave birth to the Oread and, in doing so, discovered that although he had been delivered of persistently tiny baby it was, persistently, a noisy, argumentative, and troublesome one and, above all, remarkably virile for its size. It is apt that he should be President in a year when a fine growth of membership has lent some authority to the original and still extant virility.

A man whose life has been a constant search for the solution to a series of unusual and highly original problems. Of the earlier of these, little is known, beyond the fact that they appear to be connected with the more dubious parts of Rangoon, Singapore, and other points east of Bombay. (1942-45)

More latterly there was an attempt to penetrate the mountainous part of New Guinea, followed by the founding of this club, and the concept of an Oread expedition. It is no small thing that George Sutton inspired, planned and led a mountaineering and scientific expedition to Arctic Norway in 1951 which has been described as, "one of the most efficient of small British expeditions of more recent times". In 1952 he led the British Spitzbergen Expedition with a party of five Cambridge Scientists. If in Lyngen he produced a lyric, in Spitzbergen he achieved an epic.

Somewhat gaunt in appearance and ascetic by nature, he is, on any kind of rock as a second, the answer to a leader's prayer. On snow or ice is apt to be a different person, and only thoroughly happy when leading. Once led a horrible ice-pitch on N.E. Ridge of Nevis, and had to give a top rope to several following parties – wrote delirious letters to his friends on the subject.

Is alleged to have saved Bob Pettigrew's life in Lyngen, rescuing him from an arctic swamp, but has almost succeeded in living it down.

Our President has, in the field of mountaineering, his biggest problem yet to solve (South Georgia). But whatever the outcome he might be remembered as the man, who amid the misfortunes of 1950, wrote ... "The north and be damned," and I'm damned if we weren't.

Anon

Some Profiles appeared under the by-line of the author. Others were, as above, submitted anonymously – *Editor*.

RICHARD A. BROWN

Newsletter, July 1953

His bearded, dignified, almost noble appearance contrasts strikingly with his youthful sense of fun. A true disciple of Rabelais, he has long been the hero of countless legendary exploits and orgies; exploits of astonishing variety, but all characterised by some outlandish episode exhibiting the true Brownian genius. Whether climbing Arctic mountains, or supping Cointreau in a Sheffield den of vice, Richard "A". Brown makes a delightful if bewildering companion. He undoubtedly possesses a great future – but what sort of future is anybody's guess.

P. R. Falkner

ALBERT SHUTT

Newsletter, August 1953

In 1942-3 Albert, then a lad of 14 years, became a protégé of Macleod of the Sheffield Climbing Club, and could be seen leading in shorts such severe routes on Stanage as Black Slab original route and the Trinity Wall climbs. At that time rubber gym shoes were a rarity possessed by few and tricouni nails impossible to buy locally, so Albert learned to climb and lead V. S. routes in hob-nailed boots.

Always keen on exploration and new routes, to both bars and rocks, "Our Albert", spent considerable time forcing new ways up virgin rock, only to find later that the deflowering had already taken place. Nevertheless he was probably the first to combine the girdle traverses of Robin Hood and Black Hawk, thus giving over 1,000' of climbing on Stanage. With Tom Probert he made the first ascent of the Left Unconquerable Crack, but the Right one eluded him. The following weekend he celebrated by falling off Nether Tor and breaking his ankle.

In later years he worked out numerous routes on White Hall rocks and, with R. A. Brown and P. Carr explored Rake's Rocks near Laddow. Surely no more fitting explorers could have been found, as witness the names of the routes they discovered – Orgy, Dissipation, Degradation, etc.

E. Byne

OUTDOOR MEETS (U.K.)

CWM SILYN

Newsletter, June 1953 (Extract)

A coach will run at the usual times on the Friday evening – Nottingham Midland Station 6.30 p.m., Derby Market 7.10 p.m., Burton (Queen's Hotel) 7.40 p.m. Friends and guests are of course welcome. Deposits of 10/- should be sent to P. R. Falkner, 14 Queens Drive, Beeston, by June 6th at the latest.

P. R. Falkner

COACH MEETS

Newsletter, July 1953 (Extract)

Since the Llanberis meet last February, the failing support for long-distance coaches has given cause for some anxiety. The Easter meet only just survived; the Ogwen and Wasdale projects were so feebly supported that not even a 14-seater could be operated without financial loss.

Reasons can be found for these failures. Perhaps we are attempting too many long distance meets; perhaps we have visited Ogwen too often recently; perhaps the Coronation holiday arrangements "killed" the Whitsun meet. Perhaps this, perhaps that, perhaps the other: an apologist can find plausible excuses for anything.

D. C. Cullum

KINDER DOWNFALL

Newsletter, October 1953 (Extract)

A most successful meet from the point of view of weather and attendance. The sun shone and Oreads rolled up in thousands – well, twenty came and brought ten friends. Among these were Jack Longland and his son John, who joined our Naiad section by getting wet through climbing the waterfall.

D. C. Cullum

HARSTON ROCKS (JOINT MEET WITH M.A.M.)

Newsletter, December 1953 (Extract)

The day that it was and the location of the rocks deserved a better turnout for a joint meet. Only eleven put in an appearance. However, enthusiasm grew the more they explored, for Harston is a place to improve technique. Everyone expressed a desire to come again.

The party, being small, kept together and worked from the Frogghall end of the valley, searching and climbing wherever possible, to the Harston Rock where the highlight of the day was Ernie Marshall's ascent of the Helix Route – a magnificent climb.

D. C. Cullum

John Fisher has averred that, on this occasion, Dave Penlington led Helix – *Editor*.

FIRST OREAD PHOTO MEET, BASLOW, OCTOBER 1953

This meet was a glorious success. The response exceeded all expectations, in both quality and quantity. On Saturday afternoon over two hundred photographs, almost all of a high standard adorned the walls of the room at the Prince of Wales, Baslow. The exhibition showed in a striking way the wide range of the Club's activities. There were photographs not only of all standard British climbing areas, but also of nearly all the principal Alpine districts, and places as far afield as Spitzbergen and Lyngen. The first prize in the Pictorial Section went to Geoff Gibson for a superb study of the Pigne d'Arolla. Bob Pettigrew won the first prize for the photograph of greatest interest to the Club, with his extraordinary "Moulin Rouge", starring a grotesque simian Brown. In both categories the President and Mike Moore were the runners-up. In the evening, Phil Falkner, Gerry Britton and Dick Brown gave a display of colour slides.

Revelry continued to a late hour on Saturday. Malcolm Padley gave a display of aquatic sports in the horse trough at the Robin Hood. Then at midnight there was climbing on Birchen Edge by the light of electric torches and occasional fireworks. Somehow a jumping cracker found its way into a tent containing Mike Moore and his lady friend, who had camped far away from the common herd.

On Sunday morning there was the astonishing sight of a Viking and a "toff" in tails and a cricket cap climbing the Prom. Conditions were superb throughout Sunday – mellow autumn sunshine, blue skies, golden bracken and warm rock provided an idyllic setting for the day's climbing activities. Details of climbs and parties are not important. Some enjoyed themselves strenuously, others quietly; the overall impression was of a wonderfully happy weekend for everyone.

D. C. Cullum

OREADS IN SHORTS 1953

Sayings of an expeditionary: "Old Bob would have his budgie if Anne knew that he snored". – *S. G. Moore*.

"How can you be christened Nobby Clarke?" – *Nobby Clarke*.

Quote of the month: "Of course, I feel that bread is essentially a platform for butter" – *Geoff Gibson*.

Bright idea for campers: Geoff Gibson had a nylon pan-scrubber at the Idwal camp. It made washing up a pleasure (almost), and both weight and cost are negligible. Recommended. (Real progress in the era of nylon ropes and bowlines — *Editor*).

Dick Brown celebrated the Coronation by pegging part way up High Tor. This procedure stopped the traffic on the A6 and aroused the interest, but not the fury, of the law.

Oread venture 2 (P. R. Falkner, R. A. Brown) reports the ascent of two virgin peaks, the Lyngstraltind (4,750') and the Store Gjementind (4,810'). The party has also climbed three new routes, the North Face of the Rodbjergtind, the East Ridge of the Festningen, and the Hemmeligtind by the West Face and South Ridge. (Lyngen – North Norway).

Bob Pettigrew and Trevor Panther will shortly join the expedition.

Oreads and “Coves and Cogs” had a grand drinking and singing session in Zermatt, and outsang all opposition until midnight.

Stan Moore made this season’s first guideless ascent of the Taschorn. It took him 27 hours. He was also heard by several witnesses to decline to drink beer. There is no previous known instance of this. (And no further instance either – *Editor*).

Nobby Clarke and Stan Moore also did the Mer de Glace face of the Grepon this season. Good show both.

Conversation between two (male) Oreads:

A: “You know, a fine thing about the Club is that there’s not a man among them with whom I wouldn’t gladly spend a weekend”.

B: “And there’s not a woman among them either, with whom”

ASPIRATIONS

In succession to Cyril Machin and Eric Byne, George Sutton was elected President in 1953. After returning from Spitzbergen (1952) he was now in the throes of organising an expedition to South Georgia for 1954/55.

GEORGE SUTTON

Newsletter (Extract), August 1953

The Oread now more numerous, have chosen one of the first few to be their President in this fifth year of activity. One who is aware of the honour, and will strive by word and example to influence for good the character of the club, and thus project the same ideals and philosophy into the mountaineering world.

One who has struggled in those four years to preserve the original ideals – the gay audacity: the friendly welcome to novices: the high standard of all round ability: the philosophy of loving to climb hills, to see hills, to be among hills, and not to regard hills merely as a display case for prowess – in fact, those many things which bind together to become the fibre of the club’s character, and the common spirit of its members.

Quote of the century: “Unhappy men! If you are thus weary of your lives, is it so difficult for you to find ropes and precipices?” – Antonius, proconsul of Asia during the reign of Trajan. (Gibbon, “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”, Ch.XVI.)

PROFILES

(EXTRACTS)

R. G. PETTIGREW

Newsletter, October 1953

Robert Gavin Pettigrew started his career as a climber at the age of twelve, by the surreptitious reading of books on mountaineering (but only those by the “correct” authors) in the school library. There was no practical outcome until 1947, when he set out to climb Snowdon from Caernarvon. He

gave up at Llanberis and spent a fortnight at the Rectory there. At Christmas the same year he traversed Crib Goch under snow and ice, armed only with a fireman's axe. He survived.

The salient events of his subsequent career may be outlined as follows:-

- 1948: Brief dalliance with Innominate. Made first acquaintance with gritstone with Messrs. Kershaw, Perkins and Wagstaff. Revisited Rectory.
- 1949: Joined R.A.F. Posted to Mountain Rescue at Buxton.
- 1950: Met Graham Brown at Chamonix during an R.A.F.M.A. meet. Climbed Mont Blanc and Savoy Alps with him. Started getting his pictures in the papers.
- 1951: Met Harry Pretty at White Hall and was invited to join Lyngen expedition. Got three months' paid leave (largely due to Harry's intervention) and discovery of this caused him to be dubbed "professional", "not quite a gentleman" and finally "porter".
- 1952: Climbed in Stubai and Zillertal.
- 1953: Joined Oread Venture 11 (Loughborough College section).

Handsome, athletic, bearded Bob Pettigrew, known and loved by millions for his enthralling broadcasts, has endeared himself to the Oread by (among other things) his boundless youthful enthusiasm for everything he undertakes. This occasionally leads him to make more engagements than he can possibly keep, and to utter "pettigrewisms".

D. C. Cullum

MOLLY PRETTY

Newsletter, November 1953

Molly shares with Nan Axon the distinction of being one of the Club's two feminine founder members. She is a woman whose charm has endeared her to many Oreads, and whose intelligence is built into the very foundations of the Club.

One remembers the happy adventures – how she and Harry helped pitch a tent in the Allt a Mhuillinn at Easter and then went to the pictures; how she led us blithely across the high pass to Torridon in deep snow, of a glorious sunny walk from Malham Cove to Ingleton, and Drambuie that night in the "Wheatsheaf" – and a score of other days and nights.

Her 21st, for instance, celebrated in a haze of rum at our spiritual home, Baslow, inspired a moonlight ascent by a band of Oreads, not strictly sober, who clawed, hauled, pushed, cursed and sang their way gloriously to the top, Uncle Eric in the lead.

Those alone who shared the Lyngen/51 adventure will know just how much it owed to her help as a typist and even greater service as hostess to the ever-hungry horde of conspirators.

G. A. Sutton

REMINISCENCE

DO YOU KNOW?

ERIC BYNE

Newsletter November 1953

- (1) That Chuck Cook of the old Valkyrie band once, for a small wager, leapt from the top of Froggatt Pinnacle across the steep gully. No doubt "Cook's Leap" would make excellent bergschrund practice.

- (2) That Four Jack's Cabin on Grindsbrook, Kinderscout, derives its name from four Edale gamekeepers, all named Jack, who rebuilt it in 1932. One of these four, Jack Tym, once nearly shot the balaclava from the Vice-President's head. He said he thought it was a hare.
- (3) That Goliath's Groove was so named by Peter Harding, who led the first ascent, to commemorate the effort of David Sampson, who as third man laybacked the crack all the way.
- (4) That the climbing term "to layback" originated about 1921 at Stanage as an American Wisecrack by Rice K. Evans, and so began to be used by the Rucksack Club tigers of that period.
- (5) "The best position for the rope is over both hips, held with the hands near together in front. In this position the climber is less likely to be pulled forward and lose his balance than when the shoulder belay is used. My theory was once severely tested and proved its worth".
– from *"Falling off Rock"* by Maurice Linnell, in the *M.U.M.C. Journal*, 1933. (How now, Tarbuck?)
- (6) ".....as soon as the blizzard commenced, Norah conked and refused to budge. They dragged her as far as they could, and in doing so lost their bearings, and because she was a big girl, and they but small men, they decided to shelter in a peat trench. All night, Fred and Albert sang and acted the goat just to keep those two girls awake. They tried everything, but the trouble was that Norah had no will. She gave up and just wouldn't try, and so she died"
– from a letter relating to a tragedy in 1936 on Howden Chest, near Abbey Brook.

OREADS IN SHORTS 1953-54

Molly and Harry Pretty spent a holiday in the Northwest Highlands of Scotland early in October, during which they visited Dr. Longstaff, one of the greatest figures of Himalayan exploration. It seems that Harry has joined the clergy – at any rate, whilst at Torridon on the journey north, he received a letter from Dr. Longstaff addressed to the rev. H. Pretty. The church is ever with us.....

As a result of this pilgrimage to Achiltibuie, Dr. Tom Longstaff became a Patron of the British South Georgia Expedition 1954/55 in its application to the Mount Everest Foundation – *Editor*.

Overheard in the Berwyns:

"What size is your camera Phil?" "Thirty five millimetres, if it hasn't shrunk."

Department of Rude remarks (Managers Falkner and Brown):

"You're not so much a seasoned Mountaineer as a pickled one, Cullum."

"Pretty, you look more like a worn-out male ballerina every day."

The perennial question of a Club badge has been revived once more. R.A.B. (Brown, not Butler) has produced an original design featuring Nelson's Monument on Birchen. As the voting was close on this question at the A.G.M., perhaps you would care to communicate your views to the Editor.

A fine display of pegging technique was given at Froggatt on April 4th, by Nat Allen, aided and abetted by (among others) Ray Handley and Derrick Burgess. The show, which was watched by a large and appreciative audience; provoked Pete Janes to utter the Quote of the Month: "Just like climbing a lavatory chain, isn't it?"

Coming out of a pub (it was closing time) in Coniston, Jim Winfield was greeted by two young ladies who asked, "Are you in the Orrid Mountaineering Club?" The girl's names turned out to be Cyn and Virginia – an ill-assorted pair, by the sound of things.

Many Oreads spent Easter in Scotland. Messrs Gibson, Cole, Webb, Dearden and Parslow camped in Glencoe. Harby, Fisher and Burgess stayed at Lagangarbh; and the South Georgia party camped on the summit of Nevis.

Remark by small boy lying at the top of Froggatt, watching Ron Dearden following Marion Cooke up a climb: "Ooh, look – there's another missus coming up."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DECEMBER 1953 – MARCH 1954

The following anonymous communication has been received:

This Oread Newsletter? Nothing but the journal of an association of back-patters and as far as that goes, written entirely by that horrible shower who seem to run the Club – that Nottingham crowd, I mean; Falkner and his gang of imbeciles. Nearly every article bears either his or D.C.C.'s initial. All very nice, of course, but a bit thick really, especially if you don't happen to live there.

Reading the thing, one would seriously think that the Oread only had about a dozen folk in it. Damn great long-winded chunks about past and future meets, a few senseless remarks by individuals we've never heard of and an enormous Editorial, usually insulting the average member and suggesting he's barely literate. And they have the cheek to ask "Dear member, contribute something please." No sir, I won't!

Come, sir, a few facts: First, Phil Falkner is the only Committee Member (presumably your horrible shower) who lives in Nottingham. Second, apart from the offensive D.C.C. and the loathsome P.R.F. there have been twenty-three contributions to date. Third, only a dozen folks indeed: forty-three of our membership of sixty-nine have received mention at some time. Fourth, if reports of meets and the doings of unfamiliar members are not the concern of a Newsletter, what the hell is? Fifth, no member has yet complained of insults to his literacy: perhaps self-consciousness is your trouble. Sixth, if you write sense as well as you write abuse, I request – nay COMMAND you, sir, to write a serious article — *Newsletter Editor*).

Sir,

I am distressed to see that you have published in the Oread Newsletter a scurrilous and anonymous attack upon the Club, and certain of its members who are my friends. Whilst admitting that we should allow all sides free opinion-expression, I feel that there is a considerable body of opinion in the club who have been disturbed by this unfounded and ill-informed attack, and I urge that in future, all who would write such material should have the courage of their convictions and append their name. I am sir

Yours sincerely
Richard A. Brown

medical kits. Oreads will remember him as the proposer of the toast, “The Oread” at the Annual Dinner of 1952. Many other mountaineers have cause to remember him with gratitude, and indeed his memory will be respected as long as there are mountaineering accidents.

EARLY ALPINE

Oread parties were in the Swiss Alps as early as 1951, '52 and '53, notably Geoff Gibson, Peter Cole, Malcolm Padley, Ron Dearden, Clive Webb, Bob Parslow and John Adderley but little information appeared in Newsletters — *Editor*.

ERNIE PHILLIPS

Newsletters (Extracts) 1954

Ernie Phillips, Pete Janes and the Handleys went to Chamonix and Zermatt for their holidays. Ernie writes:

“At Chamonix we met Ray Colledge, and both Rays went off via Courmayeur to do the Peuterey Ridge on Mont Blanc. In the meantime the rest of us went to the Couvercle hut and snatched the S.W. Ridge on the Moine. When we returned to Chamonix we found that the Mont Blanc party had been unable to get on the Peuterey at all, due to high wind and snow. We then adjourned to Zermatt by road, and then up to the Taschutte. I tried the Alphubel with Pete Janes, and the two Rays tried the Teufelsgrat on the Taschorn, both parties being turned back by bad weather. Back to Zermatt, and then up to the Hornlihutte for the Hornli Ridge of the Matterhorn. This just went, and took 14 hours from hut to hut in vicious conditions. This effort expended the party, and we returned via Grindelwald, Interlaken, Lucerne and places north. Judy still asserts that the first words which greeted her when she set foot on foreign soil were, “Have you any food parcels for Yugoslavia?”

PHIL FALKNER

“We went up to a hut immediately on arrival in Zermatt, and knocked off three “viertausenders” in four days; Allalinhorn, Strahlhorn and Rimpfshorn. The first two were snow plods. The Rimpfshorn was rather more interesting. We did it on the way to another hut and this involved carrying sacks up to 13,000 feet. We descended to Zermatt on the Friday and after that got rather out of step with the weather. After 1½ hours Clive¹ felt unwell and decided to return. Gerald² went with him and I continued with Mike³. We reached the Solvay hut at noon. This was very late. We were in cloud and a few snowflakes were falling, so we retreated to Zermatt.

Monday was an off day; the weather was perfect. Tuesday Mike and I plodded back up to the hut and the weather deteriorated again. But on Wednesday we did climb the Matterhorn despite a heavy snowstorm and several Swiss guides who used my rope as a handrail while I was on difficult rock. Friday Colin Morris and I went to the Betemps hut. Saturday was wet but on Sunday we did the 6,000' ascent of Monte Rosa between 2.45 and 8.00 a.m.

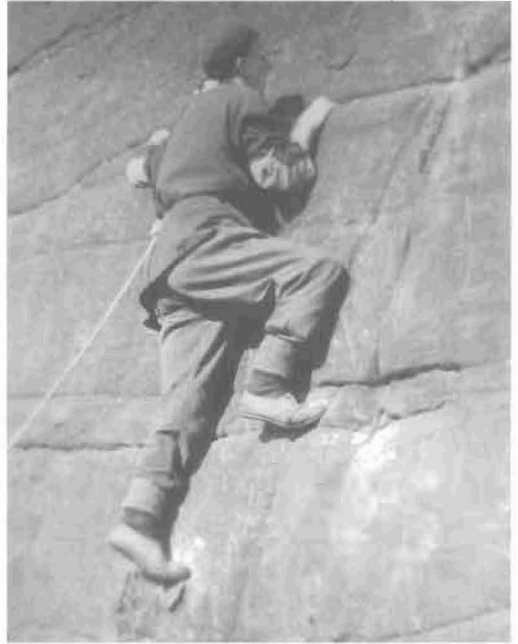
The next Tuesday I went to the Taschutte and on Wednesday did the Alphubel by the Rotgrat, a good climb but plastered with new snow. Chunky⁴ arrived on Saturday. The weather broke up and was bad for a week. We managed two climbs – the Trifhorn and the Zinal Rothorn. The next day we found 2" of snow and more falling, so we retreated to the valley.

It really seemed like the end of the season. Chunky went to the Italian Riviera. I did one more climb – Monte Rosa again, this time with Dick Burgess. The weather had remained foul until nearly the end.

¹Clive Webb. ²Gerald Parsons. ³Mike Turner. ⁴Chunky Cartwright.



Question Mark, Stanage, Brian and Marion Cooke.
Photo: M. Padley.



Rusty Wall, Stanage, Nobby Millward climbing, 1947.
Photo: A.J.F. Moulam Collection.



Robin Hood's Stride, Stanage, Keith Axon climbing.
1949. Nan Smith (Axon) and Dave Penlington
observing. *Photo: G. Sutton.*



Marsden to Rowsley Walk 1953. Arrival Rowsley,
Geoff Gibson, Mike Moore, Roger Turner, Clive Webb
(Sports Jacket and Tricounis). *Photo: Jim Winfield.*



Dave Penlington on Grooved Arête,
Tryfan, with Ken Griffiths, 1949.
Photo: H. Pretty.



Pioneers of the 40's. The Stonnis M.C., 1947: Norman Horsefield,
Ernie Phillips, Dave Sampson, Graham Robinson, Dick Meyer,
unknown, Brian Mayfield, Alf Bridge, Norman Millward, *unknown*,
Kay Hardy, John Sargent. In front: Ronnie Lee (Phillips), Peter Harding.
Photo: Ken Broadbent – The A.J.J. Moulam Collection.



Oreads at Rainster Rocks, 1958: Burns, Fisher, Gardiners, Ashcrofts, Hooleys, Axons, Allens, Janes', Pettigrew,
Cooke, Telfer, Blackrock (sundry children appertaining to Axons, Cooke, Prettys, Allens). *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Glencoe, 1950's. Bob Parslow, Peter Cole, Clive Webb, Ron Dearden. *Photo: Geoff Gibson.*



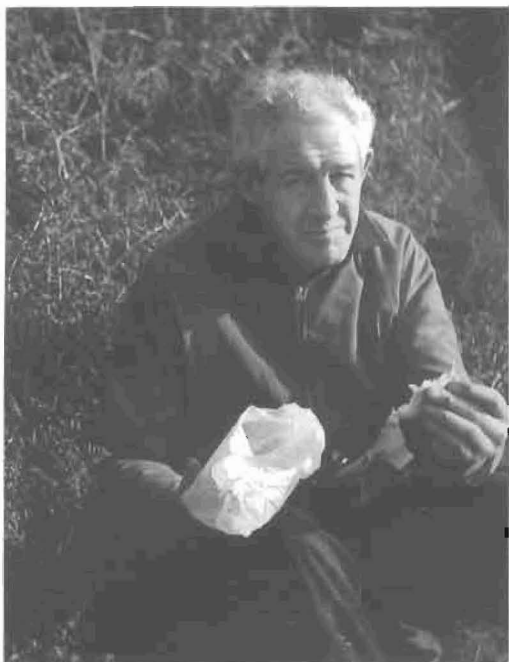
First Oread Photo Meet, The Prince of Wales, Baslow, 1952. John Welbourn, Betty Wright, Ken Wright, Charlie Cullum, Mary Cullum, Ron Dearden, Brian Cooke. *Photo: Geoff Gibson.*



Snowdon Horseshoe 1950's: Mixed group including R. Parslow, M. Moore, C. Webb, J. Fisher, T. Statham, Larry Lambe, Mary Cullum, J. Welbourn (others unknown). *Photo: Charlie Cullum.*



Snowdon Summit 1954: Dennis Badcott, Jack Ashcroft, Jim Kershaw, Clive Webb, John Fisher, Jim Winfield, Ron Dearden (sitting), Roger Turner. *Photo: G. Gibson.*



Oliver Jones.
Photo: J. Hudson.



Phillip R. Falkner, 1969.
Photo: H. Pretty.



Brian Cooke.
Photo: H. Pretty.



Ray Colledge and David Appleby.
Photo: H. Pretty.

THE LONG WALKS

Long walks have been part of the Oread tradition from the earliest days. The Bullstones Meet in December, commencing with a night crossing of Kinder, to the Snake, was probably the earliest and continued as a regular epic for at least 21 years, although Lower Small Clough became the objective after the vandalism of the Bullstones cabins. "Bullstones" still appears on Meets lists, but the name more in memory, since these modern bog-fests can take place anywhere across trackless upland country and are only defined by the inevitable bivvy in atrocious weather.

Marsden to Rowsley, Colne to Rowsley, (a Falkner special), the Welsh 3,000's, Aber to Cwm Pennant (Bryn y Wern), and, ultimately, Penmaenmawr to Cwm Pennant, have also left their mark and created their own legends.

Apart from Snowdonia the "Welsh Walks", of desperate memory, regularly negotiated that empty quarter of central Wales from Abergwesyn to the Berwyns, from Cynwyd to the Arenigs, from Cwmystwyth over Pumlumon Fawr to Machynlleth, from Dolgellau to Rhyd ddu over the Rhinogs. The mysteries of Mignent and the Claerwen moors on a bad day live forever in the sub conscious – *Editor*.

COLNE-MARSDEN-ROWSLEY, MAY 1954 (EXTRACT)

R. G. Pettigrew

On Saturday, the first party left the bivouac at 6.00 a.m. and traversed all the summits to arrive at the Yorkshire Bridge Inn by 5.40 p.m. Ken Wright's party came next; Charlie Cullum administered to the needs of the ladies in the third party, in which fine work he was eventually assisted by fabulous Falkner, (with the party in transit from Colne). Various people were posted as "missing", noticeably the Hon. Sec., Clive Webb. But all had visited the Yorkshire Bridge Inn by midnight on Saturday. Meanwhile the leader had departed alone at 6.25 p.m. Saturday and reached Rowsley at 11.15 p.m.

The majority concluded the walk in leisurely fashion on Sunday. A special word of congratulation is due to the two ladies, Mary Cullum and Jean Challands, also Glenn Gundry, a non-member who accompanied the Colne party.

A word about the Colne party. They got within nine miles of Marsden on Friday night, losing Clive on the way. On Saturday Glenn Gundry left the others behind by running a good deal of the way. However, they re-united at Yorkshire Bridge, and all four finished the seventy-mile course. A fine achievement, and a fine weekend all round.

MARSDEN-ROWSLEY, MAY 1955 (EXTRACTS)

R. G. Pettigrew

It is with regret that I have to report a lamentable lack of support for this traditional stroll down the Pennines. To my knowledge only seven members of the Club attempted any stage of it and they were strung out over a considerable section of the Pennine Way. These isolated blobs of Oreads failed to coalesce during the entire weekend and comprised, from North to South: Phil. Falkner, Charlie Cullum and Gerald Parsons, who started from Colne on Friday evening; Dave Penlington, who did a solo from Littleborough – at last my curiosity is satisfied as to the owner of the Vibram prints whose footsteps we dogged from Wildboar Clough to Win Hill – and finally John Welbourn, Laurie Burns, Bob England (Loughborough College M.C.) and Bob Pettigrew, who made the usual nocturnal entry into Marsden by train – one day I shall visit Marsden in daylight, just to satisfy my curiosity!

Being such a small party, a trade union was formed quickly to determine pace. It was decided that the weekend would be enjoyable and so an excellent start was made by obtaining accommodation in the hospitable "Isle of Skye". Joan Littlewood had a mournful tale to tell. The dear old I. of S. is

probably to be destroyed in a month's time because its effluent drains into the catchment area of the new Huddersfield reservoir. Consequently, we made the most of our stay there, eventually departing about 10.45 on Saturday.

P. R. Falkner

"On Saturday, May 7th, at 10.15 p.m., having walked the 53 miles from Colne, I staggered into the Yorkshire Bridge Inn and looked round for the welcoming faces of fellow Oreads. Alas, not an Oread to be seen!"

Dear Sir,

As you are well aware, at the beginning of May the Club Meet took the form of a walk, from either Colne or Marsden to Rowsley. A lengthy circular appeared from the Meet Leader, telling us all where to assemble, where we were to meet en route and even giving times of buses.

After the walk, which eight people claimed to have done, we heard stories saying how they had repeatedly missed each other the whole way down. Three people claimed to have started from Colne, one from Littleborough and four from Marsden. I suggest, Mr. Editor, that there has been collusion with them; in fact I suggest that none of these people actually did the walk at all.

Let us first of all examine the stories. Party A claim that they started from Colne and walked southward, following the route, called at the Isle of Skye and that on Saturday night they also called in at the Yorkshire Bridge Inn, as per the Meet Leader's instructions. Party B, our soloist (he actually claims to have done the whole thing by himself) started at Littleborough and he also says he was in the Y.B. on Saturday night, that he did not see Party A in there and that he left at 9.30 p.m. Now I feel that here's the pertinent question – who has ever heard of an Oread who left a pub before closing time? Party C, which included the Meet Leader (none other than the King of the Arctic, R.G.P.) slept at the Isle of Skye, walked down towards Rowsley, finding a handkerchief which Party B claimed to have dropped (this I suggest, was sent through the post) and camped on the summit of Win Hill.

Now in my youth I once ascended Win Hill and found that the summit was small, fairly pointed and rocky. But Party C, having two expeditionaries on its strength, found no difficulty in erecting a large tent and sleeping there on Saturday night. Party A, according to their claims, followed Party C down the walk, went over Win Hill and into the Y.B. I should like to ask Party C if the tent was secure during the night and why on earth they didn't stop another party walking through their portable bedroom. I should like to ask Party A how they managed to walk through a tent supposedly containing four Oreads without even seeing it.

Lastly, I must say that as I walked from Skipton to Matlock and didn't see anybody, I suggest that I was the only Oread out on the walk during the weekend.

Yours faithfully
IN VINO VERITAS

MORE PROFILES

(EXTRACTS)

DOUGLAS CHARLES CULLUM

Newsletter, February 1954

When, in 1945, Charlie Cullum was inveigled into accompanying me on a short holiday in North Wales, he could hardly have known what he was starting. With great trepidation we ascended the North Ridge of Tryfan, and a couple of days later, with even greater trepidation, we traversed Crib Goch. Before we realised it we were incurably afflicted with dementia montis.

The following year, having borrowed a rope, we began our rock-climbing career with the Ordinary on the Milestone. Charlie in the lead. In the years that followed, Charlie became an accomplished all-round mountaineer, with a strong predilection for camping in remote places in any weather.

But Charlie is not just a good climber. He is a man of many parts (and in quite large parts too!). Apart from chemistry, his job, his interests include music, art, literature, photography and drinking – serious drinking, I mean, as opposed to mere celebratory drinking.

Early in 1952 Charlie joined the Oread, and soon became one of its staunchest supporters – a pillar of truly Doric proportions. On June 14th of the same year he married Mary. June 1953 saw the production of the first Oread Newsletter, a venture for which Charlie has earned the congratulations of the whole Club.

Perhaps the best description of Charlie is a man who for nine years has been one of my stoutest friends, and who, as the years go by, becomes even stouter.

P. R. Falkner

JOHN FISHER

Newsletter, September 1954

John “Drws, Meall a’ Bhuiridh”, Fisher, for the benefit of Oreads who do not know him, is a tall thin person, who might be called good-looking by his friends. He has a long reach and fantastically thin legs, thin face, and a very engaging smile; in fact a physique and a personality all his own.

He began climbing well over three years ago and at once achieved fame by getting a severe telling off from the late George Bower, for climbing in tricounis at Brassington. Shortly after that he attended a course at White Hall, where he met Penlington. Through “Penno” he joined the ranks of the Oread and has been on the downgrade ever since.

Apart from climbing, John is a student at Birmingham University, where he is studying dental surgery. It has been suggested that he chose Birmingham because he could then become a member of the M.A.M. for five shillings per annum. University life has changed him. Whether for better or worse is hard to judge, but at least he has introduced a new song to the Club, which was culled from that seat of learning – a famous ditty entitled, “Good Morning, Mr. Fisherman”.

Anon

THE OREAD

Newsletter, June 1954

“But who are ye in rags and rotten shoes,
You dirty-bearded, blocking up the way?”

“We are the pilgrims, master; we will go
Always a little further; it may be
Beyond that last blue mountain barred with snow.”

In 1949 that answer might well have been forthcoming and, in the event, would surely have been proclaimed with the arrogance of youth. Likely enough it would have been made in blatantly overconfident fashion, aggressively, in a way calculated to hide any inward misgivings as to the ultimate truth. But it is important that at least it would have been made; that within the small nucleus of founder members an essential element was to be found, for otherwise this would never have been written.

By many standards a curiously composed group, brought together by fortuitous circumstance and a newspaper advertisement, it nevertheless fought its own battles, mainly internequine, and within a year had established a character which, although self-avowedly unorthodox, delivered itself into strictest conformity by this very assertion. To be sympathetic to the ideas and customs of the long established, large and prosperous clubs was as good a way as any of achieving social ostracism from the 1949 committee of the Oread – and in that year, eighty per cent of the Oread constituted the committee. It was an inevitable reaction against certain pre-war attitudes, which had endowed many of the larger clubs with some of the aspects of the “closed shop”. But there were mellowing influences.

In some way or other Cyril Machin was acquired, and he, by his singular example, unwittingly did more to indicate a general direction than was apparent at the time – but then of course, Cyril was the most unorthodox of them all. His name and strange accomplishments were legendary, and no man in the short history of the Oread has been regarded with quite the same affection as that accorded to C.B.M. in the early days.

The sudden flowering that produced the Gibson-Moore combination will be remembered for the acrimony that resulted from its impact upon an otherwise quiet and orderly A.G.M. But when the heat of that debate has passed beyond recall it will still be remembered for the promise it gave of new strength and integrity of vision. And in these ideas that came from this new source, from Gibson and Moore, from Penlington and Wright, was there not a refreshing hint of return to basics.

Into new and almost untried hands the influence passed, and the result was a bracing up, an increase of efficiency, of authoritative administration. There were new members, and a quickening of life, for there had been a draught of air, perhaps a little uncomfortable at first, which in practice proved to have many of the virtues of its original promise.

Up to the present day, four men can be said to have influenced fundamentally the growth and contemporary character of the Oread. Of these, Sutton, Machin and Byne have been previously mentioned. Without any shadow of doubt Gibson is the fourth. With quiet genius he has woven those threads which in the last eighteen months have lent a new and richer texture to Oread activities.

This was the era of the Baslow Area Guide, when the Club did not miss a weekend's climbing on the Edges over a period of four months. There can be little doubt that in giving the Oread a job to do, by issuing his demands, and imposing his personality at such a critical point, Eric Byne, together with George Sutton, ensured that this Oread would be no transitory “seven days wonder” for now there was a spirit, already they were “a little further”.

From 1950 to the present day three periods of differing thought and influence can be discerned, all of which have moulded the Club's present character. There is what might be termed the Woodbine Cottage era, from '50 to the early months of '52, followed by the Gibson-Moore coup d'etat, with its subsequent “Administrative Reform and Consolidation policies – and lastly, from early '52 to the present, there has appeared a new culture which will almost undoubtedly be known as the Beeston Period.

Lyngen '51 will always be associated with the first of these, and although much has been said of this venture by now, it is a simple and sober fact that Lyngen is still the greatest, bravest, and most inspiring achievement of the Oread.

The Beeston Period is contemporary history, too close for analysis and too blatantly alive and vigorous to require critical review. Prolific with efficiency and new enterprise, birth place of a second

northern venture, it is the proper residuary legatee of the Woodbine Cottage ghosts. As the home of one, Falkner, patron of all the singular and ancient arts, it already has the air of being guaranteed a place in future legend.

And what of the remainder? What of the ordinary member – this creature who calls himself an Oread? What are they like, these people who, by their degree of collective loyalty and spirit, can carry the Oread yet “a little further”, or destroy all that which has been achieved?

University lecturer, metal worker, student and clerk, surveyor and typist, geologist and housewife, engineer and “out of work” – all of them, and a score of other denominations, are Oreads – and many of them, still young to the ways of the mountains, are like G. K. Chesterton’s “Secret People” and have not spoken yet.

Anon

OREADS IN SHORTS 1955

Just before the great event, Phil Falkner made the Quote of the Month: “They’re serving teas in the room where Professor Graham Brown met Pettigrew!”

Annual Dinner, Baslow

Bob Pettigrew has been spending his summer holidays at Butlin’s Holiday Camp at Filey – as a barman. He landed an Honours Diploma in Physical Education at Loughborough this summer – congratulations, Bob.

The following was found written on a menu card after the Dinner:

Out in Tibet
There’s no publicity yet.
Hence the Yeti who
Had never heard of Pettigrew.

Kilchoan proved to be somewhat larger than we had expected, with about twenty houses, a small general store, and an excellent pub, and, of all things, a petrol pump. However, when we bought three gallons of petrol a few days later, and the young lady said, “Fifteen an’ threepence, please”, we were somewhat taken aback! – *Ernie Phillips*.

The same weekend, Eric Byne was principal guest at the S.U.M.C. dinner at the Marquis of Granby. On the Sunday, Eric, with Frank Fitzgerald, (President S.U.M.C.), and Maurice Twentyman, climbed the North Face of Back Tor under very icy conditions, taking four hours. Eric believes this may be a first winter ascent.

It was signing on time at the Labour Exchange. The aristocrats of the Nottingham Branch, distinguished by their collars and ties, were queuing at Box No. 3. The clerk broke the news to me gently: “Now take it easy Jim”, he said, “I don’t want to alarm you, but there’s some danger of us finding you a job in the near future. If I were you I’d get out of the district for a few days – just wait until things get back to normal”. The thought of the Cairngorms in February sprang to mind, and thus it was that I found myself on a northbound train a day later (available for immediate recall for interview – Poste Restante, Aviemore). – *Jim Kershaw*.

BRITISH SOUTH GEORGIA EXPEDITION 1954-1955

A COMMENT

Serious planning started in 1953. George Sutton (in Burton-on-Trent) gave up his job to devote himself full time, and Dick Brown alternated between Sheffield University and various building sites. The Rectory at Stanton-by-Bridge (Harry and Molly Pretty) became the administrative H.Q. and ultimately became temporary repository of nearly 8 tons of food and equipment, most of which had been acquired gratis or at greatly reduced cost. After many set backs we gathered sufficient backers (John Hunt, Jack Longland, Dr. Tom Longstaff, Tom Weir, Bill Murray, Bill Tilman) to persuade the newly formed Mount Everest Foundation to provide a grant; small in amount but influential in other negotiations. The Daily Telegraph (Sir Colin Coote), and several other foundations, also gave donations. A book deal was concluded with Chatto and Windus, and Sir Martin Lindsay D.S.O. C.B.E., M.P. (pre-war polar explorer with Gino Watkins) opened innumerable doors and became principal patron.

All this commitment had been made but, in April 1954, we still had no way of getting to S.G. In a letter Bill Tilman suggested that we forget S.G. and re-assemble as his crew for his first voyage on *Mischief 1* to Cape Horn and Chilean Fjordland. But we gritted our teeth and gambled on something turning up.

H.K. Salvesen, who still ran the shore based whaling station at Leith Harbour (S.G.), had declined our pleas for passage on one of his supply ships, and it took a personal visit by Sutton and Brown to his home in Edinburgh to change his mind, mere weeks before the *Southern Opal* was due to sail south in August 1954. He also requested that our medical man, Dr. Ian Brooker, should act as ship's surgeon on the voyage south. At this time Squadron Leader Brooker was a senior medical officer in the R.A.F., serving in Germany. He obtained temporary release on full pay (a parallel with Pettigrew in 1951). Clive Webb, just back from the Alps, resigned as Oread Sec. to join the party.

We sailed from Glasgow on 20-8-54 and after a circuitous voyage, not without incident, arrived in S.G. on 30-9-54. The expedition returned to U.K. (Liverpool) on 30-4-55. The full story was told in George Sutton's book *Glacier Island*, Chatto and Windus 1957, and the first successful ascent of a major S.G. peak, by Brooker and Webb, was described in the Oread book *Climb if you Will* (1974) (Mount Gregor subsequently re-named Mount Brooker)

I hope the following offerings may shed some light on this truly unique island when it was still a little known base for whalers and sealers, and before it achieved significance in the Falklands Conflict and, more latterly, as a regular stop off for Antarctic cruise ships — *Editor*.

From a letter to Charlie Cullum:

Had a go at Paget from Nordenskjöld Glacier, and could not force ice-fall (3,000') to col. Spent ten days on the glacier, and two in the ice-fall. Ascended one peak of near 5,000'¹ and several minor summits. It would be a long and difficult job to climb Paget this side – Harry reports that the other side looks even worse. The same problems attach to all the main range peaks, except that Paget is 1,500' higher than most. On the North side of the second summit of Paget a vertical wall of around 7,000' drops into a Great Cwm, a tremendous thing. I think we'll get up Paget eventually but it may wreck all other plans.

¹Now named Sutton Crag – *Editor*.

THE BEACH

HARRY PRETTY

With consummate ease the sealers landed us in a small bay, forcing the pram through a heaving sea only moderately restrained by skeins of loose brash ice – broken remnants from glacier ice-falls that plunged into the sea on all sides. The surf was always heavy on this south-west coast of the island for, in these latitudes, the constant westerlies drive the Southern Ocean relentlessly, and only the precipitous coastline of South Georgia intervenes.

On the previous night, a little to the north-west, we had run for shelter into a small cove close by the entrance to the great open fjord of King Haakon Bay. It was here in 1916 that Shackleton ended his epic 17-day open-boat voyage from Elephant Island, where the remainder of his crew, unknown to the rest of a world immersed in World War I, still awaited rescue following the crushing of their vessel, the *Endurance*, in the Weddell Sea.

It is the most powerful tale of survival in the entire history of Antarctic exploration, and close proximity to the scene of this historic landfall pervaded the mind as the little Albatros, with its mixed Norwegian and South American crew, pushed through loose ice, searching for some nook or cranny where the drapery of icefall relented to provide a feasible landing place.

The sealers had no name for this baylet. They had been here before but infrequently – too often choked by ice, they said. It was a pessimistic thought since the season was nearly at an end, and we, a party of five, were relying on a pick-up in two weeks' time.

There were perhaps 300 elephant seals hauled out. Near the end of the breeding season, and space being limited, the harems under the dictate of some 20 mature bulls, were packed tight between sea and cliff. Some of the frenzy of the early mating season had abated, but our arrival was sufficient disturbance to cause several large males to rear in mutual confrontation – still protective of their polygamous rights.

Drenched from standing waist-deep to unload gear amid pulverising waves and floating ice, we made haste to shift boxes, tents, skis and sledges to a safe recess, in anticipation of turmoil as the sealers commenced their dispatch of the resident males – one bullet each at close quarters.

But sudden death had no effect on slumbering females or dependent pups. Blood spurted inconsequentially over the living and the dead and there was no message in its flow among rocks and shingle, or where it soaked down into the black volcanic sand.

But then at the sea's edge, each wave broke to run foaming red up the steep black shelf, a stained torrent swirling through a litter of stranded, pale green ice. There was something more momentous in this red tide, in the stain that encroached further and further out across the bay, but it remained beyond definition.

Within an hour the sealers' work was done. The dead bulls had been flensed and the circular rafts of blubber, rope-toggled together, towed back to the Albatros, hove to beyond the inshore ice. The men, encased in black suits and wielding their long flensing knives against the backdrop of a boisterous and blemished sea, made a macabre tableau – Dantesque came to mind. But they were our friends. They were men to be trusted and they had proved it more than once. They waved as the landing pram was poled through the brash ice towards a waiting motorboat – "Two weeks, ja!" It was time to establish a foothold on this bleak coast.

Even as we started to shift gear off the beach, new bulls were coming ashore to take over the territory. From our first camp, high above the beach, the noise of combat between marauding males could be heard above the general cacophony of seals and roaring surf. It went on far into the night.

Two days of climbing reconnaissance quickly established our position on this western and unmapped side of the main range. Access through the complexities of the coastal ice-falls to the vast inland ice-sheets that might lead to our objective, Mount Paget, would not be easy. The unravelling of the route and the ultimate two-man push to the south-east is a story that has been told elsewhere. It is a brief but familiar tale of arduous travel across a sterile interior. It is about blizzards and white-outs, fear and failure, and ultimate survival.

But I saw little of this. Injured in a recent crevasse fall, I was relegated to more scientific tasks and I spent long solitary days with theodolite and camera on the summits of nearby coastal peaks. Slow, grinding ascents that were often frustrated by the sudden onset of westerly squalls that made observations impossible, and retreat a prerequisite of my own survival.

But there were days of magic brilliance when the great ice peaks of the main range seared the imagination, and icebergs from the deep south floated like fairy-tale castles on a glittering sea. It was in the early evening of such a day that I missed my way across a steepening gully and found myself forced to descend to our landing beach. It was a different place.

The massive corpses of those seals killed and flensed 10 days before had already been picked down to skeletal remains by scavenging petrels. Several skuas still raked around inside the long rib-cavities, pulling at a few remaining strings of flesh. At one end of a shallow pool, a young seal splashed and playfully gnawed an old cow. Down by the foam line, two seals lay flat on black shelving sand, pointing downwards into each oncoming wave. The water broke around their pointed snouts and washed smoothly over their streamlined bulk. As the water ran, they reflected pale blue-green light from a part of the sky far out beyond the inshore ice.

An untidy group of mature cows included several of the new bulls, inert hulks now that the violent fires of spring and early summer were dead. Soon they would return to the sea. The beach would be washed clean by winter storms, cleansed of the bones, the desiccated remnants of flesh and the torn scraps of fur that lay like abandoned trivia.

I remembered the noise and clamour of the beach when we had come pushing through the surf – the squeal of new-born pups and the roar and snarl of the old bulls. I remembered the sudden death of day-old pups pulped by the massive bulk of the lusting, never seeing bulls. Now there was a strange hush. A few gentoo penguins ejected from the arched face of a wave, moved with lightning speed up the sand, to stand preening and squawking like old gossips.

Pure white sheathbills moved unconcerned over rock, dozing penguin, or dead seal, picking their way deliberately, yet delicately, from one morsel of excreta to another. And I suddenly saw this beach for what it was: a world oblivious and uncaring of death that stank on every few yards of sand and shingle, as heedless of death as the mountains at my back.

It was a strange moment when, for a time, the rhythm of life and death seemed clear and strong. The often tritely expressed impermanence of human affairs was, in that moment, sharply three-dimensional.

This beach, it seemed, was the other place. At my back the world of ice – sterile, without life, giving birth only to the ice that choked the sea's edge. In front, this place where life and death lay inextricably mixed, but a place without fear. There was no malevolence in this world; the natural order prevailed, and not even the strong could always escape.

This article originally published in *B.B.C. Wildlife* magazine, August 1990.

CHRISTMAS IN RETROSPECT

*HARRY PRETTY**Newsletter, January 1959*

For most people Christmas has a particular flavour. Quite unlike any other time of the year it provides its own atmosphere and among those fortunate enough to spend it in the company of family and friends it is frequently memorable. My own Christmases have been spent variously: – quietly at home, uproariously at “Tyn-y-Shanty” and Bryn-y-Wern, and once on a railway station in Montreal. The story I propose to relate concerns a Christmas quite different from any of these – unique in some ways, but with the familiar spirit that seems essential to all good Christmas stories. That it is nostalgic, and not without sentiment, I freely admit. For this I make no excuse since this was the way of it.

On December 23rd 1954 Dick Brown and myself left a camp between the Lyell and Geikie Glaciers to return to base for a five-day break. The others had left two days before. We had been in the field for four heart-breaking weeks of awful weather that had resulted in frustration and considerable mental strain.

In addition to continuing physical disability I was personally feeling spiritually exhausted – an ulcerated mouth and inexplicable sores on my face seemed merely incidental.

Ironically the 23rd was a calm golden day. The crunchy glare ice of the Lyell Glacier reflected a fierce hard light. Sugartop, Paulsen, and Fluted Peak rode above us – uncompromising, majestic shapes. Magnificent in scale, beautiful in every detail of fluted ice face and pinnacled ridge they seemed a little unreal after so many weeks during which they had only been seen at infrequent intervals.

Late that night we crossed the barren scree of Echo Pass and glissaded the short snow margin of a small residual glacier. Above us snow petrels, insubstantial and slightly ethereal, floated about a spiny crag. Around us, in bat like flight, we saw the dark shape and white rump of Wilson’s petrel. Visible only in flickering snatches close about our heads it was a friendly and familiar presence with none of the remote mysteriousness that seemed to surround those pure white birds nesting high above on a snowy crag.

Below us was Grytviken, King Edward Point, and our hut barely discernible against the steep scree of Mt. Duse. Beyond the Hobarts a single catcher with a red and blue funnel circled gracefully across still dark water that here and there reflected a coppery sun-glow. Two grounded bergs gleamed, as though lit from inside, against the monochrome uniformity of the Sandebugten mountains.

The physical misery of that last descent is now only a blur, but I recall with sharpness and precision the calm and peaceful beauty of that pre-Christmas night. Through Pesca whaling station, silent and seemingly deserted, across the flensing plan still slimy and blood red from the day’s whales, and by way of the familiar shore track we returned to base. As though to remind us of other things snow began to fall before we reached the hut so that, in our tatty snow decorated windproofs, our entrance upon a party already hilariously in full swing seemed strange and incongruous.

Father Christmas came on the morning of the 24th. He came in the way that all things come to S. Georgia – from the sea, and we waited for him with almost the same expectancy as did the three young Falkland Island children to whom ships were as buses in other children’s lives. He came in the shape of old Hans Kristofferson aboard the little Sabra. Old Hans, a character even in a community of characters, wearing his ancient red dressing gown, and red woolly hat and an enormous white cotton wool beard made a curious though charming spectacle as he brought his ship alongside.

First came Hans with a little Norwegian Christmas tree decorated with tinsel, candles and flags – then came all the boxes and parcels, presents for everybody on the Point. This, it seemed, was yet another S. Georgia – when Christmas came in as an old whaler dressed in shabby makeshift but so delightfully carrying out his mission that it was no matter. Easy to forget that he was familiar Hans with

his bent leg and cherubic features. Easy to see him as a symbol of his race and kind as he handed presents to the three children who stood half bemused, beyond expression in their excitement. A shaking of limp hands, a quaint inclination of the head and he was off again – back to the minute open bridge of Sabra where his red bobbed head suddenly appeared above the side screen. Hands wrestled with the sticking plaster and cotton wool, which threatened to cut off speech, and we heard his “Laggo – aft!”.

The last we saw of Father Christmas was a blob of white and a waving arm as Sabra, ever mindful of her whaling days, heeled over deck awash, into the channel inside the Hobart rocks; and then he was gone, behind the headland that carries Shackleton’s plain wooden cross – and I was left with an impression of simplicity and kindness that would be difficult to forget.

RETURN

HARRY PRETTY

Newsletter (Extract), January 1956

We left south Georgia in the latter half of a miserably raw afternoon – sliding out past small stranded growler bergs at the entrance to Leith Harbour – past Mutton Island and the Black Rocks until, clearing Cape Saunders for the last time, we stood out to sea with only a score of bergs to keep us company.

Drab coastal peaks above the Fortuna Glacier, where it tumbles into the sea, were almost the last we saw of the island and we thought it an unfriendly scene. Years of travel brood fatalism towards departures and this it seemed was just another – uninspired and without particular merit.

There was therefore, a certain thrill on being called over to starboard some time later to see what was our genuine last view of the island wherein we had found such combination of men, mountains, birds and beasts, in an environment so creative of strange atmospheres that one can only acknowledge the impossibility of conveying the singular impressiveness of the place.

For a short while there was a glow of light over the southern peaks. The familiar double pyramid of Cape Charlotte projected a blackened finger toward off-shore bergs – seen only as pale tabular shapes against sea and sky, both of which remained indistinguishable one from the other.

Precisely four weeks later we entered the Mersey.

POLITICS

A.G.M. 1954

(Extract)

The Treasurer Ken Griffiths was brief. Our bank balance stood at £12.9.6d and cash in hand amounted to £6.17.10d. 26 members had so far paid this year’s subscription. There had been a slight loss on coaches, but recent coach meets had shown a profit. The Hut Fund had reached £37.19.6d.

Newsletter (Extract), August 1954

MEETING EXTRAORDINARY: At the Burbage Meet a group of people presented to the Hon. Secretary a request for an Extraordinary General Meeting. The subject to be discussed is that “the present Committee is unrepresentative.....owing to the large number of changes in the Committee since

the last A.G.M.” The facts are that there have been three resignations and two of the vacancies have been filled by the top two “runners-up” at the A.G.M. The third is still vacant owing to the difficulty of co-opting a suitable member. Everything has been perfectly constitutional, and far from being unrepresentative the present Committee is as representative as it possibly could be. So how the signatories of the request will uphold their claim, or what they expect to gain by calling an E.G.M., is difficult to see. It really is most Extraordinary.

D. C. Cullum

Extraordinary General Meeting

Newsletter (Extract), December 1954

The extraordinary General Meeting, called by five members to discuss whether not the present Committee was representative of the Club, was held on the afternoon of November 13th (a sinister date!). Eric Byne was in the chair, and he took a strong line from the beginning. Feelings were soon aroused, the temperature of the meeting ran high, and there were some sharp exchanges. Perhaps the wisest words were those of Bob Pettigrew, to the effect that the true spirit of the Oread seemed to be absent. At length the chairman forced the Five to admit that the Committee was in fact constitutionally representative, and when put to the vote, thirteen hands were raised in support of the Committee and six against, about a third of the small number present abstaining.

D. C. Cullum

A.G.M. 1955 (Extract)

Ken Griffiths, the retiring Hon. Treasurer, next presented his report. His announcement that we were still solvent (£4.9.3d!) was warmly received. All but four members had paid up for 1954, and subs. amounted to £29.1.6d, and total income was almost £50. The Secretary's expenses had been less, the Meets Secretary's more (£9.18.0d) and the Newsletter had paid for itself. The Dinner had shown a loss of £2.

Solvency may have been on a knife edge, but democratic rights were fiercely defended — *Editor*.

“DISASTROUS CHANCES.....”

Newsletter, May 1954

We have just learnt with regret that the fatal accident on Tower Ridge of Nevis at Easter involved a party of our friends, the Polaris M.C. The body of Mrs. Betty Emery was recovered by six Oreads (Sutton, Pretty, Cartwright, Falkner, Pettigrew and Jones), with members of the Rock and Ice Club and Polaris M.C. We offer our sympathy to relatives and friends of the dead woman.

During the night following the accident members of the S.M.C. (Dr. Norman Cochrane) and Rock and Ice (Brown and Whillans etc.) struggled to raise the body onto the eastern traverse. The Oread party (arriving overnight) completed the task as far as the summit plateau where the R.A.F. Mountain rescue took over. Betty Emery's companions (Eileen Gregory, Ernie Snow) were uninjured, but suffered a car accident on their journey south, and were hospitalised at Dumfries. They were subsequently visited by the Oread party during their return south — *Editor*.

Newsletter, June 1954

We regret to announce that on May 9th, Cyril Machin fell from Castle Naze whilst abseiling. It is believed that the rope slipped over the belay. He sustained injuries to his back and is at present in Manchester Royal Infirmary. He is remarkably cheerful and his condition is improving. Any member wishing to visit him will be welcome to stay at the Cullum's flat.

C.B.M. was seriously injured and after a long spell in hospital, he recovered, but was encumbered by metal braces for the remainder of his life — *Editor*.

Newsletter, June 1958

During the early part of May there was an accident on "Cloggy" in which members of the Oread were concerned. A hold, which at the time was vital, broke away and Don Chapman fell from approximately thirty feet above his second – Derrick Burgess. Burgess held him from a difficult position and the belay remained intact. Chapman, who sustained injury to an ankle and temporary concussion, was able to assist in his own evacuation to the bottom of the crag. Ray Handley, Nat Allen and Ray Colledge were of the party and on the same climb. The ultimate evacuation down to car in Llanberis, and thence to hospital, was carried out entirely by the party concerned and Nat is reported as having carried the victim bodily for half a mile over ground where combined tactics were difficult. Don was in hospital only a short time and can be seen most Tuesday evenings in the "Bell", albeit with plaster cast, and walking stick.

In these days when not only accidents, but stupidity and sheer ignorance seem to be on the increase rather than the reverse, it is pleasant (if one can use the word in this context) to hear of an accident properly restricted to the role of minor incident owing to the skill, efficiency, and coolness of the persons concerned.

D. C. Cullum

"Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes I' the imminent deadly breach".

Othello (1, iii, 134)

THE MATTERHORN

Records indicate that Ray Handley, Peter Janes and Ernie Phillips were the first Oreads to reach the summit, by the Hornli, in 1954. Since then successful ascents from all sides, including the North Face, have been made by various Oread parties although curiously few accounts have been submitted to Newsletters or Journals. Enough to say, in the context of what follows, they have all been accomplished without injury although I seem to remember that P.R.Falkner dropped a brand new camera down the North Face in 1954.

This brief aside is merely a foreword to my inclusion of the Rev. Joseph M'Cormick's letter to The Times recording the disastrous end to Mr. Whymper's first ascent which started on Thursday, 13th July 1865.

The original cutting from The Times was given to me nearly fifty years ago by Gerry Britton who was an enthusiastic early Oread member, a man of substance, sometime Trustee of the Club, who was at the heart of club affairs in the 1950's, only to disappear south in pursuit of a sailing career, whereupon all contact was lost.

It is quite outside the context of this Journal, but I value the original, and have thought it worthy of a wider audience and, in particular, those of an historical bent. — *Editor*.

MATTERHORN TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir, – As the news of the fatal accident on the Matterhorn must by this time have reached England, I think it right for the sake of the friends of those who have been killed, and to prevent mistakes, to give a correct account of it, and of what has taken place with reference to it.

Some months ago the Rev. Charles Hudson determined to ascend the Matterhorn this season. Before leaving England he invented and had made a kind of ladder for scaling precipices.

Mr. Birkbeck and I agreed to accompany him on his expedition. On arriving in Zermatt on Wednesday, the 12th inst., he met with Mr. Whymper, who for some years past has been anxious to conquer the Matterhorn, and has made several attempts to do so. They agreed to work together. Mr. Birkbeck and I were both prevented from joining them. Lord Francis Douglas, who had made several successful ascents this season, and had been with Mr. Whymper for a few days previously, and Mr. Hadow, who had been up some high mountains with Mr. Hudson, were allowed to go with them. Having secured the services of Michel Croz, one of the best of the Chamonix guides, and of Peter Taugevald and his son, they started on their expedition on Thursday morning. That night they slept on the Hornli arrête, and at 3.40 a.m. on Friday they began the ascent by the rocks on the left of it. They met with no great difficulty, and reached the top about 2 o'clock. There they were in the greatest delight at the accomplishment of their purpose. We saw them distinctly from Zermatt. About 3 o'clock they began the descent. Soon after they were all roped together. Croz was first, Hadow next; then came Hudson, Lord Francis Douglas, Peter Taugevald, Whymper, and Peter Taugevald's son. Not far from the summit they had to pass over a difficult and rather dangerous place. It was a decline of snow and rock, with very indifferent holding for the feet. They were descending with great caution, when Whymper was startled by an exclamation from Croz, and the next moment he saw Hadow and Croz flying downwards. The weight of the two falling men jerked Hudson and Lord Francis Douglas from their feet. The two Taugevalds and Whymper, having a warning of a second or two from the time that Croz called out, planted themselves as firmly as possible, to hold the others up. The pressure upon the rope was too much. It broke, and Croz, Hadow, Hudson, and Lord Francis Douglas fell headlong down the slope and shot out of sight over a fearful precipice.

Mr. Whymper's feelings at this time may be imagined. The two remaining guides were so completely unnerved by the calamity which had befallen their companions that he found it difficult to descend with them. He and they spent a miserable night on the mountain at a great height. As they came down they looked in all directions for some traces of their companions, but from the shape of the mountain they could not catch even a glimpse of them. At 10.30 a.m. On Saturday they reached Zermatt.

Though he had no hope that any of his companions were alive, Mr. Whymper immediately sent guides to search for them. In the evening they returned to tell us that they had been able with the aid of their telescopes to see where they lay, but had been prevented by the width of the crevasses from reaching them. Being a friend of Mr. Hudson, Mr. Whymper sent for me. I had gone to the Corner Grat. On my return it was too late to do anything that day. After consulting together Mr. Whymper and I agreed to start in search of our friends on the following morning at 1 o'clock. The Rev. J. Robertson and Mr.

Phillipotts most kindly volunteered to accompany us. The Zermatt guides refused to go with us, as it would be Sunday, and urged us, as there was no hope of saving lives, to defer our expedition until they had made preparations for overcoming the difficulties of the way. Mr. Whymper, though exhausted by upwards of 60 hours work, gallantly refused to accede to their request. Franz Andermatten of Sass; the brothers Lochmatter, of Macugnaga; and Fredric Payot and Jean Tairraz, of Chamonix, generously offered their services for the expedition. We hope their names will not be forgotten.

After an arduous walk, in which we were exposed to much danger, we reached the snow field on to which our friends had fallen. When we looked up at the 4,000 feet above us, and observed how they must have bumped from rock to rock before they reached the bottom, we knew they could not be alive, and we feared that they would be so awfully mangled that we should not be able to recognize them. Our worst fears were realized. We found no traces of Lord Francis Douglas, with the exception of some trifling articles of dress. His body must either have remained on some of the rocks above or been buried deeply in the snow. Croz lay near to Hadow. Hudson was 50 yards from them.

From the state of their remains, the danger of the place (for it is exposed to showers of stones), and the very great difficulty of the way to it, we came to the conclusion that the best thing we could do would be to bury them in the snow. We drew them all to one spot, covered them with snow, read over them the 90th Psalm from a Prayer-book taken from poor Hudson's pocket, repeated some prayers and a few words from the Burial service, and left them.

They are mourned here with heartfelt grief, and the greatest sympathy is expressed for the bereaved. Mr. Seiler, the landlord of this hotel, and his wife have assisted us in every way in their power. They are deeply distressed at what has happened.

Your obedient servant,
JOSEPH M'CORMICK, Chaplain at Zermatt.
Hotel du Mont Rose
July 17/1865

LETTERS . . . TO THE EDITOR

SEPTEMBER 1954

Dear Sir,

Accuse an Oread of bad rope management and he or she will be highly indignant, but the fact remains that a dangerous practice has arisen, mainly due to the current fashion of wearing a spliced abseil sling and karabiner. These slings which are intended to serve as aid in roping down (and to promote a neat waist line) are being used far too often as a form of belay and in almost all cases are unsatisfactory for the latter purpose. The limits of adjustment of a standard spliced loop are far too narrow to cope with all belay situations and I have seen on many occasions such a loop used where it appeared to be convenient, where in fact a far superior belay existed out of range of the loop. At least one fatal accident (where the second was killed and not the leader) has been attributed to the use of a sling as a means of belaying, and on our Stanage meet of May 1st/2nd I saw a situation which would almost certainly have resulted in injury to the second had the leader or the third man come off. And, in this particular case, had the person referred to used the climbing rope instead of a sling, a belay could have been devised that would have held a coach and four.

It is my opinion that where an abseil sling can be used, the climbing rope would in almost all cases be more effective. This is not intended to preclude the use of a knotted loop suitably adjusted or the use of nylon cord in certain circumstances.

So harking back to the reference to the Stanage meet – if the cap fits wear it!

Yours sincerely,
G. R. Gibson.

Dear Sir,

So Gibson, having at last mastered the intricacies of the bowline, now sees fit to dictate rope technique. He has never been the same since he went to Ken Tarbuck's lecture at Derby. After hearing this he immediately rushed out and bought 20 ft. of nylon shoelace which he wraps round his waist like a corset. This, like the bunch of pitons which he takes to the Alps each year, is never used but is fully approved by Stephen Potter.

To get down to actual cases, I personally have never climbed with a coach and four. This I assume is just another example of Gibson's D.Ts. As the person foully libelled by him I must insist that I was climbing with two ordinary people. As leader I was sitting at the top of the climb – belayed with the climbing rope to a rock the size of the one at Gibraltar. My second was a few feet from the top on a ledge, back-stopped by me and belayed by a spliced sling. I could have further safeguarded him by riveting him to the rocks with pitons but unfortunately I did not realise that Gibson was passing at the time.

However, I bear no ill feeling towards Gibson, and I wish him luck with his 20 ft. of shoelace. Should he desire a change from his Tarbuck knot, might I suggest that he use the one advocated by Albert Pierrepoint? *

Yours etc.,
R. V. Dearden

* For those short on historical facts, Mr Pierrepoint was the Official Executioner in more barbaric times — *Editor*.

Letter from a Dog

Newsletter, September 1955

Dear Editor,

Excuse my bad writing, my paws are still sore – those inhuman brutes Burns and Moore – that's what I want to tell you: the truth about the Pennine Way. It was nothing but a publicity stunt to get a year's supply of "Lassie" free. I don't like "Lassie" anyway. Three men and a dog on the Pennine Way – what a headline. Lawrie said, "Walkies". I didn't know it was two-hundred-and-fifty-mile-walkies. I walked four times as far as they did anyway, and the thousands of trees we passed, let alone the rain-gauges, no dog could have done himself justice. A good job they didn't know I was bluffing most of the time. That Moore was laughing at me, powdering my tail with "Apple Blossom". I don't know what I'd have done without Jim Kershaw, letting me use his sleeping bag and eat off his plate. It was a real pleasure to lick his face every morning. As for Burns, I had to take him home from Alston, he's led me a human's life ever since. I'm going to run away to a circus or something, just see if I don't. Keep my name secret.

Yours,
An embittered Corgi.

Moyers Buttress Climbed

Newsletter, September 1955

The following is an extract from a letter written by Peter Biven of Leicester and addressed to Eric Byne:

“Please forgive my not answering your letter promptly, but you know you were, in a very small way, responsible for that. You see, in your letter you said that Moyer’s Buttress on Gardom’s Edge had not yet been led. This started off a chain of events which culminated in a week’s leave in Derbyshire, and I am happy to say that we succeeded, and Moyer’s Buttress is no longer the “last great problem”. I finally led it on Wednesday Sept. 7th (but I had been up it twice on a top rope the previous day). I put a chockstone on the square block under the overhang, to protect the corner move which is the crux. My second man, Trevor Peck, was belayed down to prevent “yo-yoing” if you know what I mean.”

“As regards the standard, it is Exceptionally Severe on almost every move, the final one being almost as hard as the crux. A friend took a series of pictures which I am hoping will turn out.”

Eric Byne adds the following note: Peter Biven, by his lead of this, and of Congo Corner on Mississippi Buttress on Stanage, proves his right to stand alongside Joe Brown as one of the great rock climbers of today. It is worth noting that he has also led the overhang crack on the right hand wall of Moyer’s Buttress, the Sloth on the Roaches, and moreover has led in nails on a wet and windy day, that superb climb on Harecliffe Rocher, the Whittler.

JOHN ADDERLEY GOES NORTH

Newsletter (Extract), September 1955

The next morning I continued up the Glen, (Carnach – Knoydart, *Editor*) which got steadily wilder. I had a lot of difficulty negotiating cliffs, trees and burns but finally passed by Lochan nam Breac when, to my surprise, I turned a corner in the Glen and came upon a dam stretching across the valley. It was the same old story of Hydro-Electric Power.

Visiting the work camp I was given a meal of scones and tea and offered a lift to Tomdoun by the engineer. I accepted and in a few minutes I was back on to a highway and civilisation; passing on the way miles of new roads, gashes in the hillside for pipelines and other atrocities that go with a Hydro-Electric scheme – “so essential to the economy of the country”.

This brought me back to reality and getting my thumb out I set it to work, and made my way to the Isle of Skye. I arrived in Glen Brittle without many incidents, having done a couple of small hills on the way.

I met Bill Brooker of Aberdeen at Macrae’s and together we did a few climbs – Cioch West, Cioch Direct, Walwark’s Route on the Upper Buttress, Crack of Doom and Direct Finish, Fluted Buttress on Sgurr Mhic Coinnich and Waterpipe Gully (not direct). The highlight of the climbing came for me when it was my turn to lead through on the second pitch of Mallory’s on Sron na Ciche. Bill said the hard move was ten feet up. At ten feet I found the hard move, but Bill had omitted to say it lasted for the next twenty feet. For those who don’t know it, it is a slab. It’s quite safe really – you can’t fall off – there aren’t any holds to fall from. We continued up the arete above Mallory’s and finished up the top part of Amphitheatre Wall, a delightful finish – short run-outs, vertical and rock like sandpaper.

We had a couple of off-days, after a Scottish dance, during which we ate, slept, swam in the sea and stooked corn. We left for Applecross in pouring rain, the first for a fortnight. Bill had mentioned a shelter in the form of a road-menders’ hut, complete with stove. It turned out to be a minute box, belayed to the mountainside with wire at the point where the road makes four 180 degree turns in half a mile. The stove had fallen to pieces; dirt of ages was piled high on the floor and it was infested

with huge sluggish flies. I was lured out one day to do No. 1 Buttress on Sgurr a'Chaorachain. The formation of the rock was like a series of gritstone edges piled one on top of the other, giving rise to many airy situations.

The next day we started home. At Aberdeen I left Bill and started hitching the following morning. I arrived home 36 hours later swearing I would never hitchhike again. Funny, though – I remember saying that last year – and the year before that!

The first written evidence of an Oread in Knoydart. Bill Brooker; a very distinguished Scottish climber, companion of Tom Patey and subsequently President of the S.M.C. His older brother, Dr. Ian Brooker. Was a member of the Oread South Georgia Expedition 1954/55 and made the first ascent of Mount Brooker with ex-Oread Secretary Clive Webb — *Editor*.

ACQUISITIONS

“He would be setting up as a man of property next, with a place in the country” John Galsworthy, *The Man of Property*.

BRYN-Y-WERN

D. PENLINGTON

The third weekend of April '55 was perfect for rock climbing, warm but not too hot, the rock dry and cool. Climbing had started early so shortly after midday a large group had descended to the Bowling Green below Froggatt for refreshment.

A few weeks before at the A.G.M. the problem of finding a club hut had been discussed at length. A look in Derbyshire or outside the main Welsh valleys was suggested.

“We’ve looked everywhere, either the rent is prohibitive or you need to rebuild the place” said Ernie. Burns uttered uncomplimentary words about landlords in general. Someone mentioned that John Neill’s guide to Cwm Silyn and Tremadoc was about to be published. John Adderley said he had done a few new routes on Tremadoc with Stan Moore and Trevor Jones. He was convinced it would rank with the `Three Cliffs` when cleaned up. Others were more doubtful; Ernie quoted descriptions from records in the C.C. journal, “Trees and vegetation with a little scrambling. Some vegetation, hardly a climb, A route to be avoided until a forest fire can be arranged”. Some said Ted Dance had recorded a number of routes on Moel Hebog. Was this a new area just opening up? Mick Moore and I decided we would take a look the following weekend.

An early start was made, we decided a direct line to Portmadoc via Shrewsbury, the Tannat Valley and Ffestiniog was the best way. Most of this route was new to us but proved to be quite quick and we arrived in Portmadoc by mid morning. Seeking out the local Estate agent was no problem, only one existed. This was no other than Tom Parry himself, “Auctioneer and Land agent, Portmadoc and Caernarvon”. His office was by the harbour; we explained our mission to his secretary. A few minutes later we were explaining it to T.P. himself. Standing at the side of his desk in Welsh Tweed plus four suit, brown boots and gold watch chain, his piercing eyes looked us up and down, a few searching questions and replies must have impressed him. “Well” he said, “I think I have just the place for you. It’s part of an estate bought by a mine owner from the Midlands. The house was last lived in by the vicar of Pennant and Dolbenmaen. The rent is £1 per week”. He produced a map, “here it is, Bryn-y-Wern, stands above the river. Take the key and have a look. We close at 1 p.m.”.

We thanked him and took the key. Outside we looked at our map, yes there it was, clearly marked Bryn-y-Wern. "Must be quite a place to be marked," said Mick. We noted the way to go. What would we find, what condition could such a place be in for £1 per week? Many questions went through our minds.

We passed the church round the two right angle bends and stopped on the bridge over the Dwyfor. There in the trees was this fine looking house. "That must be it," said Mick, opening the gate of the drive.

From the outside all looked good, roof and windows intact. We opened the front door and walked in; a good sized hall, large rooms on either side, bit of a mess from a few dead rooks that must have come down the chimney, rear kitchen damp rear wall, second kitchen clear and dry. Upstairs five bedrooms, bath and W.C., all too good to be true. Outside we forced a way through the undergrowth. The wooded hillside at the rear was full of fallen timber, plenty to last a number of years.

We now had a problem, if we did not agree to rent, would someone else step in? Could we agree to take the place without reporting back to the Committee? Was the area right? Few Oreads had their own transport. Many other problems entered our minds. We decided it was too good to miss.

On our return to Portmadoc T.P.'s secretary typed out an agreement, we retained the key, T.P. locked his office, we shook T.P. by the hand and departed.

Mick purchased a brush and shovel to clean the mess on the floors. We walked up the valley, looked at crags and ridges and decided we had done the right thing. We slept on the lounge floor and it was a peaceful night. We did not know the history of the house then.

BRYN-Y-WERN

Newsletter (Extract), May 1955

The acquisition of a hut is one of the greatest events in the history of the club. The Oread has now arrived and Mike Moore and his hut sub-committee have earned all the praise and thanks we can offer them. Not content with the tremendous effort exerted in finding this palatial residence, which is now ours, Mike is among the most enthusiastic workers in equipping and decorating. Not that there is any lack of enthusiasm elsewhere.

D. C. Cullum

OFFICIAL OPENING

Newsletter (Extract), July 1955

The official opening is to take place on the Cwm Silin Meet on September 17th and by that time we should be capable of accommodating at least thirty members.

It has been said that the acquisition of a hut is one of the great events in the history of the Club. All of us who have been to Bryn-y-Wern realise its immense potential and the effect it can have on the Club's future. But those who will most fully appreciate its value will be those who, by putting something of themselves into it, will help to write this page of Club history which members of the future can only read.

Its real worth will be realised only if we rediscover there, that unique spirit of companionship without which the Oread cannot flourish.

Mike Moore – Chairman Huts Sub Committee

Progress Report IV (Extract)

Expenses will be heavy in 1956. It is hoped that members will make the most of B.-y.-W. and encourage others to do so. Only in this way shall we be able to cover our running costs and save money for future improvements. Remember even Welbourn considers it worth while at 2/6 per night!

Dave Penlington

HOLES IN THE GROUND

Editorial

Newsletter (Extract), February 1956

Underground warfare appears to have broken out between the pro- and anti- caving groups within the Club. This issue contains more letters on this subject. These letters and "Claustrophobia's" original complaint have one common feature which reveals the sinister nature of the whole controversy. They are all anonymous. Anti-cavers as well as cavers are afraid to do battle in the full light of day, and hurl their missiles from the obscurity of noms-de-plumes. One cannot help feeling that so much secrecy must veil other, more deadly, skirmishes – brief but bloody encounters involving stabs in the back with sharpened pitons, cleaving of skulls with ice-axes, throttlings with nylon line and other "such bitter business as the day would quake to look on".

D. C. Cullum

Correspondence

Newsletter (Extract), February 1956

Dear Sir,

It was with some dismay that we read the second communication from your correspondent Claustrophobia in the December Newsletter, having thought that his initial letter would have been sufficient to set the wheels in motion. These grotesques must be removed from our midst. We ourselves rushed financial assistance, and bitterly regret that we were forced by our Bank Manager to limit our support to the two lire note to which he refers.

We have however initiated a research programme to determine the psycho of the caving proselytes by means of a Gallop Pole (sic. — *Editor*). A statistical analysis of the results has revealed piffling arguments.

Other minor points revealed were opinions ranging from "All Nature's wonders are worth a little effort to see" to "You can get a crafty snog in the dark if you organise the party properly".

However we ourselves will have none of these arguments, and prefer to stand, like Cortez, silent upon a peak in Darien. The bar sinister must be removed from the escutcheon of the Oread, or at least converted into a four-ale bar.

Your obedient servant,

"Pithecanthropus Erectus".

P.S. We investigated five rifts and two adits in the Via Gellia the weekend after Christmas, but were unable to find any trace of the "underground lake three-quarters of a mile long" described in glowing terms by Penlington.

Crypt Chambers, Lower Creep, Jugholes, Matlock.

EDITORIALS

(EXTRACTS)

Newsletter, May 1956

Recently I was in Llanberis. This fact is not in itself remarkable. What is remarkable is the change that has come over the place since I was first there, eleven years ago. Not only physically – though heaps of rusting cans and broken glass bear witness to the diligent efforts of the litter-lout in recent times – but in the type of climber one meets there, the type of climb he does, and above all the extraordinary atmosphere which pervades the valley. The latter is so powerful that when a stranger asked me what I had done the previous day, I felt an acute sense of shame when I replied, “The horseshoe”, so much that I was obliged to add, by way of excuse, “Just showing a lady round, you know”. For it is old-fashioned to go to Llanberis to climb mountains; one goes there to climb the Three Cliffs; and the Three Cliffs are, to a layman’s eye (and I am a layman in these matters), little outcrops of crag which land their conquerors within comfortable spitting distance of their cars. (Assuming they want to spit on their cars, of course.) Eleven years ago most of the rock of these cliffs was considered unclimbable, and not long enough or high enough to be interesting anyway. Today they are the valley’s principal attraction. Their hardest routes are, it turns out, surprisingly long, and though not impossible, are at any rate highly improbable. This change is symptomatic of the revolution which has swept over rock-climbing during the last decade. Strange to think that many Oreads who are not yet thirty belong to a bygone generation of rock-climbers, a generation that has, in a sense, had its day.

D. C. Cullum

Newsletter, August 1956

Although the Mustagh Tower is not among the highest of the Himalayas, its ascent on July 6th and 7th by Hartog’s expedition and the re-ascent by the French party a few days later, is one of the most astonishing double events in the history of climbing. Notwithstanding Brown’s (Dick’s not Joe’s) assertion that there was an easy ridge at the back, it was widely held that the Tower would never be climbed. And now it’s been done twice in a week! Panther must be feeling a bit sore about it, for he was planning an expedition to the peak with Penlington and Pettigrew in 1958. (The three of them sound like a music-hall trio). Disappointed though they must be from a personal point of view, it is to be hoped that they will not abandon their plans, for in two years’ time the Mustagh Tower will, for all practical purposes, be a virgin summit. The difficulties involved in its ascent will by then be quite different and perhaps greater than they were last month. Never let it be said that a bunch of Oreads were interested only in the glory attaching to a “first”.

During my recent fortnight at Bryn-y-Wern, I wandered up to look at this Craig Isallt where parties keep gardening. I couldn’t help being a little disturbed about two things – firstly that people should choose to spend days of good mountaineering weather on a crag little bigger than a gritstone outcrop when there are far worthier crags within easy distance, and secondly the ravages wrought (with the best intentions) by the “gardeners”. The second of these seems to me the more important. Kicking down bits of turf, patches of moss or the odd clump of heather is one thing, but chopping down trees and stripping vegetation wholesale is another. Non-climbers are likely to see no distinction between this sort of climbing and sheer vandalism. And is it really worth it when some of the buttresses unearthed are no more than thirty feet high? Enthusiasm for opening up new crags is a fine thing, but it would be a pity if misguided enthusiasm earned us a reputation for bad behaviour and lack of regard for the countryside.

D. C. Cullum

Newsletter, December 1956

The Dinner was as usual a great success and it is unfortunate that this issue contains no account of it. The move to the Rutland was a good one, for the meal itself was first-class and of ample quantity, and the dining-room was much more sumptuous than we have previously enjoyed "in another place".

All this was in keeping with the increasing respectability of the Club, upon which at least one speaker commented. The speeches too were of a high order. Two other events made the evening particularly enjoyable. One of these was the re-appearance of Cyril Machin after his accident at Castle Naze in May 1954. Cyril is one of the Club's most remarkable members, in more ways than one, and it was obvious that everyone was very pleased to see him again. The other event was the President's announcement of the election of Alf Bridge and Jack Longland to honorary membership. Both of these men are not only outstanding mountaineers in their own right but have also made very great contributions to the progress of the sport. They have both been associated with the Oread since the earliest days and the Club has benefited much by the association. It is hoped that each will take his membership of the Oread seriously, that is, as a very practical business, and take as full a part as possible in Club activities. Both are busy men, Alf in organising expeditions and Jack in training mountaineers to send on them. But we look forward to seeing them on meets – and to reading their articles in the Newsletter.

D. C. Cullum

SELECTIONS FROM OREAD VERSE IN A MINING CAMP

Away from the bar, gin and blare
I gaze at the tropical night.
Do those same stars, weeping there,
yet give that shrouded light
which, in another world, witnesses the setting out
of youth's bravery, still furled
in sleep-bemused, devout
step, on to the glacier ?

Enclosing all, the jungle, voracious
with black movement, would dispel
this stored treasure, gracious
in that ability to quell
a despair of damp, heat-sodden ways,
and make of these a boulder
to surmount with memory's days
of rock and ice, rose-tinted – a white shoulder
of rest, pleasures won.

No – in some small act
some form, some thought,
does each day refract
the encompassing greenery, and abort
the russet ways which ever sleep
in the mind's most precious keep.

*Peter Cole
Burma, November 1955*

UNQUIET NIGHT

No water trickles down the ice,
And silence shouts
Across the dimming light,
The corniced ridge
No longer bares a razor edge of fire;
And I,
Upon the plunging edge of night,
Sing songs of praise to solitude,
Until the flickering bat-like bird
Has fled before the sudden wind,
Shorewards, – beyond the rising drift of snow.

No silence now,
The night is hideous and loud,
With blizzard winds rough-tongued,
And fresh from brawling in the southern ice;
But I,
Within my down bag lying,
Storm-drowned amid the seething wrack of snow,
No longer sing;
The eye-like mind, once strong,
Is blind to all the discipline of years,
And knows at last the shapeless underworld
Of unfamiliar fear

*Harry Pretty
South Georgia 1955*

ASCENT OF S.C. GULLY

Beneath the riven precipice we wait,
Feeling the need to put on anoraks
And sweaters, nylon- link ourselves in fate,
Ascending, kicking footsteps in the snow
Until the underlay of ice requires
The keener penetration of an axe,
Changing the leader when he tires.
We circumvent a patch of doubtful ice
By traversing up to the left on rock,
Each poised in turn upon an airy slab,
A flimsy knot belay to take the shock
Of a sudden fall,
The leader taut in readiness
To stem the rush of burning rope
That follows the frantic hands
Bereft of fingerholds of hope.
Ahead, a slope of sixty foot of ice
Is sculptured step by step, until a face
Of rotten rock looms high above our stance,
Stripped of its winter carapace.

And now
 The coire shadows lengthen far below,
 The menace of approaching darkness
 Spurs us on:
 There is no choice, the pitch must go.
 Hand by hand seeking,
 Probing, testing the shattered rock,
 Foot by foot trusting,
 Avoiding the loosened block
 Until the glassy lip is reached,
 The friction of a vibram sole on ice
 Between oneself and paradise,
 The gully's last defence is breached.
 Treasure the moment passing fleet
 As toiling up that frozen labyrinthine street,
 The cornice, promise,
 Gold in the dying sun
 Heralds the rising star on Bidean.

Jim Kershaw
Stob Coire Nan Lochan, Easter 1956

COMIC RELIEF

AWAKE, AWAKE O OREAD

Awake, awake O Oread,
 Arise famed heroes of the past,
 O fabled names of founder days,
 The Club is sinking fast.

Put on your mouldered anoraks,
 Search out your rusted iron,
 Arise, the tigers of the past,
 Restore V.S. to Zion.

Jim Kershaw

(A chorus of resurrected Oreads despairingly chants the following to the clanking of chains of karabiners, pitons, hammers and associated ironmongery which they drag behind them.)

Where are the hard men,
 Where are the serious men,
 The men with the bloodied hands?

(Stop reading the poem, you degenerate shower, and either do 100 press-ups, or hand traverse round the picture rail.)

Carry on reading now with a better conscience.

Present day Oreads lounge in bars,
 Go to the hills in sleek black cars,
 Pseudo-mountaineers in Teddy-boy suits,
 Frolic about on moderate routes.

(Have you read any good V.S. routes lately?)

Where are the hard men,
Where are the serious men,
The men with bloodied hands?

So rise, you men of long ago,
That criticise the present,
Attend some meets to demonstrate
That V.S. routes are pleasant

Newsletter, July 1955

“A CRITIC REARS HIS VENOMED HEAD

POME

William McGonegall
Wrote poetry that was absolutely abominable.
Cole's blank verse
Is worse.

(As for Jim,
H'm.)
Even the Editorial prose
Has a touch of rose.

This may not be sublime
But it does rime.

*Les Langworthy
Newsletter, January 1956*

To the “onlie begetter of this ensuing sonnet”, Mr. L.L.

And now a critic rears his venomed head,
Assails the work of gifted poets three,
McGonegall in Ulster long since dead,
Myself, and Cole beyond the Bengal Sea.
I perused the address list for his name,
And found that Langworthy or Leese, but two,
Could cruelly have vilified our fame,
Befouled the old, and seared the budding new.
I scanned the books of Oread in vain,
To see a word or line he wrote before.
Why did he vie with verse and wit inane
To emulate his betters on that score?
Before he sneers at fruits of others' wealth,
Well may he try to write the like himself.

(What price Marlowe now?)

I append brief extracts from the post I received following the issue of the January Newsletter.

“This is an insult to Clan MCGonegall; an apology or the names of his seconds. The MCGonegall, Killabeg House, Co. Donegal.”..... “Carry on writing, Jim. – Five Boilermakers, Scunthorpe.””The workers are behind you. – Trades Council, Runcorn.””Disregard recent criticism. I regard your work as promising. – T.S.E – t”and finally a touching tribute from “Your old friends at No. 3 Box, Unemployment Exchange, Nottingham.”

Yours,
Jim Kershaw.

Newsletter, February 1956

PEAK PERSONALITIES

BLOODY BILL THE BOGTROTTER

ERIC BYNE

Newsletter, February 1955

Bill was a product of the Manchester Rambling Club before the 1914-18 war. He and his companion, the famous Harry Gilliat, explored the fastnesses of Bleaklow and Kinder, and then around 1922 joined the Rucksack Club – a move that was to open a vista of new friends and great deeds, and to earn him the sobriquet of “Bloody Bill the Bogtrotter”. No walking feat was too long, no open air bivouac too wet or too cold for this tough moorland wanderer, and it was to his own inventive genius that we owe many famous high level bog trots of today. “The Three Inns Walk”, the “Double Marsden Edale”, and many all night bogtrotting crossings of Bleaklow, Kinder, and Black Hill were all planned and executed by him, often under vile conditions of rain, blizzards, and pitch black nights, during which the use of torches was considered taboo and progress was always a matter of skilled compass work.

Other areas also received his attention – the Berwyns – the Welsh three thousands – and the Scottish four thousands which he and Gilliat accomplished in the fantastic time of 11 hours and 8 minutes walking plus four hours travel by car which transported them from the Ben Nevis area to the Cairngorms. However, perhaps his most famous expedition was the planning, inauguration and execution of that great “milestone misery”, the 70 mile “Colne to Rowsley”, in 1926 – a master route which today is considered the greatest classic in the peak, and a feat of considerable endurance if accomplished under winter conditions. A little later it was Gilliat who extended the course from Colne to Matlock in an incredible time of under 24 hours, a record which probably still stands today.

By now you will be wondering who is this “Bloody Bill”, this man who for a wager of a pint of shandy once walked barefooted over the hills from Derwent Village to Edale, and who once was noted for his hospitality at Tunstead, that calling house between Hayfield and Kinder Low.

In later life he became the inspirer of youth, took over the licences of the Church Hotel and the Nag’s Head at Edale, became a Rural District Councillor – and indefatigable worker for the Peak District Branch of the Council for Preservation of Rural England – fought strenuously and successfully against the steel magnates who attempted to industrialise the Edale Valley with great steel works, and indirectly planned many great walks and inspired many great walkers with his slogans of reward for success, such as “A pint on the House”, or, (as in the case of the 120 mile Tan Hill to Cat and Fiddle) “Breakfast on the House”.

He is still there at Edale – jovial, friendly, ever ready to greet the climber, mountaineer, and bogtrotter – always willing to listen to the deeds of the day, to pass comment, to give advice, to help plan a Route, and to pull you a pint of the best. That is “Bloody Bill the Bogtrotter”, mine host of the Nag’s Head inn at Edale – none other than our old friend – Fred Heardman.

UNCLE ALF

ERIC BYNE

Newsletter, June 1956 (Extract)

You may have met him in the peak. His reputation is now legendary, and his kindness to the young enthusiastic mountaineers is proverbial. Usually one can be sure of seeing him at one of the annual dinners of the Oread Mountaineering Club, for Uncle Alf is often an honoured and privileged guest, either of some individual member, or of the club itself.

To go back to the start of Alf Bridge's career is to retrace one's footsteps back to the period that was principally noteworthy for the enterprise of Fergus Graham in forcing a direct route to Moss Ledge on Scafell Pinnacle. It was an era noted for the climbing tigers who were reared or trained on the gritstone outcrops of the Peak District. Rice K. Evans, the American Vice Consul in Sheffield, and the one time leading light on Stanage, had departed back to his native land. J.W. Puttrell was 56 years old, still climbing, and an established authority on the geology and the cavern systems of Derbyshire. And such ferocious tigers as A.S. Piggot, Morley Wood and George Bower were now truly exploiting the techniques learnt on gritstone, adding new routes over a widely distributed area in the Lake District, Scotland, and North Wales. Harry Kelly, using his gritstone knowledge, was also busy vomiting forth new routes on Scafell with the precision of a machine – and, of these, perhaps his best effort was the discovery of a new route up the Central Buttress, by way of Moss Ghyll Groove.

This then was the period which saw the introduction to climbing of Alf Bridge, a young Manchester lad with unusually prehensile fingers, and a great strength of arms, shoulders and legs. His initiation took place at the Staffordshire Roaches, under the tuition of Robert Burns of the Rucksack Club, and it is said that on this, his first day, he revealed the promise of the skill to come, by leading the climb known as "Via Dolorosa".

So the fire was lit, the ambition to do great things was born – not only in the climbing world but also on the high moorland plateaux. As a walker he proved superb, being possessed of lungs of leather, and leg muscles of spring steel which nothing could completely tire. He became a member of that brilliant band of Peakland fell walkers, "The Bogrotter's Club", whose feats soon became legendary with such routes as the Double Marsden Edale, Colne to Rowsley, Penistone to Macclesfield, and Greenfield to Macclesfield, all being traversed in exceedingly fast times. By 1927 his toughness and popularity received full recognition, for he was elected the President of this group of "grough greyhounds".

One of his famous excursions during this period was a walk from Greenfield to Chinley, travelling light, with only food, primus and pans in his rucksack, rubber gym shoes on his feet, and going via Laddow, Wildboar Clough, Slippery Stones, Stanage, Cratcliffe Tor, Castle Naze and Combs. It started as a light-hearted affair, and the intention of doing various climbs at each of the famous outcrops and edges which he reached. All went well as far as Cratcliffe, where a rapid ascent of the Hermitage Crack and the Giant's Staircase, followed by the twin towers of Robin Hood's Stride, saw the passing of a precious hour and the appearance of several fine specimens of blisters on each heel. This, of course, was not to be wondered at, for approximately 24 hours had passed since his departure from Greenfield at noon on Saturday, and for the majority of this time he had been either walking or climbing.

The continuation of the walk from Cratcliffe to Castle Naze, via the Limestone Dales, is a long and tedious one, and Bridge, traversing this section during the hot afternoon of this sunny day, found it to be "sheer purgatory". It was 6.30 p.m. before, tired and thirsty, he could gaze down from the crags of Castle Naze at the promised land of the valley of Combs. Worn out, he struggled up A.P. Chimney, trod gingerly on blistered heels across the "Scoop", and flogged himself wearily up the safe but clinging cleft of Deep Chimney.

These were the halcyon days, with such great personalities in the walking world of the Peak District as Eustace Thomas, Fred Heardman, Harry Gilliat, and many others, to look up to. With such people as an inspiration, to be used as a “mighty yardstick”, is it any wonder that the “Bogtrotter’s Club” became fell walkers of the highest grade? With Ben Bennet, reputed to be one of the most brilliant members, Alf Bridge succeeded in walking the full length (North to South) of the one inch Ordnance Survey Peak District tourist map – from Penistone to Ashbourne in the remarkably fast time of 10 hours 20 minutes – a fantastic speed for this 51 mile journey, made possible no doubt by the fact that the southern portion of this route included many miles of roadwork, thus giving rubber shod feet the opportunity of accomplishing faster times than would normally have been possible had it been purely cross country travel.

More people will perhaps know of him as the Oxygen adviser of the successful 1953 expedition to Everest; others perhaps will think of him as the secretary of the successful 1955 expedition to Kanchenjunga; but I, who have known him over 20 years, remember him as a great lover of the Peak, a great bogtrotter, a superb cragsman of Herculean strength and considerable courage. The companion of Maurice Linnell and the great Colin Kirkus, and the man who introduced, taught, and practised the “Technique of Falling”

Tough weekenders, bivouackers and walkers gradually turned more and more to the high wild moorlands and the gritstone crags – being influenced by such people as Fred Heardman, Harry Gilliat, Robert Burns and Alfred Bridge, whose reputations were now well known amongst the elite.

As for Alf Bridge, he, unknown to himself, was at the crossroads, needing only a touch from some other domineering personality to take him to further heights. Then it happened; for at the close of a summer’s day on Cratcliffe Tor he met Maurice Linnell, and thus a friendship and climbing partnership was born which was to lead to many great days and fine expeditions on the crags of Wales and the Lake District. Both he and Linnell were strong individualists with strong views about many things and therefore found much in common, both as climbers and as men.

Linnell at this period, a product and founder of the Manchester University Mountaineering Club, was now progressing to that zenith when he would crown his climbing career by the pioneering of the East Face of Scafell, and the Narrow Slab on the West Buttress of Clogwyn Dur Arddu. Tall, slim, with a long face, lantern jaw, shock of black hair, and keen eyes, one sensed instantly the drive and determination that lay behind the gentle smile which could light up his whole countenance. His life was spent in keeping himself fit for climbing and, in the training of himself to withstand cold, hunger, fatigue, and great effort, he would have found no-one more suitable than Alf Bridge. Both he and Alf had a reputation for imperturbability in the presence of impending danger or averted danger, and neither would turn a hair but simply carry on climbing calmly upwards.

In Manchester these two tigers had a regular meeting place, where they would sit over coffee and talk about climbing and the routes they planned to do. It was here that the Girdle Traverse of Pillar Rock was first mooted, seized upon enthusiastically, and then planned in meticulous detail, until that day, in 1931, when the expedition was finally transformed into fact. However, before this took place there were many exciting weekends on gritstone, on one of which they bivouacked under the Black Rocks of Cromford, and Bridge, in great form, led the first ascent of the direct start to Longland’s Birch Tree Wall, using the thin slanting crack which had repelled the layback efforts of Longland’s experimental advance the previous year.

There were also meetings with Ivan Waller, the tough Cambridge University mountaineer who reigned as undisputed monarch and “grand inquisitor” at Black Rocks – Ivan who would bundle Alf into his Alvis and tear away at terrific speed to some other climbing ground, anxious to make as complete a day or weekend as would satisfy his restless spirit. These were great days, with Alf in 1930 leading Waller and Longland on the first ascent of that ferocious super-direct finish to Lean Man’s Climb on Black Rocks – truly an incredible effort, considering that no previous inspection of this overhang was made. No wonder that it remained unrecorded for almost 15 years, when its pioneers considered it to be totally unjustifiable.

By 1931 the partnership of Linnell and Bridge was firmly cemented. There were grand times in the Lakes with A. B. Hargreaves, and it was these three who added the Girdle Traverse of The Pillar Rock, Linnell in the lead and Alf as last man. Gimmer Crag also proved attractive and George Bower's route of Hiatus was varied by a terrific new finish. On gritstone Alf was also busy – new routes on Fairbrook Edge of Kinderscout, and an important visit to Stanage where he pioneered a route up the thin delicate crack now known as Robin Hood's Innominate. There was some snow about and a little ice yet, despite these disadvantages, he managed to force a continuation up the overleaning Cave Gully Wall – a most exposed climb above the level of the well known Cave Traverse.

The greatest year for Alf was perhaps 1932, for that was the time of the start of his friendship with the great Colin Kirkus. It was the period of intensive exploration on Clogwyn Dur Arddu and Kirkus's great pioneering routes. Here Alf teamed up to help in the production of such famous routes as Curving Crack and the Direct finish to East Buttress. He also, on a visit to the Lakes, led the first ascent of the safer and exposed Route 2 of Esk Buttress.

Then came 1934 and tragedy as Linnell was swept to his death and Kirkus severely injured by an avalanche on the Castles of Ben Nevis. This marked the end of a phase in British rock climbing. Kirkus was never the same, and he too was to die during the war on one of the great Hamburg Bomber Raids. Only Alf Bridge remained, trained Commandos, kept alive the memories of his two friends by his reminiscences, encouraged those who came to follow, and became "Good old Uncle Alf"

EVEN MORE PROFILES

(EXTRACTS)

P. R. FALKNER

Newsletter, October 1954

An interesting species of bogtrotter. Lives in Nottingham, lecturing in chemistry at the Technical College. Also frequently found in public houses, concert halls, public houses, jazz clubs, and public houses. Shows almost pathological enthusiasm for fireworks.

Took D. C. Cullum climbing for the first time in 1945. Has frequently regretted it since. Though no tiger, has led a good number of severes. Lengthy holidays enable him to climb for several months a year. Does so. Usually spends Easter in Scotland, doing snow and ice climbs and marathon walks. Migrates to Alps for the summer. Has also been twice to Lyngen (1951, 1953).

Very energetic. Cannot bear weekends at home. Retires to Derbyshire moors and crags instead. Camps all over the place, does long walks (eg. Colne – Rowsley this year) and delights in attempting record numbers of climbs in one day. Steady leader, reliable second – once held a leader who fell over 100'. Smokes continually, rendering atmosphere in tent impossible for those with lungs. Not true that he made first ascent of Tryfan.

Anon

PETER JANES (WHYMPER, SOMETIMES TODHUNTER)

Newsletter, January 1956

When Janes came of age, his doting parents provided the wherewithal for a holiday in Zermatt. On this occasion only the Zermatterhof was good enough for him. The last time he visited the resort, being more or less self-supporting, he shared the top attic at the Bahnhof with three other people at one franc a night. Janes is the second tightest chap in the Club with money (no prizes for guessing the first!). As an example of his parsimony, it should be noted that he budgets for one roll of film a year. One of the shots, of course, guarantees first prize at the Club Photographic Meet.

If you see a photograph of Pete himself, you will always find him standing, back to the camera, on a pinnacle of rock in the middle foreground, a lone rampant figure looking out over a panorama of peaks ranging to infinity. Hence the sobriquet “Whymper”.

Although we have never been fortunate enough to be entertained by his histrionic ability, his friends tell us that he treads a pretty board. He's no mean performer on boards that turn up at the front, either. (Prior to Janes' electrifying appearances in the legendary Ilam Hall pantomimes – *Editor*.)

In the art, or craft, of professional diner-out he is second only to Tony Moulam. He dines out regularly with everyone we know, and a lot of people we don't know. In recompense, on odd occasions, he disburses small samples of his mother's cooking as a rare elixir. If he ever makes a mistake and invites you home for a meal, acceptance with alacrity is recommended.

There is no doubt, however, that Pete's wit is his outstanding talent. No other member has the ability of raconteur, punster or fool to compare with him. His prowess in the extempore is as outstanding as his belching is voluminous. Everyone agrees that he is an asset at a Meet or any gathering.

Anon

MEMORY HOLD THE DOOR

“Here with foul shirts and fouler breath, were the climbing heroes. Summits had fallen, and men had perished, aspirations had withered, and marriages ruined, for this and this alone: that hard men in stinking pubs might have great wealth of memory.”

Adapted from Magnus Merriman, E. Linklater – *Editor*.

“Fond memory brings the light of other days around me, the smiles, the tears, of boyhood years.”
Thomas Moore.

MEMORIES OF THE FIFTIES

PHILLIP FALKNER (SEPTUAGENARIAN)

Nowadays, when the pundits of the media comment on the years just after the second world war, they portray a dull, dreary, depressing time. Britain was exhausted and almost bankrupt after six years of war; everything was run-down and shabby; many items were still in short supply and food rationing dragged on into the 1950s, but for those of us who were young at the time, life did not seem at all depressing. We were glad to have survived the war and for anyone interested in hill walking or mountaineering, there was everything to go for. Wartime restrictions on travel had been lifted and the Alps were again accessible. Camping and climbing equipment was available cheaply from army surplus shops and travel was relatively cheap.

It was an exciting time. In Britain a new generation of rock climbers were pioneering new hard routes on gritstone and in Wales and the Lakes, and many of us were finding our way around the Alps after years of deprivation. One thing, however, still seemed pretty remote. This was the opportunity to explore and to make first ascents of hitherto unclimbed mountains. Few of us then had the resources to visit the great mountain ranges such as the Himalaya or the Andes where such opportunities were to be found.

Then, in 1949/50 a few chance meetings opened up a new and intriguing opportunity. On 4th November 1950, on Edale station, I met Harry Pretty, accompanied by Dick Brown, whom I had first met at the C.I.C. hut on Ben Nevis at Easter 1949, and Eric Byne. With a few others we spent a not too uncomfortable night at the Poltergeist barn and had an enjoyable traverse of Kinderscout the next day.

The other significant meeting came only five weeks later when on Sunday 11th December 1950 I met George Sutton in a café in Bakewell where we were both waiting for buses to get us home. George and I quickly discovered that we had a number of friends in common. I learned from George that in the previous year he, Eric, and Harry, with some friends from the Derby/Burton area had launched a new mountaineering club, The Oread, and that for 1951 they were planning a surveying and climbing expedition to a place called Lyngen in Arctic Norway, where there were still unmapped and unclimbed alpine mountains of around 5,000/6,000' rising steeply from sea-level. I was overjoyed when, shortly afterwards, Dick Brown, who'd already had experience of climbing in the Lofoten Isles, and I were invited to join the Lyngen expedition in the summer of 1951.

Much has been written about Lyngen '51 and I will not attempt to give a detailed account here. To sum up, it was an extraordinary party made up of eight people who came from widely different backgrounds but who all got on splendidly together. We had a lot of first rate climbing with several new routes, and a notable achievement of the expedition, under Harry's guidance, was the production of the first reasonably accurate sketch map of the interior of the Lyngen peninsula, previously existing maps being hopelessly inaccurate and misleading. For myself the memory I cherish most was the first ascent by Stan Moore and myself of a previously unrecorded, impressive rock peak which we called Klokke-törn (Clock-tower).

Throughout the 1950s regular Oread meets were the most enjoyable feature of one's life. A notable feature of those days was the gloriously carefree irreverent attitude to established conventions and procedures. A club that started off with its purpose summed up in two words "Mountaineering regardless" was clearly something new and different. We were always ready to take part in new ventures, and if sometime adventurousness just over-stepped the boundary into what the more cautious might regard as rashness, then good fortune always seemed to be with us when we needed it.

Many of these early ventures originated either in Harry and Molly's picturesquely named Woodbine Cottage, or in my suburban semi in Beeston which I shared with Charlie and Mary Cullum. Charlie was my most regular climbing companion in those days and our series of Easters spent in the Scottish Highlands could fill many pages. A unique memory is of a bus journey from Achnasheen to Torridon, when one of the locals on the bus kept passing us a bottle of whisky and insisting that we drank, so that when we reached Torridon we were almost too sloshed to pitch our tent. That holiday was also memorable for successive traverses of the ridges of Ben Alligin, Liathach and Bheinn Eìghe in splendid alpine conditions. The last of the three had a darker moment. On the summit ridge, in thick mist and a howling gale we came across a fragment of a Lancaster bomber, and nearby, the frozen body of a young airman. They had been there for about a week and until we reported it, The RAF Mountain Rescue had been unable to locate the wreckage.

Another regular feature of those days was the annual Marsden to Rowsley (or Baslow) walk. For the first one, in late October 1952, six of us arrived in Marsden on a cold dark showery evening, with no accommodation arranged and only minimal bivouac equipment. Having fortified ourselves with beer and fish and chips, we were huddling disconsolately in a bus shelter pondering the next move, when a passing policeman took pity on us and suggested that we try the gas-works. There the friendly night shift made us welcome and found us comfortable bunks in a warm cabin where we slept very well and were woken with cups of hot tea when the day shift arrived to take over. During Saturday we crossed Black Hill, Bleaklow, Kinder and Win Hill, arriving at the Nag's Head, Edale in the dark. Another stroke of luck, – the genial landlord, Fred Heardman, himself a great hill walker, let us spend the night sleeping in his living room. The next day the four of us, Geoff Gibson, Mike Moore, Dave Penlington and I forced our weary selves down the succession of gritstone edges to Baslow. Two years later, Ron Dearden, Clive Webb and I completed the much longer and arduous route from Colne to Rowsley. Early on during the walk Ron and I ate nearly all of Clive's supply of Kendal mint cake, intending to share ours with him later. Unfortunately we then left him behind on his own for most of the rest of the 70 miles. Clive has never forgotten this and reminded me of it quite recently.

In 1953 there was another Lyngen expedition with Dick Brown, Barry Cooke and myself, joined for a while by Bob Pettigrew and Trevor Panther from Loughborough College. Like its predecessor this expedition went very well; we made several first ascents and produced an amended and extended version of the map, which remained the best one of the area until a few years later the Norwegian authorities did a proper aerial survey. (for anyone interested, my own account of the '52 and '53 expeditions can be found in the Climbers Club Journals for the years 1952 and 1954).

One final episode from those years: At Easter 1954, Sutton, Pretty, Chunky Cartwright, and I took two new tents, prototypes for the forthcoming South Georgia expedition, to test on the summit of Ben Nevis, which we thought would give as near approach to Antarctic conditions as we were likely to find in Britain. Ironically we had the most perfect weather, cold but dry, calm and sunny all the time. It was no test at all for the tents. Chunky and I, camping on the summit plateau, had no problems, whilst the other tent, down in Glen Nevis, was damaged by cows – not an anticipated Antarctic hazard! (Edgintons were not amused since the tents had not been paid for — *Editor*.)

From our summit camp, one glorious fine morning, Chunky and I descended to the Allt a Mhuillin, climbed Tower Ridge in quick time and had lunch in our tent. We then descended to the foot of the crags again and climbed Northeast Buttress in the afternoon, finishing at dusk. I still don't know whether both of these climbs have been done in one day in snow conditions, before or since, but we felt mighty chuffed at the time!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

CHRIS MARTIN

I was introduced to MIKE GADD by a close friend in 1956. I recall having a discussion with Mike in the Shire Hall in Nottingham, the outcome of which was an invitation to attend the joint MAM/OREAD meet at Bryn-y-Wern on Nov. 3rd and 4th 1956 with Mike Harby as meet leader.

I departed from Beeston with MIKE and ANN GADD, MIKE TURNER and his wife, RON DEARDEN plus a.n.other in Mike (T)s Standard Vanguard car en route B.y.W. The journey was uneventful until we came to the Welsh Mountains with the twisting roads and Mike driving as though he was in the Monte Carlo Rally, when all of a sudden, the front near side front door flew open and I was almost ejected from the front bench seat. Fortunately for me I was grabbed by a very welcome hand and saved from being dumped on a Welsh hillside. What had I let myself in for?

Eventually, arriving at the hut in the early hours of Sat. morning, I was allocated a top bunk in the hut. What seemed like hours later a character crept into the room wearing a long black heavy overcoat and proceeded to remove the coat, roll it out on the floor. Curl up in it and promptly fall asleep. This was my first encounter with LAURIE BURNS.

The following day was a tramp over the local hills, collecting wood for the bonfire to be held on Black Rock Sands that evening. No outstanding recollections until the evening when the clubs congregated on the beach for the bonfire and fireworks display. This was when I, an innocent young towny from Nottingham was introduced to certain members of the Oread (names with held for good reason) who proceeded to romp around the sands, despite the weather, in the nude (some still sporting a pipe in the mouth). What an eye opener! My eyes must have been on stalks. I had heard of the Druids and their rituals, but no one had mentioned the initiation ceremony of the Oreads. I held my breath.... But luckily participation was optional and this shy bashful lad opted out. Was I joining a mountaineering club or a nudist club?

The Sunday morning was a stroll across the hills adjacent to the hut with what I thought was the local landowner. Dressed in tweed plus fours (looking very much the part) and in deep discussion with senior members of the club was a very distinguished gentleman. This later turned out to be DAVE PENLINGTON (at that time hut warden).

The friendliness of the club members this initial weekend, followed by attending the Annual Dinner on the 24th Nov. 56 confirmed my decision to apply for membership. It is this friendliness that has made the club so successful in the 40 years of my being a member, even when one lives so far away. Lets hope it continues.

REMEMBERING

KEN GRIFFITHS

Whilst perusing old diaries, I came upon the following entry for 26th June 1977: "Off at 06.30, arrived at Tan-yr-Wyddfa 10.30". What is so special about that you may conjecture.

Memories came flooding back: My wife Gwenda and I were running a Residential Establishment for Physically Handicapped and Delicate Children on the edge of Ilkley Moor. Most of these youngsters had led very sheltered lives, including much hospitalisation and had missed out on much of the fun and games ordinary youngsters enjoyed.

So following intensive rehabilitation training our thoughts concentrated on ways to enhance their improvement in physical health and outlook. Whitehall, (Jack Longland's Derbyshire Centre) might be a wee bit too exacting at this stage.

But what about the Oread hut in North Wales at Rhyd Ddu? With the whole hearted and generous co-operation of the club we ran, for several years, an annual summer training programme at Tan-yr-Wyddfa, and what a difference it made. Several were able to gain "I have climbed Snowdon" badges and thereby inspiring others to join the next expedition. All of them the better able to meet life's challenges.

It is all a long time ago but, as an octogenarian I am fortunate in having retired to the Lake District and I can still enjoy a good trek on the fells. My last outing was a delightful amble over Red Pike, High Stile, High Crag and Haystacks to the Honister youth hostel.

Some of my most treasured memories!:

Dave Penlington (to whom I am indebted for early rock and ice experiences) and our trip to Chamonix in 1952/53: two nights snowed in at a refuge on Mont Blanc. Some years later Dave introduced me to easy routes on Cloggy, starting with the 30' layback on Curving Crack.

A visit to Poltergeist Barn with Harry and Molly Pretty with baby Laura strapped to an ex W.D. carrying frame, quite happy despite the bleakness of winter.

Knowing Eric Byne, such a quiet and unassuming man, and through him getting to know Alf Bridge.

Geoff Gibson, dear gentle Geoff, our club secretary in 1952/53 and with whose party we reconnoitred the Dent D'Herens and Dent Blanche route from Arolla to Zermatt.

Accompanying Bob Pettigrew to Lyngen (Arctic Norway) in 1954 to climb Jekkevarrenebbe.

With George Sutton in the Julian Alps following his return from South Georgia.

As I write, within view, a most precious memento: a pewter tankard inscribed: "To Ken and Gwenda from the Oread M.C., November 1957," to mark our marriage in August 1957.

Gwenda Griffiths died, 1st July 1976 — *Editor*.

OUR TIME WITH THE OREAD

CHUCK AND MARGARET HOOLEY

I am a little uncertain as to when and where Margaret's and my own association with the Oread began. Inevitably combinations of dates and times are always difficult to remember possibly obscured by my service with Bomber Command in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948. It is perhaps easier to remember events. As I recall many earlier Oreads migrated from Clubs like the Derby Mercury and the Valkyrie. John Welbourn and I emerged from these two clubs in the late forties. I spent some time climbing with Wilf White in Cornwall and later joined with Colin Morris and his friends. Margaret was on the scene by this time and Colin had taken unto himself a wife and we climbed extensively on Black Rocks at Cromford and the Derwent Edges. It was whilst traversing at mid-height along the Curbar Edges, a recognised and difficult activity in those days, that we came upon a group at the base of the crag. An unkempt bunch to behold. Most were attired in ex army gear which is not surprising considering the year. One could hear names like Pretty, Sutton and Moore being bandied about. Had we stumbled, albeit at altitude across the embryo Oread. They had I learned later just returned from an expedition to South Georgia thereby laying down one of the earlier chapters in the history of Oread achievements. Some weeks later Margaret and I were, for reasons unclear, at the Bell Hotel in Sadler Gate, Derby. The Bell we had heard was where the Oread met on Tuesday evenings. Faces from the past were there. from the Valkyrie and the Mercury: Pete Janes, Fred and Brenda Allen, Ray Handley, Ernie and Ronni Phillips, Norman and Judy Millward etc. Our acceptance into the Oread started at the Bell followed by membership and our first Christmas meet at Bryn-y-Wern, the club hut in Cwm Pennant, North Wales. This hut, the club's first, was renowned for its ghostly atmosphere. Who's going in first to light the tilley lamps? This question was always asked by first arrivals on Friday evening. I personally witnessed an apple move out of a fruit bowl and roll across in my direction. Not many members would spend the night alone at Bryn-y-Wern. Ronni Langworthy did, but then it would be a brave ghost who tackled Ronni!

Memorable times with the Oread included activities abroad: two weeks mountaineering in Norway in 1961 with Ronni and Les Langworthy, journeying on foot across the Hardangervidder Glacier where Captain Scott trained for his polar expedition; travelling north to Jotunheimen to ascend Norway's highest summit Galdhøpiggen; taking part in Jack Ashcroft's expedition to the Bernina Alps from the Italian side and, following this, visits to the Ortler Mountains with Laurie Burns and Clive Webb. These were all milestones.

In our Oread years several notable events occurred. In the mid-1960's at the behest of many members I created a Mountain Rescue Team (call sign Alpha). It was purely voluntary and attracted about 30 members. Its role was to give support to the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation which was very active then. The team no longer exists. The call outs became minimal – perhaps it was the mild winters, or the invention of climbing walls.

Another event was the eviction from Bryn-y-Wern, not due to Oread behaviour, but to the owner shuffling off his mortal coil and the selling of the property. A search for another property in North Wales ensued and, on May 28th 1958, a Conveyance and a Deed of trust were signed making the Oreads the owners of another hut, an authentic Welsh four bedroomed house, a freehold property documented as 'Snowdon View' and now re-named in Welsh as Tan-yr-Wyddfa. Money was loaned to the club by the members and it was purchased for the princely sum of five hundred and fifty pounds.

The earliest record in the deeds is of an indenture of lease dated 30th October 1895 between Lady Ann Watkin, wife of Sir Edward Watkin Baronet, and one David Jones of the Temperance Hotel, Rhydd-Ddu, now known as the Cwellyn Arms. This places the hut at approximately one hundred and three years old.

The Oread left Bryn-y-Wern on October 26th 1958 and moved into Tan-yr-Wyddfa. A photograph in the book 'Climb if you Will' records the event. So commenced another chapter in the annals of the Oread. There were opinions that it was in the wrong location. However it was near to Cwm Silyn, which offered good climbing, and Cloggy was just over the ridge. Also one could walk out the front door and up Snowdon. It is so popular now that it always has bookings into the next year, and weekends have to be reserved for use by its own club members. The first Hut Custodians were Dave Penlington and Fred Allen. I took over from Fred in 1962 until 1966 followed by John Corden, Dave Appleby and John Welbourn. I took over again from John Welbourn around 1977/78 and am still in place in 1998. In the last forty years there have been many improvements to the hut. There are those who remember those first few years of a single cold water tap and the outside toilet to which brave mountaineers had to escort their womenfolk on a dark stormy night. The toilet from which an attempt was made to put Ray Handley into orbit with the help of army cadet corps explosives! The hut now has L.P.G. Gas on tap, hot and cold showers, and yes, three indoor toilets.

The Oread also has a hut in Derbyshire. The club took out a lease in 1968 with the Chatsworth Estates on an old Sawmill site with a cottage called Heathy Lea, located near the Derwent Edges. It is a Grade 2 listed building and is serving the club well as a base in Derbyshire where the club grew up and developed. Heathy Lea was acquired as a result of Harry Pretty's erstwhile negotiations with the Chatsworth Estate. Both huts are served by a single management committee with myself as incumbent 'Custodian'. The burning of Heathy Lea, if not recorded, would soon be forgotten. On Thursday 25th October 1990 it was found that burglars had broken in, stolen a cash box and axe, made a pile of books, papers and furniture in the lounge, and set fire to it. The culprits presumably, must have been well brought up for they closed doors as they left which snuffed out the fire and only £1,958.82 worth of damage was done.

You are permitted to think that this article is mostly about our time with Oread huts. If I were ever to possess Harry Pretty's superb turn of phrase (Playboy of the Alpine World, page 176, in 'Climb if you Will') I could write a book about our forty plus years with the Oread. However, as the Journal is to be a record of the Oreads' fifty years and, as I also firmly believe, without a club hut few mountaineering clubs would have survived that number of years, the history of our huts should be recorded.

In 1976 Margaret suffered a Sub-Arachnoid Haemorrhage. Eight hours of brain surgery left her with limited speech and mobility, but she survived. The effect on our life with the Oread was dramatically changed. Overnight I became a life long carer and our normal mountaineering activities were severely curtailed. We now realise that "Our Time With The Oread" was, and we hope will continue to be, a major part of our lives. We maintain contact with members and mountains through our work with the huts. We always look forward to meeting members on their Derbyshire walks at the lunch time rendezvous and quaff a pint or two (non alcoholic of course) before driving home, often giving lifts to hip replacements, knackered knees and other coffin dodgers.

The term "coffin dodgers" was, I understand, initiated by young Weston, son of "Weston the Old" — *Editor*.

EARLY DAYS IN THE OREAD

COLIN HOBDAV

In the 50's few people had their own transport. My love of the outdoors, cycling, and joining the C.T.C., led to meeting Dave Weston and a lasting friendship.

During winter, walking became the interest, and I joined the Derby Nomads with bus trips to Wales and the Lake District at the weekend.

The natural progression was to climbing so buying a full weight nylon rope for £6 from the Y.H.A. shop in Leopold Street I headed for Kinderscout (why Kinder I have no idea). A few months later, this time with a guide book, we walked from Wirksworth to Brassington and camped at Rainster Rocks. Whilst trying some of the climbs on Sunday morning who should come along but John and Ruth Welbourn. So my first introduction to the Oread, with an invite to the Bell on a Tuesday evening. In those days the Bell was an important focal point for the Oread with discussions for the weekend and arrangements of lifts. A35 vans were the main form of transport with four people going to Wales for 10 shillings (or 50p in new money).

Memories of many meets spring to mind. Camping at Birchen, Ben Froggatt's farm, with his usual greeting, "Is Welbourn with you?"

Big walks also proved popular in the 60's/70's. Marsden to Rowsley in particular brings back memories. Catching the train on a Friday evening to Manchester where we were met by Phil Falkner whose job it was to guide us quickly between railway stations so that we could catch our connection to Marsden. A dozen or so Oreads laden with heavy rucksacks trudged in single file through a back entrance of M & S to emerge out of the main entrance.

Once in Marsden a few beers, followed by a visit to the chippy, before walking up to a bivvy at the remains of the Isle of Skye pub, only to be visited by the Police who soon climbed over the wall and joined us for a brew. Saturday consisted of traversing Black Hill and Bleaklow to bivvy at "Penlingtons Plantation" (Stanage), finishing the walk on Sunday down the edges to Rowsley.

There were Alpine Meets (family meets) to the Bernina, Cogne, Zillertal, Clampère, and my own meet at Trafoie in July 1980, a super campsite, matched by an excellent turnout of Oreads with families, total 40 people. Many routes were done including the Ortler 3,905m.

It is possible to go on for hours recalling one's memories of my early days with the Oread and the many happy years it has given me.

More recently, many years on the Huts sub-committee, and as Hut Booking Secretary, have provided a different perspective. A few facts:

Some nights the phone never stops ringing while other times not so much as a murmur, that's how it goes when dealing with hut bookings.

The Oread is very fortunate in having two properties, one in Snowdonia at Rhyd-Ddu, Wales, and the other in the heart of the Peak District on the Chatsworth Estate.

Tan-yr-Wyddfa appears in the B.M.C. hut list and therefore attracts many enquiries and bookings. The hut is booked to guest clubs on 3 weeks a month with 1 room of 6 beds always available for members. Many clubs request bookings year after year, coming from as far a field as Glasgow and Brighton.

Over the years we have been successful in negotiating reciprocal rights with other clubs who also own property:-

- Swiss Alpine Club T.C.C.
- Climbers Club
- Yorkshire Ramblers
- Lancashire Cave & Crag
- K. Fellfarers

Over a twelve-month period Tan-yr-Wyddfa is visited by around 36 clubs and Heathy Lea, 12 clubs. This involves a considerable amount of administration, confirming bookings, taking deposits, sending keys and information and, finally, the collection of fees and the return of keys.

Finally no visit to the hut would be complete without someone leaving items behind, ranging from maps, compasses, boots and watches. Very little is actually claimed and returned to its owner.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

ERIC BYNE

Jim Winfield

Eric Byne was without doubt my main inspiration for the love of mountains and mountaineering. It was as a young man that I first met him and I was not at that time climbing to a very high standard.

Without having seen me before, the Great Man enquired as to what I had done that day and it was with some trepidation that I informed him of my modest achievements. He proceeded to recall his past enjoyment of the very climbs I had done and my attitude to mountains was cemented for life; to enjoy the sport at whatever level of expertise one can achieve. I find that the ageing process and diminishing ability do not lessen my enjoyment of the hills.

Shortly after our meeting, I was fortunate enough to enjoy a holiday in Skye together with Eric and his climbing partner, Charlie Ashbury.

I am sure that my experience of Eric Byne's enthusiasm are echoed by a great many people who had the pleasure of his encouragement and his company.

JACK ASHCROFT

My meeting with Jack, Hebog Ashcroft was on a Derbyshire walking meet. Jack had written to the club indicating his interest in joining a mountaineering club and was invited to join this particular meet, and my duties were to meet him, introduce him, and generally to put him at ease during the weekend. Hebog duly turned up with his friend Dennis and this was the commencement of a great relationship with the Oread. Jack has been, and still is, a pillar of the club. The same year we were both at the meet at Dow Crag and enjoyed some superb rock climbing in the hottest Easter weather I can remember – though Jack seemed to be strangely distracted by outside interests. We have enjoyed some magnificent holidays with Dave Penlington and Roy Darnell. We had an assured arrangement for several years, always taking off the week at Whitsun. These weeks included the Pennine Way (a hard week), Coast to Coast, Scottish Four Thousanders, and Knoydart, and my enjoyment was greatly enhanced by the companionship of Jack, Dave and Roy.

JIM KERSHAW

My first meeting with Jim Kershaw was a most bizarre circumstance during a "Bullstones" meet.

I could not be free for the whole weekend and I arranged with Ron Dearden to take the bus during the Saturday and walk to Bullstones from the Flouch Inn, which would mean walking a considerable way in darkness. In the gathering gloom, Ron led the way by torchlight on a wet, cold and murky night.

A fall by Ron in dreadful conditions resulted in his smashing the torch, and my inability to carry a spare did nothing to calm his fury. I received a considerable tongue lashing about my inadequate equipment. The fact that I proceeded to produce two inflatable mattresses did nothing to diminish his ire. Our night afloat on the moor was spent in reasonable comfort, but not such comfort that we wished to lie in after daybreak.

It was whilst assembling our gear for a continuation to Bullstones that the bizarre meeting occurred. In the half light and murk an apparition, gradually approached our bivouac. This spectre actually spoke and asked, "Are you members of the Oread Mountaineering Club?"

Jim Kershaw had written to the club indicating his interest and had been invited to join the Bullstones meet. He also had come out on the Saturday and been benighted, quite close to Ron and myself. JK's equipment had been minimal and he appeared completely soaked and bedraggled. An appearance not improved by his wearing of an ex-army gas cape.

A later incident I remember vividly was during a Welsh meet at the Ynys Ettws Hut. Jim, entering the lounge area of the hut from the sleeping accommodation, forgot that his considerable height needed adjustment to negotiate the low stone doorway. The result was JK entering the lounge with severe bleeding and in a state of semi consciousness. He was advised by all to go and recover in the dormitory and he readily agreed. Misfortune struck again. Jim forgot the low stone doorway resulting in more bloodshed and complete unconsciousness.

LAURIE BURNS

The late "Lol" Burns was a long-standing member of the Oread who gave unstinting service as Treasurer for many years and it was in this capacity that I got to know him well.

I remember Lol Burns attending his first meet which was in Borrowdale when camping was allowed in the area, and the many Oread members, plus Lol as a prospective member, arrived by coach. I believe the year to be 1953.

Laurie established his camp and, attired in his normal outdoor gear, i.e. Surplus War Department clothing and a pair of "TUF" boots, proceeded to build the largest camp fire ever seen in Borrowdale. This enormous conflagration was fulfilled with the aid of an axe which would not have been out of place in the hands of a Canadian Lumberjack.

I seem to recall Dave Penlington turning up on this meet, arriving by motorcycle and attired in full military uniform, there being compulsory national service at that time.

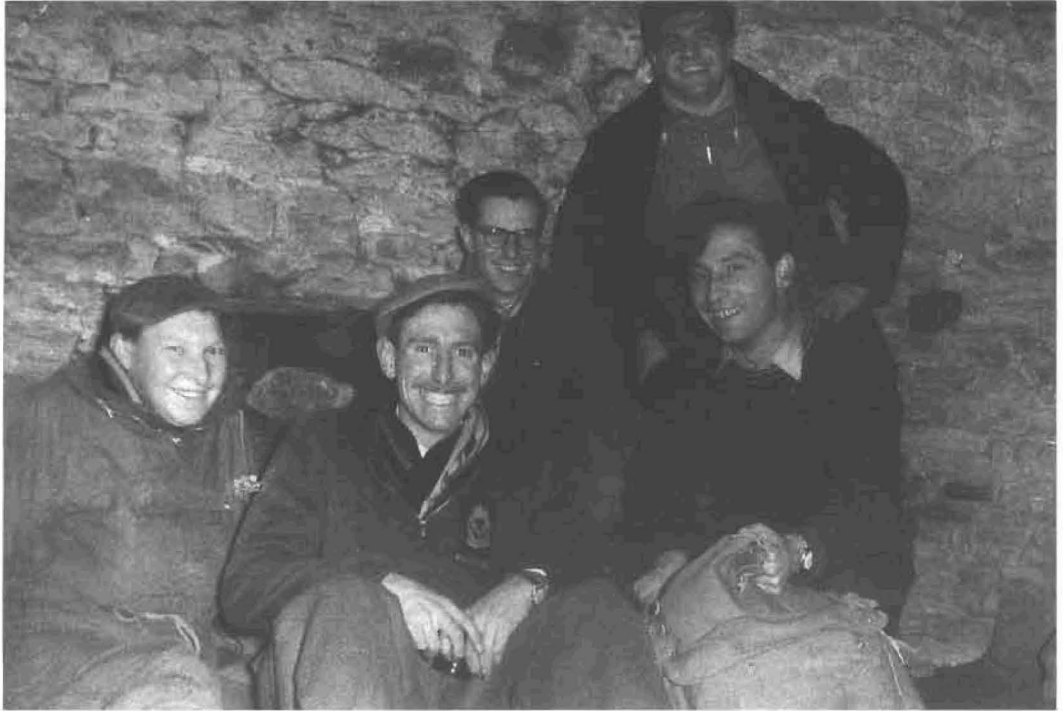
Another memory of this meet concerns two members of the coach party, Mark Hayhurst and Joe Johnson who intended camping at Sty Head rather than Borrowdale. Nothing so extraordinary about this you would think. But in fact they accomplished the ascent to Sty Head accompanied by an Ex Army "bell tent", its size and bulk filling the whole of the aisle in the coach. This task was to be performed in the dead of night.

Returning to Laurie Burns; it was some years later that I had more frequent contact with Lol who by then was a well established member and holding the post of Treasurer. The then auditor of the Oread was one Reg Squires but I believe that he had to work overseas and therefore relinquished the duties of checking Laurie's book keeping and accounts. I was persuaded to take on the duties of Hon. Auditor by Burgess during a walking meet, and I have always suspected that DB knew of the horrors of this post, (perhaps from the previous incumbent, Reg Squires). But I was naive enough to believe the Burgess job description as "a piece of cake". DB's economy with the truth could have been an act of revenge for my leaving his climbing rope in the old Snowdon Hotel after a winter ascent. The truth was soon revealed and I quickly learned that standard and accepted practices meant nothing to Lol who had devised the most bizarre methodology for his book keeping and accounts. It was during the next few years, during Reg Squires' absence, that I got to know LB well, spending numerous evenings and weekends together trying to understand his unique methods. My appendage to the accounts of the words "Audited and Found Correct", were always made with tongue in cheek, due to my inability to fathom the system. It is due to Lol's honesty, rather than my auditing, that things were always correct. It was with some relief that I learned of Reg Squire's return to the UK and of his willingness to take on the role of auditor.

Although I regarded Lol as a non climber, his love of mountains and the outdoors was immense, as was his knowledge of mountaineering in general.

Laurie's walking activities were severely curtailed in his later years due to serious physical problems with feet and lower limbs, but he still got into the hills, and he told me with great enthusiasm of his bird watching in the islands off Scotland, accompanied by Doug Cook.

Laurie is much missed by his many friends and also by his Outdoor Gear suppliers; Wakefield's Army Stores.



Poltergeist Barn, Edale 1959 (Bullstones Meet). Ron Dearden, Bob Pettigrew, Jack Ashcroft, Clive Webb, Frank Goldsmith (rear). *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Oyster Clough Cabin, December 1979: Dave Weston, Digger Williams, Harry Pretty, Ron Chambers, Dave Appleby, Peter Jauncs. *Photo: Unknown.*

REFLECTIONS

JOHN FISHER

On an old photograph (page 72 overleaf)

Site: Outside the Roadmender's hut on the Llanberis Pass circa 1954. The hut is the corrugated iron structure, to the right of the massive roadside boulder, directly below Dinas Cromlech. Although the property of the local Council, it was regularly used as a base by the climbing cognoscenti of the time.

While these sketches verge on character assassination there is a clear club precedent for happy acceptance of this style. At club dinners in the past it was usual for the main club speaker to present the dug up dirt on the half dozen or so representatives of kindred clubs, much to the amusement of diners. There was never an action for slander.

David Penlington

Uncharacteristically churlish in demeanour here, presumably his V.Diff standard friends would not accompany him on V.S. climbs with dodgy stances and dubious belays. Recent information is that he has climbed all the Alpine four thousanders. An important O.M.C. member but something of an eminence grise who likes his own way but never tells you what it is.

Martin Ridges (I think)

An able and determined Manchester University climber. Friendly with D.P. and led some of the first ascents of hard climbs with O.M.C. members on Harston Rock. No real material for facetious comment or character assassination available.

John Fisher

Without seeming unduly unkind, the most apt description of his climbing competence is that Fisher occupied the front rank of the second rank. Noted as a rather timid operator who, as Burgess relates, was quite capable of leading the crux on a demanding route twice and then retreating with the comment that the climb was too difficult for him. A sort of human yo-yo. He has never been seen in a T-shirt or a pair of jeans and has read the Guardian only once. Sometimes called the Prince of Parsimony but that title is disputed by Pete Scott.

Geoff Gibson

One of the few gentlemen in the club and, on occasion, climbed with guides. Officer material with lots of social grace, style and one of those rare people about whom one never heard a bad word. To be envied. However, with a chap called Bob Pettigrew, also O.M.C. he forged a powerfully slow party unsurpassed by any in the club or, possibly, in the country. Even the most amiable and competent leader, on an easy but cold climb with them, could be rendered transiently insane by these men of insatiable patience.

Ernie Marshall

This picture represents his pre-Alistair Sim appearance of later years. Determined and ambitious, he was a Penlington acolyte who became important later on as a climber and guide book writer in the Peak. I don't think he had any sort of impediment but he always struck me as sporting a public school drawl with its classic underemphasis, delivered with overtones of the working class. He never used anyone's Christian name but then perhaps he was not of that persuasion in spite of Vaya con Dios!



Llanberis Pass 1954: M. Gadd, W. Richardson, E. Marshall, Geoff Gibson, *unknown*, *unknown*, J. Fisher, M. Ridges, D. Penlington (see Reflections by J. Fisher). *Photo: Mike Moore.*

Walter Richardson

Known as Wally. Small in stature but a great enthusiast and also pally with Penlington since both came from Rolleston on Dove, Sir Oswald Moseley's country seat. He is memorable for an arcane style of description, especially of young women who, in appropriate cases, he relates as having good form. Nothing to do with a visit to the Bwci (Welsh). Wally's trusting nature would have made him an excellent candidate for the depredations of financial advisers. It is worth noting that a lot of Oread people live in or have connections with Rolleston but I have not noticed any armbands or funny moustaches.

The last on the left

This man I shall take as Raymond Handley because the confusion gives me a platform from which to assail him in prose. It is not, of course, since Raymond enjoyed more exalted company and, anyway, always wore trousers of superior cut and style. He had the first pair of P.A.'s in this country, climbed with the best in the land and never let you forget it. Thoroughly tamed by his most recent wife, he enjoys golf and verbal fights with Fisher, always claiming that he has won. If you want to see a picture of him in 1950 look up p.140 of *Cumbrian Rock* by Jones and Milburn. I was hoping to see the caption to the picture would cite him as "unknown" but I fear it failed to give me that pleasure.

As a P.S. I gather from an informed source that the man is almost certainly Mike Gadd. I have nothing on him of consequence. Sorry old chap, but then you did become a colonial, having lived in New Zealand for thirty odd years.

H.P. SAUCE

JOHN FISHER

An attempt on the fourteen peaks was the major enterprise of the two-week industrial holiday available in August 1953 to Mike Moore and myself. Hitching to North Wales from Lichfield we spent the first week in the idyllic but unfrequented Cwm Cowarch, and the second in Ogwen. It had been agreed that, if I joined him on this major walk, he would climb rocks with me. I remember that Grooved Arete and the Direct Route, including Gibson's Chimney, were climbed in outsize Vibram soled, second hand boots. A.C.C. chap, name unknown, but even then a computer expert and ex-Cambridge, staying at Helyg, climbed with us on the Chasm and then joined up for a shot at the fourteen peaks. His boots were nailed and one of them had the sole secured to the upper by a loop of copper wire.

Starting from Foel Fras on the hottest day of that year, we completed the trip in just under sixteen hours but our new companion abandoned his effort after the Glyders. I think the wire broke.

Our camp was in Ogwen. The finish for us was Pen-Y-Pass, then without telephone, making it impossible at that late hour to arrange transport. Happily, as we rounded the twists on the flat towards P-Y-P, we were greeted by a crowd of young men led by our broken booted companion. They plied us with hot soup and tinned fruit and drove us back to Ogwen. It turned out that they were Sandhurst under-officers who had been drinking in the Royal (now Plas-Y-Brenin) and had made several trips to find us. No facetious comment here, just heartfelt thanks for their generosity.

Naturally, Mike and myself were elated at our success, slow though it was. Nevertheless we thought that we were the first Oreads to do so and that belief continued for 45 years. However, I recently mentioned the matter to Harry Pretty who, to put it bluntly, said that we were wrong because he and a bearded Brummie called Stan Moore had done it earlier. I did not hear, nor did Mike, any trumpets before 1953 but when a most senior, eminent, and respected ex-President, and to boot the assessor of this epistle, says so, you radiate the castor oil smile, tug the forelock, and retire.

I think, for the sake of an artful climax, J.F. has slightly misrepresented my words. I merely stated that in 1951 (when no one had the use of a car) S.G.M. and myself started our attempt on the 3,000's from Ogwen (Glan Dena) and thereby had to traverse the appropriate Carnedd summits twice before continuing over Tryfan, and the Glyders, in our quest for Snowdon — *Editor*.

"The memories of men are too frail a thread to hang history from" — *John Still*.

Newsletter: August 1956

REFLECTIONS

A time there was
When I believed the crystal spire
The unknown clouded pinnacle
The only summit of desire.
The years there were,
The precious years of youth,
Lost in the desert sands of learning
That surround the citadel of truth.
At length I scaled its adamantine face
And stood alone where no man stood before
Until my strength deserted hands and failing feet
Perforce began the bitter desolate retreat
Down to a black tarn shore.
But on the shore
I came to see
The summit that I strove to reach
Beneath my feet concealed,
For darkly mirrored in the lake
The beauty of the mountain was revealed.

Jim Kershaw

A PROLOGUE

JACK ASHCROFT

In my own case it all goes back to the early fifties when our guide -(students all) took us into a quarry in the Shropshire countryside and said, "Here, you put the rope up the front, behind the right leg, over the left shoulder and rope down like this —". Over the edge he went. "This can't be right" I thought, "climbing is about going up hill", and so I got a book out of the library, which put me right on the simple theory of what goes up must come down, safely. And that is what climbing is all about.

A few years later after a little more sophistication had been introduced in the use of karabiners, slings, belays, nailing patterns etc., a visit to Skye was called for. I had only found the enthusiasm of the Oread a few months previously and, before the Committee had barely accepted my application for membership, I was up and over the front face of Sgurr Dearg Bheag en route for the Inaccessible Pinnacle. There was a howling gale with negligible visibility. "I'll go ahead, looks alright", said the optimistic Jack and promptly disappeared into the mist. A short distance along the ridge I came back to Dearg Bheag to shout the others on. They were nowhere to be seen or heard, above the roar of the wind. "Came up here didn't I?" — 50 metres down — water running. "This isn't it". I came back

up, scrambled onto the Bheag and stood there on that little pap, in the swirling mist with the words ringing in my ears, “due to the magnetic nature of the rocks, the compass is unreliable in the Cuillin”. To have tied on a rope to start with wouldn’t have been a bad idea!

Eventually the party was reunited: Janet McHarg (later Ashcroft), Mike Turner, Margaret Dearden and Ron Dearden.

Later that year a report appeared in the Newsletter contributed by Ron. “Jack got lost on a knife edge ridge”. Not true. The party got parted due to the exuberance of youth, one more exuberant than the rest. Inpin was never seen that day.

I had come to live in Derby in 1953 soon after a weeks holiday in the Lakes.

Whilst staying overnight at Wall End Barn, Langdale, Albert Shutt of the Peak Climbing Club and Stanage Left Unconquerable fame said, “If you’re going to live in Derby, the Oread is a good club”. In the ODG next morning the headlines in the paper announced the death of a climber in the Alps, Arthur Dolphin. The Leeds climber had slipped on the descent of the South Face of the Geant. Albert was stunned by the news, as indeed all North Country climbers were as recalled in the Chapter An End by Harold Drasdo in his book *The Ordinary Route*.

I was in the Lakes with Trevor Wheat a Wolverhampton youth club friend at the time and my introduction to walking and climbing mountains had come about by joining the Birmingham College of advanced Technology Exploration Society. The Society mounted an expedition during my few years of membership, to the uninhabited Shiant Isles off the East Coast of Lewis. A study was made of the botany, marine biology, ornithology and geology of the islands. Whilst at Birmingham I did my first rock climbing and read Barford’s *Climbing in Britain*, largely instructional and effectively the first handbook of the B.M.C. Then there was Colin Kirkus’ *Let’s go Climbing* – inspirational reading for the most unlikely novice to the climbing scene.

As Albert, Trevor and myself left the ODG and walked up Mickleden over Esk Hause to Portinscale on Derwent Water we talked a lot of climbing and Albert made known his early experiences of climbing with the Peak C.C. of Sheffield.

In the autumn of 1953 I was in Derby and met the Oread in their heartland; – The Bell Tuesday nights. Though my earliest experience of climbing had been through the Birmingham College everything came together in 1954 and my recreational interest was firmly established on mountain and moorland with the Oread. The spirit of the Club in the fifties was ‘mountaineering regardless’ – written into the Constitution. I soon discovered that *diretissimo* on the crag, as on mountain and moorland, was the watchword. Orpheus Wall, Top Sail, Trafalgar Wall at Birchen, Apple Arete, Finale Wall and Och Aye Wall at Gardoms were regular test pieces. The majority of the Club however preferred routes like NMC Crack, Whisky Wall and Moyers Climb. But the meet I enjoyed most during my first year with the Oread was the Marsden Rowsley walk. As Richard Gilbert wrote some years ago, “For many of us mountain walking provides the most elevating experience of all both literally and figuratively”. Just as Arthur Dolphin’s death in the Alps, described as ‘An End’ in Harold Drasdo’s book, so Black Hill, Bleaklow, Kinder and the Gritstone Edges were a beginning for many Nottingham/Derby climbers in the 1950’s. The Oread membership went from 35 in 1952 to 83 in 1955.

Having walked and climbed with the Club ever since the early 1950’s, from the mountains of Snowdonia, the Lakes, to Scotland, the Alps and Himalaya, I always come back to the Peak District.

BIG COUNTRY

“It’s big country out there”.

P. Jones (Early morning mantra)

Follies of 1956: Penmaenmawr to Bryn-y-Wern

P. R. Falkner

Prologue

Many years ago, when I was a young lad, I used to spend my summer holiday with my people at Penmaenmawr. From there I used to make excursions into the mountains, and, venturing a little further each year, in 1943 I succeeded in walking from Penmaenmawr to the top of Snowdon. In later years I looked back on this feat not without certain pride, but nevertheless regarded it as a piece of juvenile folly which I would not care to repeat. This year, however, with the Colne – Rowsley walk deleted from the Meet List, someone (Penlington, I believe) decided that a new marathon must be invented. So it came about that at 10.30 p.m. on Friday, the 1st of June, I found myself bivouacking in a wood above Penmaenmawr in the company of four other maniacs (and more arrived later), bent not only on repeating my youthful exploit, but extending it to include Moel Hebog and thus to end at Bryn-y-Wern.

The Event

We all rose at first light on Saturday, and before we set off arrangements were made with our gallant lady drivers – Betty in the Bedford, and Janet in the Pilot, – to take our gear and meet us at strategic points en route, to supply us with food and pick up casualties. (I was going to say simply “to attend to our needs”, but then realised that the average Oread would certainly misunderstand my meaning.) The cars thus functioned as mobile canteens and ambulances.

A start was made at 5.30 a.m. In the lead were four enthusiasts, Penlington, Pettigrew, Hayes and Russell, who had a wild notion of including all 14 “dreitausers” en route. The other group, Dearden, Parslow, Kershaw and Moore, (Mike), confined their ambitions to reaching B-y-W by any reasonably direct route. Somehow I became separated from both groups and did most of the walk on my own.

The weather rapidly deteriorated and we crossed the Carnedd summits in heavy rain and a furious gale – conditions which threatened to exhaust us all very quickly. Fortunately, the weather began to improve about 10.00 a.m. and for the rest of the day, though generally cool and dull, it was not actively unpleasant.

Descending direct from Carnedd Llewelyn, I reached Glan Dena at 10.40 a.m.; actually before the cars. The “enthusiasts” arrived about 11.00 a.m., having already stained their escutcheons by omitting Yr. Elen. They set off again at 11.30 a.m. for Tryfan and the Glyders, whilst at the same time I set off for the Devil’s Kitchen col. The other party arrived at Glan Dena just before we left. Ron Dearden retired at this point.

From now on, apart from contacting the car drivers at Nant Peris at 2.00 p.m., I was on my own until nearly the end of the day. Ascending Snowdon via Cynr Las, I reached the summit at 4.30 p.m., whilst the enthusiasts went via Crib Goch and were naturally later. At the summit was a B.B.C. mobile T.V. unit, which I presumed to be awaiting Pettigrew’s arrival. I contrived to make a brief appearance before the cameras, then set off down to Beddgelert. The final pull up Moel Hebog was distinctly tiring; rather reminiscent of the pull up Win Hill at the end of the Marsden – Yorkshire Bridge Walk, only much more so as Moel Hebog is much bigger. Just below the summit I was delighted to meet the two surviving enthusiasts, Bob Pettigrew and Geoff Hayes. We reached the summit at 9.00 p.m., and feeling very weary but mightily pleased with ourselves, plodded into B-y-W at 10.00 p.m. The others had all crossed into Cwm Pennant by Bwlch Cwm Trwsgl (N. of Moel Lefn) and arrived half an hour earlier.

Support party: Betty Gardiner, Janet Penlington — *Editor*.

THE BRAZILIAN CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER EDITORIALS (EXTRACTS)

Newsletter, September 1955

Joe Brown will lead the world's hardest rock-climb and a new grade will have to be invented for it. The C.C. will refuse to follow Continental practice and just call it Grade VIII. An attempt on the world's seventeenth highest peak by a party of Brazilian schoolmistresses will be unsuccessful.

D. C. Cullum

Newsletter, November 1955

For me the most remarkable feature of the Dinner was the letter signed by three Brazilian ladies and read to the assembled multitude by our President. (How gratifying to learn that the fame of the Oread has spread so far, and that our "big sporting journal" finds readers in such distant lands.) These ladies apparently blame me for the failure of a party of Brazilian schoolmistresses to climb the world's seventeenth highest peak (by the way, can you name it?). I hasten to assure the ladies that in bringing this failure to the notice of the O.M.C. I intended no slur on Brazilian womanhood. However, as their letter seems to call for a reply, here goes.

Firstly, the picture of me alleged to have been sold to the ladies by a man with "much hair and glasses". I cannot imagine what was the object on my chin, said to resemble a dirty rabbit's tail, unless it was a fault in the negative. However, the fact that the ladies were "very disappointed *Senoritas*" leads me to believe that the pictures were not pictures of me at all. For how could any lady be disappointed?

Secondly, I must flatly deny the accusation that I said Brazilian mistresses were inactive in their sport. I said "schoolmistresses" (a totally different thing, in England if not in Brazil) and I said "our sport" (which may or may not be the same thing). I have never doubted that Brazilian mistresses are indeed "very serious in their sports" and "have much action". But rather than give the ladies proof, as they demand, that they are not active women, I demand proof that they are.

Thirdly, regarding the claim that I am known in Europe as a fast sportsman and have much influence – this I admit.

Fourthly, a simple matter of a scholarship. "*Monstrum nulla virtute redemptum a vitiis*" does not mean "a monster who's vices are not counterbalanced by a single virtue", but rather "a giant who's virtues are unsullied by a single vice". Modesty forbids further clarification of this point, but really, ladies, if you only knew.

But just a moment one hesitates to impugn the integrity of our President but why is the envelope containing the famous letter addressed in correct Portuguese to "Senor H. Pretty" while the missive itself commences in Italian, "Signor Presidente"? And why is one of the stamps on the envelope Brazilian and the other Mexican? Could we – all who were present at the Dinner – have been the victims of a hoax? Could it possibly be that the President's three Brazilian mistresses are not real people at all?

D. C. Cullum

These Newsletter Editorials had unexpected consequences since they upset Brazilian lady mountaineers and resulted in correspondence from their leader S. Carmello O'Higgins and ultimately, to her attendance as a guest at the 1960 Annual Dinner — *Editor*.

“SOME MEETS ARE LIKE THAT”

J. Kershaw

JOINT MEET WITH M.A.M., BRYN-Y-WERN BONFIRE NIGHT, BLACK ROCK SANDS

November 1956

Extract

Only one President was present at the meet. We must have scared the one belonging to the M.A.M. However, ours, just to show that he is superior to normal mortals, went swimming. The first thing we knew about it was when a naked figure hurtled down the beach wearing what appeared to be a beard and sporran, and disappeared into the sea. Members were too staggered to take any action and allowed him to have his swim and get dressed again. Later on, however, when he went for another swim, he was joined by Mike Moore, and this time the alarm was given in time. Two naked figures were hotly pursued seawards by the “mob”. One member, who had a surfeit of enthusiasm, ran in after them until the member concerned realised that paddling in climbing boots was uncomfortable. Rockets were lit and fired at the swimmers. Roman candles were lit to illuminate the scene and to fire at the naked human targets. No direct hits were scored but some very near misses were registered. Chestnuts and potatoes were roasted and eaten, songs sung in the firelight, and then everybody returned to Bryn-y-Wern and bed.

BULLSTONES CABIN

Autumn 1956

Extract

It was Lord Jim who offered us the pearl (cultured of course) when he spoke of Dylan Thomas. If you should see Moore equipped with a green plastic mackintosh, you will know that the wheel has come full circle. In any case it is probably sheer exhibitionism.

That night I dreamed. I was occupying a castle (of which R.A.Hodgkin spake) and as I remember it, Jim Bury was drawing the rent. There were men about me, dark and cadaverous, when suddenly a door was flung open and upon the threshold stood one, more lean, dark and cadaverous than any man I have ever seen. He wore a wolfskin cap and hung about his neck was a board on which was written in bold Trajan letters “JOHN WELBOURN, BAILIFF.” There rose a great cry and amid the noise of thunderclaps I awoke to hear another voice from the outer darkness shouting “— Is Mike Moore there?” It all seemed a bit inconsequential for I knew that Moore had been living in castles like this for years. On coming to I recognised the voice of Geoff Hayes – my watch gave the time as 1 a.m.

Moore, who thought the intruder was a gamekeeper, kept on confusing the issue, but the facts were gradually established.

Geoff, with three companions, had come the hard way via Derwent Edge and Margery hill. It had taken them six and a half hours from Yorkshire Bridge. Having found us in the course of a solo recce, Geoff returned to fetch his party who were waiting in the shelter of rocks some distance away.

Outside, the wind was getting up and it was raining. Inside, peace and quiet returned. Only the ghost of Gibson roamed abroad.

H. Pretty

RETURN FROM BULLSTONES

Autumn 1956

Extract

Two complete strangers were witness of the final scene. They observed with open incredulity the efforts of Len to heat soup on the rocking floor of a third class compartment. One can only assume that Len put on a special show for their benefit for his stove had behaved with perfect propriety among the draughts of Bullstones Cabin – and in defiance of his efforts to drown us all in a nauseous mess of tea and brussels. Within the space of ten minutes he produced every kind and size of flame but the right one, and managed to engulf us in dense blue smoke. The strangers left at the next stop. They spoke as though it was their destination, but we thought they were seeking air to breathe and the company of persons less addicted to pyromania. It is perhaps fortunate that Jim was not wearing his plastic mac; that Len never so much as mentioned Buenos Aires; and Mike spilled sardine oil only on himself and the President. Otherwise they might have thought us very odd. (others: Len Hatchett, Jim Kershaw, Mike Moore, Laurie Burns).

H. Pretty

A LITTLE LOVE GOES A LONG WAY

RETURN FROM BRYN-Y-WERN

Boxing Day 1956

Extract

Boxing Day dawned bright and clear, little did we know that most of the roads in North Wales were blocked by snow, and therefore it came as quite a shock when we heard the news over the radio. Bird and I set off on the homeward journey about 2.30 p.m. with Janet perched in the back for the short run to Tremadoc. However, we had only progressed about fifty yards when we became bogged down in the snow, wheels spinning madly. Ice-axes and six man-power soon dislodged us from this first drift, but this state of affairs was repeated several times before we eventually fought our way to the main road near Dolbenmaen.

The Tremadoc – Caernarvon road was found to be very “dicey” and we slithered from rut to rut into Portmadoc with hard packed snow grating on the sump and beating against the underside of the wings in a terrifying manner.

Janet (Hughes – later Penlington) was deposited at Portmadoc station and Bird and I, little realising how soon we should be seeing that outpost of British Railways again, pushed for Maentwrog. The causeway was crossed, we paid our 6d at the toll and from then on things began to go wrong. The snow became deeper and more compact so that we soon found that a number plate is an inefficient snow plough. At one point we found ourselves out of control and heading for the wall at far too great a velocity and it was then that we decided it was time to pack in We turned round and ploughed back into Portmadoc. The rest of the journey home is a tale of looking for a garage on Boxing Day in Wales, of cold railway compartments, and even colder waiting rooms, of six hours in a sleeping bag on No. 4 platform, Crewe station, of continually swigging to keep out the cold, and other little odds and ends, like *getting engaged*, arriving at work late and then falling asleep over the desk. Anyone got a set of tyre chains to flog?

Paul Gardiner

GLENCOE

Easter 1956

Extract

Gerry Britton provided the car; Dave Penlington contributed a most handsome gadget – a most comprehensive piece of equipment, which cooked, washed up, aired sleeping bags, carried the rope, stimulated, inspired and simultaneously insured against all those rigours which beset us in the wilderness – he called it “Miss Hughes”¹.

From Stanton-by-Bridge to Glencoe in eight hours – overnight – to find Parslow, Turner, Kershaw & Co. encamped in Glen Etive.

“A rock climb on the Buachaille”, said Penlington.

“An easy one”, said the drivers – recollecting that Penlington had snored the hours away beneath a great heap of sleeping bags. “Crowberry Ridge”, said Penlington, “— a moderate route”.

The Buachaille is of an almost constant shape when seen from any point within the Eastern quadrant – a most confusing fact – so we consulted the book again, stretched our respective imaginations and thought it a pity that Murray couldn’t have found someone who could draw the mountain in a recognisable fashion!

The second pitch was surprisingly hard – no belay in 110 feet, and D.P. ferreting about on toe holds. Gerry and myself traversed crab-like on to easier ground. The weather was perfect – we climbed in shirt sleeves.

A series of short entertaining walls followed. We professed to recognise the V.S. alternative fork in Crowberry Gully to our left. (All good front men can recognise at sight, preferably from a distance, the famous V.S. alternatives). Shortly afterwards Penlington was balancing about on the flank of an overhanging nose. It was a hard moderate, and it wouldn’t go; so down into a snow-filled gully bed to find an exit by the right-hand wall where it grew upward to the roof of a shallow cave. We spied Crowberry Tower at the head of its ridge a long way to our right.

Apparently we had wandered without particular merit on to D Gully Buttress and, as someone once remarked to Smythe when he confessed to having merely connected different pitches of half a dozen routes on Lliwedd, – “You haven’t done a real climb at all then”.

Harry Pretty

¹Janet Penlington (née Hughes) — *Editor*.

A LITTLE HISTORY

ERIC BYNE COMES CLEAN (*EXTRACT*)

Newsletter, May 1956

Now I have reached the age of no shame. If I don’t wish to follow on a rope up a hard climb, I no longer feel guilty of cowardice, but answer complacently, “Ah, but you should have seen me a quarter of a century ago”, when Clifford Moyer and I began rock climbing in 1927.

So let’s begin then, and in my own modest manner I will tell you how good I was, so that you can compare the past glories with the shell you know now – you’re getting this for nothing remember.

I was on the “Dole” and trying to satisfy my mother’s ambition, which was to see me an expert banjoist like my Burton-on-Trent grandfather and uncles.

Face climbs at first appalled me. I had a highly developed sense of fear which, coupled with strength to weight ratio, usually meant that I could quite safely lead and climb the V.S.'s of our day, simply because fear and strength gave a clutch on handholds which would not be denied. Yet the fact remained that a hard lead on a face usually meant a nightmare afterwards. Believe it or not, I did make one or two hard new face routes, and yet doubt whether I should receive any credit for these. After all they were accidental, and only "went" because fear took hold and strong clutching hands took control and hauled the body up instead of allowing the brain to balance the body down. A typical example was the Count's Buttress on Stanage Wall End, a climb not repeated until Arthur Dolphin proved it still possible in 1950. Another route was the Tower Face Direct on Wall End, and the second ascent of this has been deferred until Easter of this year, when Peter Biven clawed his way up this unrelenting wall. I warned you I was going to tell you how good I was.

And so the years rolled on. I founded the Sheffield Climbing Club in 1933, and discovered that all my friends were better climbers than I. I went to the Lakes for the first time and, during a week of incessant heat wave, exhausted my companions (amongst whom was my future wife) by dragging them along to the ascent of nineteen climbs in Langdale, on Scafell, and around Great Gable, and all this on a diet of boiled potatoes, scalloped potatoes, fried potatoes, baked potatoes, raw potatoes, and bread. That's what a holiday on the "Dole" meant – and so you can imagine how like a millionaire I felt when a week later, I wrote an article on Moss Ghyll, sent it to the *Out of Doors* magazine, and received two guineas for it.

I was reaching my Peak form in 1934 when I came to Birmingham on the back of a lorry, with 10s.0d. in my pocket, and two heavy suitcases (mostly containing climbing gear). You've got to admit I was tough to come to a town like Brum! Could any place be more God-forsaken to one who had climbed every weekend on gritstone for six years? No Crag! No money! What would you do chum? I had a job with poor wages, but could manage to get to the Peak about once every six weekends. The remaining five I used to travel about on foot exploring the town. Sunday nights were spent in the Reference Library wading gradually through the complete set of the Fell and Rock Journals, and on one occasion I was "nabbed" at 10.30 p.m. by a copper who found me climbing on the town Hall. However, he too was a climber, a Cumberland native, and knew my landlady who came from Welsh Wales.

Then I had a break. J. W. Puttrell (God bless his name and memory) introduced me to E. W. Steeple, and the latter sponsored my membership to the M.A.M. I was the "baby" of the club, and they thought me mad. I gave them a lecture on grit which was so long-winded and detailed that it had to be continued at a further date. However, it brought me friends – R. E. W. Pritchards, the companion of H. M. Kelly, and Harold Restall, the kindest and most generous personality I've ever met. He took me to Wales, to the Cotswolds, to the Peak, and we climbed regularly together – and I repaid him by handing him over to the Sheffield Climbing Club's fiercest tiger on a joint Stanage meet. Harold climbed more V.S.s that day than all the rest of his climbing life and it's still a mystery how he managed to navigate his Morris Isis back to Brum. Perhaps the car should take the credit, for it's the same one he still uses, despite the passing of 20 years, and if it's possible for a car to possess a soul, then the Isis must certainly come within that category.

This period saw my wife and I putting up new routes on the Wall Buttress of Gardom's. Of these the best being perhaps the very severe Right Hand Crack. It was a hard lead. It still is a hard lead, and if you don't believe it, ask Ernie Marshall. He could tell you a tale about this crack.

After this, deterioration began. Lack of climbing opportunities during the War led to this, and when hostilities ceased I began to meet the new school: Harding, Dolphin and others. Then I knew that as a rock climber I had never been in the top class. My own trivial efforts could not be compared with those who produced such daring ascents on the cliffs of Llanberis, the precipice of Cloggy, or the steep crag of Gimmer.

Fortunately, at this time I met the "Burton Oread", liked Harry Pretty's flowing handlebar moustache, and remembered taking George Sutton up Blind Man's Buttress on Cromford Black Rocks, early in his career. The Guide Book work was beginning, and George and Harry's part in this is now history.

However, my rapidly declining standard on rock could no longer be denied. But my ego received a boost at this critical period. First I took over the Organisation of Meets for the M.A.M. Then White Hall was opened and I was able to exhibit my remaining talents to complete novices and, finally, the Sheffield Area Guide Book was published and proved a best seller. Life was rich, my friends many and sincere. The Oread made me President, then exalted me to Honorary membership. The Mountain Club saw fit to offer me Presidency. And so here I am, in all my glory, rich in friends numbering amongst the hundreds. I feel there can be no doubt that I must be good, despite the fact that George Sutton has been known to call me "stubborn", and Harry Pretty has said I've a "single track mind" (however, they are privileged). In view of all I have written, my ego needs but one more thing. I think I would be satisfied if Jim Kershaw were to pen a poem or ballad in my favour.

Yet perhaps even this would not satisfy my desires, for there is something else I would wish if it were possible – and that is, I'd like to go back – to see again Colin Kirkus on Stanage; or Maurice Linnell in Robin Hood's Cave; to follow Cliff Moyer up one of his face routes; to sun-bathe with Derrick Ritson, even to repeat the Robin Hood Girdle with Toni Nicholson; a Toni who started up Inverted V fully clothed and, several hours later, descended Flying Buttress completely nude except for socks.

ERIC BYNE

Newsletter (Extract), November 1957

The last time I was in Abbey Brook Cabins to sleep was about 1931, with Clifford Moyer and "Och Aye" (Jack) MacLeod. A howling wintry blizzard raged outside and idly with a pencil, I wrote on the wooden wall:

"First it friz and then it blew,
Then it friz and then it snow,
And shortly after then
It friz, and snow and blew again."

Perhaps this is not quite correct but anyway it was something like. It's a small world. I was walking down Millers Dale and Water Cum Jolly in the company of Harold Drasdo of White Hall and a number of tough-looking youths from Saltley College, when suddenly the bearded lad beside me burst out laughing, and as I gazed at him with amusement, he apologised and said, "Ever been in Abbey Brook Cabins?". "Sure", I said, "Before you were born though – why?". "Well", he replied, "I've always wanted to meet a guy called Eric Byne who wrote a verse on the wall, which often makes me laugh". Can you beat it?

LETTERS . . . TO THE EDITOR

MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

Summer 1956

Dear Editor,

I would draw your attention to the article on Kuhtai in the March/April issue of the newsletter. I quote from the first paragraph ".....solved the problem of continental travel once and for all – have a sleeper" From my experience, this idea turned out to be a complete shambles!

On the outward bound journey to Austria, we were to connect up with the sleeping car at Aachen. So far so good! We had reasonable bunks and a not too broken night's rest. We requested a call for 7 a.m. the next morning, as we had to change again for the rest of the journey. At 9 a.m. we awoke with a start and looked out of the window. We were in

railway sidings and quite, quite alone – no more coaches, no engine, and, to our horror, no conductor or official in sight. The fifteen or so travellers gathered together for consultation and after a while demanded from a passing linesman, in our best German, to know where we were. He informed us we were in Munich sidings but couldn't say where we were supposed to be going, then wandered off whistling. Nobody dare leave the train to trot back along the tracks to the station as sundry engines kept puffing along the lines and shunting us on to different sets of lines. Eventually, 4½ hours later, we were rescued by an efficient looking engine and hooked on to a passing express. Through all this, we reached our destination 10 hours late.

We were naturally very wary on the return journey and so were delighted to discover that our sleeper had H. & C. running water, fitted carpets, wardrobes, and all mod. con. We spread ourselves out in this luxury, practically unpacking all our ski-ing gear, and settled down to a last bottle of wine and a good night's rest. However, such luck was not to be ours. At 2 a.m. there was a horrible grinding noise and we came to an abrupt halt. An agitated official came rushing down the corridor, yelling at us to get out, "Schnell, schnell", and we very hastily dressed and packed and jumped down on to the rails, thinking the train was on fire at least. It turned out that the back axle had broken. So we were pushed headlong into another train, which had pulled up alongside, and spent the remainder of the journey to Ostend on hard wooden seats, trying to catch up on our broken sleep.

And then I am recommended to "have a sleeper" – it's worth the extra quid": Not b—likely! From now on I take to the air.

"PEGASUS"

Dear Sir,

I was delighted to read in the May Newsletter the amusing, but no doubt apocryphal, account of the experiences of your correspondent "Pegasus" on the Continental Railways; it might almost have been culled from the pages of Jerome Klapka Jerome's *Three Men on the Bummel*, or should it be the Alps in 1864?

However, I can assure you, Sir, that we are unlikely to emulate his misfortunes, and, if I may, I will quote from the Travel Agent's plug:- ".....these coaches are the very last word in modern transport. By day the compartments have the appearance of superior 2nd class accommodation deep soft seats and large wide windows. By night the attendant (it should read attendantes – curves like linked Christies) transforms the interior into a sleeper Three wide foam rubber berthspillow and blankets reading lamps air conditioning" Etc. etc.

The fact lives up to the description, and one travels in this style, in one compartment, from Calais to Innsbruck. As far as I can see, there can be no snags – one can drink unlimited quantities of "vin ordinaire ouvert", and sleep until 9.00 a.m. with an easy mind.

I can only assume that "Pegasus" is a bloated plutocratic spendthrift and not a penniless proletarian like myself. Let us hope that his wings prove to be better than those of Icarus when he reaches the alpine sunshine!

Yours faithfully,
Ernie Phillips.

"Pappenhacker says that every time you are polite to a proletarian (sic) you are helping bolster up the capitalist system". Scoop, Evelyn Waugh.

No mention of "penniless proletarians"— *Editor*.

NEW BLOOD AND FUTURE VITALITY

Newsletter (Extract), February 1957

Dear Sir,

It is unreasonable to expect the same people to remain quite as keen year after year. The little band of youthful enthusiasts who built up the Oread in its early years are no longer quite so youthful and most of them have acquired ties and responsibilities of some kind. Also some of the novelty is bound to wear off. I still enjoy climbing on Tryfan and Stanage, and I hope that I shall go on doing so for a long time yet, but I will freely admit that I cannot get as excited over the prospect of a visit to these now familiar crags as I did twelve years ago when they were a new and enchanting prospect.

The third point follows from this. The future vitality of the club does depend very much on attracting keen young members who are coming to the hills for the first time; and I sometimes wonder if we are going the right way about this. These cosy family parties at Bryn-y-Wern are all very nice (I enjoy them immensely myself) but are they really what the younger people want? Trevor Panther's particular brand of fanaticism does not greatly appeal to me at the moment, but ten years ago I think it probably would have done, and I have a definite feeling that the injection of a bit of neo-Pantherism into the policy of the Oread might be all to the good.

Yours,
P. R. Falkner.

Editorial comment

Newsletter, December 1957

NEW BLOOD

Unpleasant stories have been circulating recently whose general burden is that more than one newcomer has been turned away from the Oread by the lack of welcome he has received; by the fact that members were so engrossed in their own little cliques that he could find no-one to climb with. If these stories are true (which I hope is not the case) they reveal a very shameful state of affairs indeed, and one which would have been inconceivable two or three years ago. The Oread has always in the past opened its heart to strangers; it was in fact its remarkable feeling of camaraderie that attracted me to it, and I am certain that that goes for a lot of other members too.

D. C. Cullum

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose — *Editor.*

CRAG SNIPPETS

DAWSON'S ROCKS

Newsletter, April 1957

Reference to an earlier article by Brian Richards describing climbs with Wilf White at Anchor Church (Ingleby) and Dawson's Rocks (sometimes referred to as Carver's Rocks).

Sir,

I have just received the Oread Newsletter for February and thought Brian Richards might like to know that Peter Harding and I did five or six routes, mainly S and VS standard, at Dawson's Rocks between 1945 and 1949. One I remember vividly, we called the Swashbuckle. It went over a rotten overhang near the middle of the cliff. Other climbs we named Oak Tree Crack, Stonnis Slab, Ash Tree Groove, Gorse Groove and Beech Corner. I doubt if I could identify these – at least without a visit!

Yours,
Tony Moulam.

The 1949 Oread also climbed at Dawson's Rocks — *Editor*.

WHITE HALL ROCKS

Newsletter, August 1957

All this waffle about which Sutton did the White Hall rocks guide – let me reveal the horrid truth. That indefatigable writer of guide books, Uncle Eric, despatched the inevitable wad of notes to Geoff Sutton, who asked me what I thought about them. When I had exhausted my full range of blasphemous comment, having but recently rescued the then President of the Oread (one H.P.) from a dilemma on these same cliffs, we decided on a fateful evening just to have a look at the crag again. Of course, the first climb Eric told us about in Mosedale's day was up a detached buttress (this, of course, is not unusual on White Hall rocks, since nothing is attached very firmly to anything else). By sitting on the main crag, six of us put our feet against the detached buttress and pushed – thus erasing one climb in entirety from any future guide book. It was some hours before Eric deigned to speak to us again – but as you perceive this setback did not deter him from writing his guide notes. On this fateful evening, I just missed Geoff Sutton's head by knocking a rock out of a V.S. which I was imprudent enough to climb (on a top rope). Several other near misses occurred. Eventually we gave up. If Geoff has since been on these cliffs, he is madder than I thought – they should be blown up! (New members, please note – there will be no blood feud or libel case between Eric Byne and myself – he knows me too well, and I've said the same thing for years anyway!).

George Sutton

CASTLE NAZE

Newsletter, November 1957

Vandals have levered off the top of Castle Naze Pinnacle, and the crag therefore is without a pinnacle.

TREMADOC – SCRATCH

Some few years ago a new group of cliffs was discovered near Tremadoc, climbing commenced, and some very fine new routes were worked out by members of various climbing clubs.

I heard about these cliffs some five years ago when the main climbing centres were the Llanberis Pass and the Ogwen Valley. It was said that these cliffs, being near the coast, provided excellent climbing when the higher crags were shrouded in mist and rain; this is quite true, but to get on to them and really enjoy the climbs fine weather is recommended as the difficulties can be as great as many in the Llanberis area.

I did one or two of the easier routes, and then two years ago I started doing some of the more difficult ones in the company of Harry Smith and Trevor Jones. One day Trevor and I went to do one of the harder routes called Scratch on a day that was damp but not raining. Trevor, who had done the route before, elected to lead and climbed without much difficulty to the first stance. This was a grass ledge apparently stuck to the face of the very steep slab by grass and mud alone; the belay was a very small spike. After I had joined him he led across the face of the slab to the foot of a very steep groove which constituted the crux of the climb. I joined him at the foot of it and he began to layback up it. I could see that the finger crack was greasy and the wall for the feet green, and as his rubbers kept slipping it looked to me that a descent would be necessary. After much grunting and groaning Trevor decided (as I had already) that it would not go that day. After changing positions I began to descend to the grass ledge and found that though the ascent of the slab had been fairly easy the reverse was not the case.

After a little time I managed to perform a descending mantleshelf and alighted on the grass ledge, feeling it shudder as I did so. I considered that the belay was not good enough to hold us if a slip occurred, and as the ledge seemed liable to collapse I decided to insert a piton. Trevor negotiated the wall with difficulty and as he let himself gingerly on to the ledge I felt it descending like a lift under me, slowly at first, and then with increasing speed. Trevor shouted: "Hold me!" which I tried to do whilst still descending, until with a slight jerk we were arrested by the rope through the peg. It quivered, but with a great feeling of relief I realised it was well and truly in, and Trevor by this time suspended from me facing outwards on the steep slab. I slowly lowered away until he was able to obtain footholds. Our descent continued without further mishap.

We vowed afterwards to handle gently in future any sea cliff grass which obviously had not the tenacity of the "Cloggy" variety.

Ray Handley

Originally printed in the M.A.M. Journal 1958.

TIMES CHANGE

"TEMPORA MUTANTUR, ET NOS MUTAMUR IN ILLIS".
(HARRISON 1577)

1957 and 1958 were significant years. The Golden Oldies period was drawing to a close. An unforeseen crisis, concerning Bryn-y-Wern, enforced some hard decisions.

Charlie Cullum had lost some of his enthusiasm as Newsletter editor. He complained at lack of articles etc., and noted that, since his move to Manchester, he was no longer at the centre of club affairs. But in 1957 he continued to publish forceful Editorials fully up to the high standards that he had maintained since 1953. Extracts are reproduced below — *Editor*.

*Editorial (Extract)**Newsletter, January 1957*

Two mountaineering tragedies occurred almost simultaneously during the last few days of 1956, one on the highest peak in Britain and the other on the highest peak in Europe. In neither case was anyone hurt in a fall; in both cases uninjured parties attempting to descend were killed by exposure. And there the parallel ends.

The Nevis victims were inexperienced in Scottish winter mountaineering, although they were all good rock climbers and one had led an ascent of the Matterhorn – but the weather on Nevis at Christmas is likely to be more violent than that on the Matterhorn in midsummer, and the snow and ice conditions much worse. And although one newspaper said they intended to spend the night on the summit, they were not equipped for sleeping out. They also made a number of errors of judgement. First, it was rash to continue with their ascent of South Castle Gully in a blizzard when they could at least have got to the C.I.C. hut or the distillery, if not Fort William. Benighted in vile weather and unable to descend they chose a poor place for a bivouac and failed to construct any kind of a shelter. And perhaps the lone survivor erred in leaving his friends while he went for help, instead of flogging them into some kind of physical activity. But no one who was not there can pass judgement on that. However that may be, as soon as the alert was given parties set out from Fort William and spent three days searching the mountain in bad weather for four youths. Even when three bodies were found and it was certain that the fourth was also dead, the search for his body went on, at no small risk to the searchers, who knew that their efforts must be in vain.

This reflects great credit on all concerned, but who would have backed out? It is both a natural reaction and a moral obligation for a man to do all he can to help persons in desperate circumstances. No swimmer would refuse to go to the help of a drowning man; nor would any mountaineer fail to do all in his power to save fellow-mountaineers when they were threatened by death. Or so one would have said a month ago.

Vinedon and Henri slowly froze to death on Mont Blanc because a whole town full of expert mountaineers refused to lift a hand to help them. It was known by the evening of December 26th that the two students must be in serious difficulty, but although December 27th and 28th were gloriously fine, not a solitary guide set off to look for them. The French Air Force made several attempts to rescue them by helicopter, which continued during the bad weather of the last days of December, and which might have succeeded but for the crash in which a pilot was injured. Terray arrived in Chamonix on the 29th and went up the mountain the next day in foul weather with four others – all the support he could find. This gallant but pathetically small party turned back without reaching the doomed men, after misunderstanding a message from a helicopter. Their leader declared that if the guides had gone up in the good weather of December 27th, when the alarm was first raised, they could have effected a rescue without great danger or difficulty, for the snow conditions were not bad. But the guides of Chamonix had failed in their trust.

The Nevis victims were comparatively inexperienced and ill equipped. They got into difficulties because of the inexperience and consequent misjudgement. They died in spite of the endeavours of their would-be rescuers.

*D.C.C.**Editorial (Extract)**Newsletter, May 1957*

In this issue is a letter from Ernie Phillips on the subject of litter. He speaks of "abominations in Langdale", and he speaks truly. Broken beer bottles on the summit of Bowfell were taken there by climbers, not Teddy boys. And the Achille Ratti Hut, next door to Raw Head Cottage, suffered damage at the hands of campers who broke in, and who must have been the owners of nice respectable cars which were parked outside on Easter Monday. Also at Easter, property in Borrowdale was maliciously damaged. The heap of cans and bottles in the Llanberis Pass reached an intolerable level a long time ago. Now the pertinent questions are, who is responsible, why do they do it and what can be done to prevent them?

There is no doubt that Teddy boys and other youngsters of a like outlook are in some measure to blame. The police are doing their best to deal with them, but the most effective measures are probably those adopted by the locals, notably in Langdale. These measures are of a homely nature, like pitching the culprits into rivers. But I hope and believe that the cult of vandalism for its own sake is a passing phenomenon, and that rough and ready self defence will probably tide us over.

D.C.C.

Editorial (Extract)

Newsletter, September 1957

In an Editorial I had been going on in pontifical tones about the uses and misuses of climbing ropes, and just as I reached the final peroration the typist put these words into my mouth: "False SECUTIRY is worse than none at all". Oh yes. I quite agree. If I couldn't have the real thing I'd rather do without altogether. Nothing worse than this shoddy imitation stuff hanging in festoons all over the crag. It's as bad as an Irishman demanding shamrock when over in Ireland there's whole mountains full of the genuine article. Real secutiry for me every time.

And then someone, writing up a new route, said, "Step out on to the fact of Marble Wall." Well, when you've been climbing on friction for the last fifty feet there's nothing more comforting than a good solid fact to step out on. This proves, if proof were needed, that a lot of modern routes aren't really there at all. They exist only in the imaginations of the people who climb them. I'm not suggesting that they don't actually climb them, only that they aren't there at all for ordinary people. A mod. Diff. is a fact. An XS isn't.

D.C.C.

BRYN-Y-WERN

The following items appeared in Newsletters for February, March, August and December 1957

Mrs. Hall, the owner of Bryn-y-Wern, is in the process of selling the estate. Her price (£5,000) is hopelessly beyond our means, and at present our only hope appears to be to negotiate a new lease with the purchaser, if any.

The minutes of the previous A.G.M. having been disposed of, Harry Pretty spoke about Bryn-y-Wern. Mrs. Hall had wanted to sell the estate but had changed her mind. She was unwilling to sign a ten-year lease in case her son wanted to live there. The Club has been given first option on the purchase, but the Committee had decided there was no chance of raising the £5,000 demanded. The present position was that we had paid rent up to the end of 1956 and Mrs. Hall had now promised to sign a three-year lease.

Bryn-y-Wern was recently offered for sale in the Manchester Guardian, though we are still negotiating for a three-year lease. The Club has not been officially notified.

The news about Bryn-y-Wern (see Oread in Shorts) is most disturbing. Of course, if the estate were sold it would not necessarily mean that we should lose the hut. In all probability the new owner would be willing to sign a new lease. The disturbing feature is that when Mrs. Hall nearly sold the estate last year, we asked her to give us the first chance of purchasing it if she decided after all to sell. We are at present negotiating for a longer lease.

Yet we have not been told officially that the estate is up for sale. The whole thing is being done almost surreptitiously, behind our backs. Of course, Mrs. Hall is not under any legal obligation to offer the property to us, but she is under a moral obligation. This by-passing of the Club does not suggest very good faith, and makes one wonder what sort of relations will exist between our landlord and ourselves if after all she should fail to find a purchaser.

Sir,

A point has now been reached where further discussion, negotiation, or search, is pointless unless there is an immediate response for a loan (in connection with a new hut). The North Wales district has been scoured several times. Many houses and buildings have been investigated and owners interviewed. Our need for a Club hut has been made known in any quarter where it was felt to be profitable. All with little success. The result is that it is now considered that the immediate purchase of a house or suitable building is the only solution, and that the renting or leasing is impracticable. One house is under consideration; that is by the church in Cwm Pennant, the probable price being in the region of £500.

However, obviously no approach can be made to the owner without something in the kitty, and it is imperative that this is done in the immediate future, for two reasons. First, the owner is undecided whether to sell or retain the house for renting to visitors on a weekly basis, and second, when the nuclear power station project (at Trawsfynydd) gets under way all the available accommodation will be absorbed and a demand created which will place prices beyond our reach.

The Club membership exceeds 90, and even allowing for disinterested members, and those abroad and in H.M. Forces, the average loan required is only £7 – £10. Consider, for a loan of £7–£10 you can secure permanently a place in the hills. It would cost this amount to rent a house or even a caravan for one week in high summer, and you most certainly wouldn't get it back. A very few visits would repay you for the inconvenience of the loan. The actual terms of the repayment will be made clear by the Committee if any actual progress is made.

In my opinion if the appeal is unsuccessful any further effort with regard to the hut would be fruitless.

If anyone knows or can find a suitable place where the owner will come to terms, please come forward at once. The furniture from B-y-W can be transported there.

L. H. Burns, Hon. Treasurer.

BUT SOME THINGS GO ON FOREVER

In March 1957 Phillip Falkner took over the Presidency as the crisis over Bryn-y-Wern was about to unfold. But outdoor Meets, and other rites of passage, continued unabated. Jim Kershaw, at the height of his powers, also entertained. Pettigrew was about to go east for the first time.

THERE WAS TROUBLE ON KINDER THE OTHER WEEK

The aristocracy had gone,
 The landed gentry sunk to low estate,
 The shooting rights on Kinder's barren lands
 Were leased through agent delegate
 To a financial brotherhood,
 Seeking to wash with feathered blood
 The taint of commerce from their hands.
 Rag and bone kings and magnates in cotton
 Assumed the sport of long-forgotten dukes.
 A guard of keepers stood with gun in hand
 To turn away with shot and foul rebukes
 The gentle trespasser upon the land.

National Parks and rights of way
Were granted for the public use,
The People's Park Police were formed,
The Nag's Head made a calaboose
And some spare bureaucrat or other
Appointed the climbers' Big Brother.
Where formerly we roamed at will
Avoiding far-flung keepers,
Now voluntary Polizei
Sleuthhound our steps in creepers.

J. Kershaw

OREADS IN SHORTS 1957, 1958

Bob Pettigrew is now at the Outward Bound Sea School at Aberdovey, and flies out to Malaya in July ("to help Pete Cole found the S.E. Asia Section of the Oread"). Bob has recently been elected to the Alpine Club and consequently is entitled to drink with Falkner once more.

May 1957

During the day Peter Janes and Ray Handley had been arguing about the quickest way to get to Cwm Sylin from Bryn-y-Wern. The argument ended in Peter betting Ray he could run back to the hut quicker than Ray could motor back. Peter did the run in the fantastic time of 35 mins, but Ray beat him by 1 min. They agreed it was a close race and called off the bet, much to Janes' relief.

June 1957

The new C.C. journal contains accounts of several new routes by Oread parties. Pity they didn't think of putting them in their own Club's publication first.

June 1957

Ronni Phillips and Margaret Hooley, occupied in taking up the bathroom lino at B-y-W., found behind the lavatory waste pipe a perfume bottle labelled "Sweet Pea".

June 1957

The weekend of 28th/29th June provided us with a remarkable and perhaps unique occasion. It was the 30th Anniversary of Eric Byne's advent to climbing. To mark the event The Oread, The Peak, and the Mountain Club held a Joint Meet on Birchen Edge. Never have so many tents been pitched at Moorside Farm – approx. 60 I believe. On any other occasion it would have been nothing less than appalling – unless you like having some other person's guy lines running over, through, and across your tent. Ernie Phillips, hemmed in on all sides by tents of a lesser vintage than his own, resembled a light opera "Gypsy King" struggling to maintain the dignity of his Boer War W.D. surplus equipment. Mike Moore, close by, might have been one of his profligate sons.

Eric was there of course and appeared to be suffering from the royal malaise of overmuch hand shaking. There were people who hadn't been seen in years - Albert Shutt, Don Morrison, Eric Morrison - and a score of others. Dick Burger was to be seen, looking more Burgerish than ever. Nan and Keith Axon were there, and all in all it was a splendid gathering. For once, there was none of the usual

ennui when “for he’s a jolly good fellow” caught on towards the end of the party at the Prince of Wales. There were close on 200 climbers, active and retired, at the party and I doubt if there was a single one who did not have some reason to be grateful for the circumstances that led Eric Byne to find his spiritual home on the watershed moors of his native city thirty years ago.

Don Morrison (of Sheffield) has recently returned from Canada where he has been climbing and working. At Eric Byne’s instigation he discovered the grave of Cliff Moyer in the R.A.F. Cemetery at Neepawa, not far from Winnipeg. Moyer was killed in a flying accident during the last war and apparently is well remembered by the people round about.

June 1957

Pettigrew arrives in the Far East ...

I arrived in Ipoh by air after a flight of four days via Germany, Italy, the Middle East, India, Burma and Siam. Jack Tucker, who has a fund of stories about Kanchenjunga and Huagaruncho (South America), the acting warden, met me off the plane and we travelled by car to the West coast at the mouth of the Dindings river where the school is situated. Across the Dindings channel opposite the school the heavily forested island of Pankor provided cover for men of force 136, including Freddy Spencer Chapman engaged in espionage and guerrilla warfare in Japanese occupied Malaya during the last warto be continued — *Editor*.

November 1957

But before he left ...read on:

14 PEAKS AND ALL THAT

R. G. PETTIGREW

Newsletter (Extract), August 1957

The weekend June 28/29th is listed innocently enough in the Club calendar as “Welsh training Walk” to be led by its instigator Dave Penlington.

As a club institution it is youthful since this was the first anniversary of the mountain crossing from Penmaenmawr to Bryn-y-Wern in the Pennant valley. There is little doubt that the original plan arose as a direct result of the abandonment by the Club of long training walks over homeland moors such as the Marsden-Rowsley and later the Colne-Rowsley. These were subjected to a good deal of adverse criticism because the limits were expanding and the pace increasing until Rowsley was once reached in under twenty-four hours from Marsden. That was not a good time, but it illustrated that the Oread had the potential to approach the great feats performed by the Bog-Trotters, one of whom Alf Bridge, is now an honorary member of the Oread. Destructive criticism such as the taunts of “Cross-Country runner” and the like should not deter those who wish for good general fitness in preparation for the Alps, or else-where, from attempting ambitious mountain walks. By this means, stamina and speed, qualities for which average British parties in the Alps are not noted, can be improved, the resulting efficiency makes for more enjoyable ascents and a greater margin of safety.

I have long been an avid protagonist of long mountain walks and, together with Falkner and Penlington, have taken part in all those organised by the Club.

Now Geoff Hayes, Jack Ashcroft, Mike Smith and others are carrying on the tradition whilst some of us must absent ourselves from the Oread scene.

On Friday evening, June 28th, two Oread transports rolled out of Derby on the first leg of Penlington’s celebrated Welsh Training Walk. Their arrival at the dubious campsite was staggered by

some three hours - Falkner getting his head down first, owing to the lure of fish and chips in St. Asaph, and an unusual quarry approach to the campsite advocated by R.G.P. from the navigator's seat in the Trojan.

The mean time spent in sleep by the two parties was under three hours and by 4 a.m., the participants were roused by Hayes, obviously under the erroneous impression that he had to meet the newspaper special. The ladies having received sealed orders for the day, Messrs. Falkner, Penlington, Ashcroft, Hayes, Smith and Pettigrew departed Craig Lwyd and headed South at a good pace.

Stopping only to write "Penlington" on a grinning horse's skull, the party moved over Drosgl into dubious navigational conditions.

I summarise the remainder of this Pettigrew opus — *Editor*.

06.00	Drum
07.00	Foel Fras
07.45	Carnedd Llewelyn
08.15	Yr Elen
09.40	Carnedd Dafydd
10.00	Pen yr Oleuwen: Cyril Machin provided tea at Glan Dena
12.00	Tryfan: Penlington had foot trouble and withdrew from 14 Peaks
13.15	Glyder Fach: divided into two parties
13.45	Glyder Fawr: (Pettigrew and Hayes only)
14.40	Y Garn (Ditto)
15.30	Elidir Fawr (Ditto)
16.00	Nant Peris
17.00	Snowdon summit (Ashcroft, Falkner, Penlington)
18.15	Crib Goch (Pettigrew, Hayes)
19.00	Snowdon summit (Ditto)
21.00	Yr Aran (Pettigrew alone)
–	Forestry camp site: Pettigrew rejoins Hayes
22.30	Moel Hebog (Pettigrew, Hayes. The other party passed over Hebog at 21.20)
00.30	Reached Bryn y Wern (Pettigrew and Hayes. The other party arrived B-y-W at 22.35)
	Total distance! 44 miles, 14,000' of ascent.

The 1998 brand of young Oread is not noted for this kind of punishment training prior to the Summer Alpine Meet — *Editor*.

BUT THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES

MOUNTAINS IN SPACE

HARRY PRETTY

Newsletter (Extract), August 1957

By Loch an Leaothaid we fished and shortly five 8 oz. trout were lying in the heather. On the southern shore of Leaothaid, which is three quarters of a mile long and 500 feet above sea-level, there is a camp site that mountaineer's dream of among the industrial grime of a winter's day in the Midlands. There, you find a strip of pink sand by the water's edge; much of it chewed up by the countless feet of thirsty deer. Behind, rises a steep amphitheatre dense with ancient twisty oaks, birch, and rowan; and lush

with fern and moss. A mile to the east is the long west cliff of Quinag. Three miles away is Drumbeg on what must be one of the worst roads in Scotland - and long may it remain so. Twelve miles away by track and road is Lochinver. Nine miles by similar means is the Inchnadamph Hotel. The remainder is wilderness.

For myself I shall remember Loch an Leathaid as it was on the evening of June 29th – the solitary figure of Brooker, thigh deep in the shallows, – a black shape moving slowly across a broad avenue of light that glittered down the water. A lone Northern Diver fishing in his own polished fashion on the edge of the light blaze. The only noise the intermittent humming of the reel and the light splash of minnow touching water. "Are you tired of watching?" said Brooker after several hours. "No", I replied, for this was the kind of night that had to last a long, long time.

ROCHES TO BUXTON

JIM KERSHAW

Newsletter (Extract), November 1957

Tents were packed at 2 p.m. and we followed the ridge of the Roches for some way, descending to the Dane via Blackbrook. Three Shire Heads was reached across country with an interesting diversion in the river, and the site of the S.C.C. roadman's shelter (Five Inns, '54 – see Gibsonian folklore). A lane running along a somewhat rusty stream was followed to Orchard Farm and a track past some old mine-shafts led on to Axe Edge.

The sky was cloudless. We watched the sun sink behind Orchard Farm, ridge on ridge of low veldt-like hills silhouetted by the warm smoky glow of the last daylight. In the East the moon had risen, faintly illuminating our path to the Buxton road.

It was one of the finest December days I can remember. For the rest, we met the Nottingham University M.C. returning from castle Naze and were kindly offered seats to Nottingham, a pleasant hour being spent in a pub between Ashbourne and Derby.

Example of frequent meetings with other clubs, all known to each other and assistance with travel so generously given. — *Editor*.

CHRISTMAS AT BRYN-Y-WERN 1957

RONNI PHILLIPS

Extract

Christmas day dawned, breakfast was eaten, some of the men cut fire wood, and some were dispatched to fetch the milk, which turned out to be a long errand as they were unable to pass the Cross Foxes without entering and sampling its wares. Some went climbing and walking and the rest of us, mainly the women, started to prepare our Christmas dinner. 90 potatoes were peeled, 180 brussel sprouts and 15 spanish onions were prepared. 60 bacon rolls were stuck on skewers, 10 pints of soup were made, 6 chickens were carved and their stuffing removed, 16 tins containing peas, beans and carrots and 10, containing fruit for fruit salad, were opened by John Fisher (I gave him this job to strengthen his arm in readiness for when he begins snatching teeth in earnest). 6 Christmas puddings were boiled, copious quantities of bread and rum sauce and gravy were made. Cheeses, biscuits, butter rolls and coffee were laid out. By 6.45 p.m. David arrived with the ice cream and by 7.00 o'clock everything was ready and we all sat down as one big family to eat. I don't think anyone complained

about leaving the table still feeling hungry. The washing up and deck clearing operations were organised by John Fisher as usual, and everyone finally collapsed in the lounge where desultory drinking continued until the early hours of the morning.

The rest of the holiday period was marked in many and various activities. Parties climbed on Silyn and Tremadoc and the Snowdon Horseshoe was circuited under excellent conditions, although Pretty only managed to stay the course after ministrations of hot soup on the summit by a boy scout!

June Telfer was "initiated" on the summit of Snowdon by the Vice-president and Secretary, but details of the ceremony are known only to those present.

KERSHAW ENTERTAINS

DERBYSHIRE WEEKEND

Newsletter, January 1958

Ashbourne is a friendly sort of place. Moore, Geoff Hayes and myself arrived there on Saturday hot on the trail of Welbourn who had left for Dovedale on foot. It began to rain and I was persuaded into waiting for the Ilam bus by the other two members of the party who refused to follow my example in buying a pac-a-mac (price 17/4d).

It arrived eventually.

Now the Ilam bus isn't really a bus at all; it's a sort of rival time machine, say 50 years in reverse. Cold Comfort characters share their seats with a crate of fowls, an old sow or two, oblivious to eccentrics in anoraks.

We stepped back into 1957 and the rain at the Isaac Walton, and set off for the stepping stones and Dovedale (myself in pac-a-mac, value 20/-).

Just past the point where you always fall in the river we came across a group of huddled figures outside a cave. They spoke and pointed upwards to where Welbourn had disappeared in search of an old Valkyrie campsite.

Impressed at this well-deserved translation to a higher plane of existence, we retired into the cave and discussed the rival merits of a memorial on the spot, or at Stanage, but were relieved to have him back with us a few moments later in a most ungodly condition. The whole party proceeded to Halldale where tents were set up in high wind and heavy rain.

Sunday morning was fine and sunny. Moore, Geoff and myself setting off for Hartington, Welbourn and party pegging on Ilam Rock, and walking over to the Manifold. It soon began to rain again, Moore and Geoff eyeing my pac-a-mac enviously (value 30/-). We followed the usual path up Milldale and Beresford Dale, tried a scree run down the side of the valley, all going well until a short cut over a bridge which no longer existed, involved us with the serpentine bank of the Dove and brought us into a Hartington bar with a cloth on the pumps and all the farewell sadness of late Sunday dinner.

We ordered a pot of tea, eyed the polished horse brass on the walls and rafters, deplored the weather, and memories came back of previous visits to the Inn.

It is unfortunately possible to walk through Lathkill dale to Bakewell from Hartington. Moore and I were persuaded to do so against our better judgement, as it was still raining and I was obliged to refuse Moore's offer of £2 for my pac-a-mac.

I don't need to discuss the Hartington-Lathkill walk. Most of you have done it in your younger days. There isn't much to it really if you keep walking and talking - time soon passes and you find yourself walking downhill into Bakewell wet through and wondering what the hell you do it for.

The black wet misery of a winter evening stimulates the mind into activity. The night's particular fantasy took the shape of an Oread national Anthem, (tune - Jerusalem), something to sing in your bath at Bryn-y-Wern,

It might go in the following manner:

“And did those feet in Gibson’s time
Walk upon England’s mountains green,
And was the President himself
Upon the gritstone Edges seen?

etc. etc.

And was the Oread builded here,
Amongst these Welsh Touristic Hills?

Try it yourself and you'll probably get stuck on the second verse as I did.

We finally ended up in a Bakewell café where Moore was delighted to find that I was as wet as he was in spite of the pac-a mac, and, assuming his impeccable Yorkshire accent, shamed a number of walkers from Sheffield into silence.

That’s about it, really, except that I had a day off on Monday to get over it. Healthy pastime, mountaineering.

LLANBERIS JANUARY 1958

A Bus Passenger

(Attrib. Jim Kershaw)

Surely such an occasion cannot pass by without a mention in the Newsletter. For the first time in many months a bus was being run and furthermore filled to capacity. All credit to the Meet Leader, Pete Gayfer and the many prominent and distinguished motorists who were to be seen mixing with their more pedestrian fellow members. No Bishop graced a tramcar with less condescension. No election candidate handled a noisome brat with as brave a smile.

A bus certainly fosters a sense of unity amongst its passengers. It could hardly be otherwise when thirty-odd individuals are confined together in a steel box on wheels for several hours in acute physical discomfort. There is a feeling of suffering nobly borne for the good of others, of a brotherhood sharing a common disaster. For a brief time Oread is fettered to Oread as inescapably as felon to felon in a Georgia chain gang. The hour of liberty and release is awaited with the same longing. Was America hailed by Columbus with any more joy than The Mermaid, Atcham, on a Friday night by the Oread?

One of the highlights of the outward journey was the distribution of railway travel literature by Moore at Lichfield. Most of it was converted into three-foot long paper darts, which sped about the bus to the danger of passengers. It brought to mind those travel analogies which are used to explain relativity to the layman.

Bolts of lightning striking a railway track simultaneously in front and behind a moving train. Observer A on the embankment, with a set of mirrors and Observer B precariously balanced on top of the train with a similar apparatus. When A is opposite B will the lightning flashes appear simultaneous to both of them? Knowing British Railways it all seems highly irregular, especially when the train is speeded up to 186,284 miles a second to simplify the problem.

What about the poor devil on the roof? Will not A be somewhat startled at the sudden speedup of the 8.10 to Dragthorpe?

I always like the one about the physicists in the lift falling freely down an immensely high building in accordance with Newton's Law of Gravitation. There is a degree of justice in physicists being used for the problem.

I admire the scientific detachment which they display in these alarming circumstances. They experiment with small objects from their pockets, and watch their coins and keys float around weightless in the air.

It is perhaps going a little too far to transport them (still in the lift) into outer space, and wind them on a cable by some supernatural force, or attach the lift to the rim of a huge merry-go-round. Deluded by the restoration of gravity they think all is well again, and eagerly await release on the ground floor of Steins Superstores. Even a physicist deserves some consideration.

To get back to the Llanberis Meet. The more affluent members of the party alighted at Pen-y-Gwryd, and those with historical interests at Pen-y-Pas. A considerable number of people also attempted to camp in this area, including Betty and Paul Gardiner, and Pete Gayfer. Phil Falkner stayed at Ynys Ettws, and Moore, Hatchett, Pretty and myself camped near Cwm Glas Mawr. John and Ruth Welbourn, John Bridges and several others went in search of the Chester Club Hut.

The erection of tents in pitch darkness and heavy rain, on a foundation of thawing snow was most unpleasant. I hadn't got a torch and spent a considerable time feeling around for aluminium tent pegs in the snow. When I had got the flysheet on I crept inside to find that the Lilo plugs were missing, and spent some time tying pieces of torn handkerchief around the nozzles. I was fortunately spared the necessity of making fire having remembered to bring matches. The primus stove was soon going full blast and drying out the tent. Before long I was warm inside a sleeping bag and eating chicken soup.

Saturday was fine with a glimmer of sunshine breaking through the clouds, although the bulk of snow had disappeared from the low-lying ground. Hatchett, Moore, Pretty and myself made our way up Cwm Glas and Parsley Fern Gully in soft snow. Frequent stops were made for the photographers in the party. What happens to these photographs? Only a small percentage of them find their way onto a screen. I suppose it is a modern twist to the time honoured "look at the view" method of regaining one's breath. At the top of the gully we met John and Janet Ashcroft and David Widdows who had finished a day on Snowdon and were descending. We followed their example but by a different route and after reaching camp and cooked a meal, were transported to Pen-y-Gwryd by Ernie Phillips. Here we found the campers from the Pen-y-Pas area, who had been washed out, and Geoff Thompson.

The return journey of the coach was rather uneventful. We learned that conditions in the Chester Club Hut were not quite up to Bryn-y-Wern standard, and that the one leak in the roof was over John Welbourn's bed. There was the usual stop at Shrewsbury for food and drink; the familiar few hundred yards of street which is all one ever seems to see of Shrewsbury. Wilfred Thomas Pinches was incredibly enough the new landlord at one of the public houses. The portcullis was lowered over the Gents in the square. The Bass house next to Gullet Passage had been modernised inside, but spared the accompanying jukebox. The one armed man was no longer behind the bar. The funeral white wash of an empty shop window underlined the ironic epitaph; "Dulleys Successful Seeds". Perhaps he has moved to less stony ground.

There is something about bus meets. When they are a thing of the past, which need not be for some time yet, the memory of them will linger on.

Some Flying Dutchman will flicker along A5 on a Friday night with Jack Ives at the helm, and a crew of damned souls in the seats eternally searching for the pure maiden who alone can bring redemption.

A phrase drifts on the air for a moment as they pass, ".....mysisterscats", a familiar haggard face with blood shot eyes looks out of the rear window.

THE HOUSE, HEBRIDEAN WANDERINGS 1957

Extract

Jim Kershaw

A sombre deserted land hemmed in by grey cloud and steep grass slopes, wet slabs of rock gleaming from loch and sea, to the west.

I turned the headland, crossing an old wall healed green into the hill and followed the track of cloven feet down to the tide. A mile away was the house, an empty walled croft, black wounds gaping in the slate roof of the barn, deer stealing away up the hill. I was alone with the cry of the gull that circled my head on the incoming breeze. Its harsh satirical laugh followed me as I dodged the paws of the sea lazily stretching between pink and white starved islands of turf, guarding mysterious bottles, bleached bones of wood, matted grass and seaweed, the drifted harvest of the spring.

At length I stood before a half opened green door, and, entering, found the usual litter of a deserted house, a tin or two, a scattering of fleece on the floors, damp lifeless ashes in the fireplace, names scrawled in pencil on the paintwork, nothing of interest except the yellowed pages of a newspaper pasted on a wall revealed by boarding stripped for the fire.

My interest grew as “The Scotsman 1902” promised the cure of alcoholic excess, drink and drug habits. “The Graphic 1899” advertised cigar cutters and sovereign purses. The “Graphic” was a Boer War issue containing early photographs; “Our men cutting off the retreat of the Boers from Papworth Hill, position 1,200 yds. from the enemy”; a drawing in a series of Heroes of the War, “The private who stayed all night with his wounded officer after the battle of “Elands Langte”, the gentleman in question leaning back against a fallen horse surrounded by dead Boers and succoured by the private who was no doubt his butler in civilian life; “Life in a camp on the Mooi River which was lately shelled by the Boers; soldiers washing their “togs’ on the bank”; gentlemen in topees, trousers rolled to the knees, a daring view of a shirtless man in long toms looking the other way; a curiously prophetic note in a satirical cartoon of infantry mounted on traction engines pursuing the enemy, a drawing of the Kaiser shooting at Sandringham with three companions, the ground littered with dead birds, two ladies looking on passively.

I left the house, fifty years dropping away as I climbed the zigzag hill path into the mist, and I thought about the Boer War, and my own war, and whether there would be a house somewhere in half a century’s time treasuring a day from the past, lonely for the cry of the seagull, the step on the threshold that never came.

PANTHER REMEMBERS

Some of us have very definite beginnings to our climbing but mine was so gradual that I do not really know when it started.

As a boy, I was brought up, from the age of eight, in North Wales, so the effect of climbing and mountains on me was part of my growing process – hence the difficulty of stating when I really started.

After many years of reflection, I believe that one instance in 1946 was the event which has welded me to the hills forever ...

It was about December, 1946, I was just 14, and living in Llandudno in North Wales. From near my home I could see many of the hills of Snowdonia, including Carnedd Llewelyn and the cliffs of Craig-yr-Ysfa, although they did not mean a great deal to me then. On this particular morning in December, 1946, the air was fresh and clear. Much fresh snow had fallen on the mountains and the early morning sun shone with incredible brilliance. The dazzling white mountains stood out, sharp and clear, into a

deep blue sky while the air was crisp and utterly invigorating. I had never experienced anything so beautiful, or exciting before – how I longed to be up on those snow covered mountains ...

That moment has gone forever but its vision often returns to me. But alas, I can never quite recapture the feelings I had as a boy. Then all was new and mysterious – now I know too much about mountains, and I am never surprised, even on rock climbs or on mountains which I have never seen before. A deeper appreciation however, more than makes up for this.

Trevor Panther, January 1958

. . . AND PERFORMS

FIRST ASCENT OF “FINGERTIND”, LAKSELVTINDER, LYNGEN, ARCTIC NORWAY

Standing on Dick Brown’s shoulders I felt around for some place to fix a piton. On my immediate left was the vertical, and part overhanging, north face falling in an unbroken bound of 2,000’ to the Andersdal Glacier. On my immediate right was the wall of the “Fingertind”, up which we had just come, and the upturned face of the third man, Bob Pettigrew, some 100’ below. Beyond him, some 800’ of slabs swept down to a small snowfield.

Unable to find a crack to take our thinnest peg I stretched up, and up, until my fingers closed over a small hold. A series of fierce fingerpulls, accompanied by quivering muscles and quick nervous breathing, followed.

Suddenly I was on top. We had succeeded and I could not stop myself letting out a violent shout. Screwed up nerves burst forth uncontrollably.

The descent was pure joy. A couple of fine abseils and a long trudge down in magnificent Arctic lighting saw us back in camp after 17 hours.

Trevor Panther

THROUGHOUT 1958, the committee, and others, were enmeshed in the developing crisis over Bryn-y-Wern, but other activities prospered in the Peak District, the Lakes, Wales and Scotland and the first Oread boot was planted on Himalayan snow — *Editor*.

SUILVEN

FRED ALLEN

Newsletter, June 1958

After lunch we cached our sacs, uncoiled our two 120’ medium weight ropes, tied our rubbers to our waists and walked over to the centre of the face, having decided to climb the first 200’ to a grass ledge. At which point we would investigate the main face. Leading through pitch for pitch we found the rock dry, giving very good friction. The holds were rounded and the climbing similar to gritstone. The only disconcerting feature was the apparent lack of runners, we only used four on the complete climb.

The 200’ took us about 2 hours and we arrived on a grass ledge, which appeared to encircle the face. At this point we should have decided whether or not to go on, but somehow the thought seemed to have been lost. We were on the climb and intended to reach the summit of the mountain via the

remaining 600-700' of vertical face which now towered above our heads. The right hand side looked our best bet, apart from a line of overhanging rocks which we would have to turn, as we had no equipment to surmount them. However, the mountain seemed to look on us kindly, and we thought it would yield a route.

I led off, belayed, Peter¹ climbed, led through, on and on for hours, – the climb seemed never ending. From one of the few good belays we looked at three possible ways of climbing upwards, none of which looked very inviting. After trying the one I favoured three or four times, I asked Peter if he would like to look at it, which he did. After manoeuvring about for a few minutes he went up with a quickness which astonished me, and probably himself. Almost immediately he came to another impasse which he simply had to climb, as he could not reverse. After some ferreting about and dislodging a few lumps of grass he found himself a minute hold which enabled him to surmount a tricky mantleshelf, then he was away out of sight for another 70'.

The overhanging blocks which had caused us some misgiving were passed by traversing towards the centre of the face. After passing them on our right we gradually traversed back again to the right. It was getting on for 7.00 p.m. when Peter, with a shout, announced we were near the top. Another pitch, and we were on easy rock. After scrambling up another 100' or more we were on a grass dome, not very wide, indeed one could walk from edge to edge in a few seconds.

Grading this climb on the hardest pitch, we thought it mild severe.

¹P. Janes.

Interesting, and perhaps typical of the time, that the route was climbed on sight with no previous or even subsequent interest as to whether it had been done before or whether any previous record even existed — *Editor*.

WASDALE

WHITSUNTIDE 1958

Postscript

I observe in Chris Martin's account that Ron Dearden was accompanied by "his wife". I wonder if Miss Ashcroft has heard about this? – or for that matter has Miss Dearden heard about Mrs. Ashcroft? No – that can't be right since Miss Dearden is now Mrs. Turner, and Mrs. Ashcroft was a Miss McHarg – hm! It is all very confusing and, what with all this intermarriage and the possibility of incredible permutations from future cross breeding, it is likely to become worse – I give up anyway – and so will Jack Ashcroft when Ashcroft junior (male) ups and marries a Miss Dearden and there is a progeny of second generation Ashcrofts – and what relation will they be to the first generation Mrs. Turner? – What a genealogical shambles! — *Newsletter Editor (H.P.)*

And response

..... Finally I was interested to read that I was camping in Wasdale with "my wife". My wife-to-be was even more interested as she happened to be in Wolverhampton at that time. Perhaps it would be a sound idea for the Oread to take out an insurance policy to cover the Newsletter against the risk of libel action.

Yours etc.

R. V. Dearden

ERIC BYNE'S ANNIVERSARY MEET

BIRCHEN EDGE

Newsletter, August 1958

Several Oreads made a recording for the B.B.C., Midland Region, during the recent weekend at Birchen. The emphasis of the short recording was amended by the Producer, when he heard of the reason why so many climbers had congregated at one place. He decided to include Eric in the programme and record on the spot rather than at Stanton-by-Bridge, which was the original idea. The recorded conversation very briefly covered the change that has come about in gritstone climbing during the last 30 years, and went on to discover what (theoretically) happens to youngsters when they first enter the orbit of a mountaineering club. Of the Oread, Ernie Phillips, John Welbourn (using his South Col voice), Malcolm Hunt, and Harry Pretty spoke. Laura Pretty, not to be outdone, contrived to drop a hard object onto a tin lid during the live recording. It was nicely timed to suggest a clanger being dropped in the background at the end of her father's peroration.

A NOTE FROM ALF

Newsletter, October 1958

Alf Bridge has been climbing in the Alps with Raymond Lambert this summer. The following is worth quoting from a letter received by Eric Byne:—

"I have had some very good climbing in the Alps, though the snow conditions were far from good. On one out standing day we traversed the Dom and the Taschorn, and on another day I managed four 4,000 metre peaks in the day. In 12 days I managed 40,500' all above 6,000' level".

VOICE FROM THE EAST

Newsletter, April 1958

Returning from the Far East R. G. Pettigrew calls in on Kulu

My dear Charles,

I suppose you could call this a "news flash" regarding Oread in the Himalaya. I am very glad to tell you that Michael Thompson (Kings Dragoon Guards ex Ipoh) and I are planning to visit the Tos valley and attempt a mountain called Indrasan about which little is known. In fact survey work done in the 1920's has never been completed. According to the A.C., Indrasan is a high mountain (22,000 ft.), and a difficult one, that is unclimbed and not properly surveyed. Furthermore it appears that if this were our main objective, and we succeeded, we would have pulled off a harder thing than Deo Tibba (of which I have never heard) and done a useful piece of work withal.

From India I shall be returning gladly to the haunts of the Oread via Marseilles and Paris.

If I remain with the Trust it seems they might send me to Africa.*

Bob Pettigrew.

*They didn't, otherwise the history of the entire continent could have been different.

R.G.P.'s initial reconnaissance of this area gave rise to the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition 1961, and his further exhaustive exploration of the area during the ensuing years up to and including the 1990's — *Editor*.

SAHIBS IN SHORTS

(EXTRACTS)

Newsletters 1958

However I decided to explore the approaches to Indrasan and Deo Tibba by way of the Jakatsukh Nullah, third down on the left from Manali. Everyone advised that I take a Ladakhi porter and thinking: "Harry Pretty will love this!" * I engaged a likely looking chap named Wangel who had had experience with the R.A.F. Himalayan expedition. He also accompanied Mrs. Dunsheath's party, of which Eileen Gregory of the Polaris M.C. was a prominent member. See "Mountains and MemSahibs". Originally he only wanted to carry 20 seers (40 lbs) – this included 30 lbs of his own bedding and food! However, when informed that Sahib, who tends towards the left, intended to carry an equal amount, he grinned acquiescence. We both staggered away from Manali bearing 70 lbs apiece and Lyngen days were only too vividly before my eyes. There followed four very interesting days of valley trekking in stages. The last stage in knee-deep snow from a fine cave bivouac, giving me one of the most strenuous days I have ever known and confirming my worst fears about Spring mountaineering in the Himalaya. Many Yeti-like tracks were seen, obviously made by the ubiquitous brown bear. To cap it all, during the return to Manali by a very high level Ibex high wire walk, contouring across apparently vertical grass of the worst order known to Vibrams, I was nearly erased by a well-aimed rock avalanche from a tottering face 600' above us. "Sahib, Sahib", shrieked Wangel through the dust cloud from a quickly attained vantage point. "Om mani padme hum" said Sahib emerging.

R. G. Pettigrew

* R.G.P. remembering his lowly classification as "the bloody porter", Lyngen 1951 — *Editor*.

Robert Pettigrew is once more among us and, on the slightest provocation, that hideous laugh together with an exhibition of the finest set of teeth in the Oread, can now be heard and seen (respectively) in the Bell of a Tuesday night. It is reported that the "King of the Arctic" and the Prince of Kulu (Designate) arrived in Paris in typical fashion. Only after he had been narrowly missed by a wide variety of missiles (he was, of course, standing in the back of a hired vehicle of unspecified make) was he persuaded of the hostile nature of the crowds in the Champs Elysées and the Place D'étoile. He was apparently difficult to convince that the mob was not there to welcome him back from his mission in the East; and the news that he had been mistaken for a Gaullist Agent Provocateur, by left wing demonstrators marching towards the Arc de Triomphe, was something of an anti-climax.

Mrs. Pettigrew, who was there to meet him, recognised immediately his shocked condition and insisted that he go to bed for a prolonged period. He seems to have made a good recovery, and apparently was able to board the Channel Steamer without assistance.

Harry Pretty

“SIXTY GLORIOUS MONTHS”

DOUGLAS CHARLES CULLUM

Newsletter (Extract), June 1958

It will probably not be news to you that I have resigned from the editorship of the Newsletter and that after this issue the job will be carried on by Harry Pretty, and henceforth, that further issues will appear quarterly. It seems at any rate neat and orderly that this change should occur on the fifth anniversary of that historic day when Volume 1 No. 1 burst upon a startled Club. Five years is a long time, and I have to confess that during that time I have slowly lost most of the enthusiasm with which I first embarked on the task of editorship. All the same I cannot help regretting that my period of office should end “not with a bang but a whimper”, as the man said.

DOUGLAS CHARLES CULLUM

Newsletter (Extract), June 1958

I am sure everyone will agree that Charlie has all along done a magnificent job. He does feel, I know, that he has not always had an adequate supply of news to work with, but any lack of stop press news has usually been compensated for by Charlie's own editorials. Whether serious, as when discussing threats to freedom of access, frivolous, as on the subject of flying whales, or romantic (e.g. Vol. 2 No. 2.) these editorials have always been first rate.

Space forbids an account of Charlie's other virtues, but for a profile, see Vol. 1 No. 9. The Club certainly owes Charlie a debt of gratitude, and also, I am sure, wishes his successor, Harry Pretty, good luck in the arduous job he has taken on.

P. R. Falkner

LETTER . . . from Marion Cooke

Newsletter (Extract), June 1958

But – and this is what has been brought home to me so vividly in these last few months – the Newsletter is a vital and significant part of the Oread, more so than the majority realise. It holds us together as little else ever will. To hear the silence in the Bell when it is distributed, should be sufficient alone, but let any of the active members try to be cut off for a few months. You will soon realise the necessity of the Newsletter continuing.

You complain that news is late – may be, but to at least 70% who do not get into the Bell, it is still News, accounts of meets are usually good and interesting and, after all, they form a large part of Club life.

THE RHINOG AFFAIR

The following contribution appeared in the Newsletter for October 1958 and is essentially a post script to the fabled Rhinog Meet, which took place earlier in that year. It was submitted anonymously under the attribution of “Special Correspondent”.

An office in Derby:- the place of employment of those two professional gentlemen: Mr. D. Widdows and Mr. H. Pretty. Also to be found at the same address is Mr. Harry Townsend, who has only recently recovered from his ordeal on Win Hill (see Marsden-Rowsley 1958). The following conversation is barely audible above the din of mating pigeons in the roof space overhead. This particular office, occupied by Widdows is knee-deep in ancient tatty drawings, old clothing, overturned litter bins, empty matchboxes, technical pamphlets specialising in advice for the unmarried but virile young man

about town, old racing calendars, and a healthy accumulation of pigeon droppings. There is an abominable smell of Sobranie Hashish, and what light there is shows the walls to be painted in a kind of creosote pink.

The characters in order of speaking: H. Pretty, D. Widdows, H. Townsend, and an unsavoury, though diminutive person by the name of Hawkins.

- H.P. *(Entering through matted undergrowth of old chair and table legs)*
 “Hey Widd., what about that article on the Rhinog Meet?”
- D.W. “— ah yes!”
- H.P. “What d’you mean ‘ah —”
(He is interrupted by a violent grating sound which turns out to be the voice of H.T.)
- H.T. “Rhinog meat – Good God, what’s that?”
(He is ignored – as far as it is possible to ignore some-one 6’3” tall, with an ugly bullet head and a voice like a clapped-out steam-roller)
- H.P. “I was going to say – when am I going to get it? – Don’t want too much, And nothing that’s overdone”
- H.T. “Half a second mate – what is Rhinog meat, and where the hell d’you get It anyway?”
- D.W. *(a bit dim as usual)* “The Rhinogs are in Wales – Wales, y’know – hills and things, mountains ten times the size of Win Hill”
- H.T. *(Irritated by sneering implication)* – “I know all about that but what about these Rhinogs – thought they were extinct years ago”
- H.P. a kind of groan
- D.W. *(getting dimmer)* “Rhinogs – extinct! – just what are you nattering about Townsend?”
- H.T. *(wiping pigeon dropping off his blazer)* “No need to get chuffed Widdows – I meantersay – Rhinog meat – it’s a bit thick”
(During this outburst Hawkins enters, clad mainly in a large off-white topee which serves both as crash hat when mounted, and as protection from the pigeons during office hours)
- Hawkins – *(who considers himself something of a naturalist)* “Rhinogs – ah! now that’s interesting. That’s what I would like to know where do they meet?”
- D.W. *(Now completely lost)* “Oh, for heavens sake what the devil are you on about – its bad enough already without ...”
- Hawkins – “My dear chap – The Rhinog is a most interesting creature. They were thought to be extinct – the last recorded sighting is in a very old MS – around 1550 I believe, at a place called Caer Fadog on the Rhwng-y-ddwy afon”
- D.W. *(Incredulously)* – “What!?”
- Hawkins – “Oh yes! – but you know they’re not extinct at all. A pair were reported only last year by Franklin, – and his report has been confirmed by Welbourne-Smythe – not extinct at all old chap – In fact you want to keep your eyes open when you’re off on these hiking trips of yours.
- D.W. “Really!?”
- Hawkins – “You just keep your eyes open old chap – y’never know.”

By this time H.P. has slunk away horrified by the realisation that all editors must have to listen to this kind of verbal muck.

Post Script

Some weeks ago Hawkins sent to the office a revolting post card – a violently coloured and grossly inaccurate painting of a train approaching the summit of Snowdon. On the back was a Criccieth postmark and a simple though moving message. “No Rhinogs seen as yet – but pressing on”. I’m beginning to wonder – perhaps there are those in the Oread who could enlighten me?

Conclusion

The situation has subsequently deteriorated. An advertisement recently appeared in a Derby paper which announced that "...a few Rhinogs are now available for sale", and my name and address was given as the source of supply. I rather assume this to be a vindictive move by Townsend and Widdows who had not come out of the original encounter in very good shape. As a result of this ad. questions have been put to an eminent zoologist addressing a W.I.: arguments have raged in bars from Heage to Dalbury Lees; I have received enquiring letters from potential Rhinog owners; schoolmasters have been driven to the point of mental unbalance; a placard is said to have appeared in the Market Place announcing in bold purple letters "Rhinogs found in Wales" (which just goes to show); and Townsend in the role of agent provocateur, is said to have caused "wild scenes" in a local cinema by standing up and shouting in his normal cracked (slightly crazed) voice "They're out! – the Rhinogs have escaped!?" – whereupon people rushed into the streets in panic.

I really am beginning to wonder, for you know the word "Rhinog" has something in common with the notorious "Triffid"

 sic:– The Rhinogs and the Triffids
 were dancing on the shore
 And no man saw their strange delight
 For man – he was no more!

 It's all rather sinister

MOVING ON . . . SHAKING OFF THE DUST

When ye depart out of the house, shake off the dust of your feet.

St. Matthew (10: 14)

PURCHASE OF A CLUB HUT

Extract from Committee Bulletin 1958

Since the Club authorised the Committee to take steps to replace Bryn-y-Wern, the by-roads of North Wales have been well and truly scoured, and the estate agents of the area consulted at regular intervals.

The search culminated at Christmas (1957) when a "highly desirable" property was located at the south end of the village of Rhyd Ddu, 3½ miles from Beddgelert (Map ref. 571527, Snowdon 1" sheet.) It is a commodious house, somewhat smaller than B-y-W., in a good state of repair, with main water and electricity laid on. It could be put into commission as a Hut immediately, although we should naturally have to carry out minor alterations inside so as to make it suitable for our purpose, after which it should house about 25 Oreads.

The price quoted in the agent's "blurb" was £800, but this was negotiated down and an offer of £550 made and accepted, which seemed to be very reasonable at the side of other property that has been viewed in the area.

The method of administering the property has drawn heavily on the reserves of midnight oil in the cruses of the financial advisors, because the Club itself is not a legal entity and thus cannot own property; two alternatives have been considered. One is to set up a private Company while the other is to set up a trust. The original proposal to set up a Company has been looked into very carefully and although it is possible to do this there are considerable difficulties in the way, mainly due to the

nature of the business it would transact. What is equally important, however, is the fact that expenses incurred over the period envisaged would be an appreciable proportion of the capital involved. It is considered that this money would be better employed in repaying that which is borrowed.

The recommendation is, therefore, that a Trust should be set up to enable the Club to own the property legally: the Trustees will sign legal documents on behalf of the Club, and also see that the terms of the loan are observed. Trustees are, of course, appointed by the Club, and may be changed from time to time, as necessary, in accordance with the wish of the members in the usual way.

The growing urgency of the situation may be underlined by the fact that on Jan. 31st. the Hon Secretary received a letter from the solicitors asking for the earliest date at which the Club can vacate Bryn-y-Wern.

By the time this circular reaches you, the Club will, in all probability, have made a deposit of ten percent on the property described above, the go-ahead from our solicitor being the only thing awaited, (in spite of the fact that the response to the first appeal was inadequate). The maximum effort is required on everyone's part so that we can be assured of a place of our own, free from the whims of this or that landlord.

It is essential however that the Hon. Treasurer should receive your contribution immediately, so that the Club is in a position to complete the transaction as soon as possible.

BRYN-Y-WERN . . . OBITUARY

Newsletter, January 1959

"Bryn-y-Wern " passed away quietly on Sunday 26th October 1958. Death took place at the time and largely in the manner predicted by our consultants some months ago. Emotional scenes were few among the family and friends who had come together to witness the old lady's passing on. Old lady she was, but game to the end, she showed signs of evident enjoyment when only twenty-four hours before death she was subjected to the irreverent high spirits of those who had gathered for the wake. A more detailed account of the events that preceded the quietus is given below.

Harry Pretty

BRYN-Y-WERN . . . VALEDICTORY

Newsletter (Extract), January 1959

We went down on the Wednesday. For the last time we enjoyed the quietness and the seeming isolation of Pennant. There was little stimulus to activity for cloud sat upon the wooded green depression around Bryn-y-Wern like a lid. So we sawed wood, walked a little, and ate our meals before roaring log fires in the lounge. It was utterly peaceful in a way that is not always possible today in other parts of Wales. But, as usual, the hour was constantly in question after supper on Friday – anticipation of that Friday stream of arrivals always produces its own kind of excitement. There is never any certainty who is going to show up, or in what order, and I enjoy that period of two hours when the house is full of clumping feet, whistling kettles, steaming cups of tea, and bodies relaxing after the drive. No other part of the weekend is ever quite like this – the weekend is yet to come – the atmosphere develops and suddenly is there.

I have noticed that among the regulars there is a pattern of behaviour; distinct and immutable. There is a feeling of permanence when Ernie Phillips descends into an armchair within a minute of arrival. You know that as certain as day follows night Ronni will be in with a cup of Milo five minutes later. An air of nostalgia will envelop Paul and Betty Gardiner on the corner sofa – Laurie Burns will be

asleep within fifteen minutes of arrival. By midnight all will be quiet, but it is not likely that anyone familiar with the situation will have thought seriously about sleep – for this is merely the silence of anticipation. At 1.00 a.m. or thereabouts, there is sudden clamour that suggests the arrival of an armoured brigade. Organised marching and countermarching is taking place in the hall to the accompaniment of shouts and ringing oaths heard above the tumult of a Bacchanalian riot.

On the morning of October 25th the Janes-Handley entourage were still under the spell of a fair in Bala where they had witnessed several exhibitionist forms of entertainment that hadn't improved Burgess's blood pressure, and required all of Janes' extensive vocabulary to describe.

Saturday was divided between preliminary "demolition" and the collection of wood for the evening's fireworks. Eccles cakes and beer were also procured – Cwm Silin was visited ".....we started on the bottom left hand side and finished on the top right corner" – according to Janes.

For many of us the bare inhospitable boards of the lounge were a sad and depressing start to Sunday's departure, but the mood could hardly last amid the shambles of loading the lorry. How it all went on we shall never know. When the overloaded vehicle lurched and swayed down the hill and over the bridge we watched it in fascinated wonder – it seemed as if the journey to Rhydd-Ddu might come within the class of "high adventure". However, despite their somewhat grotesque appearance, the lashing held. No unfortunate tourist in the Aberglaslyn was crushed beneath an avalanche of chairs, tables, steel bunks, cast iron boilers and stags heads – and by 2.00. p.m. Bryn-y-Wern had passed into Oread history.

Harry Pretty

CHANGE OF IDENTITY

At the present rate of progress our new hut will soon bear little resemblance to the property we originally purchased. This handsome establishment (Quellyn Arms 2 mins., Snowdon summit 2½ hrs.) was acquired under the name of "Snowdon View". In addition to being a complete misnomer (with the present window arrangement) the name is heavily suggestive of suburban mediocrity and is quite unsuitable for a mountaineering club hut. The Committee would therefore, be grateful for assistance in finding a new name. To be in character the name should obviously be Welsh. As some guide, the following names have already been put forward "Hafod Oread" (House of Oread), "Bod Oread" (Abode of the Oread) – there is also another which means "House in the valley by the water", but I can't remember what it sounded like in Welsh. Please send any ideas to Len Hatchett, 598 Burton Road, Littleover, Derby.

Harry Pretty

ANNUAL DINNER 1958

WHITE LION HOTEL – GREAT LONGSTONE

The Annual Dinner was, if anything, better than ever this year. A total of 112 sat down to Dinner and there were others in the bar who, not having booked a place early enough, were excluded from eating but who joined the gallery during the speeches. There was a record number of official guests from Kindred Clubs in addition to the three principal guests comprising Wynford Vaughan Thomas, Alan B. Hargreaves and Tony Moulam. All of these gentlemen spoke, and I have no fear of being contradicted if I call W. V. T's speech a tour de force which more than upheld the tradition of excellence that has come to be associated with after dinner speaking at Oread functions. Charles Cullum who, in the manner of his kind, had clearly carried out a lot of research from original sources maintained, if he didn't surpass, his usual standard of pointed wit – and moreover Bob Pettigrew's reply on behalf of

the Club (delivered with clean-cut young Englishman back in the fold nuances) was not to be sneezed at, and nicely rounded off the polished performances of his predecessors.

Oliver Jones did not fail us and as usual Stan Moore was irrepresible when it came to the pinch. It was a pleasant surprise to find Clive Webb with us one more – and to see Eric Byne, – Cyril Machin and George Sutton in their proper places.

Geoff Hayes was not allowed to forget that it was his 21st birthday. Tankards were distributed as is the custom, but Geoff Thompson and Barbara (I must no longer refer to her as “his party”) declined to return from Majorca to receive theirs. We were sorry that John Adderley was unable to be there to receive his.

For once the weather was magnificent on the Sunday and a surprising amount of climbing was carried out by what had only recently been described as “a club of rakes”.

Alf Bridge, unable to attend the Dinner, sent a telegram to Alan Hargreaves advising him “to take a strong belay”. It was noticed that A.H. did not ignore the advice.

Harry Pretty

OREADS IN SHORTS

Newsletter, January 1959

Bob Pettigrew has once more engineered his way out of a Bullstones Meet (there are some people who doubt whether he has ever been there). His attendance was eagerly looked forward to in November, but during the preceding week I received a note to the effect that he had been summoned to Dublin at short notice – allegedly to the I.M.C. Dinner.

Harry Pretty

GOLDEN OLDIES 1953 – 1958

FINALE

George Sutton elected to Honorary Membership 1958

At a recent Committee Meeting George Sutton was elected to Honorary Membership of the Club. In almost every way it is a fitting climax to Sutton’s association with the Oread. It was George who really founded the Oread in 1949. He organised the first A.G.M., drafted the original constitution, and was the first Hon. Secretary. For many years he was the kernel of that small hard core of individuals to whom the Oread was not just a Club, but almost a way of life. Very few members of the Oread have ever read his first entry in the original Club Log Book. I remember thinking at the time (I knew very little of his character in those days) that he was rather overstating his case but, at the same time, I recognised what I thought to be a kind of hopeless idealism – stimulating and inspiring if you could take it seriously but not, ever likely to reach fruition. But how little I knew, and how many have been the persons who have reacted in a similar fashion since. The fact is that what he wrote expressed the idealism that has run through his life like a continuous thread and, more than that, has been translated into achievements that would have been considerable in a person trained to lead from infancy. His ability to organise, to lead both intellectually and physically; his skill in analysing difficult situations, and his readiness to take a calculated risk have been developed by the necessity of a spirit which has constantly aspired to things beyond the perimeter of the safe and familiar world. It is hereabouts that the explorer and the mountaineer find common ground, and few men have overcome greater difficulties in attaining it.

Harry Pretty



Lingen - Arctic Norway
1951 - J.P.

Lenangentind and
Stenbentind - Kvitang Gt.

A Touch of Class 1958-1970

With the acquisition of freehold premises in North Wales (Tan-y-Wydffa) the Oread took on increased responsibilities. But the period was mainly defined by a change in the characters who ran club affairs. The Golden Oldies of previous years, most of whom were either founders or very early members, declined in influence and a second wave took charge.

The first Oread Himalayan expedition (under the leadership of Bob Pettigrew) took the field and succeeding Presidents; Cooke, Ashcroft, Janes, Handley and Burgess, exerted a strong Alpine influence as becomes apparent from contributions to contemporary Newsletters. It is in this context that the late Geoff. Hayes distinguished himself. From 1963 to 1970 he edited the Newsletter and, with unrelenting energy, became the very fulcrum of Club activities both at home and abroad.

FIREWORK MEET AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF TAN-Y-WYDDFA, 5th NOVEMBER 1960

The period between vacation of Bryn-y-Wern, October 1958 and the opening of Tan-y-Wyddfa saw essential repairs and considerable structural alteration to the new hut all carried out by voluntary labour — *Editor*.

Everyone had a wet trip to Wales on Friday evening. However, the Ale was delivered intact and tapped with all speed. The hut was full and the lounge was used to accommodate the overflow from the bedrooms.

Saturday Started fine and several parties went out to climb. Fred Allan and John Brailsford swam up Eastern Arête in sock feet. The President spent the day thinking about the jobs which should have been done by the previous working party and, in consequence, a number of people beat it to the "Fleece" at Tremadoc lest they be detailed for a job.

Everyone arrived back at the hut in time for the opening ceremony, performed by Alan Hargreaves at 4.0. p.m. At 3.59 p.m. it was found that the front door knob was nearly off and a hasty repair was carried out. A.B.H. arrived on the dot, the rain came down in sheets and a tape across the doorway was speedily cut to the click of cameras.

Pettigrew introduced Hargreaves to the assembled company in the lounge and treated us to frequent displays of that fine set of 32 which it is understood, are at present being signed up as advertising material for Gibbs S.R. A tour of the hut ensued.

Everyone turned out in heavy rain to see the village bonfire and the fireworks commenced at 6.30 p.m. The proceedings got off to rather a slow start, mainly attributed to the unfortunate absence of R. (Rocket) Handley and "Burnt Jack" Burgess, until a Pettigrew special was used to put one of the hut dustbins into orbit.

Sunday was fine, but cloudy, and parties left the hut in every direction, some to Snowdon, some to the Hebog area, and a few to the coast.

Paul Gardiner

ALLAN HARGREAVES, in opening the hut, said: "Mr. President Pettigrew, and my very good friends you Ladies and Gentlemen of the Oread Club:—"

"I am very much gratified by being asked to do this official opening of Tan-y-Wyddfa – and, incidentally, what a delightful name – I feel it is an honour."

"Perhaps you intended the invitation to be a compliment to the Climbers' Club, which would be quite right having regard to our standing in North Wales, and if so, I thank you for that in my representative capacity. But perhaps partly, at any rate, it was intended to be a personal compliment, and I have wondered why, if that is so. For about my only contact with you, apart from the privilege of using Bryn-y-Wern as a Fell & Rocker – has been my pretty awful speech at your Dinner at Great Longstone a couple of years ago, when I completely forgot to propose a toast. However, you all seemed to enjoy that Dinner, nevertheless, and so did I, very much indeed. Indeed, until 2.30 a.m. when to my astonishment I discovered that the Landlord, when he was putting me to bed, had sparkling diamonds let into most of his teeth!"

Now this is not the first Hut opening I have been at – not by any means the first – for I have been concerned, one way or another, in the setting up of all the Huts of the Fell & Rock, Wayfarers, and Climbers Club except for the original Helyg which was just a couple of years before I began to climb."

"My first opening was of the Robertson Lamb Hut in Langdale way back in 1928 when I had been appointed the first Custodian. I didn't last long on that job, as a matter of fact, I had very little time to spare from climbing for the usual Custodian's chores. I was the world's worst custodian, so they sacked me and put in Harry Spilsbury, whom many of you will have encountered, as he is still there. But the opening I remember best was when we christened the Helyg extension in October 1932. That job was done by my most illustrious predecessor Dr. Tom Longstaff and we actually did break a bottle of champagne on the door, though it was surprising how much of the stuff got caught in both tooth mugs and other receptacles, without being wasted. That was an occasion of extreme bad weather, but nevertheless we did the job outside in spartan manner."

"So now, attempting to speak as an authority on Huts and the opening of Huts, I let my mind run over this one. And, if time permits, over your Club and its present doings and intended doings."

"As I take a look at Tan-y-Wyddfa, I recall with nostalgic regret that most delightful spot Bryn-y-Wern, a house of character in a beautiful setting and a convenient, if somewhat remote, location. But here, even though this is a pretty gory specimen of Welsh architecture – excuse me, but it is true, isn't it? – you have an even more convenient location, with nearly as much room to swing cats in; and it is your very own I understand and not held on the end of a short string by some old witch of a Landlord."

"I would be interested to know how and when this building came to be built, but I guess it was put up in the 1880's at about the same time as the Railroad – perhaps even it was a Railway House? Perhaps the Station Masters? If so, let's just work our imaginations for a moment on what the old Caernarvon, Beddgelert, Festiniog Railway was like in its heyday. I remember having a ride on it once when I first came to Wales, and it was quite fun. Emmet in real life!"

"But however Tan-y-Wyddfa came to be built it is quite different, and pleasantly different now, after all you have done to it and I hope and trust you will be able to settle down happily here for a very long time. It has at least one amenity which Bryn-y-Wern had not, and that is Licenced premises only 100 yards away. I hope you are able to train them to let you in at the back door on Sundays!"

"Now I look at my watch I see I am getting 'long winded', so I won't go on to say much about your Club except that I have a high regard and respect for it as, likewise, has the Climbers Club. Small numbers, greatest average activity! But I would like to offer one word of Good Wishes for next year's Himalayan Expedition which, as I understand it, is mostly an Oread Show. The best of luck to them – and may they be borne up during their inevitable privations and harrowings on Indrasan with the thought that they have Tan-y-Wyddfa to come back to —"

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I declare this hut well and truly opened, and I hope it never folds up or falls down upon you,"

WELSH HUT CUSTODIANS

Bryn-y-Wern	1955-1958	David Penlington
Tan-y-Wyddfa	1959-1961	Fred Allen
	1962-1965	Chuck Hooley
	1966-1967	John Corden
	1968-1971	David Appleby
	1972-1977	John Welbourn
	1978-1999	Chuck Hooley

OUTDOOR MEETS, U.K., 1959-1962 – OR THEREABOUTS

WELSH WALK 1959 (*EXTRACT*)

Compiled by Newsletter Editor (H.P.)

Phil Falkner and Peter Janes were behind Ashcroft and Hayes – Phil writes as follows:–

“Mike Turner and I were on Foel Fras 07.30 hrs., Foel Grach 08.00, Carnedd Llewelyn 08.20 hrs., Yr Elen 08.40-08.45 (5 min. halt), Carnedd Dafydd 09.40, Pen-yr-Ole-Wen 10.00, Glan Dena 10.30. Peter Janes was a few minutes ahead.”

“Janes, Turner and myself set off for Tryfan at 11.00. The high speed over the Carneddus had taken it out of us, and we were not going at all well. We were hot, thirsty and Janes kept bemoaning the loss of his thermos of tea, which he had shattered on the Carneddus. About one third of the way up Tryfan Mike Turner dropped behind (I gather he omitted Y Garn, Elidir Fawr, and joined the Pretty group.)”

“Janes and I stuck together from here on. Summit of Tryfan 12.45. plagued by thirst. At Bwlch Tryfan we descended a short way to the spring for “gulpers” and washed our feet; great relief (13.15-13.25).”

“Glyder Fach 14.00, Glyder Fawr 14.30; more gulpers at the Twll Ddu stream 15.00, and rest until 15.15. Y Garn 15.45, still thirsty, found another stream between Foel Goch and Elidir Fawr. Tom Frost and a friend joined us here and stayed more or less with us as far as Y Wyddfa.”

“Elidir Fawr 17.00 descent mainly by “arsading” down steep grass. Timed our arrival at Nant Peris nicely. The Vaynol Arms had just opened. Pint shandies and biscuits and cheese 18.00-18.45 – road walk 18.45-19.15. Started up Cwm Glas 19.15. I was feeling ill, perhaps too much shandy. Grib Goch 20.45 – there I was sick and afterwards felt better. Carnedd Ugain 21.40, Y Wyddfa 22.00, still open, thank God, mugs of tea.”

“(I leave H.P. to describe the frippett). Descent rapid whilst the light lasted, then more slowly in the dark to Hut at midnight.”

As for Burns, Widdows, and the Vice-President – they lounged in Cwm Tryfan, crossed Glyder Fach, and on the far side discovered a magnificent waterfall above Llyn Cwm-y-ffynnon. Some of you may have seen the results in a series of alarming photographs that were circulating in the Bell recently. It is possible that the Photographic meet might bring to light even worse indiscretions. In the Pen-y-Pas tea was taken in a leisurely fashion and the party, augmented by Mike Turner, eventually left for Crib-Goch – on the summit of which they joined up with Hayes and Ashcroft.

To most of us the traverse from Crib-Goch to Ddysgl had a dream like quality. Laurie was sick several times, everyone suffered from excessive weakness and over-susceptibility to exposure; and Pretty remarked that he remembered very little between the Pinnacles and seeing a young lady in a mauve jumper in the summit hotel. The same young woman immediately took us (in a metaphorical way) to her bosom – and there were those who could still resent the metaphorical manner of her taking.

Our descent to Rhyd Ddu paralleled the setting sun – it was one of those wonderful dull orange summer nights, but most of us were too far gone to really appreciate it.

The first 3,000 'anders to finish at Tan-y-Wyddfa — *Editor*.

WASDALE, WHITSUNTIDE 1959

The meet was attended by Mike Turner, J. (Gable)*, Ashcroft, J Bridges, R. Dearden, Paul Gardiner, P. Janes, and F. Allen with respective wives, sweethearts, camp comforters and families, also L. K. White, D. Chapman, S. G. Moore, R. Handley, and D. Burgess. Non-members on the meet included Kim Rumford, Nat Allen and wife, Ray Colledge and Wilf. White.

During the week-end the following routes were climbed:-

- Scafell – Scafell Pinnacle, Slingsby's Chimney, Pisgah Buttress, Moss Ghyll Grooves, Central Buttress, Botheralls Slab, (Sic.) Mickledore Grooves, Overhanging Wall, and Great Eastern.
- Great Gable – Eagle Ridge, Tychett Wall, Tychett Girdle, and Sepulchre Route, Arrowhead Arête.
- Esk Buttress – Medusa Wall and Bridges Route.

Derrick Burgess

*Pronounced "Garble".

OREADS ON MEETS

Re. D. Burgess

Newsletter, October 1959

Whenever women are discussed the name of Burgess is usually prominent. Be there a meet-less week-end and he is organising a social evening in the flat. Beware the Oread who thwarts his progress for we hear of two recent occasions when so called fellow travellers have been thrust aside.

There is the sad touching scene of that celibate fellow Janes, wending his weary way towards Bedgellert in car-less fashion while Burgess entertained some local Portmadoc piece in his recently acquired tin box. There is the more recent occasion when he was observed trying out the latest continental techniques in Coniston. Two young ladies lashed to the rocks, a sort of modern Greek Saga, while Burgess fought his way up a Mod. Diff.

Above stood Ashcroft gazing longingly out at Gable and wondering if he would ever get back to Janet before dusk when his peaceful reverie was disturbed by "I hope you don't mind old Chap". There was B in true Matterhorn fashion, shinning up Ashcroft's rope (to avoid the crux of course). As he disappeared above, faint mutterings, about Indian rope tricks and Ashcroft's chances with the two ladies were heard.

Tom Frost

CLOGWYN MEET – JUNE 1959

SATURDAY

Clogwyn D'ur Arddu

- Curving crack, Sunset Crack climbed by 3 parties:-
 - R. Handley, F. Allen, R. Colledge
 - D. Davies, P. Janes, H. Pretty
 - D. Hadlum and friend.

Route on Far West

D. Hadlum, L. White, and friend.

Craig-y-Bere

Angel Pavement:-

J. Welbourn, T. Frost, and Colin Hobday.

SUNDAY

Cloggy

Chimney Route:-

R. Handley, R. Colledge and D. Davies.

Piggotts Route:-

R. Handley, R. Colledge and D. Davies.

Sheaf Route:-

D. Burgess, D. Chapman, N. Allen.

These three climbed Lion and Ribstone Crack on Saturday on Carreg Wasted.

Nantlle Y Garn

Eastern Arête – 3 parties.

F. Allen, P. Janes, H. Pretty.

J. Welbourn and Frank Davis.

T. Frost, Colin Hobday, and Suzanne Harper.

Lliwedd

Route 2:-

L. K. White and G. Hayes.

Ray Handley

SHIVERING MOUNTAIN, THE GREAT RIDGE

GORDON GADSBY

"Climb when you are ready". The words echoed from above the ice bound crags and were lost in the swirling wind. This was the moment of truth.

We were on the top pitch of Blue John Rib high up on the East Face of Mam Tor, the Shivering Mountain. Two hours earlier, much lower down on a frozen ledge of shale, we had witnessed an accident away to our left on the easier gully climb. A solo climber has slipped near the top then fallen, slithering from ledge to ledge for over two hundred feet, parting company with his rucksack on the way. He was one of a party of six on that climb and within an hour his friends had summoned help and he had been whisked away to Sheffield in an ambulance.

All this action beneath us had done wonders for my confidence, especially with the crux pitch still to come. Des Hadlum had led that steep thirty-foot pitch in fine style ten minutes ago so I was in good hands. He'd spent the time since looking for a belay on the snowy windswept summit. "Climb when you're ready". "You'll be fine Gordon", said Dennis Gray encouragingly, just take it steady and test every hold".

With a gulp I took the first tentative step up. Without crampons and with only one axe, I knew this final pitch would be for me a desperate climb. I'd not the vast experience of my two friends, but already climbing every weekend was becoming a way of life. Once I'd reached a position about ten feet above the ledge I felt strangely calm, my right gloved hand gripping the icy edge of the rib, my left swinging the axe into whatever snow or ice I could find in a shallow corner.

It was near the end of the day and bitterly cold, the sky was already tinged with pink from the setting sun. Most people would be heading for home by now I thought, or maybe even there already. The lateness of the hour spurred me on. If I didn't hurry, Dennis would have to climb in the dark.

I made another swing with the long wooden axe, the pick bit deep, but as I stepped up and carefully transferred weight onto my right boot, the shale beneath snapped off. My right leg slipped wildly into space. The rest of me almost followed, but luckily axe and hands held firm as I desperately scabbled for a safe foothold.

With thumping heart, and after several more precarious upward moves, I was under the small cornice of snow that formed the top of the climb. Two more delicate moves, a final swing of the axe and I was on the summit dome beside a grinning Des Hadlum. I sat in the snow thrilled to have done the climb, certainly at that time the most difficult route I'd done. Ten minutes later the three of us were together once more.

"I was worried about pulling you off Des" I said, as the two lads gathered the climbing gear together. "No way that would have happened" replied a beaming crew cut Des. "Look here, my first ever snow mushroom belay. I could have held a car on that!"

The six foot across and nine-inch mound of snow looked good and stable, but I was thankful I hadn't put it to the final test.

A few minutes later we were on the crest of the Great Ridge and walking down to Castleton. Above the stone houses, the dark ramparts of Peveril Castle, and the shadowed gulf of Winnats Pass, a crescent moon had appeared to brighten the clear winter sky. The great adventure has lived long in the memory, for it was over thirty years ago on New Years Day 1961, the beginning of one of the coldest winters in living memory.

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEET – CHRISTMAS EVE 1961

Gordon Gadsby and Dave Weston invite all Oreads to a one-night bivouac meet on Snowdon summit on Christmas Eve Sunday 24th December. Tents will be frowned upon except as bivvy sheets. We should arrive on the summit between 21.30 and 22.30. Good bed spaces can be found on the east face about 20 feet below the summit cairn, providing the wind is from the west. If conditions are anything like last year ice axes will be useful – also a rope, just in case – and of course, a poly-bag and food and drink.

Many Oreads are spending Christmas at Tan-y-Wyddfa, so we are hoping some will join us on what could be a very rewarding experience. We especially hope to see that Prince of the Duvet Brigade – Ernie (fire screen) Phillips, and that ace B.M.C. photographer – Hebog Jack ("Have you seen my crampons?") Ashcroft.

Postscript:

Gadsby, Weston and Doug Cooke did spend the night on the summit as planned, 'though the bivvy spot was changed from East to West face. The contingent at Pen-y-Pas, who saw them off, nearly got frostbite stepping out of their vehicles and those, who had been on Snowdon that day imagined they were seeing the trio for the last time. As the wind howled around Tan-y-Wyddfa many cheerful comments were exchanged.

Geoff Hayes

Echoes from the Past:

During Christmas 1950 an Oread party of 10 (total membership 15) stayed at Tyn-y-Shanty (Ogwen). North Wales was snow covered to road level. On Christmas Day the entire party traversed the Glyders, descending to Pen-y-Pas. Most of the party walked or hitched back to Ogwen. Sutton, Pretty and Gardiner carried on intending to reach Snowdon Summit by way of Crib Goch. The sky was cloudless and there was a brilliant moon. Crib Goch defeated the party. There was much ice and no crampons. Some kind of high traverse was made to the P.Y.G. track and the summit was reached in the early evening. As was usual at that time a window of the summit hotel was left open (for emergency use) and the party sheltered for a while in a room wherein the snow was level with the windowsill. Eventually, still under a bright moon, they descended to Pen-y-Gwryd before midnight — *Editor*.

WELSH WALK – CYNWYD TO CWM COWARCH – MAY 1962

That people were loath to leave the pub at Cynwyd was indeed an understatement. The rain poured, the wind blew, I was dying with pneumonia. Then there was the blonde Wally saw at Llangollen. However Fred literally worked the oracle with a Welsh Farmer and shortly afterwards we were all installed in an empty farm house. The Hayes/Gadsby shouting team were confident that they had ousted Jack Ashcroft from their comfortable wooden floor, but Jack, wily old bird, was with Pretty, Dearden and myself amongst the straw in the barn. Yes even Dearden appeared on this meet, even if it was to prove that his feet are still as blister prone as ever.

We awoke on Saturday to the sound of rain on the roof and the H-G shouting team – (who appear to exist without sleep). After a ferry service had shuttled all the cars to Cowarch we were literally committed. That again is an understatement. Fred Allen, another wily bird, had generously brought all the drivers back from Cowarch in HIS car, crafty as ever.

We walked along the road for a midday pint and to see what the weather held in store. A rapid improvement soon tempted and we set off for the Hirnant, where the party arrived in dribs and drabs after a wet walk. I myself hurrying to make a considerable deviation to check that the H-G team were alright, and to sign their chit to continue to the Bwlch-y-Groes direct.

The evening was not without incident. Our comfortable barn was visited by an irate Welsh lady who, it transpired, owned the place and did not take kindly to our being there. Pretty, attired in pyjamas, assured her we were respectable. She however failed to see this and, objecting to being called ‘madam’, gave us the boot. A farmer down the valley was of a more friendly disposition and made us welcome. Sunday, in good weather, was spent in crossing over to Bwlch-y-Groes and then over the Arans to Cowarch.

Highlights of the meet;

TOTAL RETREAT by Fred Allen, Janes, and Handley.

Welbourn’s celebrated 50lb rucksack quote; (a) “as you get older you can carry more.” (b) “this is no country for a 50lb sack.”

Derrick Burgess

LATHKILL MEET 1962

A vagrant leans upon the bar.
His vacant eye and empty glass suggest
Another round of drinks. The verse
He fails to write is much the best.

We spend the night in Rileys' barn,
Sir Laurence Burns conducts the snores
Of men and beast. He bows, The work
Receives a scatter of applause.

Welbourn leaves with torch in hand
To light the way around the bend,
Stretches on the Co-op porch
For bed-night with a dividend.

Ashcroft returns, his eye aloft
On nameless peak, the virgin snow
Of Himalayan scene, He leads,
But loses us on Arbor Low.

A crowd collects in Lathkilldale,
R. G. Pettigrew has gone
To sign his autograph, Denies
He spread a rumour of Sir John.

The Reverend Pretty eminent
Divine arrives with shovel hat,
Assumes this clerical disguise
For access to his Stanton Flat.

Hooley has a liquid lunch,
Unleashes Kim to spend the day
Retrieving empties from the stream,
I phone the R.S.P.C.A.

"Highlights of the Lathkill Meet",
Presumes it does no harm
To twist the metre or events,
And least of all the victims arm.

Jim Kershaw

THE 3,000 'ANDERS, 1962

Geoff. Hayes' times:

Start Aber	7.00 a.m.	Glyder Fawr	2.00
Foel Fras	8.30	Y Garn	2.40
Foel Grach	8.50	Elider Fawr	3.40
Llywelyn	9.25	Depart	4.00
Yr Elen	9.45	Nant Peris	4.30
Dafydd	11.00	Crib Goch	6.10
Penyrolewen	11.15	Crib-y-Ddysgl	7.00
Glan Dena	11.45	Snowdon	7.15
Depart	12.15	Depart	7.30
Tryfan	1.00 p.m.	Rhyd-Ddu	9.00 p.m.
Glyder Fach	1.40		

SEQUEL TO THE MARSDEN-ROWSLEY WALK 1962

Perhaps it would be as well to tell how I came to do the Chinley variant to the Marsden-Rowsley. It happened thus. Picking my way across the bog of Bleaklow Head, in absolutely first class bog condition, and idly musing about all and sundry. – Blondes, Brunettes, Beer etc., I looked around for the first time for half an hour or more and found it all unfamiliar. I fished my compass out of the rucksack and found I was walking Northwest. The compass refused to change its mind and even after several serious blows and kicks had been administered. So I reluctantly concluded I was on my way to Manchester. I took a compass course of 175° and found I had dropped into Yellow Slacks Brook, two miles from Glossop. Ascending the other side of the Clough I was on the Snake Road but rather late for Kinder and Win Hill in October. So crossing Featherbed Moss I made my way to Chinley, catching a train to Bamford and walking to the Yorkshire Bridge with a few minutes to spare before the first of the purists arrived. Just in time to consume a long visualised pint; and look a little self-satisfied.

Laurie Burns

BUTTERMERE 1962 (*EXTRACT*)

It was a memorable meet before it started.

There was a rumour that the meet, as re-arranged, was to be an engagement party. The Committee was so worried at the thought of 96 Oreads straining mightily that Fred Allen was ordered to buy a Bog Tent. Now Fred is mightily particular, as to the type of seat he uses, and was heard to say that this would cost the club a few hut loan repayments.

Luckily the National Trust said they were very sorry but even the Oread would not be allowed to erect a bog-tent at the north end of Buttermere. In a blind panic the Hayes mob wrote to Gates-garth farm for the use of their pigsty.

The atmosphere that pre-meet night at the Bell was tense as 96 Oreads argued between the north and south end of Buttermere lake. The President was in favour of taking the Dormobile up to Birkness Combe. Hayes maintained it was all a big mistake. Ashcroft arrived beaming, having washed his hands of the latest expedition aftermath. Pretty declared to all that it was a cock up. Janes said he was glad he was going on holiday. Welbourn threatened to resign unless he was allowed to take charge...

At 12.15 that Friday night (Sat. a.m.) all the cars, except Fred Allen's had their lights trained on Gatesgarth farm. The President triangulated the fields and reported that precedent had been established in the form of a solitary tent. A quick excursion to Buttermere village revealed no sign of the bog tent or Fred Allen, but only a "No Camping" sign.

At 2.0 a.m. 20 Oreads were well encamped near the original solitary tent with their own cars in close attendance in case of danger. The Hayes/Gadsby shouting team was in full session.

At 2.01 a.m. there was an eruption from the solitary tent, a car's hooter disturbed the peace of the night and a torrent of abuse, in French, descended on the ring. Attempts at appeasement, varying between being "terribly sorry" and an offering up of Margaret Lowe, were not very successful. An appointment was made for 6.00 a.m. the following morning and, at last, an uneasy peace descended.

The following morning was rather an anti-climax as by the time people woke up properly. The torrent of abuse had departed in a pattering Citroen having circled the field a few times looking for the English chicken.

Anon

OREADS IN SHORTS, 1959-1964

At Bullstones Cabin:-

Doreen Gadsby - "John do put your trousers on please.

John Welbourn - "As you can see I am well equipped." — 1961.

RGP. Our new Vice President recently gave two lectures with slides in one evening at two Hucknall Churches. There was no audience for his first attempt. No wonder he didn't find Elsan the Throne of the Gods — 1961.

On the winter Ogwen meet a watch was found by an Oread at the foot of Amphitheatre Rib. It was found to belong to a Dr. Houghton who was tragically killed when he fell from the rib two years ago. The watch is to be returned to his relatives. — 1961.

John Foster has written on behalf of the Peak Park Planning Board to thank the Club for the effort in collecting litter from the Gardoms' Birchen area on December 3rd — 1961.

The Derby Evening Telegraph will probably reduce its number of pages once Bob Pettigrew has left for India. — 1962.

Stanage Meet:- Doreen Gadsby: "Of course I'm feminine during the week, and at week ends. You ask Geoff he's seen it".

"Clachaig Gully does not interest me". Jack Ashcroft — *Glencoe* 1962.

"I can't imagine Wally Smith as mechanically minded, he looks as though he serves behind the counter at Burtons".

After leaving his ice axe at home last year when going to Glen Nevis for the Easter meet, (not to mention the CRAMPONS episode in the Himalayas). Ashcroft did it again in Glencoe on the Easter meet when he and Pettigrew had been driven to the foot of the crag by their wives, (who soon drove off again), leaving these two hard men by the road, both thinking the other had the rope, when all the time it was in the boot of the car — 1962.

Chuck Hooley to Doreen Gadsby – “Have you never been kissed passionately by a man with a beard?”. “No Chuck, have you?” — 1962.

“I don’t consider walking meets of under 40 miles”. A recent quote from Phil. Falkner — 1962.

Quote on the recent Marsden-Rowsley walk “Do you know, this is the most expensive meet of the year for me? First I have to take my car to Derby, pay to keep it in a garage for the week end, buy a ticket for Manchester, then to Marsden and what with all those pubs we pass, I spend plenty on beer. Then of course I have to get a new pair of boots, and a taxi from the bus to the garage at the end of the walk, as I will have ‘set solid’ by then. Finally there is a week off work without pay and heaven knows how much a specialist will cost for the next few months!” — 1962.

While Walking over Bleaklow one weekend quite recently, Burgess and party were almost blown off their feet by a blast of explosive. Yes, the rest of Yellow Slacks had just gone up in dust! The party rushed over to the scene of the crime to find the little dictator farmer gloating over his handiwork, supported by a crowd of locals, and the local bobby who had supervised the deed. The result of this wanton destruction is that a compulsory purchase order, for what is left of the rocks and the surrounds, has been made by the authority, a bit late, but action nevertheless. Let’s hope it discourages other farmers from doing the same kind of thing — 1964.

Just heard, the quote of the year from Doreen Gadsby: “If you want to be known in the Oread you have to do the unusual things at night” — 1964.

Handley – “One of these days I’m going to go through all my slides and put them in a box”. Ashcroft – “What a match box?” — 1964.

“.....Several of which (Oreads) even took baths and danced on the table-cloths....”

Letter from Devonshire Arms Hotel following Annual Dinner, November 28th, 1959.

ALPINE AFFAIRS 1959-1970

From the earliest days small groups of Oreads were visiting the European Alps but their activities received scant reportage in Newsletters and Journals. This scarcity of a written record was remedied, to some extent, between 1959 and 1970 — *Editor*.

DESCENT FROM THE PEIGNE (1959) (*EXTRACT*)

R. HANDLEY

We ascended onto a rib, only to be confronted by an apparent impasse. The rib dropped steeply into the mist and, descending a groove, I found only an impossible overhang. We cast to the left and tried to climb into the couloir below the steep step across its face. The time was 5 o'clock – it would undoubtedly be dark early. I prayed for clearance of the mist, and as often happens when things look bad, there was a sudden improvement. The mist twisted aside just long enough for us to see an abseil peg from which we could get back into the gully. We also saw Don and Chris about 400 feet lower down practically on the glacier. The rappel was steep but safe and we descended into the gully and down to the glacier, having been on our chosen small peak 12 hours.

It is usual when the green Alps are reached that one is able to relax and amble downhill musing over the days highlights. But this day was to have a kick in its tail.

After we got off the peak, Katerine, Ray C. and myself decided that rather than walk down we would take the teleferique. We were thinking of an early meal at the Café de Chamonix. In the event however, we were to be disappointed, and we nearly had to bivouac because of this decision. The teleferique had long stopped running and we had to return valleyward on foot. I saw Ted and the lads just disappearing past the Plan des Aiguilles and hurried after them. The track curved slowly round the hillside and slowly began to climb back to the other side of the teleferique. Ray C. said "This isn't the way", and I agreed. Seeing a path dropping down a little further on I said "That looks alright". With that, we embarked on our nightmare descent.

All went well for 1,000 feet until, suddenly the path narrowed, steepened and disappeared over a steep drop into the trees. The time was 8 o'clock and we had about ½ hour of daylight left. I proposed a rappel, which was reluctantly accepted. We seemed so near to Chamonix that I could almost smell the Beefsteak and Chips. But I had seriously clanged. The angle of the ground was 60°; loose, heavily vegetated and treed. We had descended into a kind of gorge with a torrent crashing down to the right suggesting steeper ground below.

To get out of this somehow onto more open hillside seemed imperative, but we were completely hemmed in by trees. On the left was a steep wall covered in moss which we climbed at speed because of the loose nature of its structure. The ground was still desperate and the last minutes of daylight were dwindling fast.

We gathered together looking longingly at the lights of Chamonix which appeared to be very near, but in our situation as far away as ever. We had been forced to rope up, and the only way to make any progress was to traverse in one direction, descend as far as possible, and then traverse again. This we did, but the ground was quite unrelenting and the torch was getting feebler every minute. Ray C. had the unenviable task of descending last with no torch, but he was using his axe well as an anchor. Katerine was getting very tired.

Out luck turned at last. I had already told Ray that if the next descent did not continue on a feasible line I wanted to bivouac as it was useless pressing on like this. But I had found a faint track, which went down and down. Even then we went wrong and had to retrace our steps 50 yards. The trees were thinning, the ground was less steep, and suddenly we came out into a little alp, and there was the moon. What a magnificent sight. Our spirits soared and I could not help bursting into song.

We stumbled into the hut at 1 a.m. after being out for 19 hours. We had expected a short day, but on reflection it had been worth it.

Others taking part: Ray Colledge, Ted Dance, Fred Boardman and a Greek girl, Katerine — *Editor*.

CHAMONIX (1959)

D. BURGESS

There are two main difficulties with a climbing holiday, one is the climbing itself and the other is writing it up afterwards. Last year the writing proved insurmountable.

The climbing party this year consisted of D. Chapman, R. Handley, R. Colledge and myself. Our first objective was Aiguille du Fou by the S.W. ridge. This necessitated a 3.0 a.m. start from Montanvers, not exactly welcome after having travelled all the previous night, and a long trudge along the Plan-de-L'Aiguille footpath and up to the Nantillons Glacier. The Rognon was soon passed and we cramponed below the upper ice fall to the N. Ridge of the Blaitière. This was ascended to the third Brèche where a series of ledges and chimneys was followed across the west face to the Reynier Couloir. These ledges were not as continuous as the guide book implied and at one point a rappel was necessary to reach a lower ledge. From the couloir an obvious rake ran up below the Fou itself to the Col-de-Fou. Here we basked in the sun, ate some well earned snap, and gazed at the route before us.

The S.W. Ridge is not terribly long, only 150 feet, to quote the guide book, but it certainly looked impressive as we gazed at it. The first pitch appeared to be an overhanging layback crack, we were able to turn by climbing a steep slab artificially on some pegs already in place. Pitch after pitch followed, none particularly easy and all strenuous, a characteristic of the climbing, until at last we were all assembled beneath the final problem, a pear shaped boulder perched on the summit. This is usually ascended by throwing a rope over and using it as a hold for one hand. However, none of us appeared purist enough to worry over the last few feet and we considered the route done – the route no doubt considered us “done”.

The view from the summit is fantastic, a forest of granite is an expression to describe the Aiguilles and how true it is. All round rock fangs stick in the air, the Caiman, Crocodile, and Plan next along the ridge seemed unclimbable from our position as indeed did the Blaitière in the other direction; until it dawned on us we had to bypass it on the descent. A vague traversing line led round beneath the N. summit of the Blaitière and the Bregault ridge was reached eventually and descended to the Nantillons Glacier, which we soon descended and reached Montanvers at 21.00 hours – 10 hours on the hoof.

We had a lay-in the next day, and after flexing aching muscles shelved the ambitious idea we had in mind and descended to the Covercle Hut. This we did, although R.H. descended to the valley to fetch Gloria to the hut, but was put off by a storm (and Gloria).

THE ALPINE SEASON 1962

D. BURGESS

This season has been the best of many years and consequently most routes were in excellent condition before the end of August. The many British climbers who were abroad this year were quick to take advantage of the good weather and many fine routes were done. The success of Bonnington and Clough on the Eiger was undoubtedly the finest British achievement, following, as it did, their ascent of the Walker Spur in record time. The harder Alpine routes all received their share of British ascents. But the emphasis certainly seemed to be on rock routes, and the Dolomites, Karwendal, and Kaisergeberge, were all well patronised. Chamonix was as usual the most popular centre and the campsite there was reminiscent of a bank holiday in Langdale. By the end of the season this was especially so as the rowdier elements had given the British a very bad name. Unfortunately there were many accidents involving British climbers, caused in the majority of cases through the folly of

inexperience. The Eiger accidents should serve as a grim reminder that the mountains cannot be trifled with, and it is only due to the exceptionally good weather that the many parties, benighted or involved in extra bivouacs, escaped unscathed.

A few notes on the principle ascents (by British parties) that I have heard about, these are not necessarily complete or correct.

Chamonix Area

The E. face of the Grand Capucin was climbed by 5 or more parties, usually with one bivouac on the summit. The W. Face Aig. Noire de Peuterey had two ascents (B. Evans, I. Howell; Whillans, Bonnington), whilst the S. Ridge was climbed by R. Colledge and D. Davis. The Frontier Ridge and the Old Brenva Route on Mont Blanc were climbed by D. Gray, D. Hadlum, and E. Beard. Des at the time climbing with his arm in plaster following an accident in the Dolomites.

The Dru was in perfect condition and a multi-national procession wound its way up most routes. The Bonatti Pillar had an ascent by Crew and friend. Howell and Evans climbed the West Face, and the North Face had *at least ten ascents* before the end of the season. This was fantastic considering the second British ascent was by Oliver and Ruisson at the end of August. The other parties included Carruthers and Logan, John Brailsford, and L. Noble, I Clough, and J. Alexander.

The Aiguilles received their share of attention; the N. Face of the Plan was climbed by Carruthers and Les Brown. Several parties ascended the N. Ridge of the Peigne; the E. Ridge of the Crocodile, and the Ryan Lochmatter on the Plan.

Across the valley the Moine was climbed by its E. Face, and both the Petites Jorasses (W. Face) and Grand Jorasses (Walker) had their 3rd British ascents as also did the N. Face of the Triolet.

Zermatt Area

Heavy snow, left over from the winter was slow to clear and conditions were not good before August. The only notable ascent I have heard about was the Furggen Ridge of the Matterhorn (Clough, Alexander), and the Zmutt Ridge (G. Rhodes. L. Hughes, E. Beard).

In the Bregaglia many parties were active and the N. E. Face of the Badile has had numerous ascents – one report said that it had now been climbed by over 30 British parties and is now considered a *voie normale*.

A number of Oreads mentioned in this resumé, but what did Burgess do? — *Editor*.

AUGUST 1963

Contrary to reports, Colin Hobday and Geoff Hayes did get to the Alps. They wish it to be known that the only climbing they did was not in Munchen but in the Ortler – Seven peaks in all, including the Ortler and Königspitz. Anne and Uschi send their best wishes to friends in the Oread but want to know if the club can offer anything better in the way of mountaineers than the above two so called Alpinists.

Burgess climbing with Ray Colledge had a good fortnight making the most of rather unsuitable weather. Route Major was one of their achievements. Theirs was the first ascent this year. A very fine show indeed.

Anne and Uschi eventually became Mrs. Hayes and Mrs. Hobday respectively — *Editor*.

EDITORIAL (*EXTRACT*)

Newsletter, September 1964

Tragedy struck the happy group of 15 Oread members and friends who were camping and climbing in Saas Fee.

On Wednesday July 29th, Guy Lee, Chris Culley and Martin Jarvey left the village and walked up to the Mischabel Hut where they bivvied the night. They started up the North East Face of the Lenspitz (a fine looking snow-ice cliff). At approximately 7 a.m. stones falling from the summit ridge were falling very close to the party and it was while this was happening that Martin slipped, pulling Chris off backwards, and Guy was unable to hold them both on his belay. All three fell and cleared the bergshrund, landing on the snowfield. Martin was killed and Chris suffered cuts to his face and legs, Guy was only bruised. The body was taken down to the valley by helicopter and Chris followed after a considerable time and was taken to the hospital at Visp. Guy was able to walk down.

The rest of the party were up at the Britannia Hut when they heard the news of the accident. Chris was visited every day by his friends and after a few days discharged himself from the hospital. Martin's body was flown back to England for Cremation at Mansfield at which the Oread was represented. Martin, although not a member of the Oread was a friend of the Sutton and district group of the club. He had been out on club meets at Glencoe and the Dane Valley as well as having climbed with club members.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his parents and family.

Geoff Hayes

STORM ON THE BIANCOGRAT – 1966

RAY HANDLEY

When the Oread decided to hold a meet in the Bernina group last year, Derrick Burgess and I decided we should give the more popular Alpine centres a miss and join it. We were particularly attracted by the nearness of the Badile and the chance of breaking new ground.

We arrived in St. Moritz in time to hear that England had won the World Cup and we knew at last why at every village we drove through we received the "thumbs up" sign. The weather had been and still was very indifferent, one day fine the next snowing. We did a few training climbs, one being the Piz Morterasch which gave a very impressive view of the Biancograt ridge of the Piz Bernina.

We set off as a large party towards the end of the second week bound for the Tschierva Hut, from which we intended to attempt the traverse of the Piz Scerscen and the Piz Bernina, ascending the Ice Nose on the former and descending the Biancograt on the latter. When we arrived at the hut, there was a mixed school party in residence, who were to keep us awake most of the night until Digger Williams, unable to contain himself any more, sat bolt upright in bed loudly mouthing foul German oaths. With much grumbling we all tumbled out of bed at 1.00 a.m.; this is the time on any alpine meet when I wonder whether it is really necessary, and ask myself why I am not lying on some sun drenched beach surrounded by glorious females.

Derrick, who is always anxious to be away first, set the pace, and forcing a dry crust of bread down a dry throat we stumbled off into the cold darkness. I slowly became aware that the stars were out, but this did not help my temper as I staggered from one boulder to the next. After an age of going up and down and skirting a large rognon we stepped thankfully onto the glacier. Suddenly it was light enough to see the way ahead and trace the route; to the right lay the Piz Roseg to which the rest of

our party were making their way. Our route lay straight ahead for a quarter of a mile over the Tschierva Glacier, then to rear itself abruptly on to the ridge and flatten out again before rearing steeply up to the Ice Nose. Beyond that, all was hidden.

Even so, this is the time that one begins to enjoy the thought of the climb. We strapped on our crampons, bid *bon voyage* to our friends, and stepped out across the glacier. We quickly reached the point where we had to break to the left to climb steep snow to the ridge. This proved quite straightforward, and after a bit of mixed work we found ourselves at the foot of our first difficulties, the Ice Nose. This is of a most peculiar nature and is the only reasonable way on to the summit *nevé* of the Scerscen; some years it overhangs, but this year we were lucky as it was only vertical for a section of about 100 feet, and then lay back at about 70 degrees. However, this was not what we were thinking when we stood at its foot, and Derrick prepared himself to attack while I found a convenient stance and clipped on to a peg. One of the snags of ice climbing is that it takes a long time to cut hand and foot holds, the ice cut away usually hitting the Second, and this was no exception. I spent a very cold twenty minutes or so dodging ice chippings, alone with my thoughts, which weren't very pleasant. Suddenly there was a sickening crack and groan under my feet. I shouted up to Derrick. "This thing's collapsing – let's get off!" He looked at me without speaking and carried on. There is always a time on an alpine climb where the wrong decision means the difference between failure and success, and the choice is so marginal that a piece of paper will not go between. This to me is what makes a good alpinist, particularly on big climbs, and this is why I like climbing with people like Derrick and Ray Colledge, who make the right decisions. Derrick had found a stance, clipped to a peg, and I moved up, balancing from hold to hold. It was cold on the hands and the footholds seemed wide apart, the pegs he had placed seemed reluctant to come out and one channel just refused to budge. After some interesting climbing I joined Derrick at the top of the steep section on a small stance he had carved out of the wall. We quickly changed places, and he moved up another sixty feet to where the angle relented. I quickly followed, leading through to the lip of the plateau.

We were now in the sun and had to tramp across the plateau for some distance before climbing steeply up snow on to the crest of the ridge. The views were magnificent, and we could see the route on the Piz Roseg where our friends were climbing. In the still atmosphere we could distinctly hear shouts and yodels. The weather was still fine with a light trace of cloud. Before us stretched our ridge leading to the Piz Bernina and behind us lay the summit of the Scerscen. Examination of the ridge was not encouraging; it was a tightrope between heaven and earth. Vertical on one side and about 60 degrees on the other. The snow had the consistency of icing sugar, but the big problem was the gendarmes. These stretched one after the other like a switchback and were covered with powder snow. However, to rest was not to conquer, so with some misgivings we pressed on.

The first section was not too bad, but at last we reached the first tower. To get to its foot meant a steep descent on the crest of the ridge with variations on the vertical side where our axes were practically useless. We descended and moved one at a time, stopping only when a rock poked its head out. The ridge proved to be the very devil, as for every tower passed there was always one worse immediately after. I remember one place in particular, a descent into a *brèche* of about a hundred feet coupled with the ascent of some 250 feet to the top of the next tower. We accomplished this by tying two 120-foot ropes together. I clipped into a piton at the top of the tower we were on, Derrick then descended down a steep wall of tottering snow and then climbed the gendarme, which was rock finely sugared with snow. We were really gripped.

However, all good things come to an end, and finally only a short descent and a difficult traverse lay between us and the col leading up to the Piz Bernina. It had taken us four hours.

What we had not noticed during all this time was the steady deterioration of the weather. We now noticed the ominous clouds about and pressed on quickly up a steep ice slope to the ridge, which is the ordinary route on the Piz Bernina. When we did this ridge some days earlier it was covered with people but today we raced to the top, skirting the gendarme from which two Germans had fallen a day or two before.

We reached the summit at 5 p.m. From here we could easily retrace our steps and stay the night in an Italian hut. Or, as we wished to do, descend the Biancograt. This ridge consists mainly of a snow arete, but the top section was again rock towers. We had had good views of the route from our other ridge, and as people had been going up it during the day steps would be available. I felt we should go to the Italian hut, but Derrick was for the Biancograt. The weather was threatening, and it was late.

If there is a difference of opinion and you give way, you must always throw yourself into the decision. This we both did; the rock was not difficult, just time-consuming. A few hundred feet below the summit we met a belated party of three going up, but we did not stop as they had time and we did not. Ten minutes later, hell broke loose; I have only been in an electrical storm once before and that was on Scafell. I have always been afraid at even the thought of one, but here we were in the middle. The air became deadly still, a phosphorescent glow seemed to enclose us, when flash! bang! it had started.

Our immediate reaction was to get below the ridge, leaving the axes where they were, as we clung to our tower. Common sense then returned. We could not stay there, as darkness was not far off. We decided to move down as fast as possible, the storm lending wings to our feet. We quickly descended first one then another gendarme, the storm seemingly receding as we concentrated on the job in hand. At last we dropped on to the snow at the top of the arete; the storm had passed, leaving in its wake quietly falling snow, with visibility down to five yards. We cramponned up and moved quickly to the top of the arete, where we found footsteps which we followed, moving together and at speed. As darkness approached, we knew we were safe, but not off. We missed a slight detour in the route which cost us a valuable half hour, and my cartilage had jumped out.

Rough treatment soon put the latter right, but we could not regain the former. We thought of a bivouac, but decided to press on while what light there was remained. I slid down a chimney and thought I could see the col. It looked a long way off, but after traversing for fifty feet I found myself above it. The time was 8.30 p.m.

The descent of the couloir was interminable. My torch packed up and we had to move one at a time, but we were happy, and very tired. We had made the right decisions, how right, who can tell?

Originally printed in the M.A.M. Journal 1967.

Their arrival at Pontresina was not the end of the story. Burgess, insistent on ale, made for the station bar whereas Handley, focussed on getting back to the camp site at Silvaplana, jumped on a train. Unfortunately the train was heading over the Bernina Pass to Italy. At some point, realising that something was wrong, R.H. jumped off the train and made his way back to Pontresina where Burgess was still relaxing. They both had to walk back to Silvaplana – Some day — *Editor*.

GOING TO THE ALPS?

Newsletter, June 1967.

The Alpine Club have requested that all British Mountaineering Clubs notify their members of the situation in Chamonix this year. Because of trouble with English climbers and campers in the past, particularly last year, the police in Chamonix will ban all English climbers from the area if there is a recurrence. If you do intend to go to Chamonix please set a good example.

Geoff Hayes

THE NORTH WALL CLUB, ALPINE MEET 1969

*Editorial Extract**Geoff Hayes*

I am sure very few climbing clubs of the size of the Oread can boast so many good routes in one short season. Congratulations to all those who did these climbs. There will be a special edition of the Oread Newsletter devoted to these ascents when you will be able to read the personal accounts of Ray Colledge on the Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses and the North Wall of the Eiger. Ray Handley who, with the President, Derrick Burgess climbed the North Face of the Dru; Pete Scott who did the Matterhorn North Wall and the Pear Buttress, (Colledge also climbed the Pear on the same day). I also hope to be able to print an account of the Cassin Route on the North East Face of the Piz Badile which Nat Allen climbed. Finally an account of the first ascent of Ali Ratna Tibba by Chris Radcliffe, who was a member of the successful Scottish Himalayan expedition 1969.

Hayes was, as usual, optimistic in his intention to publish a special edition of the Newsletter. I can find no trace of it. Doubtless accounts of these various ascents were published in "other places". More detailed references appeared in *Climb if you Will*, an earlier Oread commentary on Geoff Hayes and the Oread M.C., published in 1974 — *Editor*.

LETTERS . . . TO THE EDITOR 1958-1970

33, Tailo Street,
Tiger Bay,
Cardiff.
July 1959.

Dear Editor,

My situation at the moment is adequately described by the caption on a poster outside the Cardiff Labour Exchange. "They got me back to work". The happy, smiling figure in a natty trilby which it portrays, unfortunately bears little resemblance to myself at 7.45 a.m. However, in one of the brief intervals of rest from beating my brains out for meagre reward, the occasion of my first meeting with the Oread came back to me.

In November 1953 I wrote to the Secretary and learnt that a number of members would be meeting at Bullstones Cabin during the weekend. I set out from Strines Inn on Saturday afternoon and made my way via Dovestones, Abbey Brook, and Howden Edge to Margery Hill. It was almost dark by this time, and Bartholomews $\frac{1}{2}$ " gave no information on Bullstones Cabin. I had unfortunately forgotten to bring a torch so there was little I could do except find a suitable place to doss down and wait for morning. Morning arrived, and with it an introduction to those rarely seen figures, Ron Dearden and Jim Winfield who had spent the night on the bosom of Margery Hill. Together we made our way to Bullstones where Gibson, Clive Webb, Laurie Burns and a new recruit (who later became of note by his possession of a MA. Walking certificate) were preparing breakfast.

We were soon bound for Bleaklow, a single file, in drizzling rain on a narrow path above Derwent Valley. It was here that we met a search party from Bamford who were looking for an old shepherd lost on the moor during the previous night. We reached the Snake via the Alport, skirting round Kinder on the Roman Road, to Edale and the Church Inn. The outstanding event of the journey being the collapse of the holder of the Walking Certificate, on the last quarter mile.

Walking meets in Derbyshire such as Bullstones, Marsden-Rowsley, and Five Inns have always seemed to me to be one of the most characteristic Oread activities, and it is in connection with them that I shall always associate Gibson, who now leads a shadowy existence somewhere remote from the weekend world. Many people in the Oread knew him better than myself, and it is only as a result of their silence that I put forward the suggestion of doing something in this tenth anniversary year to honour his memory. Gibson the man, is dead. Gibson the symbol, lives on.

Two projects have occurred to me as a means of commemorating the occasion. I humbly put them forward for the consideration of the members and the Committee. Firstly, the purchase of one of the Bullstones Cabins, and if this proves impossible, the maintenance of them in a reasonable state of repair.

Secondly, the erection in the Peak District of a suitable memorial to Gibson. This could take the form of an engraved tablet, or a likeness of the man, in stone or metal, placed at the scene of some memorable Gibsonian incident. A well-known sculptor could be given the commission if sufficient funds were available. The thing should be in conservative taste I suggest. I don't, somehow, fancy a Gibson with holes in, or done as an abstraction in wire. Failing this there is a lively market in second hand sculpture nowadays. North country Aldermen are two a penny, pillars of the Empire are put down to base use, and late Queen Victorias fetch little more than aspidistra pots. A rough likeness could be bought and knocked into shape with little expense. There is Fergus O'Conner in the Arboretum Gardens for example. Nobody wants him and he could be moved away for the mere cost of transport on a quiet evening.

An equestrian Gibson? Gibson with a scroll? I think not. I remember him, a tall spare figure, cap at a jaunty angle, knee length cords, cigarette nonchalantly hanging down from lip, finger pointing with absolute certainty to the Derbyshire earth;

"I know this rock"

Yours in exile,
Jim Kershaw.

It seems entirely appropriate that Kershaw should first encounter Ron Dearden resting "on the bosom of Margery Hill" — *Editor*.

Re. HOLDING OF ICE AXE:

Most members of the Oread are forced by "Rubber Face Whymp" to purchase a copy of *Mountaineering*. Read Sept. 1961 page 26. — "Adze blade points forward".

I Agree,

J. Ashcroft — March 1962.

I can't agree with "fall-out" in his letter, when he recommends the ice axe to be held pick forward. On his next fall out he will most likely wish he had held the adze forward.

Unfortunately a number of professionally trained mountaineers in the Oread have been taught "Fallout's" method.

No less a mountaineer than George Band feels strongly on this subject. A letter from him is printed in an article by Humble in the Sept. 1961 issue of *Mountaineering*, from which I quote: —

"When a climber is on snow or ice slopes he should hold his hand over the head of the axe in such a manner that the adze blade points forward and the pick points to the rear

and not vice versa". Then later in the letter – "I believe it well worth cultivating this habit even when using the ice axe as a walking stick on easy terrain."

I recommend anyone who has not read the article by Humble to do so as it gives some interesting information and useful tips on snow work in Britain.

Geoff Hayes – March 1962

CLUB SPIRIT

The Following extracts are included since they are exemplars of a recurring theme in the Club's history, and similar arguments have arisen time and time again during the last fifty years. Doubtless the divisions engendered in climbing versus huts will have its protagonists in the future. May the following be some guide to balanced thought — *Editor*.

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall".

Proverbs (16:18)

TO THE COMMITTEE: 1960 (*Extract*)

Dear Friends,

This is to tender my resignation from the Oread Mountaineering Club. Apart from a few scattered weekends I have never really taken any part in the doings of the Club since the end of my first year in climbing. 1955, and I think this is an opportune moment to resign. However, I should like to express a few thoughts, which come to mind.

Unfortunately, I agree with all the newsletter's spasmodic comments about characteristics of the Club such as "chique-ness", insensitivity, and misplacement of effort. From my earliest days with the Oread I have sensed this barrier which surrounds the nucleus of the Club. And definitely repels exploratory advances of all but the most brash and extrovert new members to gain admission. Other people have mentioned this to me, so I am not the only one to have suffered from the insensitivity of several of the inner circle to the plight of an eager newcomer in the Bell for the first time.

It seems to me that far too much effort is expended on building a posh club hut. Doubtless there are several superficially powerful arguments in favour of this policy (notably reciprocal rights) but to get down to fundamentals, this is a CLIMBING CLUB. O.K.. So a hut at the foot of the hills is a good idea so that folk can spend a dry night in Wales as a change from pitching tents in a storm at 1 a.m. on Saturday. O.K. so we can buy or rent a HUT, and the deal takes one month. At the end of one month (when the hut is "sure") can we start visiting and climbing from it? Oh no. This weekend is a working party! We have to spend this and many other weekends pulling down walls, putting in grates, tiling, plastering, plumbing. Some members spend the weekend climbing and are roundly castigated in the next Newsletter, and accused of lack of club spirit. Surely a climbing hut should stay a hut and the energies of members should be expended in climbing from the hut instead of making it a 5-star hotel for "Pretend members" who are the type of people largely attracted to the Oread of late, it seems.

Brian N. Richards

Newsletter (Extract), November, 1960

Dear Sir,

I read with some impatience the reproduction of Brian Richards letter of resignation.

The hoary spectre of extra-climbing activities is produced as a sign of human decadence.

The criticism always stems from those who least participate in the Club's organisation and activities. Naturally people who can only seldom enjoy visits to mountain country have little time for administration or working parties. I do not think that anyone has expressed an opinion that they should so waste their time, nor has the use of facilities available been in anyway begrudged by members whose labour has made them possible.

The matter is fairly clear. There is the individual and the Club. The Club augments and supports the individual but you can climb without being a club member – many do – but if you enter into association with an organisation of this character you find many additional facets of enjoyable companionship and enterprise. To the many who make the Oread M.C. a part of their leisure life, there is much to give and much to take, and most find it gives life an additional flavour. But above all they find no attenuation of activity. The reverse is true, the most active members are also the working members.

Regarding cliques. It is a logical corollary of members. When Homo Sapiens are gathered in number, they nucleate, and smaller intimate groups form. But the wider activities and interests overlap and integrate the individual to the whole. Above all they are essentially nice people and, although they have most in common with intimates, will not rebuff a stranger or little known member. We are constantly adjured to make entry into Oread circles easier, but something more than a purely negative approach by the novitiate is required. Otherwise only time will bring confidence which is probably the best way.

Laurie Burns

Newsletter, November 1960

Sir,

I expect that there were a few tongues in cheeks when it was decided to seek the approval of Brian Richards to publish his letter. There is hardly any need to invite discussion, indeed very much of the same things have always been discussed within the Club as long as I have known it, and I remember recently swopping a few ideas on the subject with our President.

It is always regrettable to receive a resignation and it is always regrettable to tender one. How many such letters begin: Dear Sir, I regret?

It is a pity that Brian's criticisms, which he himself declares to be well meaning and (he hoped) constructive, were not more energetically and practically applied by him for some of the time since 1955 when he became a member.

Roger Turner

Newsletter, August 1963

Dear Sir,

There are 100 or so members in the Oread, who are so because they enjoy mountaineering of varying degrees of activity. It would be unreasonable to expect all 100 to be wildly enthusiastic about the hut at Rhyd-Ddu. Some are quite happy to spend their

time in the mountains voluntarily improving the hut to a standard well above that which is sufficient for the more active mountaineer who may regard the hut as a refuge for the night, i.e. in the Swiss Alpine tradition.

I think it is important for those interested in, and responsible for, the hut to realise that there is this division. A natural enough one and not a situation which should cause any strife within the club but one which must be accepted by those interested in the club for it's own sake

I have helped finance the hut and, despite a lack of enthusiasm for it's structure and location, I have, in the past, helped to establish it; for a hut is a good focal point for a club. On the rare occasions when I can now spare the time from establishing my own home I prefer to go mountaineering.

It is very noticeable that on Saturday evenings the hut is deserted after 8.00 p.m. in favour of the pub and dance hall. The installation of the bath for instance must be regarded in the light of this social, or anti-social phenomenon.

Let not the Oread subscription chain the mountaineer to the hut if he does not wish it.

If Tan-Y-Wyddfa burns tonight the Oread should still survive.

Yours etc.
Tom Frost.

Newsletter, August 1963

Sir,

What is happening to the Oread? Is it just becoming a pile of dead wood waiting for someone to put the final match to it and destroy it forever? Over the past year members seem to show less and less interest in the club and if it was not for a few active members, most of whom come from Nottingham, the Oread would fade away.

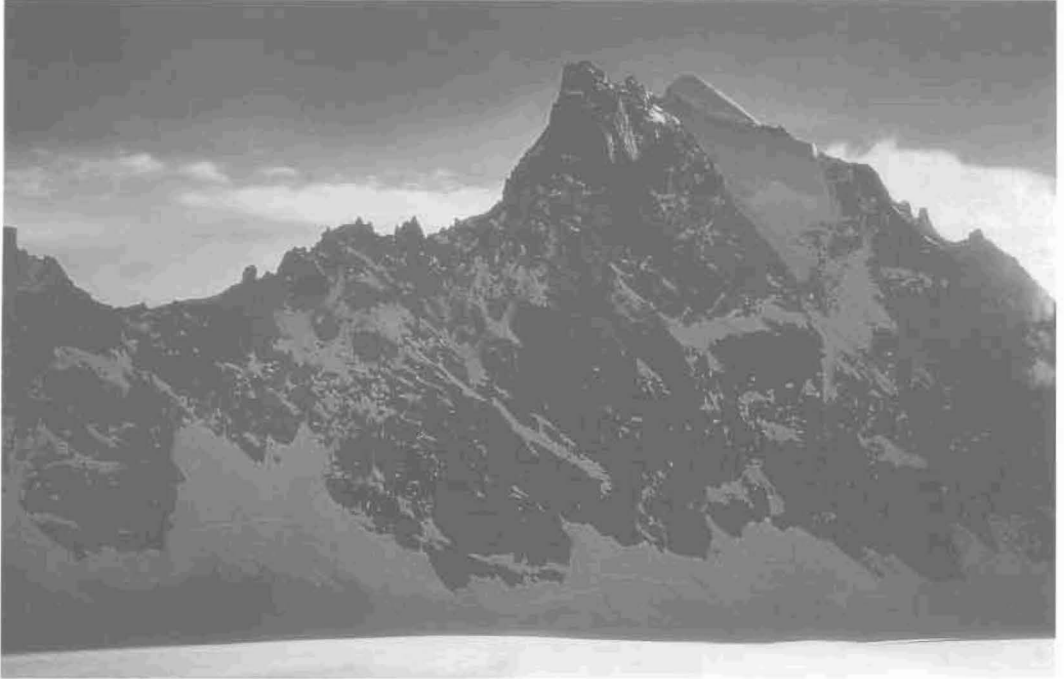
That, I'm sure, members would not want to happen. After all why not change the Tuesday evening meets in the Bell to Nottingham where the most active section is at the moment. If you go to the Bell it's a waste of time. It's impossible to make arrangements for the weekend and those who do go out seem to have their own private meets.

I know it is difficult for people who live away from the area to take an active interest, but it would be nice to see and hear a bit more of them, than their names just being on a list in the handbook. Well I have had a moan, so let's have a bit more enthusiasm for club activities. Maybe some of you will agree, others not, so why not write to the Newsletter and express your views. But let us remain a club and not become an association, which I think we are fast becoming.

An Active Member

I must admit that I agree with much that is in the above letter about the Bell. If people get there much later on Tuesdays it will be drinking up time before I see anyone. However, I believe that the club has been never more active on meets, although those attending are mostly from my way.

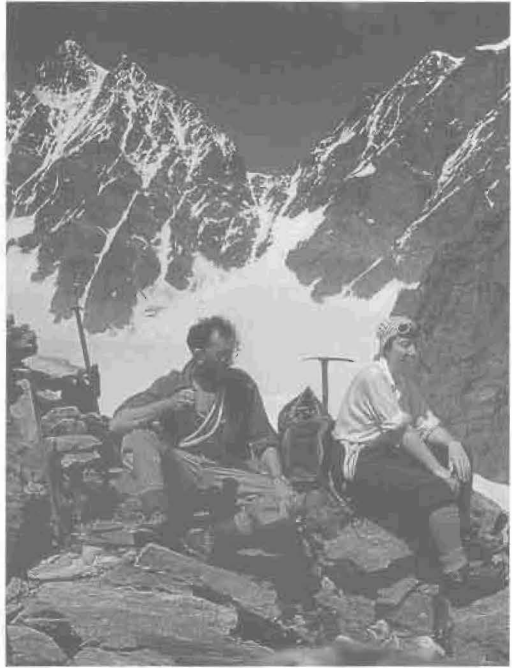
Geoff Hayes – Newsletter Editor



Indrasan (6,221m), Kulu Himal. *Photo: Jack Ashcroft.*



Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition 1961. D. Gray, D. Burgess, S. Read, R. Handley, Balgit Singh (liaison), R. G. Pettigrew (leader), J. Ashcroft. *Photo: Indian Press.*



Summit of Konigspitze, 1963. C. Hobday, Geoff and Anne Hayes. *Photo: Uschi Hobday.*

L. Burns, Margaret Hooley, Bernina 1961. *Photo: C. Hooley.*



Engadine 1966; G. Gadsby, Doreen Hodge, G. Reynolds, P. Janes. *Photo: J. Aschcroft.*



Alpine Games: Fred Allen and Tinsel Allen, Digger Williams and Pattie Carnell, Peter Janes and friend.
Photo: D. Burgess.



Alpine Meet, St. Moritz 1975. *Photo: G. Gadshy.*

Newsletter, January 1964

Dear Editor,

Through the medium of your newsletter may I seek advice on some climbing matters, which might be of general interest.

Is it possible for some avant-garde member to offer suggestions as to which nailing patterns are most highly thought of this year? The tricouni edge nail appears to enjoy popularity but some new types of clinker are available so possibly someone has some useful experience to impart on this most interesting subject. Illustrations would be a splendid idea although difficult to reproduce in the newsletter.

A Further recent innovation too, is the lighter type of Beales' Hempen Alpine line, which seems to be a great improvement upon the heavy manila in use at the present time. Does this give satisfaction?

Whilst reading the letter of "active member" in the most recent Newsletter it is difficult to resist the temptation to ask if, to some degree, he is confusing vociferousness with interest, and is this partly responsible for the absence of some members on meets?

Yours sincerely,
John Fisher

Newsletter, August 1963

Sir,

On the recent Marsden-Rowsley meet, a magnificent day on Saturday was followed by a sorry display of decadence when Yorkshire Bridge was reached. Of the ten participants, two were spirited away by their wives on Saturday evening. On Sunday all sorts of specious reasons for not continuing the walk were advanced. The walk down the Edges was contemptuously dismissed as dull and pointless. Urgent reasons were found for catching early trains to places like Liverpool and Coventry, and, most insidious of all, one member of the party had left his car in Grindleford, with malice aforethought.

As a result, I was left on my own from Fox House onwards; but cheered on by meeting Laurie Burns in Longshaw Park, and a large Oread climbing party at Froggatt. I eventually reached Baslow under my own steam. Here I succumbed to an unexpected offer of motor transport by two former Oread stalwarts of earlier days, Mike Turner and Ron Dearden.

Looking back, I recall that something rather similar happened in 1953, when I started from Colne, and did most of the walk on my own. After 1955, the Marsden-Rowsley meet was rested for a while and was a popular success again when reintroduced a few years later. After this years' performance, may I suggest that it is again dropped for a year or two, and then perhaps, when it does reappear on the meets programme, there may be a party with sufficient enthusiasm to complete it.

Yours etc.,
Phil Falkner

TO THE EDITOR - RE. MARSDEN-ROWSLEY 1963

Like many another exile I am occasionally seized with nostalgia for the region where I was born. I long for springtime in the rhubarb fields where the dark rivers meander through the spoil heaps of the West Riding. In the greener hills to the west, the grimy minarets of Marsden beckon the pilgrim on. I was not alone among the faithful as I left a

Huddersfield tram and enquired the way to the Pettigrew Memorial from a wandering Sikh. Erected on the site of the Marsden Gas-works the plaque is inscribed

“In gratitude from those who knew
Robert Gavin Pettigrew”.

The 9.40 train from Manchester discharged a select company. (as Welbourn says by invitation only). Burgess, Pretty, Falkner, George Sutton, Janes, Ashcroft, Dave Williams and Wes. Haydn. A screech of bath chair tyres began to race down the incline to the Ramsden Supper Rooms and the Tetley House next door.

I will not weary you with the details of the Marsden-Rowsley route itself. I think Phil Falkner is missing the point a little when he complains that nobody finished the walk. The thirty or forty miles of desolate moor between Marsden and Rowsley are merely a canvas on which a series of incidents and characters are painted. The picture varies in quality and size from year to year.

These are the highlights of 1963. A fine Saturday, (many of those present had never before seen Black Hill). Dave Williams' Instant Soup, which exhausted all fuel supplies. The despatch of Janes by Burgess down Crowden Brook, to perish in machine gun fire – he survived however to provoke an incident with the Landlord at the Yorkshire Bridge. Pretty abbreviates: “Ashcroft really does know the way across Bleaklow”. Falkner threatens to write to the Newsletter about the lack of enthusiasm. I retire at Fox House to give his case greater weight.

I really most complete this walk some time.

Jim Kershaw

THE DERBYSHIRE HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION 1961 (Patron: His Grace The Duke of Devonshire) FROM *CLIMB IF YOU WILL*, PUBLISHED 1974:

“The Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition comprised eight members, five of whom were Oreads, including the leader Bob Pettigrew. The others were Derrick Burgess, (Deputy Leader), Jack Ashcroft (Surveyor), Ray Handley and Trevor Panther. Dennis Gray, as a Rock and Ice Club member joined the expedition with Steve Read of the Summit Mountaineering Club (Nottingham). The eighth member of the expedition was Nick Smythe, who, at the time, was working in India, a temporary expatriate of the Mountain Club of Stafford (at the time Harry Pretty was President of the Stafford Mountain Club). The expedition was fortunate in obtaining as Patron the Duke of Devonshire and the help of Sir Jack Longland and Robin Hodgkin was ever present. It is difficult to itemise the individuals and organisations who supported the expedition, but two men within the Oread who had worked conscientiously until the moment the party left U.K. were Harry Pretty and Dave Penlington. It was their original intention to join the expedition but they both had to withdraw before the expedition left”.

“The expedition left Manali in the eastern Punjab on the 2nd June 1961. The main objective was to climb Indrasan (6,221m). Burgess and Gray reached the highest point by following the west ridge¹. However the length and technical difficulties and resources available at the time, enforced a retreat some 200m short of the summit. The nearby peak of Deo Tibba (6,002m) was climbed by two parties, (4th and 5th ascents)”.

"The east ridge² of Indrasan was also probed but found to offer no easy alternative. Pettigrew wrote "the only route offering any hope of reaching the summit would be a frontal attack in a diagonal line, before taking the steep snow of the south face". This was accomplished the following year by a Japanese expedition³".

"From 9th July for two days Pettigrew, Burgess and Ashcroft trekked over passes between the Manali Glacier and the Bara Shigri, setting up plane table stations, and taking photographic panoramas, thus adding to the work done by Snelson (1951), Dr. A. E. Gunther (1964) and Joss Lynam, who had essentially surveyed the Bara Shigri side. On the return journey they snatched a peak, and made the second ascent of White Sail (6,446m), first climbed by Lt. Col. J. O. M. Roberts in 1941".

- 1 Climbed by Tony Johnson, Roger Brook, John Brazington, Geoff Arkness, Geoff Tabbner, Bryan Pooley, 1971.
- 2 First ascent 1973: H. Day, G. Owens.
- 3 Koyiro, Tomita, Yasumasa, Miyaki.

"Simultaneously Handley and Gray reconnoitred the nearby peak of Ali Ratna Tiba (5,492m). They explored south of the peak and made two first ascents in the cluster of aiguilles known as the Manikaran Spires. Onset of the monsoon precluded any serious attempt on the Ali Ratna Tibba¹."

- 1 First ascent by a Scottish party in 1969, which included an Oread sassenach by the name of Chris Radcliffe.

Trevor Panther had to retire early from D.H.E. 1961, due to illness — *Editor*.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

Sometimes expeditions, with serious intent, are better exemplified by incidents that are not included in the official report, and I am grateful to Dennis Gray for providing some insight into the private life of Bob Pettigrew and his fellow apprentice expeditioners — *Editor*.

ON THE HIGH SEAS WITH COLONEL BOB

DENNIS GRAY

1961 is a long time ago and memories of the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition of that year, which was very much an Oread initiative, are distant. But not too remote to still raise a smile when I think on them now and then.

On the boat going out from Liverpool to Bombay, we established a reputation for ourselves as a team of live wires, and even, on occasion, eccentrics. Younger mountaineers who are used to modern communications, will probably be amazed to learn that as recently as the sixties, most expeditions to the Himalaya had to travel to Pakistan/India and back by passenger liner. Imagine a team of Oreads let loose amongst a boat load of bun-eaters, with the odd wealthy tourist aboard and a few young unaccompanied females, plus many British staff members going out to the various High Commissions, with unlimited amounts of cheap booze available day and night. This created an environment for fun in the sun, which allowed many an adventure, both above and below decks.

I experienced something of a *faux pas* at a fancy dress evening, for I went as Susie Wong. I borrowed a dress which was so tight I had to be cut out of it with a pair of scissors afterwards. Wearing rouge and eye shadow, plus falsies I must have appeared desirable to some, for a large Sikh gentleman pursued me around the boat deck pinching my bottom whenever he caught up with me.

Gaylord Handley had a fine boat trip, the highlight being when Thunderthighs, tired of his usual chat up line; "I'm an executive with Rolls Royce you know, travelling out to India on top secret work. Cannot tell you more", became so frustrated with the waiting she threw him onto a bed and dived on top of him. Gaylord obtained his nickname from the exclusive restaurant/night club in New Delhi, where he liked to spend his days and nights rather than on Colonel Bob's outings to ancient Indian relics.

Ray and I had met Thunderthighs and her cabin mate Khakiteeth on about the fifth day out from Liverpool. Up to then the old tub we were sailing on, The Cilicia, flagship of Glasgow's now defunct Anchor line had been behaving like a bucking bronco, and many of the passengers had spent their first few days confined to their cabins. Included amongst them was our youngest member Steve Read with whom I was sharing accommodation. Tired of being an invalid, and listening to my tales of four course meals, he insisted on coming up to the dining room one evening to try to force some food down. He managed to do this, but promptly brought it all up again, all over our table.

Back to Khakiteeth, who, apart from her nicotine stained molars was actually very petite and attractive with ginger hair. She turned out to be just as agile and strong as her friend; and, having seen what had happened to Ray, proceeded to throw me onto her bed with similar results. As Gaylord remarked afterwards, "It was like a scene out of a French farce". I cannot recall which one, but in case any Oread feels that Handley behaved like a cad, as was his habit in those days, he did offer to marry the girl.

Colonel Bob was our leader, and I still recall Burgess's amazement one night in Manali, when, after a few beers, he discovered that this was in all truth only an Honorary rank. In fact Pettigrew had never risen higher than an AC plonk when he had done his national service. But he has never let that stop his progress. I always think of him as a high ranker myself, for he has such military bearing. Bob's finest hour was when he out drank the Purser, glass for glass, on his own poison, gin! To realise the enormity of this feat, you must understand that this sailor was a dipso and drank several bottles of the stuff each day. He had invited us to his cabin one night for a session and Burgess, Handley, Steve and myself were all pissed as farts within half an hour. But Colonel Bob, with stiff upper lip, kept on drinking for the glory of the Oread, putting away doubles and trebles as if they were water, whilst trading stories with the alcoholic Jack Tar until the Purser was also blathered. As I passed into oblivion I realised what our leader was up to. Sitting at the side of a sink, he would divert our attention with a story, tip his drink down the plug-hole, then raise his glass to his lips and pretend to knock it back. "Aye your man Pettigrew is a fine drinker", admitted the Purser to Ray and myself, once he had recovered the next evening. I have kept quiet about this subterfuge until now, but it should be obvious to any reader why Colonel Bob has gone so far in British sport, despite being known in his youth as "Half a pint Pettigrew".

Do not be misled however, by his establishment image. In 1961 Colonel Bob was as capable of kicking over the traces as the rest of us. He might have been cast by the fates as out 'Great Leader', but he was still up for it given the chance. This came about one night in the shape of Brigadier Billy's perambulator. The Brigadier was on his way out to New Delhi to take over as Military Attache to the British High Commission. A huge florid fellow, he was a rather odious, upper class twit, and was accompanied by his younger wife who had recently presented him with an heir. They spent their days pushing this baby round the deck, being rude to any of the other passengers who might get in the way, and demanding instant attention from the Goanese waiters. They used to leave the perambulator after its daytime use tied up on deck. So. Late one night, after all the other passengers had retired, under the influence of alcohol and the direction of our leader, we decided to hold a pram race. One of us sat on this contraption, whilst another of our number raced around the foredeck to a course set

and timed by Gaylord. He of the H. Samuel Everight. The pace became hotter and hotter, and the pram was subjected to even more extreme treatment until the inevitable happened as Burgess was hurtling around the deck full tilt with Pettigrew sat like a huge baby in the Silver Cross. When the thing collapsed two of its wheels came squealing off. There ensued quite a pile up, so we simply stuck the wheels back on as best we could and crept off to our respective cabins as if nothing had happened.

Early the next morning Brigadier Billie and his wife set off for their morning constitutional, pushing the perambulator with their pride and joy inside. They only managed a few paces before the contraption collapsed once more and its front wheels went spinning off in different directions. At which the officer's roar of rage could be heard even below decks. But despite his anger he never did discover that it was a fellow officer, Colonel Bob, who had been the one most responsible for the bugging of his pram.

There are many more memories from that boat trip. We saw a blue moon over the Nile, some dirty postcards in Port Said, and a little of the devastation caused by the Suez conflict of a few years previous. The canal was still partly blocked by scuppered ships and we had to gingerly pick our way round and through, but it was in Aden that Handley and myself nearly met our nemesis.

The boat berthed and Ray, Thunderthighs, and myself jumped into a taxi to go to Krater City, for it was there one could then find the cheapest cameras, electrical goods, hi-fi's etc. Unfortunately the taxi driver, who turned out to be a rogue, kidnapped us out of the Aden Protectorate and into South Yemen, taking us to a camel market. We only realised this when, instead of taking about the thirty minutes normally required to reach Krater, one hour later we were still rolling over the desert. Thunderthighs became alarmed and Ray and I furious, and we all three shouted at the driver. But to no avail. On arriving at the market in South Yemen he demanded large sums of money, or threatened he would dump us. He also suggested to Ray that he exchange Thunderthighs for several camels. It appears that young ladies with very large thighs were very sought after in the Yemen. Anyhow as we had not the kind of money he was demanding we had a stand-off and slowly it dawned on the hapless driver that instead of well heeled tourists, who normally fell for his scam, he now had to deal with Gaylord Handley of Rolls Royce. No less that Skylon himself. A deal was struck.

Yet, even when we arrived back at Krater, we nearly did not get back to the safety of the ship. A large Nubian armed with a knife jumped Ray and myself as we emerged out of an electrical goods store, carrying the hi-fi system that Gaylord had treated himself to. The chap had us pinned against a shop window and was waving the knife under our noses, demanding with menaces the hi-fi and money, when salvation came in the form of Jerry. Physically a huge chap, a missionary, (from off our ship) who was on his way to India to carry the Christian message. He immediately sized up the situation and calmly walked up to the mugger and shouted at him loudly in English, "Put that knife down and go away you naughty man". And amazingly the Nubian did just that!

When we finally arrived in Bombay, having taken a month over the journey from Liverpool, it was with real sadness that we bade farewell to the Cilicia, her crew, and our fellow passengers, some of whom had by then become firm friends. In all truth I could have made a career out of being a cruise guide, going back and forth from Liverpool to Bombay. I had almost forgotten by then why we had set out in the first place. But waiting for us on the dockside was our Parsee agent, Freddie Buhariwallah, who was to shepherd us through customs (it took several days to clear our mountain of gear), and who introduced the rookies such as myself to our first sights and sounds of India and the realities of everyday existence on the sub Continent. An introduction that was to have a profound effect on my own life and for which I will always be grateful to my friends in the Oread who made it possible for me to share in such a mind expanding adventure.

Visit Chatsworth and see the room in which the Duke of Devonshire met RGP. All proceeds to expedition funds.

Oreads in Shorts. Newsletter, January 1961.

THE KULU WARRIOR

During 1962 Bob Pettigrew took up a teaching appointment at Rajkumar College, Rajkot, and between 1963 and 1967, visited the Kulu, Spiti, Lahoul area, with various parties, no less than six times.

Extracts from his frequent reports to the Newsletter follow.

KULU PUMORI (21,500') 1964

We left Manali on May 12th and, after a day's delay due to a storm on the pass, entered the Chandra valley. The valley porters were paid off on May 17th in a camp near the snout of the Bara Shigri glacier. Thereafter the work of ferrying stores and equipment was borne equally between the four climbers.

Base camp at Concordia, the junction of several glaciers, was finally established on May 28th, despite prolonged bad weather, with food supplies for a further 21 days including caches at intervals on the glacier.

Two days were spent in reconnaissance after which the routes selected by Lynam's party on the Northwest ridge, and the eastern approaches to the mountain, were both ruled out. We decided to seek a route on the south-west ridge, the foot of which seemed accessible from a small nevè draining the south face of Pumori. Accordingly, Advanced Base Camp was sited on the main southern tributary glacier of the Bara Shigri, near the junction of the nevè icefall from the south face of the mountain, and beneath the impressive rock spire of Lal Qila (Red Fort) 20,839'.

Two ridge camps were successively established on the crest of the southwest ridge at 19,000' and 20,000'. From the latter at 6 a.m. on June 6th Wangyal and myself climbed to the summit via the south-west ridge, making a diversion onto the steep snowfield of the south face to avoid a rock step a few hundred feet above Camp 2, and regaining the ridge just short of the summit. This, a perfect snow cone, was sited some way to the northwest along a spectacular and corniced snow ridge. The time was 9 a.m. and, for once the day was clear – permitting the identification of many mountain groups and their individual peaks as well as a round of photography. We commenced the descent at 9.30 a.m., and reached Camp at 10.45 a.m.

Three days later, June 9th, Franz Mohling and Ang Chook repeated the ascent.

We withdrew from the mountains on June 13th, heavily laden, and re-entered Manali on June 20th.

RECONNAISSANCE OF ALI RATNA TIBBA (18,013') 1965

Ali Ratna Tibba, 18,013', and its fore-top known respectively as Paptula and Dramtula to the local paharis (hillmen) is a formidable mountain resembling the Aiguilles des Drus. Aiming to carry out a close reconnaissance Langford, Pettigrew and Wangyal circumnavigated the base of the mountain by ascending the Ali Ratna Tibba East glacier, a tributary of the Malana glacier, and descending the Ali Ratna Tibba West glacier which emerges in the upper Malana, on the true left bank of the river, just below the snout of the Malana glacier. Two camps were required, one on the new pass we made immediately south-west of Ali Ratna Tibba, and one above the lower icefall on the descent glacier. The

pass was named the pass of the Obelisks, 16,000'. We consider that once gained the south-west ridge offers the best chance of an ascent. But it would have to be reached by a route traversing the steep ice fields of the south face, which would require considerable resources and prolonged preparation.

The party withdrew from the area down the remarkable and precipitous gorge of the Malana river, reaching the motorable road of the Parbati valley at Jari, (5,260') on June 17th.

BRUCE'S SOLANG WEISSHORN (19,450') 1966

Base camp (11,500') was established in the remote Upper Manalsu valley, three miles south of Seri on May 27th beneath a spectacular rock wall some 3,000' high, and close to a spur inhabited by a herd of ibex containing some splendid heads.

Subsequent days were spent reconnoitering a route northwards and establishing Camp 1 at 14,500'. Beyond the camp the route soon climbed out of the Upper Manalsu valley, over its west containing wall, and across the Kulu/Bara Bangahal by easy but exhausting nevès to the foot of the South face of Hanuman Tibba. Camp 2 was duly established at 16,500' on June 2nd.

From this camp on June 3rd two ropes consisting of Pettigrew and Pasang, Ang Nima and Rinzing, set off at dawn to make a summit bid by a route which weaved through the triple-tiered ice-cliffs of the south face.

Progress was encouragingly swift as far as the upper tier of the ice-cliffs some 600' below the summit cone. The snow condition was just beginning to perplex the party when suddenly, with a load report, a quarter-mile wide wind-slab avalanche split off at the exact level of the leading rope and swept the two ropes helplessly down the slopes for 500' only to discard them on the narrow terrace above the second tier of ice-cliffs. A later examination of the debris showed that the avalanche had continued for a further 1,500' below the second tier, and had come close to obliterating Camp 2 before it stopped.

Uninjured but bereft of an ice axe, the party quit the South face and traversed eastwards to gain the crest of the corniced East Ridge. Climbing steeply past small outcrops of vivid yellow rock, the snow summit was reached at 11.30 a.m.

Bruce's Solang Weisshorn (19,450') also known locally as Hanuman Tibba. First ascent 23.06.12 by Swiss guide Heinrich Fuhrer of Meiringen and a Gurkha soldier. Second ascent as above on 03.06.66 by Indo-British party organised by the Bombay Climber's Club — *Editor*.

HIMALAYAN NEWS – PAPSURA (21,200')

Newsletter, June 1967

News has just arrived of an accident in the Himalayas to a party, which included Bob Pettigrew. Climbing in a rope of three, the last man slipped and in a fall on snow of approximately 2,000'. Pettigrew sustained a dislocated hip. He was carried by stretcher for many days and subsequently had the hip attended to in a hospital in North India. He is now convalescing.

The best wishes of the whole club go out to Bob, and we trust that he will soon recover and be able to lead his usual full and active life.

Geoff Hayes

Here is an extract or two from a letter written to the Newsletter Editor.

“You will be surprised to hear that I am lying here convalescing after my first serious accident in the mountains. It occurred during reconnaissance of Papsura. We were three on the rope, descending a steep couloir. The lowest man slipped out of his steps, the second man’s steps collapsed and the two of them dragged me off. We fell about 2,000’ and came to rest in the bergschrund. The other two were dazed but unhurt, but I fell across the lower lip of the ‘schrund and dislocated my left hip. Ultimately I diagnosed this myself. John Ashburner got me installed in a tent just below the couloir that night. The next day they shifted me to the highest camp on a stretcher, improvised from skis and aluminium pickets. There I lay for seven days while they organised a stretcher team of Porters from Manali. The journey across the mountains took eight days (I’m claiming a stretcher record!). It was 16 days before I was X-rayed in Manali hospital and the diagnosis confirmed. By then I’d got used to seeing my left leg 2 inches shorter than my right!”

“By a lucky coincidence a professor of orthopaedic surgery was holidaying in Manali. He decided to try and replace the joint under spinal anaesthesia – thus averting a serious operation, which is the usual course after such a lapse of time. He was successful and I am now encased in plaster from chest to left big toe for six weeks”.

“I’m glad to report that a determined final bid for the peak by Colin and Geoff was successful”.

Salaams to the Oread
Bob Pettigrew

R.G.P. had further surgery in 1998 as a result of the fall in 1967 — *Editor*.

ALI RATNA TIBBA (18,031') – FIRST ASCENT – MAY 1969

Ali Ratna Tibba had been superficially reconnoitred by the D.H.E. 1961 and its approaches more thoroughly examined by Bob Pettigrew in 1965. Not a high peak but of some technical difficulty akin to classic Chamonix aiguilles at altitude. A Scottish team (Fred Harper, Marjorie-Anne Harper, Jim McCartney, Dave Nicol) invited Chris Radcliffe (Oread) to join them when Ian Clough had to drop out.

Radcliffe arrived at the base camp only five days after leaving U.K. having been assisted by the RAF who flew him to Bahrain in a Transport Command V.C.10.

The base camp was above the village of Malana (10,000') and directly beneath the west glacier of Ali Ratna Tibba. During load carrying to establish a camp on a high col. Jim McCartney had a serious crevasse fall, and with damaged ribs, had to retire to Malana. From this high col (partially established) camp the rest of the team pushed on;

Extract (from *Climb if you Will*) by Chris Radcliffe:

Late in the evening we saw two figures returning to our camp. We were surprised but pleased to find that these were Fred and Marjorie-Anne. They had accompanied Jim to base camp where he had insisted on continuing without their assistance. As the arduous part of the descent was behind him they had let him have his own way and returned to join Dave and myself.

At 4.00 a.m. on May 25th we set out across the hard frozen glacier. Soon we reached the foot of the ice ramp. We moved in ropes of two and steadily, pitch after pitch, we climbed the ramp, 4,000', to the point where it joined the west ridge. Below us vertical granite walls dropped to the glacier, above us ice-plastered walls. We crossed frequent avalanche runnels and had no doubt about the consequences if an ice field should break loose from the walls above. Dawn arrived and revealed a new panorama of peaks, but we pressed on and encountered no problems so that by 10.00 a.m. we had reached the notch in the west ridge. Here we rested and enjoyed the view. A fantastic sight greeted us. These rock and ice aiguilles seemed to belong more to Patagonia than to the Himalayas. Facing the east ridge of Ali Ratna Tibba across the Pass of Obelisks, one aiguille presented a face as big as the west face of the Dru. All seemed more serious than the training peaks we had expected of them.

Above us 4000' of climbing separated us from the summit. A series of granite buttresses were separated by snowfields. The climbing was superb. Chamonix type granite gave us the familiar strenuous type of crack climbing of. Grade D-Sup, but now we also had the insidious effect of altitude to contend with. Every move demanded a special effort; we gasped breathlessly over even the easiest moves. We had only one thought in our minds – to reach the summit. But as the shadows lengthened it was clear that we were not to reach the top that day.

Now we started looking for a bivouac site, but on this mountain they were hard to find. Pitch after pitch and still no ledge appeared big enough to accommodate us all. Eventually we found a site. It was well enclosed on three sides and would afford us some protection in the event of a storm, but the main disadvantage was that we had to sit on snow. We donned all our down gear and after an unsatisfactory meal settled down to bivvy at 17,500'. So far we had been lucky with the weather; there had been no afternoon storm, but now thin wisps of cloud were sweeping round our bivouac place and we were apprehensive about how the weather would turn out for the following day.

We were very fatigued but we slept little as the cold penetrated our clothing. However it remained fine and as soon as the sun reached us the next day, we hastily prepared for the final ascent. Five hundred feet to the summit and no great difficulties in our way. Two hours later only a thin blade of rock remained to be climbed. – a fine summit to a fine mountain. There was not room for all of us, so one at a time; we climbed to the highest point to be photographed in turn. The time was 10.00 a.m., the day May 26th. Ali Ratna Tibba had finally been climbed.

There was no great feeling of achievement. The views were breathtaking, yet not perhaps as fine as lower on the mountain where there is nearby perspective. There was no time to relax as the storm clouds were building up and we had no wish to be trapped on the mountain. The descent began uneventfully as we descended by an interminable series of abseils. We followed the ridge as far as the notch. But we had no intention of reversing the ramp because of the objective dangers. Instead we descended the south face by yet more abseils. As we feared a storm broke over us, but we reached the site of our half-finished col camp safely. After collecting the gear we had left there several days before, we descended the icefall. The surface of the glacier was in a terrible state after the effect of the sun and it was wearying work crossing it. We finally stumbled into camp at 8.00 p.m. Our ropes and gear were carelessly dumped and we collapsed into the tents totally fatigued.

Chris Radcliffe's contribution to the successful ascent of Ali Ratna Tibba concluded Oread involvement of Himalayan climbing during the period 1958-1970 — *Editor*.

THE SOCIAL WHIRL

During the years 1958-1970 the Annual Dinners attained a standard of excellence which unfortunately has not been maintained through to the present. Distinguished mountaineers from other clubs almost competed to sit at the Oread top table once a year, to have their characters delicately “done over”, and to enjoy the privilege of answering back. Character assassination by panto, song, and mimicry left few unscathed.

“the imaginative and outrageous Saturnalia which it inadequately describes as the Annual Dinner” – Jack Longland in his foreword to *Climb if you Will* — *Editor*.

THE GREEN MAN, ASHBOURNE

November 1960

Shamed by last year's debauchery in Baslow, 120 Oreads and associated friends, guests etc., sat down to a chic-chic dinner in more opulent surroundings than usual.

And in more distinguished company than usual, for among the guests, including the youthful Miss Sue Hunt and the Countess Gravina, (remembered for her example and leadership on Cho-Oyu) was at last seen that elusive flamboyant representative of the Brazilian Ladies Alpine Club, Carmello O'Higgins. Her entrance, reception by an outwardly startled, though obviously prepared Pretty, and subsequent speech of welcome must rank as the peak of Oread humour for many years to come.

What is also so commendable is that the whole hoax was one of the most closely guarded secrets of the year, for not even Gringo Handley knew of it, though from the speech of welcome he was obviously well known in O'Higgins' shadier haunts. Much suspicion must rest upon our Assistant Secretary, for the ebb and flow of O'Higgins presence was in complete harmony with his own movements. One is therefore bound to enquire as to whom paid for whose ticket. If our Assistant Secretary then his wife must feel a little non-plussed. If our lady, then Pete Janes is a bigger rogue than we have previously realised.

The speeches from R.G.P., Harry Pretty, Douglas Milner and John Jackson (the two chief guests) and Doug Cullum were consistently good. The President must be admired for his non-stop survey of Oread affairs, idiosyncrasies of individual members etc., which left Ashcroft muttering “I'll get that fellow Pettigrew yet”, in a quite venomous tone. Pretty for reading out a letter from Canon Janes, and giving a graphic account of Douglas Milner's arrival at the Alpine Club. Douglas Milner for some of his subtle jokes and account of a nailed boot ascent of the Grepon. John Jackson for some common sense at last, and Doug Cullum for some doubtful jokes. The speeches from our members must be almost incomprehensible to many guests unfamiliar with the tight circle of the Oread.

Tom Frost

THE GREEN MAN, ASHBOURNE

November 1962

The Annual Dinner was of course a great success and is now, according to one member, “The event of the Mountaineering Year”. The Green Man once again provided a fine meal, which was followed by the usual crop of good speeches. Brian Cooke in his last year as President gave a good account of the club's active and social life, and then he was followed by the two chief guests. Dennis Davis and Gwen Moffat. Jack Ashcroft and Phil Falkner spoke on behalf of the club. The evening was particularly merry because Wally Smith, who was celebrating his 21st, provided a very large barrel of ‘E’. Wally was

presented with a sleeping bag and hut key from members of the club. Oliver Jones once again put on a fine show with the pipes and led the singing, which, with the aid of the extra beer, went on for the rest of the evening. The quote of the night came from Jack Ashcroft who was presented with a toy elephant on a plaque, surrounded with all the gear he had lost during the past year. Later Jack, asking why he had been given the elephant, said "Is it because I am thick?"

Geoff Hayes

THE GREEN MAN, ASHBOURNE

November 1963

It seems a long time since the dinner but here are a few details. Ashcroft, (President), spoke at great length about marriage, children and babies. The only thing he did not suggest was that the Club should be turned into a day nursery for large Oread families, both actual and planned! Burgess also spoke at length (45 min) and very successfully pulled all the guests to pieces – he has been ignored by most of them since. Chris Bonnington, one of the chief guests, talked about Stanage and not the Eiger. Rafe Jones told one or two of the most recent jokes. He was overheard asking members for some new ones just before the dinner. Jack Longland took great delight in quoting from the newsletter, trying mistakes, grammatical errors and all. The Editor wishes to inform Jack that he was educated in Nottinghamshire and not Derbyshire. Oliver Jones again put on a good performance. It was a shame we did not hear more from Oliver as he was cut short due to lack of time. For many Oreads Oliver's little one-man show is one of the highlights of the dinner. Mugs were presented to Mr. & Mrs. Burgess and Mr. & Mrs. Caris.

Geoff Hayes

THE GREEN MAN, ASHBOURNE

November 1964

LETTER FROM INDIA – A taped address from R. G. Pettigrew

Short sequence of Indian music...

"Good evening, I hope you enjoyed my rendering of the Indian version of "Eskimo Nell". My accompanists were: Pete Janes on the Sarangi, an instrument designed to express sensuality, pleasure and love; Ray Handley on the Sitar, conveying the peaceful atmosphere of a starry night in Belper; and Harry Pretty on the Vina, this instrument is made of a long pole of bamboo to which two spherical resonators have been attached – an admirable emblem of Pretty the Man."

"I was going to entitle this letter from India "Some Good Men I have Known", when I realised that, to the new "Beatle" set in the Oread, I might as well be speaking of my forefathers, who were, of course, good men."

"When this keen young set write to me, as they occasionally do, to complain of nameless persecutions that go on in that Colditz of the Oread, Tan Yr Wydffa, they sometimes refer, in a puzzled way to the shadowy power group as the "Bathchair Brigade". These must be none other than the good men of my youth and of the Oread's Golden Era."

"To these young lads and lasses on the threshold of life, bursting with energy, even jumping off the Lenspitze for thousand foot slides to show they are 'with it'; and bringing a delightful hint of Mods and Rockers into the Oread, but, amazingly still uninformed as to the facts of life in the Club, I have decided to reveal the hitherto carefully concealed fact that the Oread has an establishment."

"You might ask: is the time ripe to reveal this fact? Is it opportune? And, above all, since you are speaking from India, is it auspicious?"

"The answer is that you must judge from one whom can best be described as an exiled Oread Pundit who is sick for a pint in the Bell, and has the Club's interests at heart."

"For you are about to witness an event unprecedented in the long and glorious annals of the Oread – perhaps, then, you will permit me to interpret for you its full significance."

"When, with a creaking of arthritic joints, frantic tuning of hearing aids, adjustment of crutches and a good luck pinch of snuff, Janes and Handley are at last ready to stand and face their eager young audience, a collective question will arise in the minds of all:"

"Who are these men?"

"There they will stand, blinking nervously at the prepared statements, caught finally and irrevocably in a situation they have avoided for so long. On them will be riveted perhaps, as many as two hundred blood-shot eyes."

"The silence would be pregnant if they were not, clearly, both passed it."

"I cannot predict what they will say, with what new clarion calls they will inflame Oread hearts and inspire young initiates to scale bigger and better things. Perhaps, with Conservatives they will merely cry, "up, up, up!" My task now is to disclose history."

"The truth is that there never has been an Oread Committee free from the influence of Janes and Handley or the Manipulators, as they are popularly known to generations of Oread Committeemen. Ah! Say some – you are wrong. What about the Pretty era?"

"Now, my children, when the young, adolescent Pretty launched the Oread as his peacetime answer to the Fleet Air Arm, all the crags and moors of Derbyshire were controlled by a large, powerful empire called the Valkyrie, (the name alone still excites wonder and gets Janes and Handley slobbering in their beer). By payment of large sums of protection money the Oread was permitted to climb in special reservations like Birchen Edge, and even write guide books."

"However the external affairs of the club were, naturally, controlled by the Valkyrie who deputed two notorious ex-cyclists, who worshipped a God called "The Murk", as gauleiters of the Oread Committee, with Pretty as a front Man."

"The decline and fall of the Valkyrie Empire, like the decline and fall of the British Empire, has never properly been explained, but some say that the secondment of the two key men of the Valk was instrumental in extinguishing this bright start of the climbing cosmos."

"Their future in the Oread was, of course, assured. After all it was a mixed club – even those hardened warriors of the Valkyrie needed a change – they had shared a tent with Nat Allen long enough."

"From then on – for an unbelievable period of 15 Oread dinners they have been at the helm. The front men have come and gone. The facts speak for themselves."

"*Pretty*. Loaned indefinitely to the Mountain Club at a ridiculously small fee, then recalled, and submerged in rural Holbrook."

"*Sutton*. Banished to the back streets of Liverpool to found small protectorate clubs in the Oread orbit."

"*Pettigrew*. The last of the Kipling Breed – exiled to India in exchange for Maria Handley – and so it goes on. Where are the Bynes, the Falkners, the Cookes?"

"But the present man is alright, I hear you say. The man with eyes like traffic lights gone berserk; Hebog Jack Ashcroft. Surely he was sent to Coventry in his prime, just when he had all but completed the greatest cock-up of his career, the diversion of the Derby ring road into the main Derwent sewer to clear the congestion of Roll-Royce traffic. His last, defiant words were, "It was the best place for 'em!"- agreed but, like his predecessors, he was quietly eliminated."

"Normally only seen stalking smoothly from one delicacy to another at the refreshment period of Committee Meetings, pausing only to pinch the bottom of their hostess, what had brought these two away from the backrooms where the decisions are taken? Is it senility? A last crazed bid for popular acclaim in recognition of their long vigil over the affairs of the club? Or is it final proof that Fred Allen has at last seized effective control in the Kremlin of the Oread, and you are about to see the new front men flushed from their holds by a new and noisome wind of change?"

"And Spherical Resonators to Pretty!"

"We send out best wishes to you all at this great annual celebration which we hope to join next year (if we can persuade the Committee to delay it nearer Christmas) and we salute the Oread Mountaineering Club."

Bob Pettigrew. Written and recorded 27 September 1964.

THE GREEN MAN, ASHBOURNE

November 1967

As sung by the three belly dancers (Handley, Burgess and Wes Hayden).

Tune: 'Hang down your head Tom Dooley'.

Rescue me Chuck Hooley,
For I'm gonna scream,
Rescue me Chuck Hooley
With the Alpha Alpine Team.

We're stuck up on this mountain,
Our lives not worth a cent,
Bring up Johnny Corden
Not your dirty President.

It was in the Bell one Tuesday
We met your climbing club,
There was Pretty, Janes and Williams,
Now we're in the pudding club.

Hurry up Chuck Hooley,
We're lying on the scree,
Hurry with your coolies,
Or there'll soon be six not three.

Tune: 'Its Foolish but it's fun'.

I love to go in Janes' car,
And drive round to some shady bar,
And slap him when he goes too far,
It's foolish but it's fun.

I love to go out for a ski
And wrap my boards around a tree,
Then Dennis Davies rescues me,
It's foolish but it's fun.

With Trevor Jones out on the rocks,
My sweaty hands upon his chocks,
Jamming his nuts behind the blocks
Its foolish but it's fun.

THE GREEN MAN, ASHBOURNE

November 1968

With over 140 members and guests this was the biggest gathering of the club ever. The Oread was once again fortunate in obtaining two excellent guest speakers and the high standard of previous club dinners was once again maintained. It was a happy occasion with an excellent meal, good speeches and entertainment.

The Green Man once again provided very good eats, which were followed by a number of entertaining speeches. President Ray Handley opened with a short preview of the years' meets and the present state of the club. For a change Bob Pettigrew appeared live to propose the toast to Guests and Kindred Clubs. Although we missed the usual Pettigrew 'Tape' it was good to see Bob back at the top table.

Al Alvarez, of T.V. and Observer fame, replied on the behalf of the guests. McNaught – Davis followed with the toast to the Oread, and Geoff Hayes replied.

Further entertainment was provided by Nat Allen who introduced three Oread Virgins who gave a song and dance act. Chris Brasher also put the boot in. (Fairly prescient of him — *Editor*.)

George Reynolds who did most of the graft for this year's dinner deserves everyone's congratulations on a job well done.

Geoff Hayes

Presumably "graft" included selecting the Oread virgins... of dubious qualifications, they should remain anonymous. Handley denied that they were on a free transfer from the Pinnacle Club — *Editor*.

Newsletter, February 1966

At the first committee meeting of the New Year it was decided to change the Tuesday night rendezvous from the Bell to the Wilmot Arms, Borrowwash.

Borrowwash is a little nearer to Nottingham, which is tipped to be the new seat of power. But keep your eyes on Coventry Hebog Ashcroft who is spreading the gospel loud and strong in that area.

Geoff Hayes

So began a long association with John Fredericks who eventually moved from the Wilmot to the George at Hubberholme in Wharfedale. Many subsequent ex officio gatherings of Oreads took place at the George during the '70's and '80's — *Editor*.

THOUGHTS ON MRS. MALAPROP AND THE OREAD ANNUAL DINNER

JOHN FISHER

The fear of being asked to speak at the Annual O.M.C. dinner must be a sort of unpleasant dream for a good number of the club. What to say and how to say it in the full knowledge that few have such ability are the disturbing essentials of that dream.

Should one be puritanical and set about a discourse on the modern climbing scene? Items for savagery could be the unnecessary and repetitive magazine articles reminiscent of the inane babblings of wine pundits, self-promotion, gear freakery, gross commercialisation, and ravings about the great outdoors. What on earth does this last item mean? As a speaker you could only take this approach if you had the stature of a Longland or a young hard member who could readily deny fageyism.

Exploration of the philosophy of climbing is, in my view, largely phoney. Climbers simply like the risk, gymnastics, companionship, technology, mountain natural history, literature or any combination according to taste. Seeking a philosophical basis for an inclination to climb is like looking for reason in love. Forget about the spirits behind stones and character building. As for the latter, just reflect on climbers you know. Having said all this, climbing has given most of us experiences, pleasures and sometimes solace, which I doubt could have come from other endeavours.

Reflections on the nature of the club and its doings over the years risks sounding like too much of a list and, of course, to best do that you need to be recognisably mature, even old. Clearly there needs to be some pep and probably only the extremes of determined supercritical review, or something funny, are likely to succeed. No one has done the former because it hazards a catastrophic failure when addressed to a society conditioned to accept half truths from self seeking politicians, media, advertising and other purveyors of the illusion of benefit. Kindly do not accuse me of prejudice because I shall tell you that my prejudices are simply a honed up combination of insight, experience, the ability to see and read and, of course, a natural ability to recognise a rogue a mile off.

Turning back to the theme, something funny and possibly new could be in the form of Malapropisms injected into a climbing subject. An audience takes pleasure in recognising these 'isms', laughs and congratulates itself on doing so. This self-congratulation is said to be a basis for much successful English comedy. To give an example one's effort could go a bit like this:-

"That northern youth with climbing ambitions said he was interested in that Eigerbond issued in Carey Street. I'm told his wages are good but the expenses of living in the Old Rectumry must mean he could do with a few more pounds per anum. His girl friend won't help because she is something of a woman's bib and got so mad at his overtures that she spilt Bonjolais all down her new Grottex, or was it Prattex, jacket. She feels she needs sexual uplift and thinks the Indian Congress Party could help. She could combine that with a high mountain trip since this year that organisation is meeting in the area of the Ram of Krutch (sorry, Rann of Kutch) near the Indo-Pakistan border. I must say I find a dose of Vino Barbitone is more useful to quieten such ambitions."

As for myself, I'm staying at home with my eyes on the Faecal Ridge of Cairngorm next winter.

All this, I suppose, is rather lacking in taste and rather biological, but, if padded out a bit, would entertain both the serious diners and drunken oafs and get you, the speaker, something of a reputation.

A WEEKEND WITH RAWHIDE, TODHUNTER, AND OTHERS (EXTRACT) SUMMER 1961

HARRY PRETTY

Stafford-Williams is of the opinion that all this “slice of country” jazz really finished when, in trying to lead us through the “trackless wilderness” to Hebog, Rawhide had to accept out topographical advice in order to prevent the party from inadvertently taking in Mynydd Drws-y-Coed and Moel Lefn en route... I am inclined to agree but, as I started to say earlier, it was for all practical purposes R. Todhunter who some time later emerged at our feet upon the northeast shoulder of Hebog.

I suppose that by this time the situation was a bit out of hand. Stafford Williams and I simply accepted the fact that we were climbing with Todhunter and eventually the whole set-up began to feel quite normal.

There was a small incident, slightly unnerving to one having some affinity with early days. We were climbing a particularly disreputable series of pitches; all vertical heather loosely connected by minute areas of clean rock, which has, I believe, been included in the guidebook as a rock climb. Todhunter said it was called Caterpillar. I was tied in the middle of the rope but, at the time, was in the lead – a situation not uncommon when climbing with Stafford-Williams and the ghost of Todhunter. It was noticeable that Williams had not quite assimilated the circumstances although those ancient breeches were providing plenty of atmosphere. He never looked Todhunter in the eye – always a nervous sideways glance. Williams was definitely jumpy and when, during his negotiation of a particularly nasty stretch of heather, Todhunter addressed him quite clearly and firmly as “George” – he fell off, to be pulled up shortly by an adeptly applied shoulder belay and the cry of “jolly hard luck George, old chap!” There was something very odd about it, and it wasn’t until sometime later that I remembered the name of the man with whom Todhunter had made the first ascent of Yellow Buttress on Craig y Cwm Du. It was, as I say, very odd indeed.

With reasonable expectation I thought that a night in the streaming fleshpots of the Port Madoc British Legion Hall, a few hours of stomping with the cats, would remove all trace of Todhunter. It might well have worked but for the fact that every time he showed promise of getting real way out his partners would insist on enquiring after the health and strength of “the tall dark ‘andsome man – surely you remember?” Janes said they were talking about Welbourn – anyway it didn’t do his condition any good, and he had a relapse.

Not until we scrambled up to the small ledge at the foot of Curving crack, at some hour of the following day, did I see the change. Todhunter quite suddenly was no longer with us.

But even at the end you can’t win – not with Janes. He stared at the long slit of a first pitch and, jumping up and down in a curious excited way he began to claw at the rock in the manner of a hard man. “Come on Pretty”, he boomed “Get on my shoulders, I can easily throw you up”.

I turned sadly to Williams. “If he calls you Maurice or Colin, take no notice”.