

# ROCKS, RAILWAYS AND THE ARENIGS

## LIMESTONE MEET, JANUARY 1961

*DES HADLUM*

The Peak District has some of the finest Limestone for climbing in Britain, and not all routes are peg routes. So if you have not got the necessary pegs, krabs etc., don't be put off from turning up on this meet.

Camping will be at Black Rocks, a quiet place in the winter. Permission has been obtained for parties to climb on High Tor during the weekend, so I expect we will make use of this. Free climbing can be had in plenty at Willersley Crag at Cromford. This fine high cliff was recently discovered and now gives many routes with or without pegs.

See reference to R. A. Brown climbing on High Tor on Coronation Day, 1953.

This was probably the first official Oread Limestone Meet — *Editor*.

## WELSH HIGHLAND LIGHT RAILWAY

*Newsletter, September 1964*

Rumour has it that a certain member of the Oread (one who sports a beard and lives at Rhyd Ddu – well almost) has applied to be issued with a black peaked cap and whistle. It is quite likely that this rumour has some foundation. The old railway track from Caernarvon to Bedgellert is in the process of renovation and it won't be long before our hut is the half way station! Are the committee to discuss the idea that Tan y Wyddffa be once again opened as a snack bar? This sounds quite an idea to help the club finances. Upon seeing progress on the railway outside the hut recently, Welbourn was heard to state that the time would soon be here when Oread members would be sitting on the wall outside the hut, waiting their clients to alight from the early morning train, eager to be guided into the fantastic world of Snowdon. Get your ice axes ready chaps and don't let the guides from other valleys step on our ground. We have a right to keep our Hornli Grat.

*Geoff Hayes*

First reference to proposed re-opening of the Welsh Highland Railway, in an Oread publication, and very light hearted at that — *Editor*.

*Newsletter, June 1965*

According to a report in the Liverpool Daily Post of 17/4/65, the sceptics who said that the narrow-gauge railway line past Tan y Wyddfa could never be opened are a little nearer to being confounded. The news item stated that "Russell" a twenty ton narrow-gauge locomotive has been given to the Welsh Highland Light Railway Ltd., who are planning to re-open part of the line which closed in 1937. Saved from the scrap yard by the Birmingham Locomotive Club, the loco is now undergoing an extensive refit at Shrewsbury. She was built in 1906 for the North Wales Narrow Gauge Company, a forerunner of the Welsh Highland, and ran for many years on the line through Rhyd Ddu, until she made the last trip to collect the remaining rolling stock from Portmadoc in 1937.

If that part of the line which runs past the hut is re-opened, and there now appears to be some doubt if that particular section will be the first, we shall be able to claim the somewhat doubtful honour of having the only climbing club hut with a railway within touching distance!

*Ronnie Langworthy*

## BURGESS GETS ABOUT A BIT

### *EXTRACT*

*Newsletter, November 1965*

The main climbing on Arenig Fawr is situated on the crag to the West (behind) Lyn Arenig Fawr. Approaching from the campsite at Bryn Ifan, the main mass of cliff is on the left as the buttress bends back to form the side of a valley. A feature being a White Streak, this provides a route of that name for 300', approximately H.V.S. A series of grooves leads to the foot of a steep slab. This is climbed on the left-hand side with a hard move right across the top to enable a large grassy ledge to be reached. From the left side of the ledge a chimney leads to the top of the pinnacle whence a short groove leads to the top of the crag.

*D. Burgess*

## FROM OUR JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

*Newsletter, November 1965*

Mountain climbing enthusiasts now practise scaling rocky slopes on the façade of a building in the hustling entertainment and shopping district of Shibuya Tokyo.

When the Taiyo Industry Company, makers of mountain climbing equipment, had a new building constructed, they had the façade, from the second floor to the roof of the six-floor building, constructed of concrete so as to duplicate the appearance of a rock face.

This structure has been named "Tokyo Rock". It is 65 feet 6 inches high and 32 feet and 7 inches wide, and has been built at an angle of 84 degrees.

In addition to a few channel-like chimneys and overhangs, 130 hankens, the special spikes used in climbing, have been fastened to the façade.

The Tokyo Rock was designed under the supervision of leading rock climbing experts. A safety net has been spread along the lower edge of the rock.

The Tokyo Rock is open to the public for ¥200 (4s) an hour. Trainers are always available at the site to help beginners, while members of the Japan Alpine Association and other mountain climbing groups hold regular training sessions on the rock.

## A DISTANT APPOINTMENT

In 1966 John Fisher had the opportunity to visit Tristan Da Cunha. By now Fisher, after army Service in the R.A.M.C. (a real captain, none of that honorary stuff), was on the teaching staff of the Dental Faculty at Birmingham University. His visit to Tristan concerned the dental condition of the local population — *Editor*.

### TRISTAN DA CUNHA (*EXTRACT*)

The island of Tristan Da Cunha and its two uninhabited satellites lie just north of the "Roaring Forties" on latitude 37°S, 1,500 miles from the Cape of Good Hope and 2,000 miles from Buenos Aires to the west. The remoteness of the group is very obvious, more so I suppose in some respects than

the South Pole. The island is one of the visible manifestations of the submarine Mid-Atlantic ridge running from Greenland in the northern hemisphere to Bouvet island in the south; throwing up Ascension and St. Helena. With its typical volcanic structure, some cynical observers have likened Tristan island to an ash cone with grass on the sides supporting a population of 250 souls. So much for the romance that has always been a feature of Tristan commentary, misplaced though it is at the present time. There is of course some considerable justification for the aura which surrounds the place but I suspect this is partly reminiscing from a distance and partly, the very real fact, that prior to the last war, Tristan and its people were unique, the inhabitants possessing at that time some of the desirable social characteristics which are rapidly disappearing in our materialistic urban society.

Enough of the background save to say that when the opportunity came to go the temptation was impossible to resist. A two minute decision, a couple of months waiting for grant authority to come through, and a desperately hectic five weeks organising equipment, found the writer exhausted on the liner to Cape Town.

Eventually all good things come to an end and the reckoning time arrived when I took passage in the M.V. Gillian Gaggins, 600 tons, for Tristan da Cunha. The "G.G." as she was called, is one of the two fishing vessels that twice a year visit the Tristan islands from South Africa for two periods, each of six months, to fish for crawfish.

Eventually Tristan appeared and, in the words of A. E. Baker, a chronicler of the Peak District, showed as "a prospect of unmitigated gloom"; cloud, rain, a heavy swell and much to the chagrin of the writer, no possibility of landing that day owing to the heavy seas. The ship therefore retired to what lee there was to await improvement.

Improvement there was the next day and the cargo including myself was off-loaded with a sense of profound relief on my part. On the whole, my stay of three months on the island was interesting but the fact remains that it is a small and rather limited place. Not only is the island small, about seven miles across, but has a singular sameness in its features as would be expected of a volcanic cone. It is, in general, treeless, often wet, almost always mindlessly windy, and with a high humidity which has a devastating effect on metal equipment. The variation in land flora and fauna is very small, relieved to some extent by the profusion of sea birds and fish, including whale and shark. To be perfectly objective, Tristan is not much of a place except in three respects, – its rather unusual and romantic background described by Brander in his book "Tristan da Cunha 1506-1908", the impressiveness of the combination of mountain and sea emphasising the remoteness and, finally, and most interesting of all, the people who have jumped from the 19th to 20th century in a very short period of time.

Hence they are interesting from medical and sociological points of view, notably in relation to the effects of isolation. Especially interesting is the fact that since the population is small and their genealogy completely known, such a group readily lends itself to the study of some aspects of human genetics. My own interest lay in the dental condition of these people.

It hardly needs saying that one of my personal objectives was to climb the peak. This did not prove possible and will always be regretted. Unfortunately the authorities insisted that to ascend the peak one must be accompanied by a capable islander and these were never available, in spite of promises, on the very few days when an ascent might have been a prospect. An ascent of the peak in fact would have presented no technical problems, being really an exhausting walk. The real problem was that of assessing weather since this was extremely erratic and frequently bad, especially at that time of year. Further, any mistake in route finding could have been catastrophic because of hard going through tree fern and the high prevalence of gullies, steep deep and shattered, which radiated from the ash peak. Half of the island periphery even now has not been traversed by land. My job anyway was to obtain co-operation of the authorities, not alienate them, so the temptation to go off on my own was resisted. Nevertheless on the quiet the padre and myself went up about 3,000-ft, almost to the edge of the ash, to gain a good view of the top itself. Even this we found quite a performance.

*Newsletter, January 1967.*

John Fisher, now on Tristan da Cunha, has recently been joined by a lady rat catcher – a Miss. Is there any connection?

*Geoff Hayes*

Fisher has always refused to comment on lady rat catchers. His lips have remained sealed for over thirty years — *Editor.*

## OUTDOOR MEETS U.K. 1962-1970

### EDITORIAL (*EXTRACT*)

*Newsletter, Summer 1962*

Last October a party of Oreads arrived at the Cat and Fiddle en route for Edale from the Roaches. It was a typical winter's day in the Peak, bleak with cold windy rain, but we had been heartened by the hope of a cup of tea after the long plod up.

On arriving at the inn at about 10.00 a.m. the inmates refused to serve us, a party of twelve, with tea or anything hot. On leaving, a little dejected and rebuffed, we passed a front window of the pub containing a single worded placard "LUNCHEONS".

Luncheons for whom? For those who are unwilling to ascend a mountain except on mechanical legs, for those who are unable due to infirmity? Luncheons for those with a shine on their shoes, a shell round their souls, and stupor in their limbs; by those who proudly claim to be the owners of the highest pub in England and yet refuse a hot drink to a group of people who love heights but not at luncheon tables.

*Geoff Hayes*

Not a lot has changed at the Cat and Fiddle even though there is now a walker's refreshment room. Recently in 1998, on a bad summer's day (wind and rain) they "ran out of tea" in mid afternoon and declined to provide a fresh supply — *Editor.*

### OGWEN 1963 (MARCH) (*EXTRACT*)

I can't report much about the Ogwen meeting this year. Although I did get to Wales – just. The van was in collision with an 18-ton coal lorry about half a mile over the border. The meet leader was also in the van so he won't be able to give his usual report. I'm pleased to say that the Nottingham Team who ended up in Shrewsbury Hospital is almost back to normal. We are having to tie Doreen Gadsby down with her climbing rope to stop her throwing herself back on the crags, broken ribs and all.

*Geoff Hayes*

### BULLSTONES 1963 (DECEMBER)

Perhaps the largest number ever of Oreads were on Bleaklow for this meet. The unfortunate thing was that there were two separate groups, which never actually managed to connect.

Harry Pretty led the Friday night group in triumph from Poltergeist Barn to Lower Small Clough. The party was about twelve strong and included Gibson (returned from the dead). Apparently the hut was over full and the Vice President was sent outside to sleep (he is the fattest of the group). The Hooleys and Langworthys tried to connect with Pretty's Mob, but after wandering about somewhere near to the correct Clough and, later at the head of the Derwent, they managed to get into Bullstones Lower Cabin about Midnight. Welbourn, Hobday, Rod Craddock and Margaret Lowe also arrived late in the evening at Bullstones top Cabin, after doing a double trip of Derwent Edge etc. I have to put etc. because no one knows where they went, not even themselves. I was in the other party, twelve strong, consisting mainly of the Nottingham Ice Rink Section, which left Yorkshire Bridge at 7.30 p.m. and only just managed to arrive at Bullstones at about 2 a.m. (Welbourn was pleased to receive us!)

Various routes were used to get back to Yorkshire Bridge, some went over the tops, in thick cloud and others took the road back beside the Dam.

*Geoff Hayes*

This was probably the first use of Lower Small Clough cabin on a Bullstones Meet — *Editor*.

## BULLSTONES 1964 (DECEMBER)

The annual epic managed to take place once again despite the rapidly deteriorating condition of the aged participants. The theme this year was "It's not so much a walk as a way of life". I hope that Pretty may give a full and revealing report of this meet and the subsequent downfall of Janes and others, but meanwhile here is a short report.

The scene opens at the Nags Head, Edale. Eventually after much intake of ale by the older members the group set off in the dark for Poltergeist Barn. Within 100 yards Pretty, who is leading the gallant few, does a purler on some ice on the path and manages to wet his beard, and other parts, in the local stream. The Barn is found with ease and those in the know get the best kipping spots, leaving the others to do as best they can with the rest of the shelter. Pretty declares that he has only brought his airbed for a ground sheet and does not intend to blow it up! Eventually everyone settles down. The first disturbance is when Ashcroft and Bob Gill arrive about 2 a.m., and, shortly after Pretty is heard inflating his airbed, (just got his breath back from the walk). Eventually the cold cruel light of dawn rouses those who managed to sleep and Frost is observed complete with North Wall hat heating his breakfast over a candle! Cold limbs are dragged up the slopes of Kinder Scout and after about two hours in an icy rain everyone gathers in Ashop Clough Cabin. Here the eclipse of Janes, mentioned by Pettigrew at the dinner, takes place. In an unusually quiet voice he asks who is going with him to the Barnsley Club Hut in the Snake. He and his chief rucksack carrier – Williams depart. A sorry sad group of supporters trudge off down the path, leaving a young virile group with a drooping Pretty at the rear to continue the pilgrimage to Bullstones. By the time Grains in the Water is reached the condition of Pretty is evident to all, and it is decided, as most of the walk is completed, to go down the Alport to see if the others managed to get to the Barnsley Hut. The hut is locked and empty. Luckily whilst having a drink in the Café next door a couple of Barnsley lads arrive and the doors are thrown open to us. A pleasant evening is spent around a magnificent fire and all clothes are dried out. At this time the Janes group, having found the Hut locked, are trying to sleep in a barn about two miles further down the road. The two parties were not to join again until the completion of the walk to Bamford. Here Jim Kershaw is found. He was drinking in the bar of the London – Manchester train when it stopped at Coventry, where he should have joined Ashcroft. Jim spent the night on Manchester Station and made a solo route to Bullstones where he spent a lonely night in Lower small Clough cabin without light or paraffin!

"Its not so much a walk as a way of life".

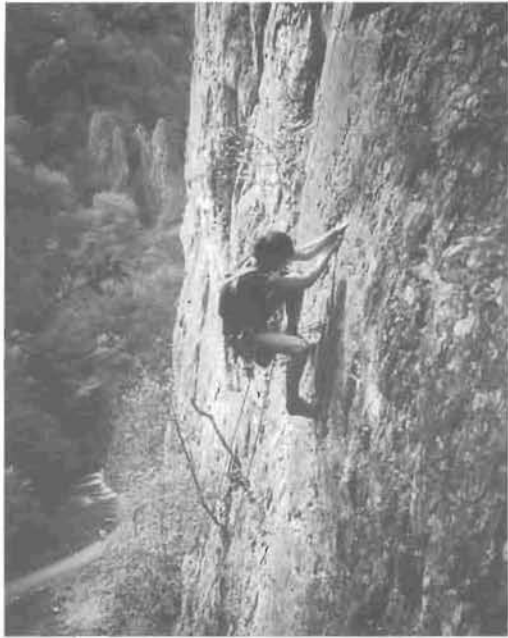
*Geoff Hayes*



Valkyrie, Froggat Edge, J. Fisher and "Unknown" (who subsequently fell and was held by J.F.) Photo: *Gordon Gadsby*.



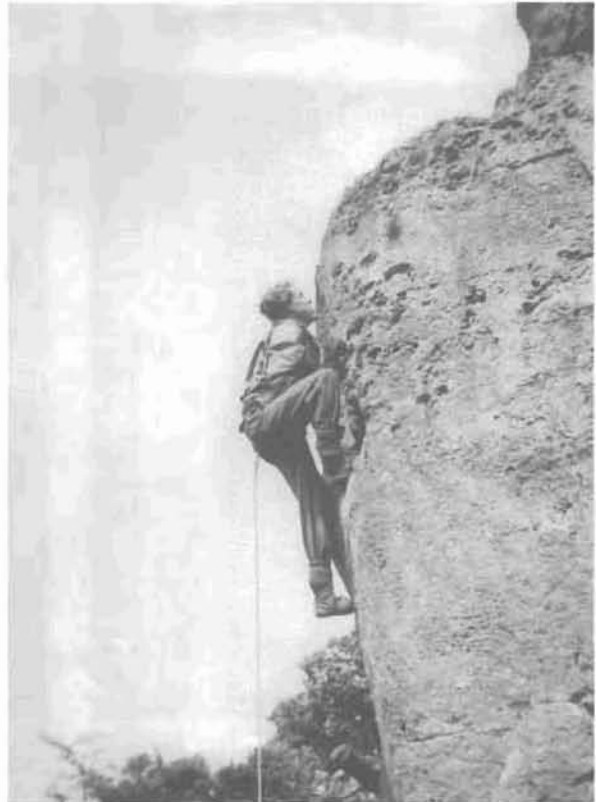
Harding's Super Direct, Stannage: Derrick Burgess (leading) and Andy Oakden. Photo: *Dave Gwyler*.



Above:  
Yew Tree Wall, Tissington Spires, Dovedale,  
Dave Knighton climbing.  
*Photo: Gil Male.*

Above right:  
Jitter Wall, Stanage, Doreen Hodge climbing.  
*Photo: Gordon Gadsby.*

Right:  
David Penlington, Rainster Rocks, 1949.  
*Photo: Harry Pretty.*





C. Radcliffe on the Old Man of Storr, Skye.  
*Photo: J. Ashcroft.*



Abseiling off the Inaccessible Pinnacle, Skye.  
*Photo: J. Ashcroft.*



Elliots Buttress, Gardoms Edge,  
D. Burgess and Hank Harrison climbing.  
*Photo: Unknown.*



Valkyrie, Roaches.  
*Photo: J. Ashcroft.*





Welsh Walk 1968: Abergwesyn to Pumlumon: G. Gadsby, C. Hobday, M. Clark, P. Gardiner, J. Crosse, H. Pretty, P. Janes. *Photo: D. Williams.*



Marsden to Heathy Lea (Baslow) 1969: M. Clark, P. R. Falkner, C. Hobday, M. Hayhurst, R. Squires, J. Crosse, D. Williams, P. Gardiner. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



21st Bullstones Meet, 1970: Holden, Kenny, Russell, Squires, Weston, Linney, Williams, Gregson, Ashcroft, Janes, Allen, Winfield, Johnson, Reynolds. In front: Scott, Foster, Radcliffe. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Bullstones Meet, 1968: Meet leader (H. Pretty) assembles troops in Blackden Clough (awaiting D. Williams adrift on Kinder overnight). Troops: P. Gardiner, P. Janes, J. Welbourn, C. Hobday, R. Handley, M. Hayhurst, S. G. Moore, F. Allen, D. Burgess. *Photo: C. Radcliffe.*

## BULLSTONES 1965 (DECEMBER) (*EXTRACT*)

Just a short report to tell you that the meet was a great success despite no one getting within miles of Bullstones. I'm hoping that Pretty will come up with the full details of this epic. It deserves being reported in full detail, being a meet of the "Vintage" type.

After gathering in the Nags Head, the party was called to order and marched swiftly around the village following Pettigrew on the bagpipes. Unfortunately he took the wrong track to the Barn and ended up at the rear of the file. This was to be Bob's finest hour. How he managed to play the pipes all the way to Poltergeist Barn no one will ever know. It was a fantastic effort. Although by the sounds of his breathing during the remainder of that long cold night Bob must have blown a gasket in his right lung! Everyone slept in the snow that night because the barn was inches deep in churned up mud etc. I expect all were pleased to see a fine sunrise over the Mam Tor Ridge.

*Geoff Hayes*

Editorial comment might provide further enlightenment...

Bob Pettigrew was on leave from India where he had (inter alia) been undergoing instruction in the art of the bagpipes. His achievement, in playing this instrument without pause from the Nags Head via the steep slopes of Grindslow Knoll to Poltergeist Barn, remains unique in the annals of the Oread.

It was a cold clear night with deep snow cover and the sound of the pipes was heard from one end of Edale to the other. The mystery of it engaged the locals for many a day.

As Geoff Hayes noted we slept in trenches excavated in the snow. Pettigrew, attired only in sports jacket, cords and deerstalker, hung his jacket on a clothes hanger (sic) to a nearby tree. Next morning the jacket was iron hard with frost. When the main body departed north over Kinder, en route for the Barnsley M.C. cottage, R.G.P. returned to Edale. There was a rumour that Sir John was looking for him.

Reference Poltergeist Barn: In the 1950's it became the haunt of the then Sheffield University M.C. (R. A. Brown, J. Clegg, D. Wooler, P. Wilkinson, Chalky White etc.) and it was so named following a curious incident when a rucksack self ignited during the night. No logical explanation ever transpired.

After early Gritstone Guide Committee meetings at Manchester University (1950-1), I used to return by train, with Eric Byne, Dick Brown and George Sutton to Edale where R.A.B. would conduct us to the barn after the usual hospitality of Fred Heardman at the Nags Head. It was there that I first met Phillip Falkner in 1950.

By the late 70's the barn was a wreck and incapable of providing any shelter. A sad result.

*Editor*

## CRAIG CWM COWARCH

*Newsletter, August 1963*

Cowarch is possibly the most secluded and beautiful of the Welsh valleys. We were all made very welcome by the friendly farmer on whose land we camped. Possibly this was because his dogs had the best weekend's food supply at our expense. – Yes the "Dogs of Cowarch" are still there, as crafty as ever. – Is it true that they can really climb trees for food? The moderate climbers of the party found the rock not to their liking. Harry Pretty led a successful assault on North Gully. Crampons would have been useful, as they had to kick steps – in the moss. Burgess and party had a good day on Sunday, climbing what was possibly the only ascent since 1956 of a Harding V.S.

*Geoff Hayes*

I rather doubt Geoff's remark regarding the Harding V.S. The tigers of the Mountain Club (Stafford) had roamed all over the crag in the late 50's. While still occupying their original hut in the valley —

*Editor.*

## ESKDALE, WHITSUNTIDE 1966 (*EXTRACT*)

Saturday morning saw feverish activity, as everyone left early to make the most of the good weather. Many good climbs were done, the pick was “Speedy” Smith and Des Hadlum’s (Rock & Ice) ascent of the Central Pillar of Esk Buttress. One of the Lake District’s hardest climbs and Derrick Burgess’s fine lead of Hell’s Groove.

Sunday dawned just as good as the previous day and another rush was made for Scafell, with routes such as Gremlin Grooves, Yellow Slab, and Botterills Slab, and a heroic lead by an Oread on Moss Ghyll Grooves in an Anglo-Summit, Rock and Ice, Oread Party, comprising “Big George” Potts, “Oxfam” Tabs, and R. J. Cummerford who were all rescued by George Reynolds on the crux. Brian Cooke “clocked in” with the meet leader on Mickledore, explaining that he and Jack Ashcroft could not camp with us due to the lack of traffic lights on the farm track. The day finished with nude bathing (all male), several brass objects being observed in the stream. Whilst the men retired to the Bower House, the Ladies had a rowdy Hen Party for Ronnie Leeson in the George. She is of course about to take on a great weight in the shape of Johnny Corden.

Monday again saw a rush for Esk Buttress and Scafell. Handley and Ray Colledge did Great Central on Esk, and Geoff Hayes completed the demise of Moss Ghyll Grooves. Messieurs’ Corden and Appleby ascended Pillar via the Wasdale Head Hotel, and Burgess led the steep and difficult Gormengast on Heron Crag. All hands descended to the superb swimming pool, just above the campsite, for fun and games.

*Nat Allen*

## WELSH WALK (14 PEAKS) (*EXTRACT*)

*Newsletter, June 1966*

In Retrospect maybe the Meets Circular was presumptuous. Of eleven members and friends who left Aber on Saturday morning only two did the 14 three thousanders – and they bivvied the Saturday night on Crib Goch.

Gadsby and Reynolds did the whole walk having left Aber at 9 a.m. The main party left at about 5 a.m. (Gadsby and Reynolds were late starters due to car trouble). They arrived at Rhyd Ddu in time for breakfast on Sunday morning.

Paul Gardiner, Colin Hobday and Dave Weston did their walk missing out Y-Garn and Elidir Fawr, arriving Rhyd Ddu 11 p.m.

Jim Kershaw, Dave Penlington, Matt O’Brien and myself finished at Nant Peris 6-7 p.m. (Saturday). Dave Williams and Mike Watchers added the incredulous element arriving on Snowdon Summit at 11 p.m. Williams led the weary novice walker into the summit café to coincide with arrival of the train. It had come up from Llanberis to evacuate the staff after a report to the police of a planted bomb. Mike departed for Llanberis on the train and, under the watchful eye of the constabulary, found room in a police cell for the night. Williams descended to Rhyd Ddu solo, arriving at 1 a.m.

Pretty walked by himself throughout the weekend turning up at the hut to voice his disapproval at this year’s variance from the traditional nature of the Welsh Walk.

Burgess, Nat Allen, and Handley camped and climbed in the Gwynant – another voice of protest from Burgess.

*Jack Ashcroft*



First ascent of Ram Chukor Peak (5,500m) above Malana Glacier, Kulu Himal, India.  
In background Deo Tibba (left), Indrasan (right). *Photo: Bob Pettigrew.*



Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition 1961: Camp 2 on Indrasan. *Photo: Jack Ashcroft.*



British South Georgia Expedition 1954/55: Allardyce Range including Three Brothers (2,050m) across un-named glacier. *Photo: I. M. Brooker.*



The Isle of Arran Ridges. *Photo: Gordon Gadsby.*



Monte Rotondo (2,670m), Corsica. *Photo: Gordon Gadsby.*



Glencoe, towards the Buachaille. *Photo: John (Rock) Hudson.*



An Teallach from Sail Liath. *Photo: Colin Hobday.*





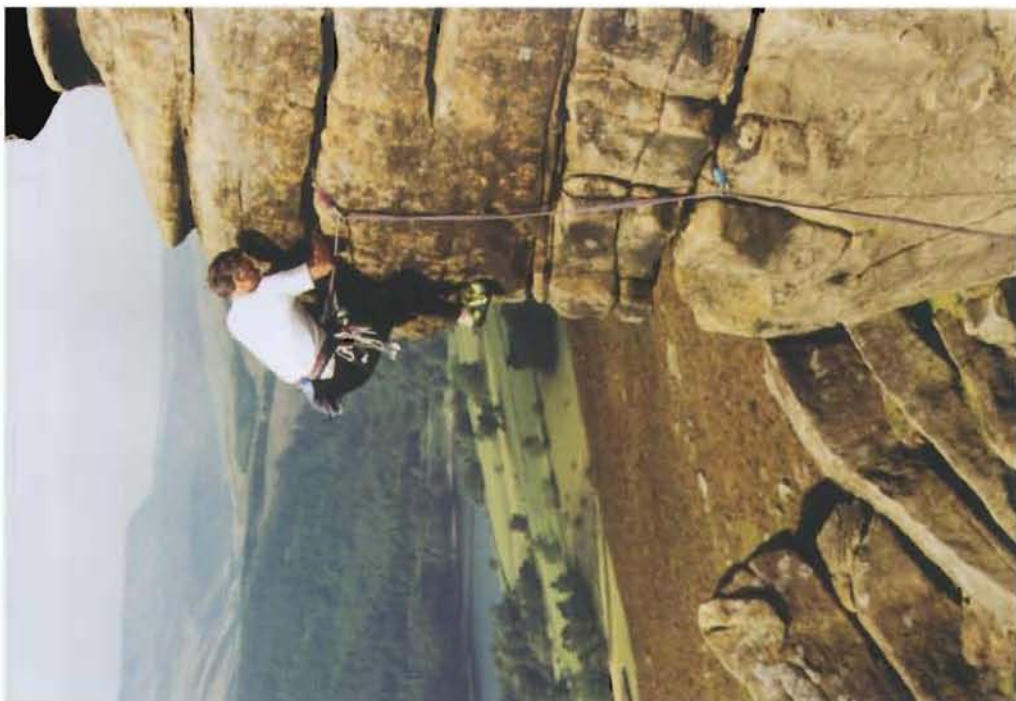
Peter Scott on the Schallgrat, Weissshorn. Photo: Chris Radcliffe.



Descent from the Grandes Jorasses (after ascent of Walker Spur), Paul Addison in flight. Photo: Robin Sedgwick.



Kharcha Kund North Ridge, Day 4, Robin Beadle climbing.  
Garhwal Himalaya. *Photo: Peter Scott.*



Derwent Edges – Chris Radcliffe in action. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Day Walk – above Gratton Dale 1998 – too many to name. *Photo: Colin Hobday.*



Annual Dinner Entertainment 1986. Helen Griffiths, Dawn Hopkinson, Peter Scott, Sharon Russell, Lisa Welbourn.



After ascent of Pear Buttress (Mt. Blanc de Courmayeur behind), 1969. P. Scott, Ron Lake, Dan Boon, J. Fullalove). Photo: Ray Colledge.

## NORTH WALES, OCTOBER 1966 (*EXTRACT*)

The Ladies meet was combined with an unofficial Men's Welsh Walk at least as far as Cerrig Druidion. Here, after the pub had closed, the ladies motored on to the hut for two days whilst the men trudged on for a night under Pretty's fly sheet. Many a good meet has started under this old fly sheet and this was no exception. Of course it was raining very hard in the morning, but eventually a start was made for Cefn-garw, the objective for the following night. Some interesting un-pathed country was traversed which was completely new to everyone. A fine night was spent in Cefn-garw with a magnificent fire and endless tales from Pretty and Janes with Williams and Handley taking most of the raps, and Hobday and myself, as insignificant observers, perched on our airbeds.

It came as something of a shock to everyone when looking at the map on the Sunday, to realise that only one third of the walk had been completed. However in brilliant weather everyone reached the Gwynant for the evening, to the welcoming arms of the ladies and so back to the hut for a communal bath (men only I'm afraid).

*Geoff Hayes*

Once more across the mysteries of Migneint and the Moelwyns — *Editor*.

## TRANEARTH (LAKES), OCTOBER 1966 (*EXTRACT*)

Mention Dow Crag to anyone who went on that meet and they will still show you the sodden car floor coverings. The highlight of this meet apparently when the stream near Tranearth rose rapidly overnight and it was "as wide as the Trent" the following morning! – With the cars in the middle. Tales were told of waist deep wading, and boots floating level with steering wheels (inside the cars), also of water rushing out when doors were opened. I hope someone took a photograph. Wallerbarrow was visited and climbed upon on the Saturday before the rains, but Sunday was spent baling!

*Geoff Hayes*

## BEESTON TOR, MANIFOLD, JUNE 1967 (*EXTRACT*)

Yes, to the cheers of the onlookers, a dashing rescue was carried out on Beeston Tor, which proved to be the highlight of the meet. A fair damsel, marooned by her compatriots in the huge cave midway up the Tor, was deemed in need of rescue. With little ado team Alpha sprang into action. The Thorn had its first mass ascent and bodies hurtled into the cave; the resulting melee hardly likely to placate our fair maid. Chivalry prevailed and some Cairngorm patter saw the terrified look fade from her eyes. She was quickly lowered off into Hayes' waiting arms.

*Derrick Burgess*

## PEMBROKE, AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY 1968 (*EXTRACT*)

Sixty-one Oreads and friends encamped on Mr. Jones' splendid site above White Sand Bay. We clocked 230 miles from Nottingham. Hayes and his gang managed to cover 269 miles via the Birmingham back streets. Jim Kershaw walked it from Dolgellau, in two weeks, and looked very fit.

Climbs done on Saturday: Craig Garn, Porth Long; Reptilian by Burgess, Handley and Colledge. Our youngest members, Tom Green and David Brady also climbed Reptilian, Barad by Chris Radcliffe and Peter Scott.

Sunday morning: Forty Oreads assembled on the Life-Boat slip-way, Porthstiam. Hard bartering with boat owners and eventually twenty-five set sail for Ramsey Island (15/- return).

Tuesday was beach day: surfing, football, swimming and climbing. Radcliffe did the lot including the 2,000' girdle of St. David's Head. Mr. True Form, (Reg. Squires) made an appearance, having walked a mile and a half along the cliff top in alpine fashion (roped up and carrying coils). All tourist operations were halted to observe this caravan.

Those on the meet:- Jim Kershaw, Mike and Meg Moore, J. Dench, Reg Squires, Ann Thornhill, D. Carnell, Pat Carnell, Allan Squires, Robin Green, Judy Skinner, D. & J. Burgess, Gary B., Joan and Andy Oakden, D.Gadsby, J. and G. Reynolds, R. Colledge, P. Craddock, Christine Brady, David Brady, Tom Green, Ron and Kath Chambers, Stew Bramwell, K., B., and C. Clark, Mat and Maureen O'Brien, C. Radcliffe, P. Scott, C. Culley, Ray and Maria Handley, Bernice Heason, H. and M. Marshall, John Crosse and family, Geoff Hayes, Colin Hobday, Wendy Bottomley, Rosie Grayson, Marke Clarke, John Fisher, Mike Berry, and various other unidentified friends.

*Gordon Gadsby*

This is the first mention of Chris Radcliffe and Peter Scott on an Oread meet (not to mention Wendy Bottomley and Rosie Grayson) — *Editor*.

## WELSH WALK, JUNE, 1969 (EXTRACT)

What stands out most about this meet is that those present were subjected to yet another series of Williams' culinary fiascos.

The fact that, on Friday night, he was encamped nearer to Rhondda than he has ever been since his miss spent youth had the most wayward effect.

On Saturday's walk up the Towey we were afflicted with renderings from William Shakespeare and, at the lunch break, by his Consommé Ospiz, which dissolved Chris's cup on contact.

By the time the watershed above the Elan reservoirs was reached we were being regaled by Churchillian speeches. It is well known that William's ability as a map reader is, to say the least, suspect, and he engaged in his usual terrier-like diversions whilst the rest of the party pursued a straight line. However, he later admitted that, as Bombardier Williams. D. C.M.D., he had spent all map reading training sessions in a public bar. At 4 p.m., when all food had been consumed, Janes was still asking for a lunch stop.

On Saturday night we bivvied above Cwmystwyth where Williams, surveying the "job lot" of ex WD food he always carries, decided to build himself up with Pretty's tinned fruit whilst H.P. was engaged elsewhere.

*Anon*

"Engaged elsewhere" describes the long drive back to start point at Abergwesyn by Betty Gardiner, her support team, and drivers, in order to ferry cars to Cwmystwyth; thus minimising further driving at the end of the walk somewhere north of Pwmlunon Fawr, even as far north as Machynlleth. At this period long distance walking across the Cambrian "Empty Quarter" was a serious business — *Editor*.

## TAN-Y-WYDDFA, WHITSUNTIDE 1968 (*EXTRACT*)

Prospective members, Peter Scott and Chris Radcliffe, climbed Narrow Slab on Cloggy. The remainder (22) spent the day at Morfa Nefyn – footballing and swimming.

*Gordon Gadsby*

Although not yet members perhaps this meet gave some impetus to the hard-hitting Editorials by Radcliffe and Scott when they took over as joint Newsletter editors in February, 1970 — *Editor*.

## BULLSTONES 1968 (DECEMBER)

Quite a large crowd of Oreads staggered out of the Nags Head in Edale on the Friday night. Ashcroft and Chambers were in such a state they slept the night in the pub yard. Two others only made the foot of Golden Clough. Dave Williams and a prospective member<sup>1</sup> led off at a hot pace over Kinder and were not seen again that night. The rest of the team eventually arrived at the Barnsley Club Hut in the Snake. By now Williams had found what he thought to be a stream leading down to the Snake, followed it, and found himself back in the yard of the Nags Head after two hours of walking.

On Saturday a rescue party was sent out to round up Williams. He was found and had a public dressing down by H.P. the meet leader (who was wearing full ceremonial dress and medals for the occasion.) After demanding that Williams should resign from the committee, everyone left for a good trog over Bleaklow.

Ron Dearden and Mike Turner returned from the dead and walked over Kinder to attend the meet on Saturday. Geoff Hayes and Jim Winfield arrived in the Nags Head on Saturday night, just before closing time, a phone call came through for a certain Harry Pretty, it was the one and only Pettigrew on the Hot Line from Tunbridge Wells! Pettigrew has taken to attending club meets by telephone.

*Geoff Hayes*

<sup>1</sup> Prospective member was Brian Hayley. I don't think he aspired to full membership. In 1969 he left for Africa; probably safer than Kinder on a dark night in the company of Digger Williams. This was the first (and only?) time that anyone failed the night crossing of Kinder from the Nags Head — *Editor*.

## THE CZECHS ARRIVE

*Newsletter, June 1967*

A party of Czech climbers will be spending two weeks in the U.K. during October as guests of the B.M.C. and various British Clubs who are being co-ordinated by John Hunt's main Reception Committee.

I am representing the Peak District and am responsible for organising the activities of the party during their visit to the Peak District from 11th-13th October.

A number of "tigers" in the Oread have already been forewarned that their services will be required on the 12th and 13th October. This group will also be responsible for transporting the Czechs to North Wales on the 13th where they will be handed over to the C.C. (C.C. North Wales Dinner).

I shall be organising accommodation (in homes) for the party and a Sausage and Mash supper at a Derbyshire pub on Thursday night (12th October) at which all club members, who are interested, can meet our guests.

I shall be pleased to receive any offers of assistance.

The visit by Czechs is of course in direct line with the previous visits by the Russians and the Poles – but this is the first time that Derbyshire has been included in the itinerary. I would like to think that the Oread will be the mainspring of a successful first visit by an away team who normally climb in mountain areas so little known to us.

*Harry Pretty*

The Czech team: Dr. Ludek Koupil (leader), Dr. Josef Kupec (political relations). Dr. Jindrich Steindler, Vratislav Fibinger, Michal Lichy, Jiri Tomcala, Marie Kasalicka, Milan Kucik. Koupil, Kupec, and Steindler were from Prague. The remainder came from Ostrava to the east.

The nucleus of the Oread climbing team: Ray Handley, Peter Janes, Derrick Burgess, Geoff Hayes, Nat Allen, Speedy Smith, Des Hadlum, George Reynolds.

The Czechs arrived by rail at Sheffield (after visiting Glenmore Lodge) were met by the Oread team and transported to a welcoming party at Jack and Peggy Longland's house, Bakewell.

The Oreads provided accommodation for the Czechs in their own homes (Handley, Janes, Pretty, Hayes, Allen). This was the only time during their stay that the Czechs were not accommodated in either hotels or institutional establishments. This fact made a great impression on them.

John and Joy Hunt joined the party for a day's climbing on Stanage. There was a sausage and mash supper at the Spotted Cow, Holbrook, to which many other Oreads came.

On the second day the whole party was entertained at White Hall and from there a cavalcade of cars drove to North Wales (an arranged tea stop at the Fox, Overton) and the Czechs were handed over to the C.C. at Pen y Gywrd.

Subsequently the Oread team, plus wives, attended a quite lavish reception at the Czech Embassy in London (everyone occupied spare beds and floor space at Dick Brown's substantial town house in Putney) before seeing the guests off from Heathrow.

In 1970 (after the Russian re-invasion of Czechoslovakia) Janes and Pretty (with wives) were invited back by the Prague and Ostrava groups. During a hectic two weeks (by car and frequently under close Russian observation) Prague, Ostrava, the Betskydy Mountains, and the High Tatra were visited. The Tatra ridges were reminiscent of Skye, the scale being multiplied by two. Only in the mountains did the Czechs feel free and the difference in atmosphere between city centre and mountain hut was remarkable.

Further visits occurred in later years and contact with the Prague Czechs is still maintained in 1999.

*Harry Pretty*



## BURNS TAKES A SWING

*Newsletter, January 1967*

Sir,

The love of wandering in the hills springs from a desire for the serenity and contentment that is the rich treasure found only in the beauty and desolation of upland country. Also in some great measure to the individual enjoyment of this, a way of life that requires no organisation of teams, no requirement for companions for whom you need to adjust your intentions. Pick up your rucksack and go – where you please, how you please – alone. To the tree lined river and pastures of the valleys, or the windswept desolation of the high moors, or the more trodden paths of the Peak – preferably in winter. You carry no number on your back, you report to no check point, nor are you directed to go here – or there – and you leave behind the decrees and regulations that stifle your life in alleged civilisation.

Those last bastions of solitude and freedom are now being assailed by laws of authority and organisation. We now have the official rescue teams. The hills are hideous with the shrieks and whistles – the Army – Police – Fire Service – uniforms, and all dressed up “in a little brief authority” with all that ill-considered interference of authority. To my dismay, this is being introduced with the connivance of alleged hill lovers – a treachery condoned by the insidious voice of those people who plead safety, in defence of the indefensible, and who wish to have some measure of control over those who wish to be free. Recently two arm-banded protectors had to be rescued from the comparative safety of Alport Dale on a mild October night because it had turned dark.

*Laurie Burns*

## . . . AND GETS A REACTION

*Newsletter, March 1967*

Sir,

Whilst appreciating the wish of Burns that the last bastion of solitude and freedom in hills should not disappear (letter in last Newsletter) times are changing and so are peoples' approach to mountaineering.

The increase in the number of people, young and old, taking up the sport has been fantastic during the last decade. Ten years ago there was barely a small track below Stanage Edge, the road at it's foot only wide enough for one car, and without a surface. Nowadays there is a wide track around Kinder and almost one over the very summit of its plateau. This was not so in the 1950s.

Whether we like it or not this upsurge must bring with it more accidents, more access problems, more litter. There has to be some sort of organisation for all this. It is something to be proud of to find that clubs such as the Oread are willing to give up some time to organise a rescue team. Litter hunts have been organised in the past on club meets.

I offer this advice to Burns. Go to walk the Arenigs, or Radnor Forest this summer. These are the places you love. They are still not the “done” areas and I'm sure that you will be almost alone and away from “arm bands” and whistles; but you may find me going along as well.

*Mountain Oread*

The years between 1959 and 1976 were marked by the loss of the Oread's first two Presidents. Cyril Machin (C.B.M.) succumbed in the early part, and Eric Byne towards the end.

An Appreciation of both men appeared in the relevant Newsletters and extracts are given below, together with E. B.'s write up of his 38th and last rock climbing anniversary at Birchen Edge in 1967.

*Editor*

## CYRIL MACHIN, AN APPRECIATION – 1963

*(EXTRACT)*

Cyril Machin died in Bedgellert on Saturday 14th September whilst attending the M.A.M. Anniversary Dinner. For those of us who came under the influence of this remarkable man in the very earliest days of the Oread it may seem characteristic that he departed suddenly and without fuss – in the company of some of his oldest friends, and close to the mountains which had been at the very core of his life.

In 1949 he was old enough to have been a grandfather to most of us, but he climbed with more panache, greater technical skill, and a higher determination than many of us even dared to aspire to. He climbed and caved with what at times seemed almost a ferocity of purpose as though in regretting his relatively late start as a climber he was determined to compensate for the “lost years”. This he surely did.

He never understood our inveterate bawdiness, nor our brash ebullience in pubs and on buses. Retrospectively it is difficult to understand how he tolerated our uninhibited ways.

For my part I shall always remember him for the way he unaffectedly welcomed Molly and myself, complete strangers, to his 1949 Skye Meet. Anyone who had the good fortune to join one of Cyril's legendary parties on Skye, Fort William or, more latterly, in the Dolomites, is never likely to forget the warmth, humour and excitement of the occasion – for the atmosphere of his parties was invariably an extension of his own unique personality.

The first anniversary number of the Oread Newsletter, June 1954, carried the news of Cyril's serious fall from Castle Naze. Only his determination and unquenchable spirit brought him through. He never climbed again. To walk at all, his limbs artificially supported, often extended him to the limit, but few, if any, of his closest friends would have dared to express vocal sympathy. Independent and wilful as ever, gentle and courteous despite all the pain and stress, self effacing to the point of embarrassment when his friends kind heartedly invaded his amazingly self sufficient world – he devoted his latter years to working and organising on behalf of others.

Not only did he continue to organise meets in the Dolomites and Skye with the same efficiency and attention to detail which always gave his parties a very special atmosphere, he continued to attend them. Ubiquitous in his little motorised chariot, (as M.A.M. Hut Warden), he commuted to N. Wales in all weathers, living on his own for long periods, organising work parties, climbing ladders into the loft, and lending to committees far and wide that very special gift he had of getting things done.

In company with all his friends I remember his determination and courage though the years since 1954. His gentleness and patience will be remembered by hundreds of White Hall youngsters who tied themselves to his rope. At an age when most men have taken to carpet slippers and the melancholy of remembering only the past, Cyril lived vividly and urgently in the present.

When the founder members of the Oread made him their first President, and subsequently their first Honorary Member, Cyril was at the very height of his powers. These were the days of C.B.M. in his prime – the period during which so much of the legend had its origin in fact.

Cyril going out for a solitary walk from Glenbrittle House and going on to complete the entire Cuillin Ridge Traverse in well under twenty-four hours. "I had a pair of plimsolls with me for the harder bits" was his only significant comment.

Cyril patiently tunnelling his way through a massive Nevis cornice- a task that occupied him all of a long night and which will never be forgotten by those of his companions who were normal men.

Cyril abroad on the Terrace Wall with a frightened plumber who had merely called at Glen Dena on business, and was unfortunate enough to find C.B.M. alone and raring to go.

Cyril wandering solo across steep Welsh rock – he probably lost count of the times he'd soloed Pinnacle Wall, which was one of his favourites. I don't know just how much solo climbing Cyril indulged in – he always talked of it with the same deprecating nonchalance that enlightened most of his climbing stories. But I suspect that during the long periods he spent on his own in Glan Dena he enjoyed more than he admitted to.

On one occasion he fell down No. 3 Gully accompanied by a large cornice. "I knew it was safe by then...so I went back up and it was easy". He was climbing solo of course, and I remember that others, who met him on the plateau and had no idea of the toughness of this apparently frail balding old man, showed signs of being outraged by such flagrant non-observance of the rules.

Cyril clawing his way up President's Wall barefooted on a raw, foggy winter morning. These were special years for some of us and much of the fun, and discovery, and the excitement was the gift of Cyril Machin.

Not long ago I came down from Tryfan to find Cyril in sole occupation of Glan Dena. I was returning to Rhyd Ddu, but for a while we sat outside and talked of this and that. Desultory gossip about nothing in particular, and about which I remember very little. He said that he'd been in the loft and was a little tired, but he emphatically insisted of making tea and bringing it out. I do remember that we talked about Derbyshire and, among one thing and another, I remember chaffing him, as I had done a dozen times in the past, about the time he got lost in a Derbyshire cave with a mutual acquaintance – and how he'd sat all night leaning against the small hole that eventually got him out. And I remember thinking that he did look tired, and that I didn't possess one decent photograph of him. So I took several – and he sat very still and asked several times whether I wanted him to move – Cyril always seemed to get what I can only describe as a young person's enjoyment out of being photographed. Eventually when Tryfan was a dark wedge against the evening sky I drove away and it never crossed my mind that I would not see him again.

*H. Pretty*

## BIRCHEN EDGE, JUNE 1967

### *(EXTRACT)*

After nearly ten days of continuously fine weather I began to wonder if the conditions would hold out for this 38th rock-climbing anniversary of mine. However my week of effort on the family prayer mat proved successful and the whole weekend was nothing else but fantastic. After counting two hundred and twenty people I knew, either by name or familiar face, I gave up, but roughly estimate that about two hundred and fifty people turned up from such sources as the Oread, Mountain Club, M.A.M., Peak C.C., S.U.M.C., Harrow Mountaineering Club etc. Amongst these were such pre-war climbers as Harry Dover (whom I hadn't seen for thirty years) and Fred Jones the original founder of the S.U.M.C. There were also many odd bods from such far-flung places as London, Lincoln, Leeds, etc.

As near as I could work out there appeared to be about fifty Oreads plus their offspring, which is a confirmation that "tradition plus fine weather plus the Peak District" is an unbeatable combination.

Unfortunately I can no longer identify every face by name – I easily get confused these days, especially when I am having such a happy time greeting everyone. Janes was there of course, looking as leathery as ever and still full of those caustic flashes of humour which have always been such an essential and individual part of him. – Nobby Millward was nursing him along making sure he didn't get into serious trouble, – and keeping a wary eye on both was Judy Millward. What a wonderful woman, and that's saying something, for I've seen a few in my time, and the Oread has always been noted for fine looking wenches from Molly Pretty onwards. Needless to say Molly and Harry were there. It wouldn't have been so good if they hadn't been, for Birchens and Pretty's are part of my life.

To see Paul and Betty Gardiner gave me a great kick – John Welbourn too. Strangely enough I saw him do more climbing this time that previously. One mustn't forget Jack Ashcroft, looking as well as ever although somehow we never seemed to get together for a chat properly – and Dave Penlington, growing grey, and in shorts. I don't think I've ever seen him in shorts before – and Janet Penlington, looking as young and charming as the day Dave first snared her.

Somewhere I caught a glimpse of Laurie Burns. Doug Cook was there, and Jack Leeson. Jim Kershaw let me buy him a drink in the Robin Hood, which was indeed a privilege.

These are but a few of the names that come to mind. I hope the others will forgive me for not mentioning them. I ought really to have had a register at Nelson's Monument. The signatures would have proved interesting and informative.

One last thing – believe it or not – I did climb. I led all those mods and diffs who's every hand and foothold I know off by heart. I even brought the great Frank Fitzgerald up Left Ladder Chimney, on a rope. He swears he slipped off one move! It's hard to believe. Anyway he retaliated by dragging me up Emma's Dilemma and another severe and, thus bolstered up; he began a slanging match with Pretty. He should have known better, if only from past experience. It's not surprising therefore to find that a little later he had to be rescued by a top rope on Crow's Nest. He finally departed leaving me with a final message for Pretty – a brief but telling – "Bugger off".

If this were, for any reason, to be my last Birchen Edge Meet. (God forbid) then it has been a glorious one.

*Eric Byne*

This was E.B.'s last Gritstone occasion and, in the following January, he died. The Newsletter for January, 1968 carried the following.

## ERIC BYNE, AN APPRECIATION, 1968

### *(EXTRACT)*

Eric Byne was not a founder member of the Oread. He became a member in 1950, largely due to his previous association with George Sutton and Cyril Machin, and the club's acceptance of his invitation to work on the Baslow Edge's Section of the Sheffield Area (volume 2, Climbs on Gritstone), which was published in 1951, under his editorship, and during his term (1951-1953) as President of the club. He was elected an Honorary Member in 1953.

Up to 1960 he was an extremely active member of the Oread and exerted great influence during those years that the Oread developed from a small group of friends into an well-organised club.

His sudden death on the 2nd January 1968, at the age of 56, when many of his friends had not realised he was so seriously ill, has left a space that nobody will ever quite fill.

Eric Byne was born and raised in Sheffield, and came of age at the height of the thirties depression. From the hopeless situation of industrial Sheffield, with a small group of friends, he set in motion a social revolution in the climbing world.

Eric was a founder member of the Sheffield Climbing Club which consisted principally of young men like himself, without work, without money, who walked their native moors and climbed on the Edges in workman's overalls or cast-off plus fours purchased for a song in the city rag market. They were the real prophets of the egalitarian principles, which have become the tradition of present day climbing society.

He was a fine rock climber and many of his first ascents are still classic Gritstone routes. But Eric had a quality, which translated him from the good climber of the thirties to a man of real stature in the post-war years. He was a man of incredible determination, with the perception to realise that what was happening on the moors and outcrops of the High Peak was more than casual recreation. He recognised the real value of this wild country wedged between the massive conurbations of Sheffield and Manchester. While many of his contemporaries were making reputations in more exotic mountain areas, Eric Byne devoted all of his energy to fostering the interests of those who lived and took their recreation in the Peak.

Throughout his life he displayed intense feeling towards freedom of access to open country and took part in both individual and mass invasions of Kinder Scout during the years of prohibition, police protection, and frequent physical violence.

The most assiduous and authoritative chronicler of Peak District affairs, he was the first editor of the first serious volumes to describe and classify the Gritstone outcrops. It was entirely typical that he was still improving the early excellence of the 1950's as editor of the new *Rock Climbs of the Peak* series right to his death.

It is difficult to describe how great was our delight when *High Peak* was published in 1966. Many of us witnessed Eric struggling with the MS of this book for nearly twenty years, and it is a further tribute to his fantastic determination that, at long last, he found a solution in association with Geoff Sutton. But, for me it will always be Eric's book – not so much as a record of physical activity but, more significantly, as a carefully observed record of social change.

In the post-war years Eric climbed in the Alps and frequently in North Wales and the Lakes. He discovered a number of new routes on Tryfan all of which exemplify his early flare for picking a splendid line of great character between established trade routes. But it is his association with Derbyshire that was the core of his life.

He was deeply moved by the number of people who went to Moorside Farm and Birchen for his June 1967 Anniversary Meet. Perhaps as many as two hundred old friends, with their numerous progeny, came from far and wide to talk and climb, to drink gallons of tea and a fair amount of ale, and those, who recognised the seriousness of his malady, wondered at his energy and his ability to still lead an awkward severe. Maybe he recognised it as possibly his last Gritstone occasion for certainly it was. But he gave no hint and, his new beard lending substance to his features, I could still think of him as indestructible.

Older members of the Oread will remember Eric's obsession at every AGM concerning the acquisition by the Club of a hut in the Peak. He considered a hut in Wales to be of secondary importance. It is ironic that he should die in the year that we are on the verge of attaining this objective.

I can think of nothing more proper than commemorating the name of Eric Byne in the cottage that the Oread will eventually acquire in the area that he loved more than any other.

H. Pretty

## SELECTIONS FROM OREAD VERSE

Between the years 1959 and 1970 Jim Kershaw's muse went into temporary retirement but the flame still flickered amusingly elsewhere.

*Newsletter, September 1962*

### ODE OREAD

Once upon a time we're told  
All stories thus begin -  
But many, many years ago  
Is this one's origin.

Pretty then, was in his prime  
And even Falkner used to climb,  
And as we gaze around the Bell,  
We see the others there as well,  
The Druids and the Climbing Bard,  
With faces weatherworn and scarred,  
The mainstay of the club they are,  
The ancient bearded crew  
Who rest on laurels earned in days  
When mountaineers were few.

A name among the famous few  
Is that of R. G. Pettigrew,  
It wings our thoughts to distant lands  
Of turbaned chiefs and Sherpa bands.  
"What's in a name?" new members ask,  
"Who is that man behind the mask,  
Of legendary and talked-of feats,  
Why don't we see him on our meets?"  
But now they find to their dismay  
The Pettigrew of yesterday  
Is busy climbing social routes,  
Hard V.S. in dinner suits!

There's that old timer Hebog Jack,  
He used to be a climber  
In countless ages back,  
Though now alas, from all reports,  
We face the bitter facts -  
Old Hebog went to Scotland once,  
He left behind his axe.  
Old Hebog went to higher peaks  
And trailed around for many weeks  
Searching - as so well we know -  
For his lost crampons in the snow.  
But Hebog hadn't cooked his goose,  
He made it all a good excuse  
To stay at lower altitudes,  
For photographic interludes,  
While hard men struggled ever upwards

Hebog's plans were all laid cupwards.  
Old Jack is now beyond all hope -  
In Glencoe forgot his rope.

The Oread holds out arms  
To friends from far and wide,  
Among its members  
Proudly claims a real Italian guide.  
His name is Guido Gadsby,  
His fame has spread abroad,  
For taking swims while fully dressed,  
A cure for feeling bored,  
A menace to the club one fears,  
For circulating mad ideas,  
Like bivouacs on Christmas Eve,  
With only frostbite to achieve,  
Or quite unnecessary feats,  
Like alpine starts on Ogwen meets.

The President himself appears,  
A climber still, though many years  
Have not quite gone without a trace  
Of household cares upon his face,  
But still the twinkle in his eyes  
Conveys that keenness never dies.  
Herr Turner gazes past them all,  
Dreaming of the Trollind Wall.  
...And great new routes that he will do,  
With pale-straw filtered photos too.  
And wond'ring how the holds will grip  
When boots are cleaned with Molyslip

If your name does not appear  
Within this weird epistle here,  
Take heart - you're either in your prime  
Or else I just can't make it rhyme.

*Anon*

*Newsletter, October 1968**Newsletter, April, 1970*

## MY BILL

My Bill's a climbing man you know –  
 'E's always tellin' people so,  
 I met him in a lovely caff  
 Down by the road at Matlock Bath.  
 'E likes to dress up smart does Bill –  
 it gives me ever such a thrill  
 to see 'im in 'is mother's coms  
 all sewn up tight wi' leather thongs,  
 and tucked inside 'is jungle boots.  
 'E's made 'is shirt from parachutes –  
 'E says it's Spanish terylene –  
 it's yellor, black and olive green.  
 'E's got a lovely 'at 'e took;  
 'E found it 'angin' on an 'ook.  
 It's orange, shinin' like the sun –  
 I think it's aluminium.  
 'E's borrowed my suspender belt  
 and covered it wi' purple felt,  
 It looks a treat when it's all laced  
 And pulled in tight around 'is waist,  
 'E uses it to 'ang things on  
 like nuts an' bolts an' a funny prong  
 what 'ammers into solid rock.  
 ('E's clings to it or else 'e'd drop.)  
 Sometimes 'e takes me for a walk –  
 I think it's nice to here 'im talk  
 To other climber men, and say  
 "It's nice for tyin' off today"  
 and "what a lovely abseil thrutch",  
 or "do you oil your runners much?"  
 'E keeps on shoutin' all the time  
 about the crags 'e's goin' to climb.  
 Before 'e does, I really 'ope  
 'E's goin' to buy a bloody rope.

## ROCK

No I wouldn't say he was a dangerous climber  
 but he'd lose control of himself, get all worked up  
 With the rock, almost personal, as if he reckoned  
 that if trusted, it might let him down.  
 He'd uncoil the rope at the cliff's foot and  
 banging his hammer on the crack shout "brainless bitch  
 You're as proud as eternity, you've helped  
 Twenty of my friends drop to their deaths,  
 Yet you can't move around like we can and you can't climb up"  
 – then, scrabbling and grunting, he would make a jump  
 and land at the top so fast there just wasn't time  
 for the rock to act; for his logic was simple,  
 if he could fall off a cliff, he could also climb it.  
 Not like another I know, who'd coax black rock  
 For hours, as a royal lover  
 will stroke a girl's hair half the night (and only then  
 dare make what in most men's repertoires  
 are the opening moves). He'd fondle the crack  
 with the palms of his hands, lowering each wrist in turn  
 to feed the fingers with blood; finally when the rock lay  
 most relaxed, glide softly upwards like a dancer.  
 A queer thing, but the rock was almost like a woman,  
 forgiving this one his seduction (he died  
 not by striking, but in a snowstorm, peacefully)  
 – and punishing that one's rape by breaking him.

*Ronnie Wathen**Anon*

Ronnie Wathen, although known to many Oreads, was not, to the best of my knowledge, ever a member of the club and I am not certain how an example of his great gift came to appear in an Oread Newsletter.

This remarkable man; poet, climber, part clown, and player of the pipes, died well before his time, in September 1993 — *Editor*.

## MEMBERS

In an Editorial (Newsletter, 1967) Geoff Hayes noted that membership was increasing slowly (thirty new members between 1959 and 1970). The Newsletter for November 1967 included the following applicants:-

Ronald George Chambers	<i>Proposed:</i> J. Corden	<i>Seconded:</i> D. Williams
Roy Horatio Sawyer	<i>Proposed:</i> D. Williams	<i>Seconded:</i> P. Janes
Tom Green	<i>Proposed:</i> J. Welbourn	<i>Seconded:</i> G. Hayes

An interesting trio and good evidence for the theory that fancy plumbers always come in pairs, complete with the apprentice — *Editor*.

## ENTERTAINMENTS

### BONFIRE, PANTO, DOVEDALE DASH – NOVEMBER 1967

The weather did its best to stop this meet. The few hardy Oreads who camped almost drowned in the mud on the field. No one managed to get to the bonfire in the Hall grounds on the Saturday night: all were trying to keep warm and dry inside.

For once one did not have to fight the queue to get into the Pantomime. Tinsel Allen and her magnificent cast did their best to warm up people with a fantastically well-costumed and performed panto. The club was well represented in the cast with Wes as “Blames Jond” in the lead. President Handley seemed quite at home playing the part of the villain. Burgess played alongside a slick blonde who turned out to be his wife Janet. Pretty was made for the part of the big fat sheikh. He was well attended by Digger Williams who was the only Welshman of coloured extraction in the cast. Big John Corden took the part of the big beefy henchman. Tinsel took the part of Harry’s first and favourite wife – who treated all the lads to a fantastic belly dance. The ladies of the chorus have never looked lovelier – or more naked! All were introduced by ‘Uncle Nat’ complete of course with topper, which becomes more battered each year. Keep it up team it was a terrific evening.

*Geoff Hayes*

For many years the Ilam Hall Bonfire party, followed by a home made panto, preceded the Dovedale Dash. The occasion was invented by the Derby Mercury RC in the mid '50's. By the mid '60's Tinsel Allen was not only the chief scriptwriter, she was also producer and principal costumier. Occasionally Oread and Valkyrie members were invited to make guest appearances until, by 1966, they were playing the major roles. The scripts were freely amended on an ad hoc basis by Peter Janes both during rehearsals and the actual performance. They invariably played to a packed house. The more exhibitionist of the cast occasionally wore their costumes for the Dash on the following day to loud applause at the Stepping-Stones. At this time the number of runners rarely exceeded 200 — *Editor*.

Quote from Pete Janes to Les Langworthy – “When are we getting these bloody side boards off? I’ll be glad when the panto season is over”.

“I’ve got to get a few pints of beer inside me before I get rid of my shyness”.

From that Oread Amoré – D. Burgess



## “NOWHERE TO STAND”

“Nowhere to fall but off,  
Nowhere to stand but on”.

*Ben King – The Pessimist*

## SWANAGE, EASTER 1969 (EXTRACT)

*RON CHAMBERS*

I set off up the slab, nonchalantly flicking a MOAC behind a flake as I went. After a further twenty feet the slab steepened into a wall completely void of suitable nutting cracks. I decided to place a peg and review the situation. The peg went in with a thud and I then realised just how much the quality of the rock had deteriorated during the last fifteen feet – the peg was useless in the event of a fall.

In retrospect I should have turned back at this point but a good corner crack beckoned a further fifteen feet higher and to the left and the rock friction was very good – I pressed on.

After about ten feet of diagonal traversing on very small and sloping holds I put in another peg runner, then made another delicate move leftwards and was relieved to find a really good undercut handhold at about shoulder height.

“Ah! The secret jug” I told myself, but as I moved across to bring myself into balance, the hold and a large flake suddenly came clean away from the cliff hitting me on the forehead. I instinctively glanced across at the two pegs as I fell over backwards, as my weight came onto them they flashed out as if fired from a bow. Everything went black.

A few minutes later I regained consciousness to find myself lying on my back staring up at an angelic figure hovering over me with outstretched hand doubtless sent to escort me to the “Promised Land”. Then to my relief the hazy figure announced that he thought I was still alive and I immediately recognised the impeccable elocution of Ray Colledge.

A crowd of willing rescuers soon arrived and I learned that as the rope came tight as I was approximately six feet from hitting the ground, and that thanks to the nut runner and Nat’s ability to hold me, I had escaped with comparatively minor injuries. No bones appeared to be broken as I could move both arms and legs, but I couldn’t raise myself off my back. A human “caterpillar” was formed along the “Ruckle” and a spectacular stretcher raising exercise up the two hundred-foot cliffs organised by Don Whillans. I was rushed off to Poole General Hospital where it was found I had a couple of cracked ribs and a compressed spine.

Colledge writes, “Ron lay there moaning and mouthing “My back, my Back”. I put my hand under his back and found a bunch of pegs. When I removed them he said “That’s better”. The coastguard produced a stretcher and ropes and we hauled him to the top. But just as the stretcher was nearing the last few feet I noticed that one of the two ropes has almost worked through – two of the strands having broken. So Ron was in danger of going back down again whilst strapped to the stretcher, but it didn’t happen – a remarkable escape”.

## NEVIS, CHRISTMAS 1954

NAT ALLEN REMEMBERS . . .

*Newsletter, April 1970*

There was a great snatch as I took the strain and I was pulled sideways from my steps in the near vertical ice. The ice peg, which was my belay, went next and I was catapulted into space as if on a sling. I remember the gully walls coated in ice rushing past, then a sickening thud as I apparently landed with one leg driven into the deep gully snow and the other boot full of tricouni's in the left side of Joe's face. This was his second bounce and I had stopped him in his tracks. Out I catapulted again, a further hundred feet. When the rope pulled me up I was semi-conscious and upside down. Painful cries from above and it eventually occurred to me that I was strangling the "Baron Brown" as he was wrapped up in my spare rope. Somehow I scrambled back up a little, my dislocated right leg swung back into its socket and I passed out again. Later I sat with blood running past my eyes; I felt around for "holes and bits" but, apart from the leg and a nose bleeder, I seemed to be OK.

We had been stanced at the top of a hundred foot ice wall pitch on the major difficulties of Point-five Gully, trying for the first ascent. My stance was two footholds and a long channel ice-peg at nose level. Joe traversed leftwards to gain a steep ice rib, which, in turn gave to a nasty bulge of water ice. He had placed two ice-pegs for protection to his right, about three feet apart, and was on the tip of the bulge trying to gain lodgement in the snow runnel above. I was thoroughly gripped as I watched the struggle, then there was a sharp "CRACK" and the whole bulge, Brown ice-pegs and all left the "hill" en-bloc.

Nip Underwood in steep snow at the foot of the ice-pitch, a hundred feet below me, was third man on the rope. He had a good snow covered rock spike and for a second effort a loop of rope round an ice axe that I had dropped to him. When he took the strain the sling flew off the rock spike and he rolled over, but the axe held us. Below us the gully steepened and then ran out in about seven or eight hundred feet into the corrie. Nip was unhurt, but Joe looked as if Nat Allen had kicked him in the face! I was sitting there with a "gammy" leg so they tied my legs together and slid me pitch by pitch on to easy ground at the foot of the gully, then towed me sledge-wise down to the C.I.C. Hut – a case of frost bitten "bum".

In conclusion, I suppose if Joe Brown had been a better climber we might have made it!

## DESCENT OF SPENCER COULOIR (AIG. DE FOU) (*EXTRACT*)

*Newsletter, April 1970*

DON COWEN REMEMBERS . . .

Our deliberations were brought to an end when lightning struck the ridge. We risked the couloir.

After fastening on crampons we descended in order: myself, Eileen, and then Pete as backstop. We were off the ridge and felt a little happier as, by now, the ridge was being continuously struck. Darkness, hastened by bad weather, was almost upon us. It began to snow.

I began cutting steps into ice below the snow but almost as fast they were filling up. We had no ice-pegs and our belays were extremely poor, and I was all too conscious of this fact as Pete started to climb down towards us. He was having great difficulty in finding the steps and was well above us when a shout from Eileen and a swishing sound from up above announced that Pete was on his way

down and pretty fast at that. He streaked by me, feet first, lying on his back. My thoughts at the time were why doesn't he turn over and start braking with his axe, but before I could turn my thoughts into words he'd vanished down the couloir. Almost immediately, the strain came on Eileen who hadn't a chance of holding him. She was plucked straight from her stance and went by me in a flurry of snow; there was only a relatively short length of rope between Eileen and the axe from which I was belaying her. But the shock, when it came, tore the axe from the ice, and before I could do anything about this, the strain came upon me. – Strain is perhaps the wrong word – it was more like being ejected from a catapult. I left my stance and described a great arc before crashing onto the floor of the couloir. I then started to slide when, wham; I was launched into space again, as the rope between the other two and myself snapped tight once again. How far I travelled before I hit the deck I'll never know, but the bang on landing knocked the breath from me. I was now sliding down the couloir at an incredible rate without an ice axe. This had gone, but precisely where it and I had parted company, I cannot remember. In some respects the fact that I lost my axe might have been a good thing, as I suppose I could have been impaled upon it. Ah well, that's my leg broken – surprising how the thoughts run through one's mind – no sense of fear, just one of annoyance at being so stupid as to get killed in the Spencer Couloir at the end of a holiday. Killed I was sure I would be, as I had few illusions of a gentle run out at the bottom of the couloir. If I didn't bash my head in on the way down the couloir, the ice cliffs of the Nantillons Glacier would soon rectify that.

My progress down the couloir continued in a series of slides and flights through space, whilst all the time I was waiting for the bang on the head that would put me out. I've heard it said that some people see their past flash before them under such circumstances; this was not so in my case, but all the same my mind was very active and I clearly remember thinking "Well I suppose my friends will read about this in the newspapers".

Suddenly a tremendous bang and oblivion. That's it I thought, I must be dead. The sliding, flying sensation had gone; everything was still, no sound – no light and black as hell. No pain even. So this is death – Hell, I'm still thinking, you can't be dead if you're still thinking. Dead of not, it was still black and silent as the grave, and I couldn't move. How long this lasted I have no idea, in reality probably a short time. A shout, it was Eileen's voice. I couldn't be, surely we'd all been killed. Another shout, this time "Don, where are you – are you alright?" My addled brain began to clear, and I began to realise the reason why I couldn't move, and why it was so dark. I was buried, obviously not very deep; otherwise I would not have heard the shouts. I managed to free an arm, and instinctively probed above my head. The snow above yielded and I saw a lighter shade of darkness and felt the fresh air on my face. It was incredible – I was still alive – after falling some seven hundred feet and what's more, I was not alone.

The rest of the story is a boring one of doctors and hospitals.

*Footnote:*

There can be no credit for sustaining a fall, yet it is in the nature of climbing that the finest achievements are separated from disaster by a razor sharp margin. For instance, on Bonatti's solo first ascent of the SW Pillar of the Dru: The crux came at the great overhangs above the red slabs. With insufficient gear to peg over this barrier, his last resort was to lasso an outcrop of rock above the overhang and pull himself up to it. Would the outcrop itself support his weight? "One last poignant hesitation. One last prayer from the bottom of my heart, and then, as an uncontrollable tremor ran through me, before my forces grew less, I closed my eyes for a second, held my breath and let myself step into the void, clutching the rope with both hands. For an instant I had the feeling of falling with the rope, and then my flight slackened, and in a second I felt I was swinging back; the anchorage had held!"

*D.C.*

“Climb if you will, but remember that courage and strength are naught without prudence, and a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a life-time. Do nothing in haste; look well to each step; and from the beginning think what may be the end”.

*Wymper: Scrambles Amongst the Alps*

## NOTHING TO LOSE

“If you don't spent owt, you lose nowt”.

*Derrick Burgess*

## TWO HEADERS

*Ray Colledge*

In 1963 Derrick Burgess and I climbed Route Major on the south face of Mont Blanc. The main difficulty was the upper rock buttress split by a strenuous chimney crack, ably climbed by Derrick. On top of the buttress was the ice cliff and my turn to lead.

This ice wall had two indefinite cracks leading upwards and, climbing up a little, I was able to hammer my ice axe shaft into the right hand crack. The wall was not too high but it was vertical. After borrowing Derrick's axe and with a hand jam in the left crack, I was able to mantle shelf onto the axe. Standing on the axe, I could use the other axe to step up onto the snow slope above. Derrick followed.

Now we had the problem of retrieving my axe. It was a new one, about ten days old, and I was distinctly worried about Derrick's lack of will to take recovery seriously. It was rumoured that Derrick never actually bought any equipment or food either, relying on his companions to provide what was needed. As he did most of the leading, it must be assumed that he carefully checked other peoples' racks before climbing with them.

However as I lowered him headfirst down the vertical ice, he was probably more worried about my ability to hold the ropes than anything else. A few gentle taps and the axe was safely recovered. We gained the summit of Mont Blanc and on the descent to the Grand Mulet hut we caught up with Ray Handley's team. They had done another route on the face.

In 1969 I was part of two teams on Mont Blanc. There was Peter Scott and Ron Lake followed by J. Fullalove (Dan Boon) and myself. This time it was Pear Buttress and again we descended from the summit to the Grand Mulet Hut.

Next morning we continued the descent over the dry glacier towards Chamonix. At one point we made a stop, where Pete put down his axe onto the ice next to a pool of melted glacier water. The axe slid into the water.

Pete rolled up his sleeve and reached down but not far enough. Using another axe he could hook it, but it always slipped back. Now Peter is known to frown on the very idea of releasing the moths from his wallet and so we knew what he had to do to avoid buying a new axe. He would strip to the waist and be lowered headfirst into the water. Cameras would record the event. He was thought to be a hard man who would not hesitate.

Alas, to our disappointment he refused and left the axe to its' fate.

Now, if Derrick Burgess has passed that way later on, and seen the axe, he would have dived in fully clothed to retrieve it.



The Welsh Hut: Tan-y-Wyddfa, Rhyd ddu. *Photo: Colin Hobday.*



The Derbyshire Hut: Heathy Lea (Sawmill) Cottage, Chatsworth. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Bryn-y-Wern 1956: Janes, The Smiths, Marshall, Thompson, Berger, Welbourn, The Wrights, Phillips, Prettys, Cullums and Parsons. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Panto at Ilam Hall – the 1970's, includes Janet Burgess, Rita Hallam. *Photo: D. Burgess.*



Bullstones 1968: Paul Gardiner, Derrick Burgess, Don Chapman.  
*Photo: C. Radcliffe.*



Annual Dinner, Devonshire Arms, Baslow 1956: Dr. Norman Cochran, Alf Bridge, H. Pretty (President), Molly Pretty, Showell Styles. *Photo: Mike Moore.*



Cyril B. Machin – Opening of R. O. Downes Hut, Froggat, 1961. Ernie Phillips at rear.  
*Photo: Harry Pretty.*



Effervescent Bob Pettigrew with Margaret Lowe.  
*Photo: Jack Ashcroft.*



Contemplative George Reynolds.  
*Photo: Harry Pretty.*



Eric Byne and Harry Pretty. (E.B.'s last Anniversary Meet at Birchen Edge, June 1967. *Photo: Molly Pretty.*





The Czechs arrive, 1967: Spotted Cow, Holbrook; J. Tomcala, D. Weston, G. Smith, V. Fibinger, R. Handley, M. Kucik, P. Janes, J. Steindler, D. Hadlum, M. Lichy, E. Wallis. Seated: H. Pretty, Nat Allen, M. Kasalicka, J. Kupec, L. Koupil, D. Burgess. *Photo: Derby Evening Telegraph.*



Working Party Weekend, Heathy Lea 1995; lunch break. The Hobdays, Tony Raphael, Eileen Gregson, Keith Gregson, Chuck Hooley, Kevin and Margaret Sarson, John Shreeve, Margaret Hooley, Brian West. *Photo: J. Hudson.*



Ski-ing in the Cairngorms, 1969. Standing: Peter Janes, Arthur Hawtin, John Crosse, Ron Chambers, Colin Hobday. Crouching: Dave Appleby, Dick Brown, Dougie Godlington, Gordon Gadsby. *Photo: Harry Pretty.*



Annual Golden Oldies Meet, Tan-y-Wyddfa, 1980's. Jack Ashcroft, Ken Hodge, Meg Moore, June Telfer, Janet Ashcroft, Mike Moore, John (Rock) Hudson, Charlie Cullum, Nat Allen, Ruth Allen, Colin Hobday, Doreen Hodge, Mary Cullum. *Photo: Buck Hooley.*



Opening of Eric byne Memorial Cottage, Heathy Lea, Chatsworth, by Ivy Byne, October 1970. Alf Bridge and Derrick Burgess (President) in attendance. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Evacuation of Bryn-y-Wern, October 1958. Lorry leaves for Tan-y-Wyddfa, Rhyd ddu. (B.-y-W. behind). *Photo: Jack Ashcroft.*



President's Meet (Brian West) 1996: Heathy Lea, Chatsworth; Derrick Burgess, Janet Reynolds, Brian West, George Reynolds, Ruth Allen. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Nat Allen.  
*Photo: J. Ashcroft.*



Molly Pretty: en route Coulags to Torridon, 1984.  
*Photo: H. Pretty.*



Shirley Wainwright, Hon. Secretary 1999.  
*Photo: Julia Willson.*



Uschi Hobday and friend.  
*Photo: Colin Hobday.*

*The  
Moderns  
1970-1990  
Re-inventing  
the wheel*

During the late 1960's Chris Radcliffe and Peter Scott had blossomed into Oread hard men and, in their wake, came a string of like minded enthusiasts so, when Geoff Hayes, (after seven years) retired from editorship of the Newsletter, it seemed wholly appropriate that Radcliffe and Scott should jointly take on the job.

They were at the height of their powers, ready for the ultimate mountain challenge, and simultaneously irritated (if not angered) by an apparent torpor that permeated club activities. Their early Editorials made their point ..... and there were those who did not agree.

"Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,  
Disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage"

*Henry V*

# STIFFENING THE SINEWS

## EDITORIAL (*EXTRACT*)

*Newsletter, February 1970*

“The Oread? You want to steer clear of them, they’re a cliquy lot” said this character we met in the pub. Undeterred we visited the Wilmot and after a few weeks we managed to get a foot in the door. Soon we began to appreciate the very considerable depth of experience and variety of outlook which characterised the Oread. We found that this unique club comprises climbers whose mountaineering experience extends over many years and at the same time many whose ambitions do not extend beyond a few rigorous walks; many members who are prepared to devote hours of time in the thankless tasks which are necessary to make the club tick; a lively social life; an original approach to meet venues. All this contrasted strongly with the “hard-man’s” club we had come from. That club was a ‘clique’ personified – venues were limited to the current vogue areas, social life limited to beery confabs. The collective experience of the Oread mounts to a living tradition. Whilst we have the greatest admiration for this tradition, it seems fitting to ask if it is one that will live on into the seventies and is it an appropriate tradition for the new era?

The Oread was formed in 1949 and thus it bridged two famous eras in the history of British Mountaineering. Members are still active, whose associations were with the pace setters of the pre-1960 era: Arthur Dolphin and Peter Harding and the pace setters of the era that followed; Brown, Whillans, and the Rock and Ice. The link the Oread has with the Development of climbing in the Peak District is an essential part of its character and it is fitting that the club included among its members the late Eric Byne, whose unparalleled contribution to Peak District climbing began in the pre-war era. Within two years of its formation the Oread formed an expedition to Arctic Norway, in a period of post-war rationing, long before expeditioning became as straight-forward as it is to-day. Other expeditions followed to Arctic Norway, Spitzbergen and South Georgia, and ten years after the initial expedition the club was organising a major expedition to the Himalayas. In spite of the virile way in which the club has contributed to the British climbing scene, it is nevertheless true that it has played no part in the modern era of climbing.

*Chris Radcliffe, Peter Scott*

The implications did not pass unnoticed and there was a response – *Editor*.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

*Newsletter, March 1970*

The ‘Modern Era’ is considered by some to have started in 1949, with Brown and Whillans, or with Crew’s downfall. How wrong they are. It is also said by our equally modern Editors, that the OREAD has played NO part in the development of this ‘Modern Era’. How wrong are they? It seems to me that some backroom historian should do something to put the books right, and if this article seems to ‘shoot the bull’, may I be excused on the grounds of provocation.

The sixties started for the Oread with the full task of putting a fairly sizeable expedition into Kulu early in 1961, and whilst it only concerned five members, it required the efforts of several Oread backroom boys to launch it.

1962 was a quiet year, the majority of Oreads seemed occupied with repeating Brown’s routes, especially those at Tremadoc. In the Alps the East Ridge of the Crocodile and the West Face of the Petits Jorasses were the pick of the season.

1963 Saw three new routes on Baslow Edge, two on Curbar and three new routes on limestone in the Manifold. Pick of the Alps in '63 were Route Major and the Old Brenva on Mont Blanc.

1964 saw the completion of the Froggat-Curbar-Baslow Guide for publication. Two new routes were climbed on Chatsworth Edge and one in Dovedale. In the Alps the East Ridge of the Pain de Sucre and the Scarfe Arête were ascended. Our man was active in Kulu.

In 1965 the Manifold Guide was undertaken and seven new climbs were found in the valley. Elsewhere 'Light' in Gordale, a HVS on the Ruckle at Swanage, and one in Dovedale were climbed for the first time. The Brassington Area Guide was completed with three new routes. In the Alps the North Face of Lyskamm, the Caterinagratt on the Monte Rosa, and the Zmutt Ridge of the Matterhorn had Oread ascents.

In 1966 Oreads put up two HVS and two VS routes in the Manifold, one Dovedale VS, and two routes on the undeveloped Guillemot Ledges at Swanage. The Chatsworth Edge section of Vol. 4 Gritstone was handed in. During a bad Alpine season the Scerscen-Bernina was traversed. Another good route on the Ruckle at Swanage was put up and our man was at it in Kulu again.

In 1967 one new Dovedale VS and one Manifold HVS led to the completion of the Manifold Guide Script for Vol. II Limestone. Two new Swanage routes were knocked off. The pick of the Alps included the S. Face of the Meije, S. Face of the Aig. Dibona, S. Face Punta Guigliermina; and don't forget our man in Kulu.

In 1968 two more HVS Manifold routes were put up and another VS in Dovedale. A C.C. Guide to Cader Idris was written and in the poor Alpine season the traverse of the Schreckhorn, the Bonatti Pillar of the Dru and the N.Face of the Doldenhorn were climbed.

So ends this quickly sorted, potted history which I hope will at least stop our young climbers joining the local rambling club. Not a lot you may say, but every little helps.

*'Clinker'*

*.....on a less sanguine note .....*

*To the Editors!*

E. Byne, A. Bridge, G. Sutton, D. Penlington, E. Phillips, P. Gardiner and H. Pretty – names such as these earned the Oread recognition as one of the top clubs in the climbing world in the late 40's by their pioneering on Derbyshire Gritstone, whilst more recently the names of Burgess and Nat Allen have maintained our position by their magnificent efforts on Derbyshire Limestone.

What have the 70's in store for us? – or more to the point – what has the Oread in store for the 70's? Perhaps another Himalayan expedition or a trip to the Andes, it is entirely up to us: especially we younger members full of the spirit of adventure!! Or are we? Come to think of it, what has happened to the spirit of adventure of the Club generally? Are we entering a phase devoid of enthusiasm and achievement? Let us not bask in the reflected glory of the past.

Every member is or should be aware of the hard work that has gone into building the Oread into what it is to-day, but it is no use sitting back thinking, "Well, we've made our mark, we needn't do any more". On the contrary, we must continue to maintain the standard set by the earlier members. Are we younger members really bothered about this? I am beginning to doubt.

There are too few members striving to keep the name of the Oread to the fore front and all too many content to go to the weekly ale-up and to do plenty of waffling about what they are going to do but, come the weekend, and it is the same few climb-any-weather members who are keeping the flag flying.

Is this good enough for a club that used to be so active? For the last two years attendances at meets have declined, although the club membership has increased. Why? Amongst other things I fear that the membership could be exceeding the limits and straining, perhaps too greatly, the much coveted Oread bond. People do not seem to want to make the effort. There are too many relying on too few, and when the few cannot make it, the unfortunate meet leader finds he is spending the weekend on his own. Which brings me to the subject of huts.

We have a Welsh Hut used more by other clubs for meets than ourselves, and a Derbyshire hut also neglected by all except the usual crowd. Much hard work went into the landing of this hut and it is up to us to keep it going.

This is the Club's 21st birthday year, let us younger members try to do as much for the Club in the next twenty-one years as was done for it in the first twenty-one years by the founders and the earlier members.

*Ken Hodge*

*The new Editors were not over impressed by Clinker's C.V. and in April kept the pot boiling .....*

One of the more remarkable features of the Radcliffe/Scott editorship was the introduction of a fairly regular contribution by Tricouni. The identity of this anonymous commentator has, to this day, never been divulged and, despite much discussion during the intervening period of nearly thirty years, still remains a mystery. Tricouni employed a sly wit, often in a serio-comic vein that displayed an intimate knowledge of club affairs which, on occasion, could lapse into embroidered fantasy. His first contribution, in the form of verse, was directed at the crisis in club climbing activities as alleged by the new editors — *Editor*.

## THE PROBLEMS AND SYMPTOMS OF A THREATENED AND DECLINING IMPETUS TOWARDS THE PHYSICAL ATTAINMENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL SUMMITS

*Tricouni . . . Newsletter, March 1970*

It was during a short walk in the lower British hills, that the memory of the following discourse came to mind, touching a major problem affecting to-day's climbing world.....

It is true that old climbers go septic,  
That the gleam in their eye tends to fade;  
That piton and rope are considered a joke,  
When the debts owed to time have been paid?

Or do they in turn take to ski-ing  
To cover their lessening skill;  
Adopting a pose and wearing flash clothes,  
And pulled by a motor uphill?

Many old climbers were going this way,  
But now it's beginning to spread,  
With all the young Tigers deserting the rock  
And acting like penguins instead!



There's Handley and Hayes and now Weston;  
 Appleby Dench and old Pete;  
 Forsaking the edges from Birchen to Stanage  
 In favour of those on their feet.

Perhaps it's a sign of rebellion  
 Now that climbing has lost its mystique.  
 Due to Whitehall, Prince Philip, and now 'Mac the Tele',  
 On the box on every new peak.

Or is it the lure of the dollies  
 That brings these fine men to their knees;  
 of Rosies and Wendies and discotheque trendies  
 To fill up those hours apres-ski?

I wonder where all this will lead us?  
 With what joy will father tell son.  
 That the pride of his youth was no Dolomite roof.  
 But descending Mam Tor on his bum!

So 'alas and alack' for the climbers,  
 Who's hearts must be aching full sore;  
 No gear in the shops, just queers on the tops,  
 We're second class beings once more.

*Tricouni*

## EDITORIAL (*EXTRACT*)

*Newsletter, April 1970*

British climbing clubs are many and varied, but basically they can be grouped into four main categories. At one end of the scale are the senior clubs such as the Climbers Club or the Fell and Rock club with large scattered memberships, excellent facilities, considerable resources, and an unquestioned, but possibly undeserved authority. At the other end of the scale are local clubs such as the Nottingham C.C., Rimmon M.C., which have an essentially informal structure, offer little in the way of facilities but, composed of small groups of climbers with like interests, they survive on a surfeit of enthusiasm. Thirdly there are the specialised clubs – in the Universities, the Services and other institutions, which have an essentially transitory membership and an equally chequered history. Somewhere between the first two groups comes the somewhat nebulous fourth category which we can call the Area clubs. The Oread, having of course started life as a local club, has, after 21 years, now outgrown its role and belongs properly to this fourth category. Its survival up to now is evidence enough of a healthy development, but can we look forward to an equally prosperous period in the seventies and eighties? Or are we, in our twenty-first year, going to indulge in a self satisfied bubble of complacency which when pricked will reveal a skeleton of a club composed of faded heroes, supported by a plethora of beer drinking, peak-bagging, piste-bashing, fair-weather socialites; a sterile community in which any emergent talent is still born?

There can be few clubs in the country which boast of two huts. On the one hand this is a credit to the stalwarts who have done all the work to put us in this fortunate position. On the other hand it spells danger when people join to take advantage of the facilities rather than contribute to the spirit and fibre of the club. We also count ourselves as a senior Peak District club. Why is this? Presumably on account of the work done by the club in the development, fifteen years ago, of a few overgraded

beginner's crags, in the vicinity, appropriately enough, of the Derbyshire Hut. Also, as "Clinker" told us in March, this vestige of authority is attributable to the development work done on some vegetated limestone outcrops on the southern fringe of the Peak. Sterling stuff, but can we rest on such laurels? Modern developments make all this seem as ancient as the Gully Era. The Peak District moderns generally operate outside the club context anyway, which begs the question, whether the club is an appropriate institution now that everyone is mobile and T.V. has put climbing alongside soccer as an attraction for armchair enthusiasts, and whether the club is in fact a hindrance to a climber's progress – the antithesis of its original concept.

*Radcliffe/Scott*

*Editorial note 1998:* – Interesting that many of the climbs on these "overgraded beginner's crags" have gone up several notches in grading in the 1996 Chatsworth Area Guide, in a period when climbers are using a plethora of protective aids. In the 50's we led most of these "overgraded" routes straight through without much in the way of intermediate protection (no harnesses, no friends, no nuts, no wires), frequently in boots and, at the very best, a pair of Woolworth's plimsolls. A quick comparison between Climbs on Gritstone (1951) and the Chatsworth Area Guide (1996) in respect of Birchen Edge, indicates that at least 20 routes have been upgraded in the 1996 edition – a number from V.D. to H.S. Since the Derbyshire Hut was not available until 1970 the reference to it seems largely irrelevant, except in the pejorative sense.

*Newsletter (Extract), March 1971*

Many of you will be reading this Newsletter for the first time at the AGM, hence this is an appropriate time to take a critical look at the health and spirit of the Club. Last November we celebrated twenty-one years of existence as boisterous as ever at the Dinner and many fine phrases were flung around looking forward to equally fruitful years to come. We hope that this will indeed be the case and that the Club will move from strength to strength. It is clear that the Club as we know it comes from the farsighted enthusiasm of its older members who spurned the conventional framework of climbing communities. As Eric Byne wrote in "High Peak", referring to the early expeditions organised by Oreads; "It is perhaps difficult to realise nowadays what a psychological and social breakthrough this was, or how much character it required."

Fine though these achievements may have been, it is equally clear that conditions have changed so radically that the essential character of the Club must change if we are once again to be seen as pace-setters. The privations of earlier days which tended to throw fellow climbers together have largely disappeared and as with life in general the sport has become too comfortable. Is the age of the extrovert personalities who did so much to kindle enthusiasm now lost to us? Perhaps the concept of a club is the antithesis of vitality – certainly the front runners of today's climbing scene tend not to be club types. However we believe that this outlook is far too narrow-minded and that the club retains a place to foster a true spirit of the hills and a belief in mountaineering as very much a way of life.

*Radcliffe/Scott*

*Newsletter, March 1971*

Dear Sirs,

I have read with interest your comments on the state of the Oread in past Newsletter Editorials. Since you are obviously hoping for replies, here are my observations for what they are worth.

In general I do not agree with you when you denigrate the past of the Oread, but like yourselves I am afraid for the future. At present the Oread is a club to be proud of; but will it be so in a few years time?

If a climbing club is to retain its 'hard image', I believe it must retain within itself a nucleus of keen young climbers. The age group of the nucleus must normally be 16 to 25 (which lets you out Pete) since these are the years of comparative freedom from responsibility (polite word for wife, children, home, garden etc.) and nearly all one's spare time can be diverted to climbing. The size of the nucleus must be such that an element of competition creeps in between individuals and I think this means a minimum in the nucleus of 8 or 10 people. Since by the laws of nature individuals are continually leaving the nucleus from the top end, it is obviously necessary to recruit into it preferably at or near the bottom.

Climbing clubs are normally formed by such groups of individuals, but if a club fails to continually replenish its young nucleus, then a form of creeping paralysis sets in. For a few years all will seem well on the surface and the hard image will remain for a while, but eventually it is doomed to become what you so aptly described as 'a skeleton club composed of faded heroes'; a joke among the more virile clubs of the day.

How does the Oread fit in with this picture? When I first stepped through the doors of the Wilmot to meet the Oread, my eyes were greeted by a bevy of beautiful birds.

To digress for a moment; for a while I was amazed at the way the Oread managed to attract them unto itself, though I now appreciate this is entirely due to the magnetism of certain senior members. When I looked round for the young men who ought to have been hanging round these birds, I could see very few – no more than a few glowing embers in a once vigorous fire. Admittedly a "not so young as it used to be" group were and still are putting up a pretty good smoke screen which tends to hide the trouble underneath. Unless something happens, however, I believe the Oread is doomed to obscurity in not too many years time, at least from the climbing point of view.

*Trevor Bridges*

*So, an outsider was brought in to have a look, and consider the verdict.*

## GREENER GRASS (*EXTRACT*)

*TIM LEWIS*

*Newsletter, March 1971*

These days it's no good moving from one climbing area to another and expecting to have an effect like Prometheus bringing fire down from Olympus to the mere mortals. You're more likely to suffer his fate – drinking all night and having your liver pecked out next day by the local vultures (or something that feels like that). The days of Gods descending from the clouds in climbing circles are gone. Climbing has now reached the communist ideal – a classless society where no-one's impressed by anyone else's status. Now don't get me wrong. The only reputation I have to precede me is best left behind.

The editors asked that I point my trumpet Derby-wards. Now if I blew it a hundred times more often than the seven times that fixed Jericho, Derby and Rolls-Royce wouldn't bat an eyelid. First things first. I've seen them play often now; Mackay is still impressive, Macfarland's learning well, but who are the pygmies at the front and back? As a forward line they make a good circus act – with Shetland ponies and followed by sea-lions. What next? Oh yes. The clubs. This town's got more than Arnold Palmer. It took me some time to work out the difference between the Mercury and the Oread and why they were connected. I've got it sorted now, I think. This old guy told me in a pub. He said, and I've no reason to believe he lied, "A long time ago the Gods came down from the North (I think he meant Manchester) and gave three gifts to us, water, the wheel, and iron. We'd no use for the first, having found better brews ourselves, so one took the wheel, and the others iron. Now the lot with the iron needed some means of moving so they conned the lot with

wheels into letting them join. The lot with wheels didn't want iron so they felt aggrieved and eventually both sides had recourse to water substitute to sort out their problems. That's the way it's stayed. As I said, I've no reason to believe he lied; an extraordinary story for an extraordinary set-up. Finally then, I was warned before coming to Derby about them: I was prepared to believe it, but the truth was worse. They don't think they run the town, they just ignore it.

Then there's another party; I call him that because the first time I met him, he was a one man celebration and asked me the second time what I'd said. God bless you sir, and your penguins. The rest of the Club seems to have remained uncontaminated; do yourselves a favour and remain that way.

Well, I've nearly done and I've not said much about climbing in this climber's newsletter. Disregarding the cries of "That's because you've not done much", he passed on. I think, I hope I'm right, that the reason for this is the diversity I feel in this club. It has more opportunity for becoming inbred than most other clubs, because of its nature and the area it operates in. The climbers seem to climb, the rambles to ramble, and both to discuss anything other than that when not in action. It also seems to have a healthy sense of inter-personal vituperation – gossip to you madam – which does not prevent it from being friendly. Thanks to all who have helped ease my entrance to a new area, especially those I've had a swing at. I've only one criticism to make: in the breathalyser age; why does the club meet so far out of town? Not good thinking for good drinking.

*This is only 1971 – and it's going to run, and run and — Editor.*

*For example – later in 1971*

Dear Sir,

As to the general gloom and despondency expressed in your editorial, and other letters, I cannot see the Club "doomed to obscurity in not too many years time". It must be agreed that a regular intake of the young is essential to the virility of the Club but the totally rational approach of the nucleus outlined by Trevor Bridges does not quite workout in practice. To take as an example: the great alpine routes in Rebuffat's 'Starlight and Storm'. In recent years the record of Oreads in this context is equal I'm sure to any club of similar nature. The age spread of climbers is the significant point, 27 to 47 (at a guess). Admittedly the climbers involved have joined the Club by various routes but this only serves to reinforce the point. Might I be so bold as to suggest the "faded heroes" image and "withering on about passes", image is not yet on our doorstep. The reference to a club composed of "faded heroes, a joke among the more virile clubs of the day" is rather a joke in itself. The most virile clubs of the day are notorious for only surviving the day. The A.C.G. have acknowledged this basic fact and deny club status.

Yours, a witterer  
Triple Hob

*Despite the Alpine record of 1971<sup>1</sup> the Newsletter Editor was still worrying away in 1972.*

<sup>1</sup>see Alpine Affairs 1970-1980.

EDITORIAL (*EXTRACTS*)*Newsletter, July 1972*

Judging by the attendance on recent meets, perhaps it is not surprising that nothing is being written since nobody is doing anything to write about. Surely attendances cannot have been as bad at any time in the history of the club, especially considering the nominal membership of 120 plus. The weather has of course not been good, but this in itself is an insufficient explanation. No meet (apart from the 14 Peaks walk) has been well attended for many months; several attendances have dropped below ten and, on one occasion, the meet leader himself didn't turn up. Even the best attended meets are usually swollen in numbers by non-members. As a whole the picture is pretty pathetic. In the past I have attempted to write some reasonably vitriolic editorials, but the response has been staggering in its indifference. So I continue to despair as to what is happening to the club.

In the April 1970 issue of the Newsletter I attempted to analyse the Oread M.C.'s position in terms of British Mountaineering and questioned whether in fact we would look forward in the seventies and eighties to the same fruitful development we had enjoyed in the first 21 years of our existence. I concluded that this would depend on the encouragement given to the younger members, but that in essence it depends on the overall enthusiasm of the club. Now, only two years later, I can see little to provide much optimism. I see little to change the view expressed in the March 1971 Newsletter that we still owe too much to the older members, who increasingly are fading from the scene.

*Chris Radcliffe*

## COMMITTEE MEETING DISRUPTED . . .

*Newsletter, March 1970*

During the meeting of the Oread Committee at Dave Appleby's in February, the numbers were suddenly reduced by the call out of Team Alpha. Messrs. Weston, Hodge and Appleby departed to Ashbourne, leaving the remainder of the committee lounging in front of Appleby's fire, enjoying Judy's excellent cuisine. The business of the evening was nevertheless completed. Dave returned about 11.30 p.m. and quote "....."to find the rest of the committee tossing up to see who should leave last".

The rescue involved the recovery of two young lads who had fallen at Tissington Spires.

## MANIFOLD VALLEY

*Newsletter, March 1970*

It was reported in *The Guardian* (18/2/70) that 'defenders' of the Manifold Valley, which the Trent River Authority plans to flood as a reservoir, are to invite an all-party group of MPs to tour the valley.

Jack Longland has pointed out, however, that no definite plan has yet been put forward by the Authority. They are scheduled to do so in a few months time. Depending upon where the dam is to be built more or less of this valley will be flooded. In any case this will not be effected for some years to come.

It would seem fairly ineffective to protest at this stage if no plan has yet been submitted. Nevertheless if such a plan is forthcoming and the amenities of the valley are to be drowned, then is the time to write your protest letters.

This proposed scheme seems to have died without trace, or does it still lurk in the files of Severn Trent ..... or was it overtaken by Carsington? – *Editor*.

## ERIC BYNE MEMORIAL FUND

*Newsletter, April 1970*

### *Eric Byne Memorial Fund/Campsite*

The official closing date for sending contributions to the Eric Byne Memorial Fund was April 1st. The Peak District lacks good camp-sites and it is hoped that a permanent camp-site will be purchased and equipped in the vicinity of Gardoms and Birchen Edges. This is a most important development when the general trend is towards restriction of casual camping in the Peak District. No doubt the trustees of the fund will only be too pleased to receive further contributions, especially from members of one of the senior Peak District clubs. — *H.P.*

The E.B. Memorial Fund was set up in May 1968, largely due to initiatives by R.E. (Larry) Lambe, Jack Longland, Alf Bridge, Harry Pretty, and Nat Allen.

The Trustee Group comprised: Nat Allen, John Hunt, Don Morrison, Geoff Sutton, Alf Bridge, Jack Longland, Fred Piggott, Larry Lambe, Joe Brown, Tony Moulam, Harry Pretty, and Eric Byrom (Treasurer).

Negotiations with the Water Board and Peak National Park were mostly conducted by Longland, Pretty, and Lambe. The Fund was not heavily subscribed but by late 1970 the Peak National Park Board had agreed to take over land at Moorside Farm, below Birchen Edge, to establish a "wild" camp-site.

The campsite was officially opened by (then) Sir Jack Longland in October 1976 — *Editor.*

## FOREWORD TO NEWSLETTER, DECEMBER 1971 (*EXTRACT*)

### *PAUL GARDINER (PRESIDENT)*

I am sure that members and friends will understand the mixed feelings with which I put pen to paper in an endeavour to write some appropriate words on Oread events of the past five months.

The feelings range from pleasure in the club's outstanding Alpine achievements to heartfelt despond at the loss of two members to whom the Oread owes so much.

My intention in late August was to write a foreword recognising the outstanding performances of Chris Radcliffe, Peter Scott, Ray Colledge and others during the Alpine holiday.

However, the events of September 1971, the loss of Geoff Hayes in an accident on Dow Crag, the injury to Lloyd Caris, and the untimely death of Alf Bridge, transcend all other thoughts, and this numbing effect is felt by all. I extend to the relatives of Geoff and Alf the sympathy of the club, and wish a successful and speedy recovery to Lloyd.

## GEOFF HAYES, 1938-1971

### AN APPRECIATION (*EXTRACT*)

The first Oread meet which Geoff and I attended was at the Roaches, some time in 1955. That meet saw the genesis of the person who was to become, without doubt, the "Complete Oread".

In all aspects of his mountaineering activities, Geoff exhibited a high level of competence, although it was typical of the man that he did not always set his sights so high that this standard was required. One felt that whatever the occasion, Geoff would always have something in reserve. It was unlike

Geoff to train seriously for long walks or Alpine meets. We all know that he did not need to and that on a given occasion he could have walked probably any of us into the ground, although that would have been the last think he would have wished. The walk that gave Geoff the greatest retrospective pleasure was when he and Bob Pettigrew were the only non-stop finishers of an epic trip from Penmaenmawr to Bryn-y-Wern, our old club hut in the Pennant valley. This walk included Drum, Yr Arran and Moel Hebog as well as the 14 Threethousanders. Their time was around 19 hours and I remember Geoff saying that this was the only time he had been really tired. It has been voiced by many experienced Club members that Geoff seldom seemed extended on rock, indeed he was proud of the fact that he had never peeled, either when leading or on a rope.

There is no doubt that in his rock and Alpine climbing his family responsibilities had an inhibitory affect upon his performance. It was only in recent years that Geoff began to realise his potential on rock and was well known for climbing in boots quite hard routes in inclement weather.

Due to his overall competence and ability to make the correct decision, Geoff often became, by general consent, a leader of small groups in the hills. It was fitting that he chose to communicate his knowledge to a multitude of beginners both on Oread meets and through the medium of his Ilkeston College night school classes. That these classes were effective can be vouched for by a number of the younger Oreads. It can scarcely be doubted that Geoff introduced more people into the Club than any other member and willingly spent very many days in the mountains, helping beginners when he could have been doing harder and perhaps to him, more interesting things.

From soon after his election as an Oread member in 1956, Geoff showed his willingness to perform any official duties asked of him and served on the Committee for many years, as well as in the offices of Meets Secretary and Indoor Meets Secretary. He is best remembered in this context however, for the ten years he spent as Newsletter Editor. I am sure that those who have performed this office will appreciate the enthusiasm necessary for so many years of hard labour. There is no doubt in the minds of many members that Geoff would eventually have become President of the Oread Mountaineering Club, perhaps in the near future.

*Mike Berry*

### IN MEMORIAM

Stricken with grief,  
Tears run down the gully of my cheeks  
Shattering my world of calm.  
Why?  
Snatched from the joy of living,  
A life so glorious as the mountain air  
Of a September day.  
Why?  
The chance to live, seized by the crags  
He loved so dear.  
Why?  
He gave so much to many,  
Expected nothing in return,  
But only the freedom of the hills.  
Why?  
We shall never know.  
Farewell loved Mountaineer,  
Your memory will linger on.

*John Crosse*  
13th September 1971

It has not been editorial policy to include a compendium of obituaries but I have felt compelled to include (inter alia) Geoff Hayes since he was a very special Oread. His abiding modesty provides a suitable counter point to other inclusions that seem to suggest that personal status can only be enhanced by unrelenting attention to so-called Club Status — *Editor*.

## OUTDOOR MEETS, U.K., 1970-1973 21ST ANNIVERSARY, PRESIDENT'S MEET 1970 – RHYD-DDU (*EXTRACT*)

King Grot, alias Geoff Hayes, led a large party up Lockwoods Chimney. Wendy Allen came back with bruised knees and elbows and was reported to have stood on Tom's head which may have prompted his remark "you have to be married to get anywhere in this club". Geoff, being the traditionalist, finished up Geoffrey Winthrop Young's climb on Teyryn Bluffs. (The last man was still in Lockwoods!) The veterans were jolted into action by the younger extremists for a winter ascent of Lliwedd. Once in the mist, they were soon lost, taking Don Cowen with them, leaving the plodders, led by 'Eigerwand' Colledge, to search for Horned crag. The sight of the route turned Ray 'whiter than white' and he immediately hid behind a snowflake whilst R.H. and I climbed the easy gully to the ridge. Needless to say, we were soon followed by Colledge who promptly accused us of cowardice, to which we agreed. Lliwedd was traversed and the stragglers picked up on the col (is this Tryfan they asked?) and brought to safety over Snowdon to the hut.

Teams did go out on Sunday and were rewarded by a glorious late afternoon. Chris, Don, and Ray C. climbed Angels' Pavement without getting shot; whilst Martin Harris took Pete to snatch his first ascent of Tryfan taking in Grooved Arête en route.

There was activity elsewhere; the Grey Man was on the Carnedd's with a team; a member of the Lightcliffe Harriers was there, a Kiwi passed by; it all added up to a good weekend.

*Derrick Burgess*

## CHRISTMAS, TAN-Y-WYDDFA 1970 (*EXTRACT*)

No doubt, John Fisher was looking forward to a juicy steak after a hard day in the hills, but his luck was out. The steaks and the sausage, which he had so carefully hidden under a slate in the garden, (why, we shall never know, because the kitchen was like a refrigerator), had been found by an equally hungry dog and instantly devoured.

## CHRISTMAS, KESWICK 1970 (*EXTRACT*)

Christmas dinner at the Watendlath cottage, the largest of the frugal dwellings, was its usual riotous occasion. The climax was a hand written Appleby song, toasting the ladies, which seemed to be stealing the limelight from a noisy 'Gaylord Handley', whose face took on a most peculiar expression. He shuffled away from the table like a China man in tight shoes. Later a search party found him gazing hopelessly at the shattered remains of his distinctive underpants. It appears that in trying to trump Appleby's ace song, he overstrained with disastrous results.

*Nat Allen*



## LANGDALE, 1971 (*EXTRACT*)

Rusty, out to prove that one can survive without the five star luxury of Arctic Guineas and Mountain Tents, was ensconced in the remnants of a kiddies (15/- plus 2 Kellogg's tops) play tent, with the added luxury of two lilos (one to keep the place afloat).

## THE PEAK HORSESHOE, JUNE 1971 – (*EXTRACT*)

Eric Byne in "High Peak" wrote at some length about the epic Peak Horseshoe walk, first done by Sumner and Lambe of the Mountain Club of Stafford in 37 hours in 1953. Long before this book was published, the Oread had attempted the same marathon walk. The first attempt started from the barn at The Roaches early on Saturday morning in '59 (I think). It ended for some at Buxton in the foulest of weather, with Gordon Gadsby being transported from Whitehall seated in a wheelbarrow. Ashcroft, Frost and myself did get as far as Edale, but a night at Poltergeist Barn in pouring rain put paid to us and we got the train to Grindleford before limping to Rowsley.

After a twelve year lapse I decided in a weak moment to lead the meet once again. A few weeks before the date, I was regretting the decision, but lived with the belief that no other Oread could be interested in doing such a slog. It was therefore with much surprise that on Friday evening, 19th March this year, that I saw assembled at Trevor Bridge's home in Derby the following young and not quite so young Oreads and friends: Dave Williams, Paul Gardiner, Clive Russell, Chris Radcliffe, Trevor Bridges, Neill, Doris and Dog!

*Geoff Hayes*

*The following is a brief extract:*

Left Upper Hulme 21.30 for barn near Three Shires Head. The barn reached at midnight after Williams encountered "The Black Horsemen"

Late start on the following day via Cat and Fiddle, A6 close to White Hall, Combs Moss and descent to Dove Holes (Hot drinks from support party: Jean Russell and Shelagh Bridges). Doris and dog retired to the relief of Williams. Route continued to Sparrowpits, Brown Knoll, Kinder Low. The party became separated in cloud and rain before crossing Snake summit (Support party waiting). Hayes, Radcliffe and Bridges pressed on for Lower Small Clough. "Remnants" sought refuge at Barnsley Wood Cottage and/or Heathy Lea.

Lower Small Clough reached at 22.00. Don Cowen in residence. Next morning the main party continued south over Bull Stones, Margery Hill, Derwent Edges to Ladybower road, where Rusty suddenly appeared with support party. Heathy Lea was reached at 18.45, a total of 25 hours walking. What happened to Williams and his "remnants" is not known. Hayes makes no further reference to them in his extended account — *Editor*.

## OGWEN, FEBRUARY 1972 (*EXTRACT*)

Sunday dawned fine and clear, but mist rolling up the valley drove everyone to a relatively early start. The ascent of Tryfan brought everyone above the cloud into warm sunshine and spectacular views. Various routes brought the party to the summit. Chris Radcliffe, Pete Scott, Pete Holden, Trevor Bridges, Derrick Burgess and Don Cowen ascended Grooved Arete – but not without incident. Pete Scott dislodged a "grand piano" on the lower reaches of the climb and petrified people standing on the eastern terrace. Chris Radcliffe was later heard to remark "I was more frightened than on the Eiger".

Radcliffe in an attempt on the world record Gribben Ridge descent, was believed, over a section of about forty feet, to be accelerating at something like thirty -two feet per second, even collecting a bruised shin and a broken rucksack strap on the way.

*Dave Guylar*

## THE INFAMOUS CRATCLIFFE MEET, DECEMBER 1972

*(Meet Leader Designate:\*\*\*\*\* Derrick Burgess)*

This meet must surely stand out, for the leader at any rate, as the biggest "NON-event" of the year, for, having described in glowing terms his intentions in the Oread Circular, to wit: "There is camping at the farm". — Mr. Burgess turned up at Black Rocks on the Saturday afternoon without venturing into the meet area at all.

His attendance at Black Rocks notwithstanding, those regular acquaintances of the Meet Leader should have been forewarned, for is it not a fact that Mr. Burgess has already reached maximum points in the 'One-Day-Only-At-The-Weekend' stakes for 1971, and could possibly be forgiven for forgetting that in this era of easy, comfortable, pluto and auto-cratc living, there still exist those people who have to rely on "Shanks' Pony" or the "Thumb" to achieve their destination.

It must also have been refreshing for the prattlers of outdoor keenness and enthusiasm to find that in this day and age a prospective Oread could travel from Chesterfield to Cratcliffe by these methods – passing comfortable Heathy Lea on a Saturday forenoon, and arriving after lunch at the designated spot. Unhappily, he was the ONLY ONE THERE .....!!! What thoughts did he have then. Dear Member, as he retraced his weary steps under the racing cloud and the darkening evening sky to reach at last the succour of the Derbyshire Hut and a 'Chamberspot' of tea?? What dark thoughts suffused his brain as he bathed his reddened feet in the plastic bowl, or turned uneasily upon the Kayfoam bed? We may never know, but suffice it to say that, while his victim of the first debacle was nursing his wrath and aching feet, the perpetrator was setting in motion the chain of events that was to lead to further scenes of human endeavour. Read on....

At the party (I did mention there was a party in Derby that Saturday night, didn't I?), the Meet Leader (CRATCLIFFE), after his afternoon on the rocks (BLACK), was feeling expansive (BEER). With several pints under his belt and a crooked smile on his lips, the fateful words flowed smoothly: "If you all come out in Dennis and Ken's cars tomorrow, I can bring you back and they can go straight home to Manchester. (Denis Davies and Ken Beetham were two friends from the Karabiner Club who were to climb with the team on Sunday). The die was cast and the happy, inebriate Players left, their cups o'erflowing and their pint pots empty, to the various homes that awaited them, secure in the knowledge of the 'morrow's plan.

Fate, however, in the guise of a four hour cloudburst delayed an early start next morning into the beginning of the afternoon. One member, one Hon. member, and their guests duly arrived at Cratcliffe and, for three hours, amused themselves on the crag and the various boulder problems that abound. They saw no-one, but several cars parked on the top road in the distance testified that a number of people were about. "Probably all gone for a walk into Bradford Dale, seeing that it was raining this morning", they decided. The Manchester team left and the remaining Derbeans walked over the fields to find the Meet Leader's car in the gathering gloom. IT WASN'T THERE – IT NEVER HAD BEEN!

"He'll be waiting down on the bottom road", said the All-Time-Believer devoutly, so back they rushed. An hour later as the second rainstorm lashed into his winter woollies, the All-Time-Believer shuffled his feet, his facts, his opinions, and became blasphemous. "God rot him, we'll walk", was the decision and the trio set out in an increasingly damp wind for Wirksworth. Space does not permit a full description of their suffering or language during this time, but it is sufficient to say the journey was not without incident.

The five-to-seven was, happily, a bit late starting out and, as the trio grasped the handrail and swung aboard, the memories of bygone aeons flooded back: the upper deck full of climbers, the back seats piled high with Ex-WD rucksacks, the front ones being used for brewing, the inevitable clashes with conductors and letters to the press. They mounted the stairs eagerly, the ghosts of yester-year panting at their heels. A red-faced man in a pacamac gazed at them stonily from the back seat. A callow youth with spots placed his arm protectively round an overweight girl and the rest of the seats were moodily empty. So much for memories. The trio moved to the front and gazed bleakly through the steamy windows. The conductress punched the tickets and took Hank's name and address because he was two bob short and, finally, the One-with-Flu reverse-called wife, who collected them from the Derby bus station and tried not to smile.

Those attending the Meet, in order of suffering were:- Billy Beveridge, Derek Carnell, Nat Allen, Hank Harrison, Denis Davies and Ken Beetham. Burgess stopped home and made himself ill at yet another party on Sunday afternoon.

*Anon*

I consider the above to be a minor classic of Oread reportage, The author has remained anonymous but a distinct whiff of gunpowder in the style of Nat Allen – Derek Carnell is self-evident. — *Editor*.

### LANGDALE, MARCH 1973 (EXTRACT)

The morning dawned with Handley opening his eyes and muttering "Who's ringing that bloody till?" – he'd pitched next door to the shop. On looking outside, the bag was down and the rain was falling; and so it was for the weekend, – rain and quite cool.

Sunday was the same if not worse. Fisher came out of his tent at 10.30 a.m., grinned and uttered, "Il faut que nous avons l'amour." Gritting his teeth he went back in for his breakfast.

Penlington ate Ashcroft's breakfast; Carnell went back to Derby to play golf; Handley threw a brick in the shop and quietened the till; various parties went for short wet walks; Fred wasn't to be seen, although a report came through that his van was seen leaving at 7.30 a.m. with Fred driving, still in his pyjamas.

Why on earth we don't go to Eskdale I do not know. Perhaps now Burgess is off Committee, we might stand a chance.

*David Appleby*

### MARSDEN-HEATHY LEA (BASLOW), JUNE 1973 (EXTRACT)

Those doing the complete walk were Nat Allen, Pete Janes, Paul Bingham, Roy Sawyer, Dave Weston, Clive Russell, Ron Chambers, Les Peel and Tom Rogers. Those "on and off" the route, part timers, etc. were Jack Ashcroft, Dave Appleby, and Derek Carnell. Phil Falkner, the old man of the party, came out for the Friday night and Saturday. He was last seen heading over Kinder by himself, in a wet and bedraggled state, for Edale. It's his 50th birthday this year.

This year's meet was the 21st anniversary of this favourite Oread bog trot. The first was on October 24th-25th, 1952. The party then consisted of Phil Falkner, Geoff Gibson, Mike Moore, Harry Pretty, and Dave Penlington. The party slept the night at Marsden gas works, and in the back parlour of the Nags Head (Fred Heardman). Edale had been the original objective, but they continued down the Edges to Baslow.

*Jack Ashcroft*

Week-end prior to this meet Ashcroft, Penlington, Winfield and Darnell completed the Pennine Way (North to South) in seven days — *Editor*.

## DOVEDALE, JUNE 1973 (*EXTRACT*)

The sun still shone brightly as we forced our way through the jostling crowds on the George's field. I tripped over one of Reg Squires' boots, barely hidden by the long grass, and subsided heavily into the Oakden's nest of billies. My heavy rucksack held me floorbound and I was uncaringly trampled by the quartet returning from Beresford Dale. A plethora of wives, occupying sundry camp beds, lilos, spats, and chairs were spread over the field like "pearls byfore the swyne", and Chambers was trying to fit himself into a Whillans' jockstrap that was obviously too small. The Oread had arrived, and from my prone position by a teacup, I surveyed it all with pride. Bare-footed children and dogs played frantically round the tents: reddening anatomies rotated sunwards, and tea bubbled on the stoves. The President arrived back from Cumberbund with our K.C. friends, Shelagh Manning and Denis Davies and much wine was spilt replenishing old friendships. As the sun set and the sky darkened an aura of respectability crept over the scene as numerous people dressed for dinner at the George and surrounding hotels. It was about this time that 'Nitelite' Burgess arrived and set off for his one route of the day (Venery), and London-based Charlie Cullum was savagely scouring the country round the Isaac Walton for traces of the club meet.

*Derek Carnell*

## BLENCATHRA, WINTER 1973 (*EXTRACT*)

The level of activity was about normal for a club in the last stages of decadence. Various groups on Saturday approached Blencathra by different routes, many continuing to Skiddaw House and beyond. Reg Squires, Simon Crosse, Sabina and myself opted for a short but interesting day by descending Sharp Edge. Lounging in a sheltered spot besides Scales Tarn, we discussed most of the world's problems and solved none (an irresistible crib from Whillans' ghost writer, whoever he may be). Saturday evening's boozing was most competently carried out and afterwards the bladders of Messrs. Williams, Janes, Burgess and Co. pointed out the error of their ways when I locked them in the bicycle shed where they were domiciled for non-payment of fees and general insubordination.

In conclusion I must agree that the Oread is dying. Panther said it in the Newsletter in August 1955, Radcliffe said it again in 1972, but with a turnout of 49 adults on a winter meet, 160 miles from home, we at least have the consolation of an uncommonly healthy corpse.

*Clive Russell*

This report on a winter meet did not appear until July 1973 — *Editor*.

## LIMESTONE, ETHICS, AND STOPPERS

### DABBLING IN DOVEDALE

### (NEW GUIDE TO LIMESTONE) (*EXTRACT*)

*Newsletter, July 1971*

Already our first line of defence is breached. We have surrendered such fortifications as Campanile Pinnacle, the Col du Turd, Silicon, John Peel, and Simeon. The pristine whiteness of these areas reverberates with shouts and the clink of alien gear. Foreign hands clutch at unworn holds, Moacs bite at sharp-edged cracks, rucksacks cluster together for safety, and equipment lies in bright-hued heaps. We are forced higher and higher into uncharted country in our search for seclusion.

With aching hearts we turn to the areas that are left us – green, mossy walls, slimy cracks, and shattered rock. Were all those other routes once like THIS before we came? We scabble on, seeking to excavate a niche for ourselves; mindlessly, but with an awareness of the others far below, we hack and hew and dig and pray, seeking our own individuality; seeking to carve from the jungle a route worthy to be done by the future generations of ‘Guidos’ – seeking to finish before we are overwhelmed by time and the inexorable pressure from below.

Hanging from a rose bush by one hand, and with a grass sod in the other, spitting out soil dislodged from above and twisting sideways to avoid the limestone block that is about to fall on your knee, you shake your head sadly, and promptly fill your eyes with dirt from your hair. Centipedes scurry across the back of your hand, and a snail drops from nowhere down your neck. “Could do with a helmet if only to keep off the soil, “you think, and then your spirits soar as the rock (which missed your knee) lands with a crash on to the spare coils of your rope far below, breaks into several lethal chunks, and smashes on to your second’s shin-bone! Good job you’d got him tied to that tree – he might have been able to get out of the way otherwise!

*Derek Carnell*

## EDITORIAL (EXTRACT)

*Newsletter, July 1971*

At Stoney Middleton, which has seen more activity than any other limestone crag, most of the routes have become quite safe and old peg routes are now led free, some at quite a reasonable standard. Even so, another problem is the polishing of holds on the most popular routes – Windhover comes to mind as an example. On the other hand certain routes on other crags are becoming positively dangerous with increasing use. The detached flake on the first pitch of Debauchery on High Tor, and a similar feature on the first pitch of Campanile in Dovedale, are both getting very loose. It seems extremely likely that sooner or later there will be a serious accident.

What can be done about this? On the continent, where climbers are far more organised than in this country, many of the pegs on outcrops such as the Ardennes in Belgium or the Vercours in France, are real “stoppers” that have been cemented in place. These would be considered very major crags indeed if situated in this country and the operation of cementing in pegs must be quite an undertaking. Surely it would be quite justifiable for a similar practice to operate on routes such as Debauchery? Perhaps it cuts across the grain of normal British thinking, but with the increasing popularity of such routes a change in attitude in this respect could be timely.

*Chris Radcliffe*

## EDITORIAL (EXTRACT)

*Newsletter, July 1972*

There is (inter alia) another incident in which the Vice-President (who is also a co-author of the guide to Chatsworth Edge) discovered a youth placing a peg by the crux on High Step at Chatsworth. An argument ensued in which Mr. Burgess maintained that a 20' route, albeit a highly technical one, which was originally led without protection (none was available) should not be debased in this way. If the climber was not sufficiently confident to make the move, he should retreat. This argument had no effect on the youth who maintained that as he knew several people who had injured themselves on this route, some form of protection was justifiable. He was clearly the sort of person who was prepared to fall off Cloggy (which is steep enough to keep the rock well out of the way of falling climbers) quite indiscriminately. The gap between their two viewpoints was wide and remained unbridged, but perhaps the final comment lies in the fact that the peg so placed (and left behind) was removed easily by hand! Perhaps to-day’s climbing clubs have a role in bridging this kind of gap and providing some kind of sense about ethics.

The Mountain Schools, Outdoor Pursuits Centres and other 'authorities' who provide 'instant adventure' have a heavy responsibility to bear for introducing people to the hills without weighing in the balance the consequences of doing so. The position is well expressed by Gwen Moffat writing in the Sunday Telegraph recently about the Cambrian Way, the proposed way-marked path between Cardiff and Conway, now under consideration by the Countryside Commission:-

"we inveigh against hydro-electric schemes, mining, widened roads, conifers (all in the national parks), but the people who love the hills, yet travel only on designated paths, are themselves wearing them away. Already parts of the Pennine Way have had to be closed to prevent further erosion by feet – and now there is talk of a Cambrian Way: signposted, way-marked, official...."

*Chris Radcliffe*

## TRICOUNI STRIKES AGAIN BRITISH VARASHAM EXPEDITION 1970

It was during a short walk in the lower British Hills whilst the men of the OREAD were away in the high Alps, that the bizarre nature of the whole adventure set-up became so evident. The wild, excited eyes and open mouths of a devoted climber faced with new and exciting peaks, gives credence to the maxim that:

"The only difference between a goldfish and a climber is that one mucks about in fountains....."

Not that climbers are alone in their peculiarities. Speliologists are undoubtedly worse. Mind you, I wouldn't say that all potholers are perverts, but they do put those rubber things on and stuff themselves down little holes in the ground!

Surely though, it is the expedition more than any other activity of "civilised" man, that destroys the barriers of reason, establishes pseudo-religious fervours, and inevitably makes a Patrick Moore out of the most reticent participant. Throughout modern, and not so modern history, the human animal has rallied with relish to the "call to arms", where service in far distant lands is promised. Perhaps this instinctive need of organised man for battle – for life as a hunter in a hostile environment, encourages the unmistakable flavour of the Colonial Force in expeditions of all sizes and all degrees of formality.....

Pettigrew as Caesar of Rome.....

Radcliffe as Gordon of Khartoum.....

Squires as Horrible Hannibal the Heliphantine Hun.....

So it was with the most recent of British expeditions. As members will know, Mr. Janes and Mr. Pretty have just returned from a long absence from the British climbing scene, purportedly from a mid-European state of dubious political motivation. In fact, this news letter is able to reveal the true unexpurgated facts concerning their leadership of a small, but highly organised expedition to the little known mountains of the Varasham in Central Asia. Brilliantly formulated, but unfortunately unsuccessful, its concept, organisation, and untimely demise are well summarised in the first hand account of our Asiatic correspondent, which is reproduced below.....

One day, Handley was sitting in his bath, contemplating his lot and the achievements of the Oread. All of a sudden he jumped up and called to Janes (who was holding his runners at the time) "I've just had a thought", he said.

"Oh yeah?" cooed Janes cautiously.

"Yeah; well you know how we feel about expeditions and things and how pleased we are now that we've conquered the whole world and everything?"

"Here's your runners, Ray".

"Well, what I mean is, we haven't; I mean we've forgotten Varasham – Pretty isn't going to like this you know!"

Word spread, and a couple of days later Pretty was at a first division drinking match between Oread and Rock and Ice United, when a lad called Hodge, who had heard the news, felt that the time was right to break it to Pretty (OREAD were 3 pints up at half time and an orgy was scheduled for after the match).

"Er, H old pal, er, you know this expedition business and all that, and how we've done the world over?"

"Yeah", said Pretty, picking up another peanut.

"Well, we haven't actually, we've forgotten somewhere!"

"Where, for Chucks sake?", cried Pretty, sitting up and spitting nuts at Colledge over the bar.

"Varasham", said Hodge, looking uncomfortable.

Far from being angry, Pretty was delighted, so that was that. Pretty was soon on his way to Varasham at the head of his good old army. Europe was nice, and although they had a bit of trouble with the Deutsche Bundespost over food parcels, the trip went fairly smoothly. When they reached Varasham, not unexpectedly they had a few stiff passes to climb, and not unexpectedly one or two natives to coerce, but within a very short time the area was fully Anglicised and Pretty was marching up and down the country looking for hills to climb.

Anyway, to cut a long story short; one day our lad was marching along at the head of his army on his way to visit a "daughter" of his in Vodrograd, when he happened to glance up at a hill he'd been thinking of bashing up for some time, and there, standing on top, as large as life – blow me down if there wasn't a Mercury Man, complete with bicycle clips and Ramblers Club card. The Mercury Man coughed, and shifted from one foot to another. Now a bit further down the line, it suddenly occurred to Under-Bergsteiger Thomas Green that they hadn't actually climbed that hill, and that the Mercury Man was obviously determined to defend it at all cost. He passed this information on to Ober-Bergsteiger Burns, who was picking his nails with his ice axe at the time. Burns passed it on to Janes, and Janes told Pretty, who was very angry at the cheek of the chap, and yelled "Oi, what do you want on our 'ill?"

The Mercury Man cleared his throat and yelled back "One OREAD, one MERCURY and a wet slab!"

Now Pretty allowed himself a chuckle, and called up one of his best wet rock men to knock-off up the hill and "sort that bloody cyclist out!"

Scottie smiled to himself as he sauntered up the hill and over the brow. Pretty lit his pipe and confidently awaited the return of our hero. To his surprise, however, it was Scottie's tissue in bits and pieces that came back, rolling down the hill and coming to rest at his feet. When Pretty looked up, there was the Mercury Man, as fresh as a daisy.

One MERCURY, Ten OREADS, Pegs at ten paces", he shouted down.

Well, Pretty was astounded. "You cheeky billiard player", he shouted back, and immediately despatched ten of his best peggers up the hill. The fight lasted about fifteen minutes. All that Pretty could do was listen to the furious sounds of battle from above. To his utter amazement one by one, the burps and clogs of his lads came rolling down the hill followed by their battered helmets. After a while the noise ceased and the Mercury Man reappeared over the brow of the hill, his peg hammer bent and his helmet all dented. He was definitely still in one piece as he called down to the speechless Pretty –

“One MERCURY, a hundred OREADS, Ice Axes and Ice daggers at arms length.”

Well, night was drawing on, so the OREAD made camp. Pretty had long since forgotten all about his “daughter” up the valley.

“I’ll be a laughing stock”, he thought. “I’ll never be able to look the committee in the face again!” He went right off his food, even refusing a plateful from Wendy A. who was serving the blokes that night, though she was supposed to be in Switzerland.

Come first light, there was the Mercury Man standing patiently, axe in hand, waiting for the hundred OREADS. When Pretty ordered Janes’ mob up the hill, he got very little response. Most of them pretended to talk amongst themselves or look in the other direction and fiddle with their crampons. At last after a bit of backside kicking by Pretty, they all shuffled up the hill, each one doing his best to keep at the back of the line. The battle that eventually took place was horrible to hear. The carnage lasted all morning, while Pretty stood at the bottom of the hill with his hand over his ears. One by one, axes, daggers and such-like came rolling down the hill, followed by battered OREADS.

A sobbing Pretty counted them; “Ninety seven – Oh no! 98, I can’t believe it, 99, it’s all over.”……. But wait, – a ray of hope?” Pretty looked anxiously up the hill. Only ninety-nine. Dare he hope – could it be? At that moment, a bleeding Janes appeared at the top of the hill, staggered a little, and groggily made his way down to Pretty clutching the shaft of an axe, that all too evidently to our ‘Arry went straight through him.

“Harry, Harry,” he groaned, pulling up his Y-fronts with his free hand.

“What is it man, what is it?” screamed Pretty (who was pretty much in a state by now), as the unfortunate man sank to his knees before his beloved leader.

“Harry,- Harry mate-, It’s a trap, there’s two of the bastards!”

The Mercury R.C. or “the Murk”: The Derby cycling club of distinguished lineage (60 years old in 1996) which, together with the Nomads and Valkyrie M.C. gave many Oreads their first taste of adventure in the Great Outdoors. This rich mix of cyclists (national and Olympic record holders), senior walkers, bog trotters, mountaineers, and rock climbing tigers established Derby as a centre of excellence for many years. The Derby Ski Club, and events such as the Dovedale Dash, all started from this alliance of youthful enthusiasm and, although some have sadly departed (Eric Thompson, Nat Allen), others such as Janes, Burgess, Handley, Welbourn, Weston, Hank-Harrison, Oakden, Godlington, etc. are still with us — *Editor*.

## ALPINE AFFAIRS 1970-1980

### CHAMONIX ROUTES 1970

Mont Blanc – via Gouter Hut

J. Ashcroft  
J. Dench  
D. Reeves

L. Burns  
R. Sawyers  
D. Williams

Mont Blanc – Old Brenva

Peter Scott  
Ray Colledge

Chris Radcliffe  
Dennis Davies

Aig. du Midi – Frendo Spur

Peter Scott

Chris Radcliffe



Aig du Chardonnet – Forbes Arête	Trevor Bridges Howard Johnson Ron Chambers Peter Scott Don Cowen	Mervyn Sarsons Geoff Hayes Andy Oakden Chris Radcliffe
Traverse of Les Dorées	Trevor Bridges	Mervyn Sarsons
Aiguille de L'M – NNE ridge	Trevor Bridges	(+friend's wife)
Les Courtes – traverse	Geoff Hayes	Howard Johnson
Tour Noir – W-ridge	Ron Chambers	Andy Oakden
Aig. de Tour	Don Cowen Paul Bingham Lol Burns	Dick Saw Digger Williams Jack Ashcroft

## DAUPHINÉ 1970 (*EXTRACT*)

An 'odds and sods' team, comprising Oread, Rock & Ice and Summit members, spent a pleasant holiday in the Dauphiné this summer. We camped near Briançon, a historic walled city of Vauber fame, at a delightful 4 star camp site. From our base we had relatively easy access to the Ailefroide and La Grave areas, with delightful open air swimming pools, numerous bars and clubs popular with Tinsel's jet set.

Routes climbed:

S. Face Pavé	D. Burgess S. Smith	T. Lewis Nat Allen
Trav. Salaoize	S. Smith T. Lewis R. Handley	Nat Allen D.Burgess
Agneux	D. Burgess S. Smith P. Brown	R. Handley Nat Allen 'Tabs' Tallbot
Pelvoux	D. Carnell	L. Peel
Ailefroide	M. Talbot	P. Brown

Compiled by D. Burgess.

## MONT BLANC TRADITIONAL 1970 (*EXTRACT*)

### *DIGGER WILLIAMS*

To commemorate the virgin ascent made in those stalwart days of 1786 by Jacques Balmat, it was considered fitting that the Oread, albeit some of the venerable members together with some young blood, should try to capture a little of that past glory by repeating the venture.

The ring leader for an abortive start was Ashcroft ably supported by that old codger Burns. We set off for the Tête Rousse Hut 3hrs. guide book time away. The weather was holding despite some thundery cloud and it was good to be alive.

After the usual wrangles about where the route went (sic.) – my instinct pointed the way and we set off at a cracking pace of 1 mph. The snow was softish but we arrived at the hut around 2 pm. and promptly ordered soup for the six of us. This simple culinary request sparked off a little dispute between Burns and myself, the gist centring on quality not quantity and the rights of the individual to have the soup the way he wants it. The altitude was beginning to tell.

The route to the Gouter Hut lay across a snow basin which crosses a small couloir which is prone to stonefall, especially at this time of day. We met no real difficulty but from all accounts a sharp look out is necessary; we learned later that a fatality had occurred that same day.

We arrived around 4.30. pm, in various degrees of “knackeredness”.

Ashcroft was interested in a female of about fifty, well preserved, but accompanied by a tough looking character. The rest of us were admiring the two young au pair girls, particularly attractive in their knee-length tight breeches. We experienced no more trouble with Burns.

The dreaded hour soon arrived and by two-thirty a.m. the place was like the black hole of Calcutta. The whole hut was seething with bodies all intent on filling any blank floor space and it was every man for himself. From this chaos we emerged like Neolithic throwbacks and set off in exemplary fashion, some with crampons, and some without.

The route was straight forward with no crevasses and we soon topped the Dome du Gouter.

Ashcroft now took the lead as I was slowing down, almost into reverse. Roy Sawyer was surprisingly fit, almost running for the top.

A very fine ridge led up to the summit providing a magnificent situation along the narrow crest for the last 30' or so. By 7.00 a.m., six of us had made it and, although only by the facile ordinary route, felt a great inner satisfaction and joy at being there.

## GROSSHORN NORTH FACE 1970 (*EXTRACT*)

### *RAY COLLEDGE*

Next day being August 1st and Swiss National Day, we were reluctant to leave the valley. However, the weather, though very doubtful all day, was not bad enough for an excuse and so off we went to the Schmardri hut.

The hut is one of the best I have seen, and far from the madding crowd. Here at least, I thought, no other OREAD member had penetrated: until we saw the hut book.

D. Carnell, N. Allen and others had slept here, and done the West Ridge of the Breithorn in 1968.

By 2 a.m. when we left the hut, the sky was clear and with head torches made good progress to the foot of the Grosshorn North Face.

The initial slope took us to the first bergschrund which presented the usual difficulty but was crossed at first light. A steep slope of thin soft snow, then ice, went up to the second, somewhat easier bergschrund. The slope above steepened appreciably and consisted of bare hard ice, except for a ribbon of thin soft snow on the ice to take us most of the way to the overhanging rock nose in the centre of the face.

Cramponing together up the thin layer of snow, we ran on to hard bare ice towards the rock overhang. At this point we had a choice. Either the original Welzenbach route to the right of the nose, or the Feuz/Von Allmen direct route to the left, through a belt of icy rocks, with a pitch of V. We chose the Direct route.

From now on it was to be hard bare ice, very difficult to crampon. But the Direct route was preferable if only because it was shorter. In the event we at once found a way through the rocks by an icy gully and perhaps a rock pitch of III, although the gully required step cutting and took time.

Having broken through the rock band we were now on the great ice slope beneath the summit tower and we began to think that we might have cracked it. Another ribbon of snow took us up about a hundred feet, then a length or two of crampon work before the ice became very hard.

The great slope was endless. Behind us the usual dense black clouds obscured the Lauterbrunnen but always the Grosshorn was clear.

At last we arrived at the side of the summit rocks, only to find another three rope lengths of steep hard ice up the side, easing off into snow.

We climbed the snow with head torches to arrive at the summit at 10.40 p.m. The summit was so pointed, and covered with soft snow, that care was needed in the darkness. Once balanced on the point, one carefully turned round, then moved backwards with equal care until able to step down on to the South Ridge ten feet lower. A hundred and thirty feet or so down the South Ridge we found a small rock platform and here we made a comfortable bivouac for the night.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S NOTE: Grosshorn North Face – 21 hours in difficult ice conditions – probably a first British ascent – (if Talbot has done it with Martin Epp, that would be an Anglo/Swiss ascent).

Colledge also climbed the west ridge of the Nesthorn in 7 hours.

## IMPRESSIONS OF A NORTH WALL NOVICE PIZ BADILE (*EXTRACT*)

*PETE SCOTT*

“Yes, we’ve been up, but it’s pretty bad on the Badile.” .....hearts sink; so it’s out of condition; disappointment floods in but quickly changed to apprehension when.....

“We tried it yesterday, but there’s a body up there; we came across it and couldn’t face the thought of going on; retreated from the snow patch; there was a big rescue a week ago, steel cables and everything ...”

At the Sciora Hut a day later the Piz Badile raises it’s huge shield of granite slabs 3,000’, gleaming dully in the morning sun, soon to be cast into shadow for the rest of the day; the snow patch is just discernible; we are very impressed. The day is spent lazing in the sun at the hut, our gaze forever being drawn to the slabs of the Badile. Suddenly our minds are made up; a hurried meal – don’t feel like eating it though – force it down. Food, water, bivy equipment, pegs, krabs, two ropes, torches: all are thrown into one sac; going to be heavy, should have brought two really, still – can’t be helped. The others wish us good luck and we stumble off across the moraine in silence, each with his own thoughts .....

.....across the moraine and up the glacier. The foot of the wall is sheer where we walk under it; could get three Malham Coves in that little lot; not a fracture or natural line anywhere. We move gingerly along the glacier at the foot of the face and come to the yawning bergschrund: Corti’s mate fell down this, better be careful. We don crash helmets and rope up for the crossing of the bergschrund: Exclamation from John .....

“There’s blood on the snow here, and a fragment of bone too.” Bits of tattered equipment lie scattered around the snow. Hell! This place is ‘the absolute berries’, better not turn out like this for us. We kick up the last few feet of hard snow and step across the gap onto rock; that’s better. We wander up the first easy pitches looking for the bivouac spot, instead we find a torn rucksack and a boot, raisins lie scattered on the rock; more jitters; too late to turn back now before it gets dark; where’s this

bivouac spot? A shout from John and I traverse across to find him standing down behind a large flake; perfect spot for two; looks safe enough from stones, can't fall out either. We don duvets and crawl into sacs as the sun sinks in a blaze of colour behind the granite needles of the Bregaglia. Silence .... the body gradually relaxes ..... suddenly we hear them coming; a high pitched whirring heralds the arrival of some big stones; nerves scream and remain taut long after they have gone past, many feet out from the rock; only a trickle of dust and gravel remains. We try to settle down and gradually drift off into a fitful sleep only to be awakened again by a hideous crashing and rumbling .....silence again .....I look at my watch, the luminous dial reads one o'clock; getting cold now; I wish dawn were here. Another three hours of alternate dozing and waking follows.....

.....half past four! Dawn IS here! We scramble stiffly to our feet. A cloudless sky. Well, this is it. Excitement grips the whole body; I shiver violently. Could it be nervous tension as well as the cold? Breakfast is forced down; don't feel like climbing, in fact I feel decidedly rough. Still, who does feel like climbing at this time of the morning?

John leads the first diedre. I haul myself after him with the sac; hard going. I climb clumsily across the slabs; don't feel any good yet. An overhanging groove; my lead, must force myself to lead it, although it's agony at first. But as the blood begins to flow I warm to the climbing and soon arrive at the first Cassin bivouac, feeling better now. Away we go across now sunlit slabs, pitch after pitch; slabs, grooves, diedres, threading out way up the wall. Apprehension gives way to elation, driving us every upwards; like a sunny day in Wales this; then we remember the drop below us and take a bit more care ..... but the driving force is there and we settle down to climbing the great Alpine classic.

The above account appeared in a Newsletter in 1971 but describes an ascent made in or around 1964 and is therefore chronologically misplacéd — *Editor*.

## TRAVERSE OF MONTE ROTONDO – CORSICA (*EXTRACT*)

GORDON GADSBY

*Newsletter, March 1971*

The silence and grandeur of Mountain Corsica is hard to describe but, like the Alps, once seen is never forgotten. We were soon crossing large snow patches, and then up the steepening slabs on the right hand side of the Restonica river. Just before the final steep rocks guarding the plateau where the lake lies, we noticed avalanche debris below us and to our left, (where the usual route would go in summer). This consisted of large and small blocks of ice and also some broken trees.... a sobering sight! The tourist pamphlet to the lake and environs warns walkers not to take the route by the slabs, but after heavy snowfalls or early in the season, it is the most enjoyable route. The lake was still in shadow and was almost completely covered over with snow to a depth of over two feet. On the left, falling ice or rocks from some steep cliffs had broken through the surface snow and a slow thaw was spreading its way across the lake. The view was very impressive. Beyond the lake a wide snow basin curved upwards, flanked by the rock towers of Punta La Porte on the left, and the sweeping snow and ice of Mt. Rotondo on the right. At the head of the coomb was the snow peak of Punta Mozzello, 2,342 metres and behind these peaks the backcloth of sky was the deepest blue I have ever seen.

The French guide books on climbing in Corsica contain accounts of summer routes only, when the peaks are free from snow and ice. Any routes therefore in winter or spring have an aura of real adventure about them. This, coupled with the lack of rescue facilities, and the fact that in two weeks mountaineering we saw not another living soul beyond the tree line, give a certain seriousness to the climbing.

We decided to climb more or less direct up the wide concave couloir and to traverse right on the steep upper section to reach the gendarmes of the South Ridge. The slope was still in shadow as we crammed up, moving together for about a thousand feet. We then made a rising traverse to the right

above some steep rock buttresses. This section, although now in full sunlight, still contained many large patches of bare ice and was very exposed, and it took a good hour and a half of step cutting and belaying to reach the pinnacles. The rock here was excellent granite which provided an enjoyable route along the ridge of mod/diff standard in places and plenty of scrambling over minor summits, until the main rock point, 8,750' was reached.

## OREADS IN THE ALPS – 1971

The Club Meet this year was held in the Zermatt valley from 24th July to 7th August, with about 25 members, friends and children camping at Zermatt and a further 10 camping at Tasch. The weather was generally excellent, although the late snow that had accumulated during a poor June was very much in evidence.

A list of the routes followed:

### PENNINE ALPS

#### *Mischabel Chain*

SPITZE FLUII, 3,260m	Janet Ashcroft, Brian Cooke, Anne Hayes
ALPHUBEL, 4,206m	Jack Ashcroft, Pete Badcot, Gordon, Gadsby, Geoff Hayes Derrick Burgess, Don Cowen
TASCHHORN, 4,490m S.E. Ridge (Mischabelgrat) DOM, 4,545m Traverse by the Domgrat	Derrick Burgess, Don Cowen
NADELGRAT:- (LENSPITZE, 4,294m)	Pete Badcot, Geoff Hayes
NADELHORN, 4,327m STECKNADELHORN, 4,242m HOBERGHORN, 4,219m)	

#### *Monte Rosa-Breithorn Group*

DUFOURS PITZE, 4,634m	Derek Carnell, Les Peel
LYSKAMM, 4,480m (W) North West Spur	Nat Allen, Derrick Burgess, Don Cowen
BREITHORN, 4,165m S.S.W. Flank	Derek Carnell, Dave Guyler, Les Peel

#### *Matterhorn-Dent d'Herens Group*

MATTERHORN, 4,478m N.E. (Hörnli) Ridge	Tony Hutchinson, Frank Yeomans
DENT D'HERENS, 4,171m North Face (Benedetti Bivouac, 3,469m)	Ray Colledge, Dennis Davies Derrick Burgess, Don Cowen

*Zermatt West*

POINT DE ZINAL, 3,791m  
N.E. Ridge Gordon and Margaret Gadsby

OBERGABELHORN, 4,063m  
E.N.E. Ridge  
(over WELLENKUPPE 3,903m) Pete Badcot, Geoff Hayes

ZINALROTHORN, 4,221m  
S.E. Ridge (via Gabel Notch) Jack Ashcroft, Pete Badcot  
Brian Cooke, Geoff Hayes

– Kanzelgrat Variation Ron Chambers, Andy Oakden  
Pete Scott

Doris Andrew, Chris Radcliffe,  
Frank Yeoman

(East Face) Ray Colledge, Denis Davies

TRIFTHORN, 3,728m  
South Ridge Ron Chambers, Andy Oakden

Terry Lowe, Mervyn Sarsen

WEISSHORN, 4,505m  
S.W. Ridge (Schaligrat) Chris Radcliffe, Pete Scott

**BERNESE OBERLAND**

ALETSCHHORN, 4,195m  
S.E. Ridge Ray Colledge, Dennis Davies

EIGER, 3,970m  
Eiger North Face Chris Radcliffe, Pete Scott

**SILVRETTA ALPS**

DREILÄNDERSPITZE, 3,197m Gordon and Margaret Gadsby

SILVRETTAHORN, 3,244m  
South Ridge Colin and Uschi Hobday

OCHSENKOPF, 3,057m Colin and Uschi Hobday

SIGNALHORN, 3,210m  
Traverse S.W./N.E. Ridge Colin and Uschi Hobday

PIZ BUIN, 3,312m  
Wiesbadener Grat Colin and Uschi Hobday

**GERMAN ALPS**

ZUGSPITZE, 2,964m (Klettersteig) Colin and Uschi Hobday

## GRAIAN ALPS

GRAN PARADISO, 4,061m Nat Allen, Don Cowen

LA TRESSENTA, 3,700m Dave Guyler, Les Peel

## MONT BLANC MASSIF

GRAND FLAMBEAU, 3m559m Nat Allen, Dave Guyler, Les Peel

## ARDENNES – FREYR

Nat Allen, Derek Carnell, Ray Colledge, Dave Guyler, Andy Oakden and Les Peel, climbing in various combinations, did 3 routes here on their way back to the U.K. The buvette at the top of the climbs seem to have been the major attraction, but the climbing is good although very polished.

## BREGAGLIA/BERNINA

John Fisher and Len Hatchett are known to have been shambling around the region, but are totally reticent about routes actually climbed.

I have thought to include the above listings since, contrary to contemporary Newsletter Editorials, it provides some evidence of “Club Virility” in the 1970’s — *Editor*.

EIGER NORTH WALL (*EXTRACT*)

*PETER SCOTT*

*Newsletter, December 1971*

The Brittle Ledge was a heap of “tot”. Crampons were removed and as we climbed the Grade V pitch it began to snow. The Traverse of the Gods was a wilderness of black scree covered ledges disappearing over a sickening drop, technically easy but, with virtually no protection, a slip was awful to contemplate. Four ropelengths and we again cramponed – up onto a good bivouac ledge at the foot of the White Spider.

“And there the spider waits”

A few rocks crashed past on their way to the valley, but Chris (Radcliffe) undeterred front pointed out onto the Spider. Soon we were both suspended from its icy back.

This is what we had come for, The White Spider, a grey icy slide surrounded on all sides by wild vertical screens of rock streaming upwards to the sky. The view downwards almost made me giddy, Chris 150’ below and our two friends climbing out from the Traverse of the Gods on the edge of nothing silhouetted against the meadows of Alpighlen. We steadily made progress and after four ropelengths I entered the black and gloomy confines of the Exit Cracks. The others were still down on the ice and Chris dropped a rope to Bernard who was finding the lack of steps a little trying. An ice peg suddenly came out and Bernard with a yell of fright hurtled down the Spider only to be held in a second by Chris. He was lucky that time as he was a full rope-length above Jean-Pierre.

The ascent of the Exit Cracks was relatively uneventful, but what places of climbing history we trod. It would have been pleasant to linger at the bivouac of Rebuffat and Buhl, the epic Quartz Crack, and the Corti Bivouac, but the traditional Eiger storm was brewing. The rock was nearly free of ice and snow but nevertheless the ascent was completed in crampons. After the abseil pitch four steep rope-lengths followed up smooth black wet grooves. Pitons appeared at about hundred foot intervals but further protection was impossible. Water showered down numbing fingers and slowing progress. Just as we exited from the grooves the storm burst. Thunder echoed in the crags and snow whirled into our faces. A wave of snow and rocks from the summit slopes hissed past and rattled down the cracks up which he had just climbed. Four more rope lengths over 'tiles' and gravel and suddenly it was there – the summit ice field, now bathed in evening sunlight, the storm having passed as suddenly as it had arrived. We cramponed up the gleaming slopes and along the ridge to the summit. An icy wind was blowing as evening approached.

The dream had been translated into reality.

## PULMONARY PANTING IN THE PENNINE ALPS (*EXTRACT*)

*D. CARNELL*

*Newsletter, December 1971*

The weather breaks. Parties return from the Matterhorn in a stupendous electric storm, rain like glass rods, hailstones big as marbles. We sit in the campsite – boozing – until it passes (2 days). We fail to get up the Weisshorn when half the party's legs develop punctures. We return, and the social life takes yet another pasting. Dennis Davies, the suave and debonair member of the Karabiner Mountaineering Club, throws himself wholeheartedly into the social whirl and the net covered pool at the Theodule, his dripping moustache more eloquent than his French as the manageress makes off with his clothes. Ray Colledge, getting more dances than peaks this year, has the party in hysterics telling jokes in a high, wine-cracked voice. Pete Scott threatens to take on the whole might of the American hippies before leaving for Grindelwald, but they are finally destroyed and overwhelmed by the little men from the other side of the world – the Japs!

We sit and remember climbing ropes with minds of their own, frozen fingers, and sweating armpits, the snoring German in the next bunk in the hut, the early morning search for the elusive sock. Candles flicker, forming pools of light, their weak rays swallowed up by the dark pine interior of the hut. Tousled heads bent over bowls of steaming liquid, and the pinch of frost in your nostrils as you step outside the hut. The head torch that fails, and the ever-present stars that compensate. The toiling up the darkened slopes, the agony of placing one foot in front of the other, again, and again, and again. The sunrise striking the summits with its attendant warmth. Watch the light spill over into the dark, still, sleeping valleys thousands of feet below, softening the outlines, and promising a glorious day. The exultation of the summit ridge, all the masochistic effort forgotten as Happiness is paramount. ....

## PIC DU MIDI D'OSSAU, PYRENEES 1973 (*EXTRACT*)

*D. CARNELL*

We set off at 5.45 a.m. for the Col de Peyreget and the start of the route. We saw plenty of lizards but nary a bear. We climbed the Peyreget ridge after a false start keeping pace with a French party on the adjoining Flamme de Pierre arete. Grade II, with pitches of III, both led to the summit of the Petite Pic (9,139'), on perfect granite all the way. The temperature by now was hotting up and, after a quick drink, we descended the slabs on the east side, and abseiled into the Fourche and welcome shade.



Nat led across the Dalle Blanche and round into the chimney. Seen from the other peak, this section had looked steep and unnerving, but proved in fact to be very pleasant climbing, the holds and angle perfect. A succession of short walls, chimneys and grooves led to the summit of the Grand Pic. A large fat man in sagging vest grabbed me by the hand as I emerged from the final groove onto the summit, helped me belay, kissed four pretty girl walkers who arrived with their escorts, and burst into song. When Nat arrived on the summit there was a full scale choir going, the quality of which deteriorated as the cognac flowed.

## GETTING THERE . . . “UMLEITUNG”

*COON TRIKEY*

*Newsletter, July 1973*

Oreads going to the Zillertal this year may, in Germany or Austria, encounter the sign “Umleitung”. This is not a direction to the home of Chinese girl of easy virtue but a device to prevent motorists from entering their cities. My first experience of this Teutonic trap resulted in a whole series of misfortunes.

Entering Augsburg a large yellow sign pointed left. “Umleitung” it said. Turning into a side street, we found another sign, smaller and less obvious; “Left” into an even more “side street”. Another sign; straight ahead took us into what appeared to be a cross between a Wimpey building site and a terminal moraine. No more signs. Leaving by the only exit possible to a wheeled vehicle we found ourselves on the eastbound carriageway of the Stuttgart-Munich Autobahn and had to do a total of 58 km. to return. Re-entering Augsburg; there it was again “Umleitung”, turn left. Not willing to do that sodding lot again, we went straight on: an unwise decision as it was a one-way-street and we were reversing it. After staring into the accusing headlamps of a large Benz bus, we hurriedly backed out, nearly maladjusting the o/s front wing of an opulent black Mercedes.

The driver, a miserable looking b..... in rimless glasses, came to give us the benefit of his comments. However justifiable, they were not welcome. Our “love thy neighbour” spirit was a bit tattered at the edges, but our best collection of Anglo-Saxon four letter words was wasted as he understood not. Then he was reinforced by his Frau – a granite faced bitch of great superiority. She didn’t address us personally, but whatever she said was relayed verbatim through Herr. From his obsequious manner he was obviously afraid of the old bat and expected us to wither in consequence. But he retired defeated to his car, where he and the Queen stared at us through the windscreen like two frustrated hens.

Then the law arrived, highly polished, both doors opening simultaneously in true official style. Now was the time to try the Falkner technique. However multilingual these characters may be it does not include Welsh – the fact that you yourself can’t speak it either is immaterial, so long as you think of some good Welsh place names like Penrhyndeudraeth or Llechwedd Byniau Defaid.

They stood back a bit, decided on the evidence of our GB plate that we were English, and with great deliberation said, “DRI-VING LI-CENCE”. But this, when produced, was of little help as it was a W.D. licence and with great economy bore the legend “31 BVD WST COMD – return if found to MOD”. Then the old saw took a hand, and after perusing at some length a “Book of Useful Phrases” made us understand that Herr Complainant was a member of the Deutsche Automobile Touring Club and, in consequence, of some importance. This we countered with an R.A.C. membership card (expired). Then they said in Deutsch equivalent, “P-ss off while you are still free”, and, discretion still being the better part of valour, we went back on the Autobahn. But this time we went to Ulm instead.

The writer is now more experienced, and mature, and does not admit to mistakes, so he prefers to remain anonymous.



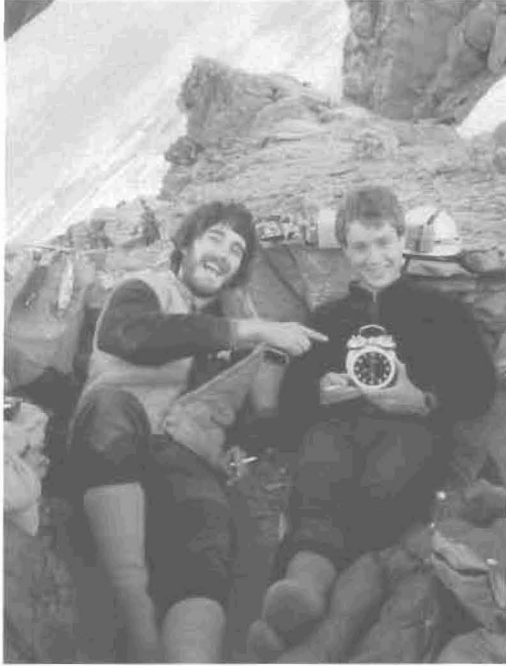
Monte Disgrazia, G. Gadsby on N.W. Ridge.  
*Photo: K. Bryan.*



Mont Blanc, 1970. D. Williams and Lawrie Burns.  
*Photo: J. Ashcroft.*



Morterasch Glacier, Bemina and Bianco Grat – Janet Ashcroft. *Photo: Jack Ashcroft.*



R. Sedgwick and P. Addison, bivvy at Hörnli (North Face of the Matterhorn). *Photo: R. Sedgwick.*

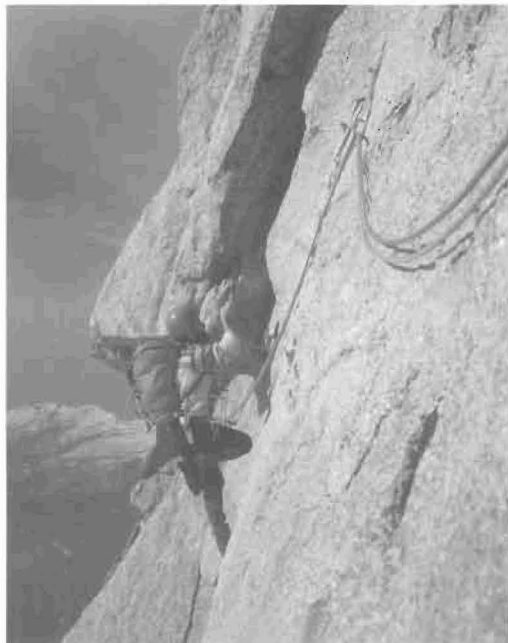
C. Radcliffe, bivvy on Croz Spur. *Photo: P. Holden.*



R. Handley on P. Scerscen ice nose. *Photo: D. Burgess.*



Peter Holden on Mt. Blanc. Grand Pilier d'Angle, East Face (Bonatti-Gobbi Route, Eckpfeiler Buttress). Traverse from top of Chinmeys, 1974.  
*Photo: Chris Radcliffe.*



Peter Holden on Central Pillar, Mt. Blanc. Fréney Face. Climbing the Chandelle, The Crux, 1973.  
*Photo: Chris Radcliffe.*



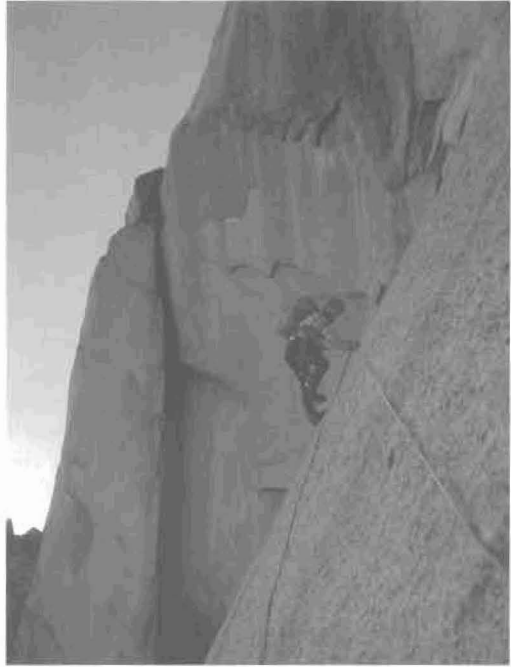
Croz Spur, Grandes Jorasses, Peter Holden climbing.  
*Photo: Chris Radcliffe.*



Croz Spur, Grandes Jorasses, Peter Holden climbing.  
*Photo: Chris Radcliffe.*



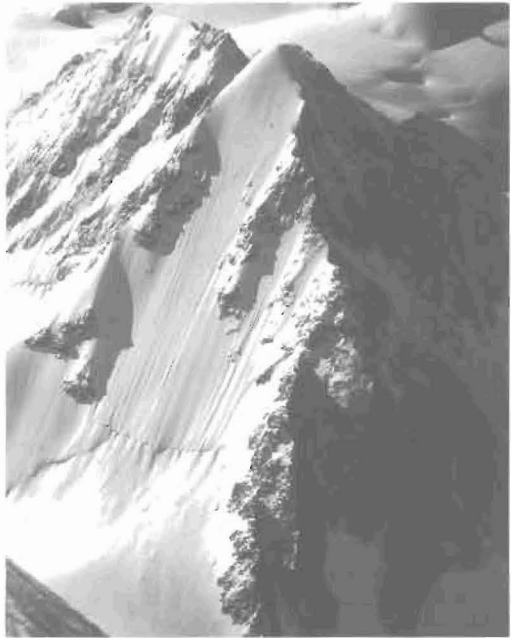
Paul Addison, Frendo Spur, Aiguille de Midi, 1978.  
*Photo: R. Sedgwick.*



Aiguille Dru, West Face. Peter Holden climbing.  
American direct route – rock profiled is "Niche" on  
North Face. 1974. *Photo: Chris Radcliffe.*



Paul Addison above the first icefield, North Face of  
the Matterhorn, 1979. *Photo: R. Sedgwick.*



Petit Mont Collon, North Face. (C. Bryan and J. Hudson  
just visible near top of face). *Photo: G. Gadsby.*

## IGNEOUS FEZOFF DOES IT AGAIN (*EXTRACT*)

J. LINNEY

*Newsletter, Winter 1977*

Phew! It's warm! I'm not going very well, my sack feels heavy and I must tighten my right boot next stop – next stop? At last we move into the shade of the Trift Forest. Cooler now, we march onwards and ever upwards. All too soon we move back into the open and the oppressive heat. Houses appear ahead. "Trift hamlet" I declare. The sound of running water greets us and we stop. "No! Mustn't stop, got to keep moving!" Igneous cries. The rest of us ignore him, after all he is a prat at times. He again preaches the Gospel, looking at his watch and muttering something about guide book time. No one is listening, we are all too busy drinking the cool refreshing water. The inevitable happens of course. We are all ready to move off just as he decides to have a drink. Soon we settle back into the monotony of walking, minds wandering aimlessly, moving one foot in front of the other

Not as many zigzags as I thought. Wonder what Marge is doing now? Then a certain doubt starts to creep in. This is too easy. Wish bloody Beverley wouldn't dash off in front. I check the map with Igneous. Puzzled we continue on. Bloody hell! What are those people doing there? Through the trees can be seen several cars parked and people picnicking. A sign post confirms my suspicions. We are lost! "Didn't think we were right. Not enough zigzags". "I thought that" said Igneous, looking at his watch. We retrace our steps quickly, embarrassed by the stares and obvious comments made by the people we had so professionally passed earlier. We seek refuge and find somewhere quiet to read the map.

## SENTINELLE ROUGE (*EXTRACT*)

CHRIS WILSON

*Journal 1978*

Midnight, and first to leave the hut. At Col Moore the confusion of old footsteps ensures a false line and enforced retreat, but soon the long exposed traverse to the Sentinelle's rock commences. No obvious line to follow either. Simply cross a couloir, heart in mouth, go to the next arête and repeat the process, fighting terror all the time. Usually the 'line' goes up and across, sometimes down, and always snow or ice. Snow covers everything, making identification difficult.

"Is this the Red Sentinelle?"

"No, because this isn't the Great Couloir".

Up and across, nothing difficult, and body now almost enjoying its unroped freedom. At last the Sentinelle Rouge and the start of the long diagonal traverse, hugging Mummy's Rib, pretending to be shielded from avalanche. Up and up and then across the subsidiary couloir. It's a long way. Shapes loom up from lofty heights above. On towards the couloir's centre.

sh.....sh.....sh.....shush.

The sound was almost imperceptible. A slow timeless river, un-ending. Gentle rivulets flowing slowly and smoothly down, down, down into the narrow beam of torchlight. There a change occurred. Individual particules madly cascaded down, bumped into one another, and accelerated one another. bomber cars bent on destruction. Just like a river in full spate.

A brief hesitation. long enough to grasp that anything larger than these grains of snow might also follow the same course. And then again long enough to realise that this might not be a pleasant viewpoint. Merely time to regain lost rhythm – hammer in, crampon in, right crampon in, axe in – only now with increased tempo. Later, a slight lessening of tension as body and mind emerge unscathed from the tumult. But the rib is still far off; adjust course for the snow arête at its base, trying not to look up at the menacing shapes far above. On the arête aching lungs and weariness catch up, as does slightly harder climbing, so it's on with the rope and up again. But at last safety has been reached, and none too soon as the early morning sun wakes a previously sleepy face.

The ground changes to snow-covered rock, not hard, just 'interesting', and the sweet curves of snow on the right look more appealing.

Long pitches follow one another until the Rib lies below. Meanwhile the sun, despite the wind, is getting warmer, and all the while throats are becoming drier. A water bottle would have been appreciated on this route, especially as no ledges are forthcoming on which to brew up. A respite from the wind, gaining strength with every metre in height, would also be appreciated. The 'difficult rock chimney' mentioned in the guide and leading to the upper slopes, is enclosed in an ice wall and this calls for more skill than the usual run of the mill 'advanced snow plod'.

"Scottish Grade 4?" enquires a croak from above.

"Tight", being the standard reply in such situations, is croaked back.

Above, the wind increases, inducing a strong desire to be done with the route. But on it goes, through the windslab, ever upwards. As Route Major recedes below the climbing and angle ease until it becomes time to unrope, and struggle up the last few feet to the top.

There, in the screaming, numbing wind, a thought gets through – "Still nearly 3 weeks to go, and we've got one off the list already!"

## PETTIT DRU, NORTH FACE (*EXTRACT*)

ROBIN SEDGWICK

*Journal 1978*

We say farewell as the Scots move off right, en route for the hole leading through the Bonatti Pillar to the descent route on the S.E. ridge. Paul and I continue, up and left, drawn by the glinting lodestone of the Summit Madonna, now visible in the afternoon sunlight, seemingly beckoning from above the final ramparts of the face. A straightforward snow and mixed gully leads me inexorably upwards to the base of an appalling-looking squeeze chimney, walls glistening with verglas, back crammed with rotten ice. I clip into an in-situ ring peg on a long belay and bring Paul up. It's 4 in the afternoon and the sunshine has deteriorated into thick, cold, all-enveloping grey cloud. Forcing tactics are the order of the day. Paul takes both Terrorclaxys, the etriers, and most of the hardware, and moves up 20 feet to the base of the chimney where a peg provides welcome protection.

"Leave your sac on the peg, I'll bring it up".

He acknowledges, removes his sac and clips it in. Moving up, he realises the rope is tangled round the sac, so reaches down and unclips it again.

The next half second runs through with the clarity of slow motion as Paul's crampon points shear out of the ice and, oh so slowly for the senses, but much too fast for any action save reflex, he's off and down. We both yo-yo to a stop on the ropes; he 15 feet below the peg, still holding his rucsac, me swinging on the belay rope in the middle of the gully, pulled off the stance. We clamber back to our previous positions. Paul clips his sac into the peg and tiptoes on up, terrors biting rotten ice, crampons grating on ice-glazed granite. An aid-nut, a struggle, into a sling, another nut, and finally a pull out from the icy slit into a gully and easier ground. I bounce up on jumars, towing a sac, impressed with the lead as I swing into the chimney to clear the pitch. As I crampon off into the mist on what we both hope will be the last lead, Paul's voice floats up behind me;

"Shout Geronimo if you get to the top."

Ten minutes later, he emerges into view to find me sitting smugly on a square-cut block, topped by a small gold-coloured Madonna:

"What was the name of that Indian, Paul?"

## ASHES TO ASHES

DUSTIN KRAPPMAN

*Newsletter, April 1975*

Since 'our mans' last visit to that most celebrated of mountains, the Matterhorn, certain facts have come to light. It appears, on talking to an official from the Ministry of Tourism in Basle, that he has set them a bit of a problem causing much confusion as well as some considerable cost. It all revolves around his last ascent of the Hornli ridge. So much congestion was caused by his habitual and selfish 45 minute stint that something just had to be done. Consequently, the ministry have poured thousands of francs into a rare convenience – a fully functional gas-powered lavatory which converts human waste into dust. It is situated just below the fixed ropes above the shoulder. As most of you know (either by actual ascent or by guide book) there are seven in number, therefore, the Loo has been situated at the side of the rope that is popular with the Americans (he never has liked them since the day they entered themselves into the last war).

Recent statistics show that on a good day some 150 climbers attempt the peak so you can imagine the problems, the hold-ups 'our man' causes on that knife-edge ridge. So after many months of research and development they came up with the gas-powered loo. A trial run was made in the latter part of the '74 season but the loo was not an unqualified success due to a temperamental burner setting, a rarefied atmosphere, and failure to supply operating instructions in several languages.

An official explained "as soon as you have finished you put down the seat lid and the contents start burning – there's an electric battery, a cylinder of compressed gas and a 7 foot chimney. We are using this type of loo every day in the valley, and have done for many years but since your man's last visit to the mountain the ministry had to do something". He went on: "It took the International Environment Corps seven weeks to get it up there and a further two weeks to get it going". He looked at me with a pained face – "We've heard he's coming back this year, can't you suggest that he goes to another area".

"I'll see what I can do", was my reply, "But he has this thing to prove, something to do with the older generation and all that".

The official mopped his brow and then raised his head and looked up at the mountain. "Then there's the telephone", he said. "What telephone?", said I, enquiringly. "What's this about a telephone?"

"Well, a couple of years ago a violent storm hit the ridge and blew away his pigeon loft (used for world-wide communication), It was situated just behind the Solvay Hut, pigeons were scattered everywhere – in all directions. It was a disastrous affair. Well, your man came along and insisted that we make amends or offer an alternative system of some kind. He kept on shouting, "Do you know who I am?" and started mentioning names like Herr Petigashen and Frau Welbunz. Are they politicians in your country?" he asked.

"No" I said, "but they can be just as amusing".

From the last report, instructions in seven languages have been fitted to the loo (under the seat) and may be used by all, but the telephone is for the use of "our man" only, unless someone returns the last breeding pair which were last seen in the bar at the Lady Bower Inn.

Todhunter is ever with us ... but I am pleased, if only for the record, that he mentioned the last known evidence of the celebrated R.H. Pigeon Post Communication System. I was privileged to be present when that exhausted bird fluttered in through the window of the Lady Bower Inn bringing confirmation of yet another coup (or coop) — *Editor*.



MONTE DELLA DISGRAZIA 1975 (*EXTRACT*)

GORDON GADSBY

We set off at a steady pace on a good undulating track past the old stone cottages of the Preda Rossa Hamlet (long since deserted but still in good condition). Our destination was the Cesare Ponti Hütte situated above the lateral moraine of the Rossa glacier at an altitude of 2,559 metres. On our right from the track, above the forest, we would see a spectacular ridge of red granite leading up to the summit of Corni Bruciati (3,114m), whilst on the left rose the equally impressive ridge of the Punta Della Averta (2,853m). Ahead of us the track climbed steeply alongside a series of delightful waterfalls, stunted pine trees and masses of azalea with butterflies in such abundance that we had to watch where we trod.

Thirty-five minutes later the ground levelled off to another idyllic valley with a small tarn. Soon we passed the last of the trees as the track turned sharply to the left and ascended a steep rock band in a series of zigzags. The hut was hidden from view until the last ten minutes. As we approached, it looked like an outpost from the Alamo, with dirty cement walls offering little contrast with the rock surroundings. We were pleased to step out of the hot sun and into the cool dark interior of the spacious hut – the walk had taken two and a half hours.

“Arrividerci, Grazia, Buona sera” – that was about the limit of our Italian and the three teenagers in charge knew no English. We soon gathered, however, that we were the only overnight visitors in a hut of forty beds, a welcome change from the overcrowded conditions in the Bernina Alps. It was a lovely evening with a delicate pink sky over the shadowy hills of Italian lakeland on the horizon. Across the Rossa glacier snout were the impressive twin summits of the Cima Di Corna Rossa (3,250m) just catching the last rays of the evening sun.

We decided on a three o'clock start. The cold grey light of dawn was slowly easing across the sky as we fitted our crampons on the upper moraine of the Rossa glacier. We had left after a torchlight breakfast in our room.

The first hour had been a stumbling process with no real track across boulders and creaking snowfields. It was real pleasure now to lead off at a steady pace up the long and fairly steep Preda Rossa glacier. A chilling wind was whining across the snow-ice from the North East and the dark morning was bitterly cold. About half an hour later a cry from Stuart “Look behind, Gordon”, stopped me in my tracks and, on turning, I saw the first rays of the morning sun changing the dark tower of the Cima Rossa into a red fiery light. Slowly the light spread along the ridge, dancing from rock to rock; a breathtaking spectacle of nature that never fails to enthral. This was our third sunrise of the holiday and by far the most memorable.

The sky above us was filled with small fast moving clouds, a true herring bone formation, and a sure sign of bad weather on its way. Ken reckoned we had twelve hours, but Disgrazia is noted for attracting bad weather and we were worried.

At five-fifty a.m. we reached the lowest point of the North West ridge at the Sella di Pioda (3,387m) after crossing several large crevasses and a bergschrund without incident. On our left the satellite of Disgrazia, Mount Pioda (3,431m) swept up to the heavens like a missile. On our right the very sharp N.W. ridge of Disgrazia rose up in a series of towers and snow crests into a deep blue sky. The views northwards into the Valley Sissone was all peace and beauty with green meadows and tiny villages dotted on alps thousands of feet below us. In the middle distance was a band of haze and mist with the enormous backcloth of the main Bernina massif rising above.

The snow was in excellent condition as we traversed the base of the first tower and then climbed steeply to the crest of the ridge, a short exposed snow arête followed, then another rock tower taken direct. the rock was very sound and we climbed in crampons. “This is the best route I've done!” shouted Stuart as he followed up the rough red granite. It was certainly a fantastic ridge with spectacular views on both sides.

After an hour we reached the base of the steep curving shoulder of the forepeak. The first thirty feet was a delicate traverse across icy slabs above a sheer drop of three thousand feet, then a direct ascent up very steep snow glazed with ice for about two hundred feet. Eventually the slope eased and we stepped onto the almost level snow summit of the forepeak. Ahead of us the main ridge dropped slightly then was blocked completely by an unusually shaped hunk of granite – The Bronze Horse!

Beyond the block the imposing summit tower, reared to the heavens, so near, but could we get round the Bronze Horse?

I approached the impasse carefully. The guide book said traverse left or right low down, both very exposed. I decided on a direct ascent and surprisingly climbed the impostor without difficulty. Ken and then Stuart followed with comparative ease and at 8.15 a.m. the three of us stood on Monte Della Disgrazia's highest point, at 3,687m.

A few days later Ken, Stuart, Chris Bryan and I were descending from the long snow ridge of Piz Fora. As we emerged from the pine forest in the upper Fex Valley above Sils Maria, we met two German Alpinists who were descending from the rocky peak of Il Chaputchin.

They had a good command of English and we walked down together in the evening sunshine, chatting away about our various mountain adventures and other things. They made an unlikely climbing team, one very slim, the other tall and heavily built, "What jobs do you do in England?" asked the latter, adjusting his spectacles as he spoke. When we told him that we were two decorators and a toolmaker, and that we were camping at St. Moritz with our families, the two men expressed surprise. "We thought only the rich people in England could afford holidays abroad, especially in Switzerland", exclaimed the slim one, whilst his friend nodded in agreement.

Ken closed that conversation by assuring them that workers at home were not the poor relations of Europe, and that climbers in Britain came from all levels of society. Our group for instance has been visiting the Alps since the early sixties. An hour later as we reached the cars at Sils Maria we exchanged good wishes for the future. Just before getting into their car, the slim man turned to us and said, "My friend, Helmut, will soon become an important man in German politics; remember the name – Kohl. Helmut Kohl.

Also taking part; Stuart Bramwell, Ken Bryan, Chris Bryan — *Editor*.

## TRICOUNI REVEALS THE GREAT GARDINER GUNGEY

It was during a walk in the lower British hills that the chance sighting of one of those large blue fertiliser bags that you see here and there in the great out-doors, caused my companion to reveal to me an episode and resulting saga, which has lain carefully concealed in the minds of a chosen few OREADS for many years ..... the saga of the Great Gardiner Gungey.

It started in Scotland, just ten years ago,  
and by chance to an OREAD man,  
when Paul, who'd been ill  
was out on the hill  
with his wife and a new lad named Sam.

Being strong walkers; in those days quite hard,  
they were soon quite high on the Ben,  
with no-one aware  
of the secret they'd share,  
or the thing that they'd bring down again.

The phenomenon known as the Great Gardiner Gungey  
was discovered by innocent Paul  
as he stopped for a pee,  
at the top of a scree,  
in the lea of a tall dry-stone wall.

In the clear mountain air it shimmered and shone,  
as it drifted down into his sight;  
like a sack filled with gas,  
a candle of glass,  
or a coral pink rubber clad kite.

It fluttered to earth, not making a sound;  
one end of it right at his feet,  
while the other came down  
all bulbous and round,  
at a distance of twenty-three feet.

Now Paul is a miser as everyone knows,  
and just can't resist a few bob,  
and the sight of this thing,  
and the cash it could bring,  
seemed rather like Manna from God.

So quick as a flash, when he'd finished his slash,  
he set about rolling it up,  
It was into his sack, and onto his back,  
'fore anyone knew what was up.

They stopped for a breather at three thousand feet  
when Sam took a fancy to food,  
and before Paul could stop him he'd found it; eyes popping,  
at the sight of a Gungey so huge.

Sam wasn't convinced by the tale that Paul told  
of how it came down on the fell,  
and he said so that night  
in the pub, when quite tight,  
though he swore that he never would tell.

The thing was produced for all there to see,  
the men thought it funny and lewd,  
while the female reaction  
was one of contraction  
at the sight of a Gungey so huge!

The trouble then started for innocent Paul,  
now the fame if this Thing was unfurled,  
and plots they were made,  
and schemes they were laid,  
in the night by the women and girls.

Paul woke with a jerk at a quarter to two,  
and could see as they parted the flap,  
the two hungry women  
intent on their sinning,  
disturbing his nocturnal nap.

He leaped from his bag like the star of a 'drag'  
thinking thoughts that were carnal and rude,  
but the look in their eyes,  
and their languishing sighs  
were too much, and soon changed his mood.

The women advanced on innocent Paul,  
who retreated as far as he could,  
not sure if relieved  
or thoroughly peeved,  
that Betty had slept at the pub.

Now Paul is no chicken as everyone knows,  
but the two rampant nymphs were too much!  
He fled past the pair,  
though indecently bare,  
to escape from their ravishing clutch.

The glen was alive with a feminine hoard,  
some were just curious to see,  
while others desired  
to be fully en-sired,  
and were willing to pay a stud fee.

All night Paul was running from pillar to post  
pursued by the petticoat hounds,  
till at last he fell spent  
at the door of his tent,  
on his face, on the warm summer's ground.

The women encircled; a quivering mass,  
each one of them dying to view  
what filled out the Gungey,  
which made them so hungry,  
for posture three hundred and two!

Paul was rolled over: the women all gasped,  
the colossus they'd hoped for was missing.  
He was quite well endowed,  
with a right to be proud  
But not at all what they'd really been wishing.

In deep consternation the women searched round  
for the Gungey that started the trouble.  
They found it at last,  
with this label stuck fast  
to the base of that wondrous bubble...

"Will the finder return to the address below  
post-paid by ourselves on receipt.  
To N.A.S.A.,  
Department D.K.  
Houston, Texas, East 43rd Street."

*Post Script:*

Letter to the Editor, Newsletter, November 1971

Dear Sir,

Reference to the Gungey; it is time the truth is revealed.

In fact it was a large bag of wind which I subsequently sold to Tricouni, who is apparently still using it.

P. W. Gardiner

## MID SUMMER MUSINGS (*EXTRACTS*)

### TRICOUNI

*Newsletter, July 1972*

It would seem then, that a truly Freudian urge could well be the binding factor which draws the mountaineer from so many walks of life. As yet, however it is undefined; equally identifiable as a homo, or heterosexual drive. Consider though that, in general, climbing is accomplished by pairs or teams of the male gender. This in itself suggests interesting relationships; relationships which have been so eloquently summarised by our old friend Raymond Colledge, who despite all our efforts, must again be quoted by 'Tricouni', but in this instance however, I assure you, only because of his profound knowledge of Latin!

"Nec vidisse semel satis est:  
juvat usque morari, et conferre gardum,  
et veniondy discere causas!"

("Nor is it enough to have seen him once; it is a pleasure ever to linger by him, and to come to close quarters with him, and to learn the causes of him coming".)

*Swallows Nest 1969*

It is further recorded that once upon a time, in ages past, George Reynolds used to climb. His contemporary activities can only be guessed at however, when records reveal that on one occasion he spent two hours and forty-three minutes belaying a totally inadequate gentleman on the first pitch of

Ordinary Route at Brassington. His eventual arrival at the stance was greeted with these most suggestive words of Mr. Samuel Pepys.....

When I at last beheld thee,  
 Mine heart did leap within me,  
 And the bonds about my loins were greatly loosed!"

Of course he could have been dying for a slash!

Such a discourse would not be complete without due regard being given to the state of affairs as it stands between the long, the short, and the tall, namely Rot, Scabcliffe and Phew! Not content in throwing a huff whenever 'she' puts the mockers on a weekend with Rot, old Scab (an affectionate nickname from his horny and thick skinned character!) elected himself giver away, best man, and chief bridesmaid for the May festivities, and threatened to stand as chief objector on the grounds of breach of promise made in the exit cracks (where else might I ask). In view of this, how else could one conclude, but to quote the lyrical free adaptation of Wordsworth's "Lines above Tintern Abbey" which were discovered watered into the snows of the Second Icefield....

"The tall rock, the mountain, and the deep and gloomy Scottie,  
 Their colours and their forms were then to me an appetite, a feeling, and a bottie."

## FOR SALE

Shortly after the successful ascent of the Eigerwand by Radcliffe and Scott in 1971 the following advertisement appeared.

### B.B. 'EVEREST' RUCKSACK

This is a large frame sack in excellent condition. Large zipped front pockets; two large side pockets; features include quick release buckle for easy lifting, chrome leather straps throughout.

A first-rate buy: £3.00

### McINNES-MASSEY ICE AXE (24")

The hinduminium alloy shaft makes this the strongest axe in the world, Forged head; polythene sleeve covering shaft. Excellent condition.

A fantastic bargain: £3.00

### STUBAI 'ASCHENBRENNER' ICE AXE (85cms)

A conventional axe, although it has a curved adze. Cost new £6.00

Ideal for winter hill walking: £2.00

### STUBAI NORTH WALL HAMMER (50cms)

Proved on many north walls, but equally useful to include in your sack, just in case. Cost new £5.95

Great Value £1.25

### FISHER'S WATERPROOFS (No connection with "Parsimonious John")

Cagoule and overtrousers of the oiled fabric type. Needs re-proofing (Fishers provide this service) but plenty of life left.

Can't be bad: 25p

LEATHER OVER MITTS, Good quality buckskin, unused:

25p

LEATHER OVER MITTS, as above, used

15p

1 PAIR GOGGLES (tinted brown)	5p
1 PAIR GOGGLES (tinted yellow)	5p
1 PAIR STOP TOUS	5p
SUPER BLEUET CASE – this holds your gaz stove, 2 spare cartridges and acts as a windshield in use. Little used	50p
MISCELLANEOUS CAMPING ACCESSORIES – including two sandwich boxes; two 2-egg containers; tin opener, a polythene mug and misc. K.F.S.	10p
	Total    £10.65

All available from: Chris Radcliffe,  
21 Avondale Road  
Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

It is alleged that Burgess acquired the job lot for £ 9.50 and, after some judicious asset stripping, made a decent profit. After compensatory payment of bus fares to Nat Allen, Hank Harrison and Derek Carnell (See Infamous Cratcliffe Meet 1972) he was said to have maintained a healthy surplus — *Editor*.

## THE DERBYSHIRE HUT

### HEATHY LEA COTTAGE

After the death of Geoff Hayes in 1971 it was decided that the barn should be brought into use and should stand as a memorial to him. This work was completed during 1972 and the early part of 1973 under the supervision of the Hut Custodian, Ron Chambers. As previously, in the cottage itself, much of the graft was carried out by Nat Allen, Derek Carnell, Fred Allen, Paul Gardiner, and George Reynolds — *Editor*.

## OPENING OF THE GEOFF HAYES BARN

*March 3rd 1973*

This function, the culmination of eighteen months of decision making and effort was marked by the presence of Anne, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Hayes, Geoff's sister Barbara, and Mrs. Kall, Anne's mother.

Five minutes before the opening a steady drizzle began much to the annoyance of those present and the photographers amongst them in particular.

The simple plaque was unveiled by Anne, who then, having said a few words, opened the Barn door officially and everyone managed to squeeze inside for shelter and to hear a speech of appreciation from Mr. Hayes.

The final working party had put the Barn in splendid order, the newly lined roof making a vast improvement and everything appeared clean and shining; a fine tribute to the man commemorated and a credit to the Heathy Lea Warden, Ron Chambers, his sub-committee, and all who have turned a hand to the numerous jobs.

Mr. Hayes generously donated the new gas heater which gives heat at the turn of a tap; better than the cottage where one has to chop the wood and forage for "kindling"!!

Tea and biscuits were dispensed efficiently by a team of Oread ladies, principally Margaret Johnson, Tinsel, Kath Chambers and Janet Reynolds. The visitors book was passed round and a count up showed some seventy-five in attendance.

*P. W. Gardiner*

As the Oread were opening the Geoff Hayes Barn, there was a death in Edale and Nat Allen (President) contributed an Appreciation to the July Newsletter:

## FRED HEARDMAN 1896-1973

Fred Heardman of the Rucksack Club and living in Edale, died at the age of 77 years at the end of the first quarter of 1973.

Fred, for many years licensee of the Church and Nag's Head hotels in Edale, was a pioneer of many of the now famous Peakland walks, earning himself the nickname of "Fred the Bogtrotter". His marathon walks, often made in the company of such characters as Cecil Dawson, Harold Gerrard and Eustace Thomas, began after the 1914-18 war. In 1922 he invented, and walked, of course, the Three Inns walk, which in modern times has been varied to include four or even five. In 1926 he walked the 73 mile "Colne to Rowsley" in a time well inside 24 hours.

The 1930's saw Fred Heardman on the Rural District Council, fighting a successful and almost lone battle, to stop the building of a giant steelworks in his beloved Edale valley – an act which placed him "in Coventry" with the locals who were strongly in favour of the idea. He was an outstanding worker with the C.P.R.E. and was a mine of information from behind the Bar of the 'Nags' when it became the Peak Park Information Centre.

For the 1952 Rucksack Club's Jubilee, Fred invented the Tan Hill – Cat and Fiddle walk, which five of their members completed. He compiled the booklet Walks Around Edale and in later years became the BMC's Peak Committee man on the spot, rarely missing a trick when the vandals or planners stepped out of line.

For his work he was awarded the O.B.E. The late Alf Bridge would always refer to him when talking of walking, as his "mighty yardstick". Peakland walkers and climbers have indeed lost a champion and friend.

See Eric Byne's Appreciation: Bloody Bill the Bogtrotter, Newsletter, February 1955 — *Editor*.

## SOME OUTDOOR MEETS, U.K., 1974-1990 PEMBROKESHIRE, EASTER 1974 (*EXTRACT*)

*GORDON GADSBY*

I joined some of the children in a walk across the Island (Ramsey) to join up with Hobday at Foel Fawr. Goldsmith and Hobday had rigged up a rope across easy sea cliffs so that the youngsters could be taken down for a closer look at the grey seals. From the bottom it was possible to make an exposed traverse into the cove, with a sloping shelf, then down to a boulder beach and two fine pinnacles.



Hobday, Craddock and Ken Bryan climbed the east face of the further pinnacle – possibly a new route; Lost Arrow. I climbed the easier but more spectacular tower (moderate), belayed by Shirley Goldsmith (later Wainwright), who bears a remarkable resemblance to Thor's Hammer on the Kvanndalstind ridge in Romsdal, Norway.

Perhaps a subordinate phrase is missing here – Thor's Hammer indeed — *Editor*.

## ESKDALE, MAY 1974 (*EXTRACT*)

*DERRICK BURGESS*

"Will you write up the meet? Handley's organising the campsite and we don't really need a leader for a Bank Holiday meet." The President's words came to mind as I stared blankly at the "NO CAMPING" sign on the gate at Brotherkeld farm, our venue ("idyllic" raved Handley) for the weekend. The headlights picked our numerous scraps of paper pinned to the gate; surely someone had left a note, but no word of the Oread, although Fred and Dave (?) were at Wasdale, and half the other clubs in the land seemed to be featured. A hard word from inside the car jolted me back to reality. The image in my mind of Handley stretched on the rack faded and I was faced with finding a campsite – quickly. Like the majority on the meet I drove back down the valley and was very pleased to locate Ray and the rest on the campsite at Spout House, and all worries soon disappeared over hot cups of tea.

## SKYE, WHITSUNTIDE 1976 (*EXTRACT*)

*JOHN DOUGHTY*

That evening heralded the arrival of a few more Oreads and it was decided, yet again, that a walk along the cliffs would be a good idea. this time to go looking for rare wild flowers. After a day's exercise I was feeling a little more human and tried to encourage one or two of them to go with me to Corrie Lagan and, if weather permitted, do a climb. Alas, this was not to be, so our bumptious botanists and yours truly started the search for the elusive orchid. After a while, I became rather bored and decided, as it was a nice day, to soak my feet in a stream and look at the mountains I had travelled 700 miles to climb. When the fancy returned to join the others it wasn't long before I found them sitting in an orderly circle. I assumed they were having their lunch and did not pay much attention to Hodge lying on his stomach with his camera to his eye. I thought this was how he always spent his lunch breaks. The friendly atmosphere soon changed as I strode into the centre of the circle. It's a good job there are no trees around or else I think I would still be hanging there. I had just stepped on the only Skye wild orchid in existence! Anyway, we splinted the poor thing up and left it looking somewhat dejected and bent. After this unfortunate episode, I spent the rest of the day on my own as no one would talk to me. I walked on to the peninsula jutting out into Loch Brittle and soloed one or two routes on the cliffs. The reason I mention this is because on they way off this peninsula I noticed thousands of these rare orchids and you just could not help stepping on the dammed things!

After completion of the Cuillin ridge:

Absolutely finally, I would like to thank W. D. and H. O. Wills for their support because without them I don't think the expedition would have succeeded. If anyone asks how long it took, I tell them about 50 fags long!

'Half a lung, half a lung, half a lung onwards'.

## GLENCOE, JANUARY 1977 (*EXTRACT*)

*ROBIN SEDGWICK*

The moon is already high and still rising. It's light in the west above the cold, grey wastes of Loch Leven and the dying sun highlights scattered innocuous looking black clouds. Puffing and panting settles into a steady rhythm in picking a way up the steep broken slopes to the right of Clachaig Gully. Gaining height quickly, the grass and earth is seen to have a feathery white dusting. Soon the heather is starting to struggle under a white blanket and I'm crunching a satisfying trail in half consolidated snow, moving well and wondering if this is going to be third time lucky. A quick stop to put on crampons and then back to the rhythm of movement, weaving round shadowy rock outcrops and up glimmering snow ramps, trying all the time to keep to the ridges where the wind will have stripped off the recently fallen powder. Occasionally floundering in knee-deep sugar, rhythm broken and gasping, making a bee-line for the nearest rock outcrop. Easy scrambling and snow-slope plodding, sliding past larger outcrops, climbing the smaller ones, until the angle drops back and leads to the plateau below the summit. A little voice in my head appeals for time out and a hastily taken cigarette and handful of nuts gives time to contemplate the weather. The black clouds are still floating across but don't appear to be harbouring any hostility. So it's up and off again, across the top of the sgurr and onto the ridge of Aonach Eagach.

## OYSTER CLOUGH, MARCH 1977 (*EXTRACT*)

*BRIAN WEST*

Habitues of the Bleaklow cabins will know only too well how these nights of adversity arouse the baser human instincts and this night proved no exception. On these meets you soon get to know your place in the Oread hierarchy. Exercising his Presidential prerogative (Beryl averted her eyes), Hobday, resplendent in his apres-ski gear, was soon into the optimum position nearest the fireplace and furthest from the door. The rank and file were left to sink to their respective levels; David Cheshire in the spilt sugar under the table, and myself as reluctant door stop. Incontinent Mike Wren showed his native cunning by trampling everyone but the President whilst rushing to and from the door. This despicable exhibition of blatant boot licking was rewarded by a number two spot under the President's wing. Beryl, of course, was spoilt for choice...

## CEFN GAWR, APRIL 1977 (*EXTRACT*)

*COLIN HOBDAY*

A small hand-picked group of Oreads decided to make the pilgrimage to Cefn Gawr on Migneint on Friday, April 22nd 1977 to relive some of the delights first introduced to the Oread by Harry Pretty way back in 1965. The group consisted of myself "leader", Chris Bryan, apprenticed to John "Bruno" Welbourn, Brian West (Fire Lighter, first class) and Beryl Strike (Bronze Medal Life Saving).

It was now 4.00 pm and still the last part to complete. We set off and crossed the Trawsfyndd – Bala Road. There, in front of us, the great expanse of Migneint. In the true traditions of Migneint we were soon wallowing in bog and thigh-high heather. In the distance, perched on the side of the hill, we could see Cefn Gawr. In an endeavour to find easier walking, we made for the higher ground, only to get mixed up in "Turks Heads". There appeared to be no choice but to plod in a direct line for Cefn Gawr, which slowly grew closer. The sky became darker and in a matter of minutes we were enveloped in the full fury of the storm. Upon reaching the Afon Gerw, one look at the depth and

width told us there was no chance of crossing. Cefn Gawr seemed so close, but so far, as we turned upstream into the driving rain. Chris saw the black horseman for the second time that day and complained that Bullstones would be a piece of cake after this.

Welbourn's pipe went out, which demoralised all the party. Brian who had been out in front had found a possible crossing place, a rather dubious looking island in the middle of the river, about twice the size of a dustbin lid and in much the same condition. The first section to the island was comparatively easy. Brian completed the second part safe and dry. The rest of the party gathered on the island, whilst I made a safe landing on the far bank. John, however, in a flurry to get across, threw his rucksack and, at the same time, was attacked by severe cramp and fell into the river, taking on the appearance of an obsolete submarine with his pipe just above water. I think it was on the third time he surfaced that he muttered between obscenities "Pull me out". Beryl who was quite overcome by the drama taking place before her eyes, leaned over the bank and looked into John's glazed eyes, his trilby hat floating away downstream.. Realising it was for real, we pulled him onto the bank. The final insult being that he was back on the bank from which he had started! Chris showed no improvement when crossing the river and, falling short of the bank, was pulled out dripping wet. What followed was like a scene from Monty Python. John, after ten false starts left the island, failed to gain sufficient height, fell short of the far bank and once more disappeared into the murky water to be pulled out by Brian and myself. Beryl quite disillusioned by all that had been happening, made a half hearted effort to get across the river, failed, and sank slowly.

Does the painting of the ram still exist? What is it really like at Cefn Gawr? Only those who go there, will know the secrets of Migneint Moor.

## BIVOUAC OF THE YEAR 1978

"I could stand the thought of a night  
on Angel Pavement. I could stand  
those silly buggers waking us up  
every hour. I could even stand the  
thought of 'em jugging it up at  
the Tan Ronen. But all these fags and  
no matches ....." "

*J. Doughty*

On December 26th, Dave Cheshire and John Doughty were benighted on Angel Pavement on Craig y Bere. They were unable to retreat and spent 18 hours sitting on a small ledge without bivi-gear, whilst the remaining Oread Team enjoyed their Christmas Dinner at the Tan Ronen. The following morning they were rescued by a strong Oread team led by Chris Radcliffe — *Editor*.

## TAN-Y-WYDDFA, JUNE 1984 (EXTRACT)

*RUTH CONWAY*

We make the Prince Llewellyn by 10.28 and the rest of the team are already ensconced, Colin Barnard, Richard and Dawn Hopkinson, Helen Griffiths, George Fowler, Alistair Gordon, John O'Reilly, and Martin Roome. I stop worrying about living and start worrying who I'm going to climb with. I seem to have done nothing but pester people to be third on a rope recently. To my unutterable relief Helen says she's on her own and why don't we team up? The Pinniclub had better watch out, the most unlady-like ladies team ever is about to hit the crag.

Well, as I told you, Saturday dawned fine and fair. By the time I got up John and Martin had already disappeared with mysterious aims in mind and our numbers had been magically swelled by Roger Larkham who chose to drive overnight and arrive at 7.30 a.m. (no accounting for taste). Weather like this it has to be Cloggy, but what to do? Richard and Dawn are already established on Boulder, everywhere is busy, so Helen and I set off up Sheaf after George and Alistair. She makes short work of the first pitch, I lead through, but eventually we are both defeated by the beastly overhang. We try amazing contortions, turn ourselves backwards, sit in the groove, bridge out at alarming angles . . . we just can't do it. We begin to realise that as a climbing team we do lack that certain something – basically inches. Eventually George returns from aloft and offers advice on how to leap up and throw wires into cracks. Thus emboldened I merrily aid it until I grab the jug that they could reach standing. Alistair says we can't help it, it's not our fault if we're stunted from birth – and to think I rather liked him!

The following pitch involves stepping out wildly right-wards onto the arête. The elongated bean poles in front leave us an aid sling without ever being asked – what price Womens Lib? Well, it was too early to go home and too late for another major performance so we dithered and watched Richard and Dawn on Diglyph. Eventually George and Helen decided they'd had enough while Alistair and I, little puritans at heart, did Sunset Crack for our sins.

## TAN-Y-WYDDFA, CHRISTMAS 1984 (*EXTRACT*)

In the evening a knock at the door was heard and upon opening it two Dutch lads appeared. These were immediately recognised by Ruth as the same two who had arrived five years ago to the very day, perhaps to the very hour. That time they were cold, wet and much fatigued after traversing Snowdon (in clogs, carrying rucksacks bulging with daffodil bulbs), but were now suitably clad. In minutes with typical Oread hospitality, tea, cakes and places by the fire were provided. In those five years they had often recalled the friendliness given and the pleasure of the North Wales hills.

## DERBYSHIRE BARN MEET 1987 (*EXTRACT*)

*RICHARD COGHLAN*

The British Legion club was not yet open (Parwich). We did the obvious and went to the pub just down the road. As more and more Oreads converged on the same spot, what had happened to Rusty eventually became known. Three of his cattle had 'escaped' (we never found out whether this was by tunnel, glider, or the vaulting horse trick), with potentially horrendous insurance consequences. In the darkness Rusty had to give up the search.

We all piled into the British Legion club for more beer before setting off up the road to what was clearly someone's music room annexe for an excellent meal of stew, with a sweet course and coffee to follow. The setting and cuisine was a cut above the rough company ravenously devouring food. Mike Wren had a go at playing the harmonium in the centre of the room. The set of songbooks used for the music provided the official version of the words. The Oread choir, led by Dave Weston, invented their own, "not recommended for young children or people of nervous disposition".

On then with the rucksacks, out with the maps, and up we went, following Rusty's direction to Two-Dale barn about a mile north of Parwich. Rusty had obviously prepared the way by laying a thick layer of clean hay on the floor. Some barn this, it even had a built-in hay strewn matratzenlager which looked purpose built, except that there was no ladder up to it. This taxed the technical ability of not a few people. The worst ascent was made by someone during the night who climbed up the wall at

the wrong end of the barn, embarked on a lengthy traverse on the inside wall and fell off, landing on Gordon Wright, sleeping on the floor below. To save unnecessary nocturnal preambulations, there was a hole in the matratzenlager down which one could urinate as one wished. It was not obvious where the liquid ended up. Sleeping below, I'm sure I felt something splashing onto my face during the night, but in my drowsy state I didn't think too hard about it. Before settling down to sleep there was a short, sharp burst of much promised "outrageous repartee" one classic example being "Last time I saw one that size, it had a harpoon in it!" Draw your own conclusions.

## BULLSTONES, DECEMBER 1987

*Compiled from Extracts*

*Editor*

Nags Head – Edale (Friday night) present: West (Meet Leader), Jonson, Hudson, John Green, Helen Griffiths, Bingham, Coghlan, Amour, Phillips, Burt, Hopkinson, Pretty, Williams. Overnight to Jubilee Cabin, very dark, but dry.

Departure Saturday a.m. for Cat Clough cabin, all except Pretty and Williams who went north west following some ancient Oread songline.

Main party split at Bleaklow Stones, Party A (Amour, Bingham and Jonson) headed for Lower Small Clough. Party B (remainder) arrived at Cat Clough to find only a neatly stacked pile of timber and corrugated iron, so turned south towards Lower Small Clough in stygian darkness (and gloom). At junction of Stainery Clough with main valley they encountered Scott, Larkham and Radcliffe, all heading north for Cat Clough. The united teams reached Lower Small Clough at 19.00 (Radders actually went past and had to be brought back). Additional arrivals were Gadsby and Bramwell.....

*Extract from 1987 Journal*

*Anon*

The cabin (Lower Small Clough) had been repaired – a new window and renovated walls, but some of the wooden benches had been removed, while grotty plastic mini tables, quite out of place, had been installed. Along the back wall people sat in duvets. Some had balaclavas on, some were gloved, while others cupped their hands around a hot drink. From nails or just perched on protruding sharp stones, hung removed gear; various designs of rucksacks could be seen by the flicker of candles or the search-light activities of head torches. Boots and gaiters caked in mud stuck our from beneath the table. The table was littered with all manner of things, many of which in any normal household would have been removed to the refuse; all shapes and sizes of plastic containers, plastic bags, with knives and spoons lying in congealing food, witness to some culinary failure. Loaves of bread were hacked apart by blunt knives, and clusters of tins, their contents of garden peas, chunky steak, baked beans or curry mix indicating what was in an adjacent billy. Bluet, primus and meta burners produced a steady roar and the steam rose upwards past concentrating faces which peered into the boiling cauldrons.

In one corner Rock stood in his sodden gear, for there was no seat available. He stirred some revolting mess. A second course was tipped into the remains of the first; this was to produce a sauce! After a while a mucky handkerchief was clasped around the billy, so that he could lift it towards his mouth and tilting it at a slight angle towards him he shovelled the overloaded spoon fulls down with greater ease. While licking the spoon, the billy was returned to the Bluet and a tin of cream-rice tipped into the left over soup, greens and meat. The warmth of the meal obviously reached his legs for he stopped trying to get warm by stamping his feet.

On the Saturday night Pretty and Williams descended from Oyster Clough Cabin to the Snake Inn where they came upon Janes, who had arrived by car. They all returned to Oyster Clough for the night.

The main party returned to Edale on Sunday. En passant they spotted Chris Burt in the vicinity of the Jubilee Cabin. Had he been there all week-end? But no – he had reached Cat Clough on his own, had proceeded downstream from the vacant site and found a newly renovated structure which he occupied alone. Brian West was not impressed by this revelation. All parties re-assembled at the Nags Head, Edale by 13.30 on Sunday.

Janes and Williams walked over Kinder from the Snake; Pretty drove Janes' car back to Edale. As Westy would say "Just another Bullstones really".

## A MESSAGE FROM MOULAM – JOURNAL 1978

(EXTRACT)

*A. J. J. MOULAM*

The club spirit has been held high over the years. The early Lyngen expeditions and the Oread book are just two of the many notable accomplishments for a 'local club, but the Oread is strong because of its local connotations, rather than in spite of them.

Having been banished to the southern flatlands for nearly ten years, and having other commitments at weekends, most of my recent climbing has been at Oread evening meets. I'm not yet sure whether I make the Wednesday evening pilgrimage to Derbyshire for the rock, or for the beer in Jonah's pub. It's probably a bit of both, and at least it keeps my consumption of routes and ale at an acceptable level.

Certainly I begin to live, as opposed to exist, at the Derby exit from the M1. There is a change in my metabolism, when I enter Oread country, and sparks of joy as I meet the members at different crags, all well set up in a rosy glow brought on by kindred spirits. Either struggling up a few feet from the ground, or sitting on it chatting, I feel I have come home.

The high spot of 1977 was not an official meet but it was one of the best attended. Nat Allen's 49th (oops – perhaps he'd meant to keep the number secret) was the occasion, a week after the season had officially ended. I arrived at Black Rocks, scene of my youthful endeavours, and thus dear to my heart, complete in city suit. A bite or two of this nourishment fortified us for a flying visit to Dukes Quarry, and Great Crack; as Nat put it: "the best gritstone crack you've never done".

Keen to get back to the meet we did it quickly and descended. On the quarry floor we met the eternally youthful Peter Pan figure of Nobby Millward, and his wife Judy, who had come to see us in action. They were too late as we declined to do it again, and so back to Black Rocks for a work-out until dark. Birch Tree Wall, (LH) Stonnis Crack, The Ravage – how often is it done? I'll swear Harding's buttons still lie in the dark depth of the crack, and they have been there since they fell from his cut down Mac in 1945! Queen's Parlour Slab as the last light faded took me back to the old Stonnis days when Harding first top-roped it, and then led it – with a handkerchief round his eyes. The result of a youthful boast in the Greyhound that he could do it blindfolded.

The great days of our formative years culminated in the Superstitious start on Lean Man's Buttress, the easy exit from Promontory Cave, and Demon Rib, the latter an early forerunner to the extreme and unlikely gritstone routes of today. These were all done on a Friday 13th, and apt it was, too, on Demon Rib. I gave Harding a top rope so that he could learn the early moves and thought he shouted 'haul away!' As I did so he jumped for the ground, having really said 'all away!' and to his surprise floated upwards drawn by the rope manipulated by my strong young muscles!

However, the Promontory was our 'piece de resistance'. Members of the Polaris had witnessed our early tries and told us, gratis, that "better men than you have tried and failed". The nose was relatively

easy to reach and one Thursday, (after school!) Harding and I stood in the cave. We had confidence in one another, and no belay. A little tension ensured my exit down the eastern side, my feet searching for the hidden foot crack. My toes slipped in and somehow I made the few feet to the abseil spike. A descenderless abseil on a single line deposited me in Prom Gully, and left Peter to make these few difficult and unprotected moves before he could join me, and we knew then, at least we could completely girdle our home ground.

It seems we were blind to the limestone possibilities that have now become the normal routes, aping climbs on bigger cliffs. We did try one or two things but were indoctrinated to believe it was all rotten, steep and unclimbable. Our ascent of High Tor Gully, full of debris, was not inspiring, although I well remember the struggle shared with Harding, Horsfield and Herbert up pitch after pitch of rubbish, after the first clean little wall. The park police were not so active then, or years later when I did the Original Route on High Tor with Don Whillans. They wanted to take our names but they didn't believe us when we said that we were both called Brown!

## A MESSAGE FROM BRAZIL – 1979

*Editor*

The 1960 Annual Dinner had been distinguished by the appearance of a representative of the Brazilian Ladies Alpine Club. Sen. Carmello O'Higgins. This lady had been in communication with the Oread some years previously, when D. C. Cullum had made some scathing reference to Brazilian lady climbers in a Newsletter Editorial.

Relations with the Brazilian Ladies A.C. had not entirely withered and there were stories of an alleged encounter with Major Bob's 1961 Himalayan team in the Manali Orchards. "A Latin-American formation dancing team" was referred to deprecatingly by Burgess and others, when questioned, but Ashcroft's spectacles steaming up at the mere mention was not convincing.

The 1979 Annual Dinner (President: Chris Radcliffe in charge) brought some enlightenment in the form of a letter from the legendary lady. The letter was addressed to H.P. who, only recently, in the company of David Appleby, had met an O'Higgins lady journalist at an International Ski Congress at the Coylumbridge Hotel, Cairngorm. The letter was read out to the assembled members and guests among whom was the celebrated New Zealand mountaineer/explorer Mr. George Lowe, himself only recently returned from a long attachment in Santiago, Chile.

Villa Santos

My Dears

How sad it is I am not able to come with you at the Dinner in Derbyshire. Me and my now fast groping son Roberto Gavino, truly an O'Higgins, but with the big ruptured mouth of his father, we was much anticipating your unstuffed shirts and your well stuffed breeches. I often tell him of those days 18 years ago when me and my Brazilian ladies made the 5th ascent of the world's 35th highest peak. He likes to hear how I met Major Bob in the Manali Orchard with his English tuffs. My Dorita has said sometimes that she has never felt so many hard men in their English vests and horse riding shorts. As my pictures tell me, they have all been so flashing, and I am always remembering Major Bob's teaching me the long English words about how he has always been reaching the culminating points.

I am always thinking about my visit to your Dinner many years ago now I think, and all this noise from the bog pipes which I am not hearing till then.

Will you remember my French friend Esmé who was with me. She is still wondering about this story that your friend she says is Pierre was telling her in the bath room about an Octopus and the bog pipes. We have never been understanding it but as my Esmé says "this Pierre he is the man who has the big parts in your entertainments". She is not understanding that he is not round shouldered.

And how is the funny man with what he calls the Welsh dragon on his espadrilles. He always reminds us of our Patagonian Patron who has all the sheep on his pampas. He tells me when he takes me to see his big glass instrument and his special paper on the walls of his hut that looks like real bricks that he has had his privates in the Welsh Dragoons when he was young. My Esmé says this English word 'privates' is a funny word and I must be careful what I do with it. Perhaps I am not understanding too well.

You have the new El Presidente, Senhor Ratsniff, and I am trying to remember him in the flesh as you say in English. We have looked at the old photographs but we are not able to see him. Esmé thinks he is the one who wears the Velcro chest wig with the Vaseline finish. He is I think what the American gringos call the Big Apple.

It is nice that you meet my second cousin Elizabeth at the ski-ing in Scotland with her Belgian friend Henri. She is often laughing about your little dark skinned friend Davvid Applestrudle – she tells me he has the face that the skis have run over. Henri says he should have been run over by one of the trains that my great grandfather, the General, was running in 1835. I think that your friend does not know that Elizabeth is high caste O'Higgins and is not like her Brazilian cousins. When we next meet I think we give him the Brazilian wax treatment.

Please remember me to all my English friends  
with love  
Carmello

P.S. My cousins in Chile tell me that they have met a long time ago an English Colonial man called Geog Lowey who has climbed some mountains. He tells them that he knows the English climbing boss, my Roberto, but my cousins think he has all the bull – they do not think Geog is that important a man.

Historical Note: Bernado O'Higgins (1776-1842) Soldier and Statesman, head of first permanent national government of Chile, born at Chillan (20.8.1776) the natural son of the Irishman Ambrosio O'Higgins, Governor of Chile (1778-95), and Viceroy of Peru (1795-1801). A cavalry general in many South American campaigns against the Spanish supremacy. Also a great railway engineer celebrated throughout South America — *Editor*.

## ALPINE AFFAIRS 1980-1990

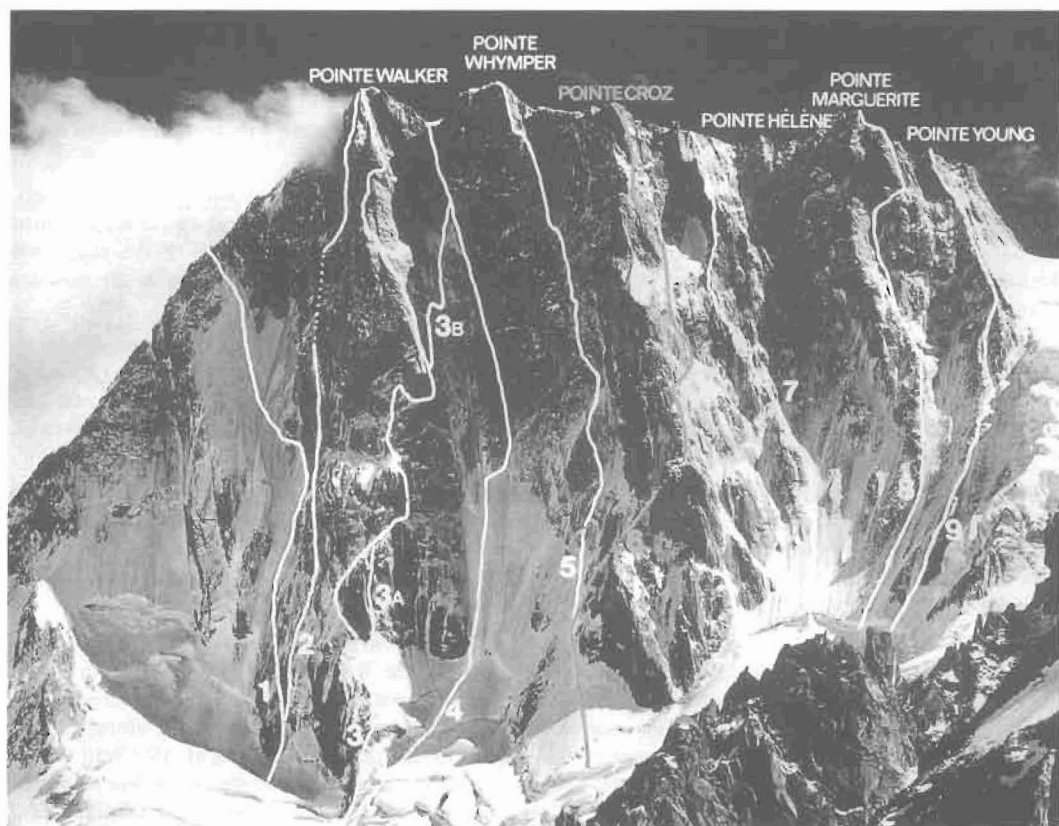
### LES GRANDES JORASSES

The 1,200 metre North Face of the Grandes Jorasses, rising above the Leschaux Glacier.

- W – Point Walker, 4,208 metres
- WH – Point Whymper, 4,184 metres
- C – Point Croz, 4,110 metres

The lines of the Walker and Croz spurs are marked and white dots indicate the bivouac sites mentioned in the articles.





## DOUBLE TOP 1980

This year saw two notable Oread successes on the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses in the Mont Blanc Massif. Firstly Pete Holden and Chris Radcliffe made an ascent of the Croz Spur over 6 days at Easter, an ascent which, while outside the period for the recognition of Winter Ascents, was probably the first time the route had been climbed by a British team in winter conditions. It was Chris and Pete's third attempt at the route.

Later in the year Paul Addison and Robin Sedgewick made a storm bound four day ascent of the neighbouring Walker Spur.

The following are extracts from the Journal 1980 — *Editor*.

## LES GRANDES JORASSES PAR L'EPERON DE LA POINTE CROZ, 5TH-10TH APRIL 1980 (EXTRACTS)

*PETER HOLDEN*

As a most generous act Howard Lancashire and Pip Hopkinson carried some of our gear and deposited it beneath the Leschaux hut as an extension of their ski-descent of the Vallée Blanche — this act most probably saved us a further bivouac on the glacier approach to our climb.

Chris and I had made two previous attempts on the climb, both over the Christmas period, but the highest point attained on these had been the top of the rock barrier beneath the middle ice-field. These attempts had cost us enormous effort and had been great experiences – but of course to retreat twice from the same climb had left a very deep impression of an undertaking unresolved. So for a third time we faced the mountain; it looked the same majestic bastion, but were we this time sufficiently determined to overcome our weaknesses and its strengths?

After the two weeks of storms which had preceded our attempt, the glacier was covered in deep, fresh powder snow; but whereas the Mer de Glace had been quickly transformed into a regular firm ski-piste, the Leschaux Glacier before us was virgin and soft. On a slight easing of the slope we decided to make our bivouac and proceeded to stamp out with ease a large platform in the powder snow.

Next morning the sky was clear and we turned our eyes and thoughts to the steepening glacier which we had to ascend for 1,500' to reach the foot of the face. Three hours of strenuous plodding. The last few hundred feet of ascent had been a battle against wind slab crust which had formed and threatened to break off in large slabs. It was a great relief to take a stance beneath the first ice-field, to gear-up, and to take off the snow shoes.

The ice-field was covered in deep snow. The good snow-cover over the ice continued up into the couloir behind the 'first rock tower'. Immediately above us we knew that the serious climbing began. On our last attempt we had been involved in a near bizarre epic in the company of Patrick Valencenne only 150' above where we stood and we had all retreated from that point. Thus we were quite happy to make an early stop and prepare a bivouac at the foot of the rock wall.

The next morning we resolved to avoid the steep rock tower which we had climbed on previous attempts and we opted for the steep ice gully on its left hand side. It was very difficult (Scottish Grade 5 for 300'). We were forced to take extreme care with the soft unstable snow which terminated in the most amazing knife-edge arête atop the 'second tower', which gave us a 75' sky-walk along its fine crest. Two strenuous pitches up snow plastered rocks led to the clean, near vertical, 150' wall which bars access to the 'middle ice-field'. We knew that there was no good bivouac site to be found above the wall, so we resolved to make the best of the poor site where we stood. Now in the last light of a fine day, we hacked away two acceptable ledges from the hard grey ice. To sit on this vast wall in winter is an incredible experience – the feeling of isolation being compounded by the intense cold which was intensified by the strong wind.

We warmed to the next day by prussiking up the rope fixed on the previous evening and above a tiny stance we contemplated the huge expanse of hard grey ice which forms the "middle ice field" and up which we would have to climb as a diagonal line for eight pitches. Very often the shattering of the brittle surface skin would cause a foot to skid off and one's whole body heaved with the strength of the reaction which powered front-points back into place. (It took two months for our toes to recover from this mal-treatment!) A very dramatic moment occurred when I asked Chris to make a pendulum across the ice because an in-situ piton had tempted me too high onto the ice glazed rock wall. The back-up piton, which I had placed, moved under load and the existing one began to bend slowly down. I cried to Chris to off-load the rope and in those agonising seconds, as I watched him quickly regain security, I saw Chris fifty feet below, splayed out on the vast sheet of mirror-like ice above the impending void. The upper rim of the ice-field was followed with sustained effort until at the highest point of the ice the rock band had to be taken to. After this pitch we were one again briefly in the evening sun, but the rigors of a steep ice crack and chimney absorbed the last remaining minutes of light and the expected ledge could not be found and eventually a desperate bivvy place was fashioned where we stood.

The dawn came red and fiery and we knew that the storm which had been building up for the last few days was about to break. The pressure to find a route up was great because of the swirling grey clouds sweeping in. We scanned right across the wall and decided to make a traverse on the steep, brittle ice at its foot in the hope that something would turn up! Eventually the ice gave out to bold granite ten feet before a groove which promised a way up and out. The ascent of this pitch in the

swirling snow without crampons was something which demanded full use of the skills of delicate bridging on both rock and ice, combined with cunning deployment of curved axe-picks until the ice-field was reached and crampons were strapped on whilst standing in a sling. Avalanches cascaded down the face and we became buried on belays and everything rapidly became covered in 6 inches of freshly fallen snow. Progress was slow. We swept our way slowly upwards until we reached the next rock band and there we searched for a place to bivvy. An obvious bivouac site did not materialise before the ice loomed again so we applied creative ingenuity in the form of a two hour hacking session at a hard, grey ice-boss atop a rock flake to produce a couple of meagre sloping ledges.

The first pitch on that next morning was 150' of total concentrated effort on four points, cruelly unreliable on brittle glassy ice. Further ice led into a rocky couloir which acted as a perfect funnel as, with only a few seconds warning, we regularly found ourselves completely enveloped in rushing, pouring snow. A narrows formed a steep technical pitch up a chimney and an icy crack which led to easy but very unstable snow which we followed to the crest of the spur. We tackled the steep rocky crest above. After 150' of this climbing a crisis of confidence occurred on a band of shattered rock which defied all attempts to place a secure belay. The wind was up again and chilled us to the bone as it blasted in from the north-west. So yet again we began the search for a bivouac place – but this ground promised none and above us reared the summit headwall. A descent had to be made from two pitons placed in excavated cracks. Frayed nerves jibbed at this manoeuvre – climbing down collapsing rock to an extremely exposed crest of the wall with no prospect of a bivvy ledge. Desperation forced us to scratch out two places to sit with feet hung over the void. At the time, more than any other on the climb, we were extremely close to suffering from severe exposure.

By dawn the wind had not abated and we struggled out of our sacks as the deep red sun rose out of the grey cloud-sea below. With choice of exit barred we tried another way and the secret was soon discovered to be a diagonal descent with aid from the rope in an adjacent couloir on our left. The final two pitches up the steep ice-glazed rocks had to be climbed with numbed hands, often bared to the rocks, with no piton to guide the way or even to secure a fall. Then suddenly the deep soft snow of the summit ridge was reached and instantly the world was changed. On the other side everywhere was brilliantly white with the southern aspect over Italy blinding and dazzling. The wind, that cruel cold wind, could be felt no more. We slumped and made a much needed brew a few feet beneath the summit of Pointe Croz.

The descent is another story in itself. Suffice to say that we survived a high speed fall down a steep snow slope after I had slipped, to be saved by the rope being caught on a small protruding spike of rock. A night in the hut commenced with an unrestrained attack on the plentiful liquor store until my head reeled. The descent from the hut to the valley was serious enough with steep snow slopes, avalanche danger, a hidden ladder (which took 2 hours to locate) and soft, soggy snow in the valley floor.

## LES GRANDES JORASSES – WALKER SPUR, AUGUST 1980 (*EXTRACT*)

*ROBIN SEDGWICK*

"A route to dream of, perhaps the finest in existence" -

- *Gaston Rebuffat*

"The most beautiful of the extreme alpine routes" -

- *Reinhold Messner*

"To feel the fascination of the Walker Spur..... is the most wonderful and, at the same time, the most overwhelming experience that a climber can have" -

- *Walter Bonatti*

A last check on the weather forecast at the Guides Bureau reveals “une orage avec tonnerre dans la nuit” for the end of tomorrow (Thursday). The prospect of sitting out a few hours of storm doesn’t unduly worry us as we’ve both got gore-tex bivvy bags and the forecast is a return to “Grand Beau Temps” for the Friday. The die is cast and we set off. Two hours stagger up the Mer de Glace and arrange a bivouac on a heap of moraine within half-an-hour of the foot of the face. Awake at four, a quick brew and set off for the bottom of the face where lights are already visible. After our usual route finding cock-ups and numerous detours and retracing of steps we arrive at the bergschrund to find a crowd of competitors for the route – 4 British, 2 Austrians and 3 Japanese – standing around doing very little. So we’re out in front. Feeling very smug and efficient with our overtaking.

Two pitches on superb rock, peg pulling strenuities on the Rebuffat Crack, and then steep icy mixed ground, both moving well, enjoying the climbing. More rock and moves right to the 75 metre diedre. Superb bridging and laybacking in two long pitches. More mixed ground leads to a fixed rope across a belt of slabs. As I’m preparing to follow, there’s a sudden loud curse from Paul and a confession that our only copy of the route description is fluttering off to join his axe in the bergschrund. It was obviously going to be “one of those routes”. The prospect of 1,000’ of difficult rock with no description has little to commend it but the words of Bergführer Scott ringing in our ears spur us on “use your mountaineering sense and experience”. We keep going. I arrive at the stance to find Paul belayed to a single, doubtful, in-situ peg that bends under finger pressure, the loose ground precluding any better belay. Sorting gear for the next lead we discover one of our ropes is jammed out of sight below the stance. Pulls and tugs from various angles fail to free it and we realise the only possibility is an abseil and prussic, a possibility too awful to contemplate in that position and with that belay. We keep going on a single 9mm rope. Two more rope lengths on easy loose ground brings us back to a notch in the spur crest at the top of the grey tower. With dusk gathering, two small lie-down ledges, about 4 feet apart, are a welcome sight and we settle in for the night.

I awake some time after four. Light is slowly returning and there’s a strange weight on the bivvi-bag. A peer outside and all is revealed. The weight is an inch of fresh snow and the only view is a swirling maelstrom of white. We wait and it gets worse. Bangs and flashes with frightening simultaneity and torrents of ball-bearing like snow that cascades down the rocks. The hours slowly slip by in a daze. We take stock of our situation. We decide to sit tight until the storm stops, but after that the prospects are none too heartening. The idea of 2,500’ retreat with a single 45 metre rope and a meagre stock of hardware is uninviting. The storm increases in intensity again as the day slides into afternoon and we pass the time cocooned in our own private worlds and thoughts. It slowly gets dark and the swirling snow continues as we settle down for our second night.

Daylight slowly returns and with it blue skies and a white panorama of snow-plastered rock. The temperature is right down and the snow, piled up around our respective ledges, has a hard frozen crust, so we decide to see if we can thumb a chopper. We spend the morning flashing mirrors and waving vainly at distant aeroplanes to no avail. In the early afternoon it slowly begins to dawn on us that, like buses in England, helicopters are never there when you want one. How long before our friends in the valley raise the alarm? To-morrow? The day after?

“Go for the top?” – “Aye”. Paul leads off, smashing ice off the rocks, limbs heavy with inactivity and chill. “Christ it’s plastered!”. “Keep going”. It’s good to be going again after our 40 hours of inactivity. Mind and muscles warm to the task in hand and we find we’re making reasonable progress. A pitch of tricky mixed and then steep cramponing up the triangular neve to the base of the couloir leading up left of the red tower. A groove on the left of the couloir is capped by an overhang. Paul swings out right on pegs, one pulls and he takes to the air. He bounces to a stop 20’ lower but no damage is done. The sun’s on us now and it’s good to be climbing again, although it’s now early evening and the possibility of another bivouac is looming large. A traverse below the tower and on up the couloir on its far side. Dusk is gathering rapidly but we keep moving up, hoping for a bivvi ledge. We’re above 4,000 metres, there’s a strong bitter wind and we need a ledge. Paul brings me up to the small ledge on the nose of the spur that’s exposed to the full force of the wind. It’s sheltered across to the right but this is the only available ledge and we decided it will have to do.

Dawn eventually arrives but the effort of getting out into the bitter wind and struggling to pack with frozen fingers is such that it's 8 a.m. before we're ready to go. Up to our right the summit of Point Whymper beckons, gleaming white in the morning sun. Our way leads straight up, delicate chimneys and snowed up couloirs for three or four rope lengths until a short snow rib leads to a pull-out onto the sunlit snowy expanse of the summit of Point Walker and it's all over. Italy lies in front of us, to our right Mont Blanc glistens in white splendour while to our left the distant Matterhorn rises majestically above the peaks of the Pennine Alps. Behind and below is the 4,000 feet of the Walker Spur. It feels good to be on top.

Already our thoughts are returning to steak and beer and cream cakes. We plod over to Point Whymper and the long descent to the distant valley below.

## A TURN TO THE RIGHT

*ROCK HUDSON*

*Journal 1981/82*

On leaving the Vignettes Hut, the hard crisp snow indicated a good frost, whilst above, the twinkle of many stars foretold that we should enjoy a perfect alpine day. Chris Bryan set a good pace over the smooth slopes leading down to the Vignettes Glacier. Derek Mountford and I followed; not letting him gain on us, but neither being able to reduce that ten-metre lead.

It was the first route of the 1981 holiday and we were heading for the N.E. Ridge of the L'Eveque which appeared to be a suitable starter, an indication of the conditions on which to base our plans for the following weeks.

We gained on the other parties, passed them, and were quickly nearing the flanks of Mt. Petit Collon, which was now appearing in the pale light of dawn. Glance to the right. Curt comments, 'it looks all right!' followed by a similar detached 'aye, not bad'. We continued following the tracks. Some hidden pretext allowed a change of pace and thus we found ourselves closer together, enabling each of us to notice the others glancing to the right. The north face was now distinct, its icy features producing a beckoning line. We continued, perhaps without a clear sense of purpose, but we each knew. A glance in front showed the track trending to the left – we had turned to the right, but no comment was required from any of the party as we made our way up the steepening slopes below the north face.

The last rucksack was swung onto a back, the axe picked up, and we turned towards the centre of the face at a point to one side of the apex of blocks formed by an avalanche. We reached the steepening ground and moved together on hard nevé, the rhythm only being broken when negotiating the deep runnels. These soon passed into smooth slopes, which swept upwards to a distant skyline, while below the late parties were still following that now narrow ribbon of a path.

With increasing angle, we decided to pitch, and a peg was solidly placed, which allowed the leader to move off and quickly reach the next stance – another good peg. The steep front-pointing continued and, with increasing light, the panorama widened, while the distance to the adjacent right-hand ridge showed that we had gained considerable height.

For some while the snow conditions had deteriorated, the nevé reducing to only a thin skim loosely adhering to the now granular and brittle underlying ice. The pegs would not hold, sending off large splinters of ice, so only a scoop could be made at the contact of nevé and ice; a less than useful loop of rope being wrapped around the head of the axe, which had with great reluctance penetrated a few centimetres into the ice. Looking up the leader made progress more slowly, his crampons hiding all but the edges of his sac, while his axes swung with little effect into the now 'granular sugar'. The last few pitches had reached an angle of 55/60 degree and progress was even slower, but the last of the rock, perched on the adjacent ridge, was below us and we could cut to a snowy shoulder a little distance below the summit.

The sun was warm, the views rewarding, the sardines welcome, the water refreshing, while the 'turn to the right' the best decision of the day.

## OLD BRENVA (*EXTRACT*)

JOHN O'REILLY

*Journal 1981/82*

"For Christ's sake, how much further Christ!?"

"Just keep going – almost there now!"

A none-too-gentle tug at my harness and I realise there are no more loops of rope to quietly lengthen the gap between myself and Rog. I stagger on – the state of stumbling exhaustion has existed for hours or at least it seems that way, as my detached mind wonders at the continued movement of my body.

A mixture of memories and emotions replace thoughts of physical efforts as the struggle continues – "you might as well get fit on a big climb as get fit for one" sounded so simplistic, so logical, in the alcohol-induced comfort of the Bar Nash as to be not worth contesting. The initial sweep of enthusiasm at the thought of the Brenva Face, dampened by doubts at the memory, and stronger image, of a close friend shivering, freezing, storm-bound and not surviving on the same route. The fleeting vision of sunny limestone crags..... dispelled abruptly by another knee-deep blunder, confirming the aching realisation of lack of fitness.

The knowledge begins to form, now too tired to argue or be annoyed about, that I had been conned – "Okay, I agree, we're in no fit state to climb the last 1,500 feet, but we will have to climb over that mound by those rocks before we can traverse" – the mound seemed to go on and on and on.....

.....the knowledge now complete as the mound no longer exists and Chris admits we're on the summit – the summit of Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe, by a classic route – but there is no view, no euphoria, no summit photos, just a gentle throbbing head, aching limbs and the reality of an immediate, wind-buffed, staggering descent – attempts to concentrate on the insidious tangle of stiffening ropes, views only of three meandering bodies, but visions of shelter, a brew, sleep, sunshine, warmth – strangely, perhaps naively, no doubts that we would get down safely.

Something else to look at and concentrate on now, as the swirling cloud and snow reveal occasional glimpses of the descent path, a few incongruous rock features and then the Hut – clumsy, stumbling crampons on steps slightly too steep, banks of snow outside and in, spreading a thin layer of intrusive spindrift over the creaking floor, a floor covered by the debris of countless grateful climbers – grateful for a windless haven, grateful for an imperfect tin box which would give any health inspector palpitations, grateful in some cases for another chance. The Vallot Hut, still over 14,000 feet on the now stormy flank of Mont Blanc, but a place to relax, to feed, to sleep.

Some thoughts on the Brenva Spur, Mont Blanc, August 1981.

Dave Helliwell, Roger Larkham, John O'Reilly, Chris Wilson.

## OREADS IN THE ALPS – 1982

*Compiled by Rock Hudson*

### CHAMPEX AREA

Eandies Traverse	R. Larkham, P. Wragg, R. Hudson, R. Penlington
Mt. Dolent, E. Ridge	R. Larkham, P. Wragg, R. Hudson, R. Penlington
Traverse, La Portalet	K. Bryan, L. Bryan, J. Muskett, K. Muskett, M. Jaggs, M. Wren

Aiguille du Tour	K. Bryan, J. Muskett, M. Jaggs, J. Welbourn, G. Gadsby
Aiguille Purtscheller (South Ridge Integral)	D. Penlington, R. Penlington, R. Hudson
Petite Velan	D. Penlington, R. Penlington, R. Hudson
Mont Velan	D. Penlington, C. Barnard, R. Hudson

## CHAMONIX AREA

Drus, Traverse (D)	M. Wynne, R. Sedgwick, J. Blackledge & party
Moine, E. Face (Contamine Route)	J. Blackledge & Party
Petite Jorasses W. Face (1st half – more or less)	M. Wynne, R. Sedgwick
Aiguille de l'Midi (Couzy Route)	D. Owen, J. O'Reilly, J. Blackledge & party
Traverse (Midi to the Trident Hut)	M. Wynne, R. Sedgwick
l'Index, S. Ridge	D. Owen, J. O'Reilly
Aiguille de Peigne Papillons Ridge	D. Owen, J. O'Reilly
Amone Slab, about 6 pitches or so (quote: 'desperate')	M. Wynne, R. Sedgwick
Chapelle de la Gliere (including new 3 pitch direct start – 'Cosmic Traffic Lights' E1 5a)	M. Wynne, R. Sedgwick

## SWITZERLAND AND OTHER AREAS

Civetta, Solleder VI	P. Holden, H. Lancashire
Civetta, Phillip-Flamm IV plus	P. Holden, H. Lancashire
Dent Blanche, N. Face	P. Holden, H. Lancashire
Mönch, N. W. Buttress (Nollen Route)	R. Tresidder & party

Doges Palace, N. Face 1st British Ascent	P. Lancaster, S. Lancaster, P. O'Neill, J. O'Neill
Tour d'Ai, Chimney & the Arete (Leysin)	S. Carter & party
Miroir Slab, Direct	S. Carter & party
Aiguille Argentiere	S. Carter & party
Arete de Belvedere (Verdon)	P. Lancaster, P. O'Neill
Traverse, Bridge of Sighs 1st British ascent	P. Lancaster, S. Lancaster, P. O'Neill, J. O'Neill D. Sedgwick, D. Parnham, L. Freestone, Dot's Mum
Ciarfaron, N. E. Ridge	K. Bryan, L. Bryan
Grand Serra	K. Bryan, L. Bryan
Casnil, E. Ridge (Walter Rische Route)	K. Gregson, M. Pearce
Monte Rosso, Traverse (WNW to S. Ridge)	K. Gregson, M. Pearce
Traverse, (N to S) Gorge d'Ardeche	R. Larkham, P. Wragg
Mt. Argentine (nr. Bex)	D. Penlington, R. Penlington, R. Hudson
Rosenlanistock Engelhörner	S. Carter & party
Ecrins, N. Face, Whymper Route	R. Larkham, P. Wragg
Mont Aiguille, S.W. Pillar, Vercors Via Ferrata de Guiseppo Tofana di Mezzo	R. Larkham, P. Wragg D. Wright, A. Ames
Cima Grande, NNE Ridge 1st Half (hard half)	D. Wright, A. Ames

And last but not least, a British attempt on the "Telepherique Route" to the Plan de l'Aiguille – retreated due to bad weather. The retreat involved two stormy bivvies at the Pierre d'Orthaz before a retreat to base camp near Monte Chair Ladder.

*D. Helliwell, C. Wilson*



THE ALPINE SEASON – 1982 (*EXTRACT*)

ROCK HUDSON

*Journal 1983*

At the same time, another epic was unfolding on the Schreckhorn. Gordon and Bev. took the E.S.E. Ridge, which was generally steep, loose rock. This and the overall conditions caused them to bivi on the way down. Bev had a pleasant night – Gordon did not. This may have been due to the large amount of extra equipment Bev. was carrying. Gordon was somewhat taken aback by both the contents of Bev's sack and his explanations for same. The items included:–

eye shadow	"not as heavy as goggles"
two spare helmets	"for soup, in case you drop the billy"
spare sleeping bag	"stops first bag being spoiled on ground"
spare piton hammer	"in case normal one too light for large pitons"
2nd spare piton hammer	"in case of loss of tin-opener"
ice axe	"in case snow found hidden beneath scree slope on a rock climb"
Heinz, Crosse & Blackwell, Tesco & Co-op Beans	"you might be climbing with a faddy buggar"
just a small bundle of firewood	"in case primus/bluet dropped and, in any case it gives a homely atmosphere and don't forget, it's Swiss National Day"
dehydrated water	"only inexperienced mountaineers would forget this on a rock route"
35mm, 2.5", half-plate, full-plate cameras & assorted lenses	"I believe it's the only way I shall ever win the photo competition"
Italian, Austrian & Nepalese etc. money	"you might descend by another route"

Bev. Abley and Gordon Wright — *Editor.*

LIVING ON THE FRONT LINE  
(EIGERWAND WITH ROB TRESIDDER) (*EXTRACT*)

ROBIN SEDGWICK

*Journal 1983*

The grey dawn half-light complemented the atmosphere of the third icefield perfectly. Black, glassy ice, embedded with grit and stones, overhung by dark, beetling rock walls. It exuded an atmosphere of sleeping menace. Above and beyond, the Ramp gave four superb pitches on sound rock, the previous evening's trepidations and misgivings dissipated by the smooth flow of movement and progress. The waterfall chimney, a black overhanging nasty, gave a hundred feet of bridging and peg pulling, half blinded by spray, icy water gushing down sleeves and gaiters, a memorable, magnificent pitch. The ice bulge proved to be a wicked little slot between ice and rock, very steep, very Scottish; thrutched by me, wedged much more elegantly by Rob, to an awkward pull out onto the Ramp icefield. A further rope length, curving away right, led to the Brittle Ledges. Following this latter pitch, I heard a crack and looked up to see the sky black with stones. I instinctively flattened against the ice and, seconds later, my very being was engulfed by a total assault on the senses, as rocks whistled,

cracked, whirred and thumped off the ice around me, smashing against helmet and rucksack. A sharp crushing blow on the left shoulder, inhaling dust, an acrid smell in my nostril; a timeless period of detachment and waiting, of split seconds transformed into hours; nothing lasts forever, but everything lasts for some time. Slowly, the veil was lifted, the air cleared and silence descended, save for the rattling of small splinters and pebbles still dancing down the ice below me, and Rob's worried shouts from above. Apart from the pain in my shoulder, I appeared to be o.k. – I yelled back and climbed up to join him on the Brittle Ledges.

Two more pitches and we reached the Traverse of the Gods. An excellent lie-down ledge with leaning back wall appeared to offer a protected bivouac and, despite it being early afternoon, we decided to call it a day, as the Traverse and the Spider beyond were undergoing constant barrage.

The White Spider is a magnificent place, an experience to be treasured as a little gem amidst a handful of life's select memories. At the time, a blur of dry mouth, cramping calf-muscles, and radar-sharp senses alert for the by-now commonplace warnings of oncoming stones. A cathedral-like atmosphere, the very epitome of the Eiger, hemmed in by seemingly impossible cliffs with 6,000 feet of clean exposure sucking ones heels towards the meadows of Alpiglen. The Spider is indeed an awesome place. I felt almost as if entering a shrine as I cramponed up to Rob's ice screw belay. As if respecting our benediction, the Spider stayed quiet and we scuttled up a further two rope lengths to relative safety at the foot of the Exit Cracks. A brief halt for a bowel movement, probably brought on by having to hop up the last 30 feet of ice on one crampon and then we were off and away, galloping up the first easy pitches of the Exit Cracks. Rob got the Quartz Crack, possibly the hardest pitch on the route, steep and strenuous, with a thin delicate slab exit at the top, led and seconded, gratefully, without rucksacks. Above, I continued left to the pulpit and a diagonal abseil.

*Postscript*

KLEINE SCHEIDEGG;

The Eiger was unchanged and yet subtly different. A burning ambition and a sense of purpose had gone forever and irretrievably. I looked down at the fresh scars on my hands, impressions which would soon heal. The impressions in my mind would last longer, though they too would face with time. Fading memories and a set of colour transparencies – is that all you're left with?

## OF AIR BEDS, HARVESTERS AND GASTRONOMY (*EXTRACT*)

COLIN BARNARD

*Journal 1984*

Back in the fleshpots, yet more eating and boozing, then off at 7.30 on the Friday morning, to arrive back at Stafford in the wee small hours of Saturday. Oh yes, you ask, what about the air beds and the harvesters? Well a recurring memory of the holiday was of lying in the tent, gazing at the Harvest Spiders in the roof, whilst Rock blew up his leaky air bed. The latter tended to subside nearly completely within a matter of hours. In the same time the Harvesters shifted perhaps one inch. What do they do for a living? I mean, how do they eat? Perhaps they chew holes in antiquated air beds. Something certainly does!

BRENVA, OR ABBO GIVES UP SMOKING (*EXTRACT*)

KEITH GREGSON

*Journal 1985*

Another few minutes and not only is the air blue but the snow round about has taken on the hue of a well matured Stilton. I set off back and eventually see two points of light approaching and we exchange words – short sharp ones! My frustration wins and explodes “How the hell are we going to get up this thing if we have to bugger about standing on the glacier for hours on end?” Rock says, he’s lost the spike off the end of his ice axe – I tell him it’s nothing to what he’s about to lose, and it’s about time he bought some bloody kit which had its beginnings in the twentieth century instead of mending his museum pieces with wode and baler twine. Abbo acts as peacemaker and we fix Rock up with a north wall hammer (with spike) which he threatens to test on me. The storm passes, and then begins again as we launch ourselves in the tracks of those who should not be in front.

We passed one or two parties before reaching the bergschrund under the col and another group as we forced our way to the foot of the ridge. The situation at this point was incredible. The moonlight gave an ethereal effect to the surrounding peaks with the Peuterey Ridge and the Eckpfeiler dominating the view to the left and the Brenva Face stretching above us. All the mountain features were in sharp relief with every snowflake intent on being a star. The storm below continued but up here all was quiet, as though in anticipation, but of what? Were we being lured into a trap, was the storm waiting to catch us on the summit?

I must admit that my motivation generally, whilst on a mountaineering route, is geared to an early completion, and I seldom relax until the route and the descent is completed. I suppose that most people share these feelings, though I could be wrong. There were certainly occasions on this route when Abbo would have cheerfully killed for a fag break, and I am sure that on this occasion we all shared the feeling that conditions were remarkable. The higher we climbed, the more we were able to see that the only place in Europe with fine weather was the summit of Mont Blanc! The storm wasn’t just confined to the Italian side for we could now see flashes of lightning to the West beyond the Bionnassay.

We eventually reached the final serac barrier which was enormous and we were glad of the tracks left by the previous parties. There were no really difficult sections, except perhaps the odd steep ice of twenty feet or so, but finding the correct route through the seracs was not obvious – it was still dark. Suddenly the slope decreased and we climbed out of a snow filled crevasse onto the summit. We’d done it.

On the descent from Mont Blanc du Tacul we did the British thing and had a brew in a glorious snow bowl. It was the first stop in eight hours and Abbo’s first fag. A French party came by, and not realising that we were on the down-line, made with the sarcasm “Zees is no time fur le tay, allez! O les Anglais!” Abbo dropped his fag. They were put in the picture pretty damn quick I can tell you!

*An account of the ascent of the Old Brenva Route on August 8th 1979 by Chris Bryan, John Hudson (Rock), Stuart Godfrey (Abbo) and Keith Gregson.*

## ICE STATION SOLVAY

*ROB TRESIDDER*

*Journal 1990*

We were all curled up in our bags in the cold pit at the bottom of the hut watching our breath sail into the warm high roof. All day the radio in the corner had crackled with more or less urgent messages – arcane signals of life in another world.

Suddenly.....

“Allo, Solvay Hütte, ‘Allo Solvay Hütte. Bitte antworten.”

I leaped out of my pit and struggled hurriedly to decipher the instructions on the red box which told which buttons to press in what order to transmit.

I heard my own voice, tense with drama, sounding like the chief engineer addressing the skipper on the bridge after a direct hit to the engine room in one of those interminable naval films from the Second World War.

The radio operator wanted to know how many we were and then advised that the forecast for the following day was very bad and we should descend as early as possible. “Over and out”.

Did I really say that?

The weather seemed pretty awful now and it would be worse tomorrow. Suddenly we were transformed from a slightly bored, just international quintet, who had been swapping yarns and jokes to wile away the long wait, into a closely knit group of men determined to fight to the bitter end for our survival.

Jan from Czechoslovakia had already had one night in the hut before climbing alone to the summit and back in seven hours. Peter and Brett from Kendal were on the route they had come out to do. Bobby and I, along with numerous others, had found conditions on the North Face unpromising. The ice was very hard and the snow was too fine and dry to stick.

On the North Face too little snow, on the Hörnli ridge far too much, so our climb to the Solvay Hütte the day before had been slow and had felt insecure. We were holed up in the hut because the early morning weather had been so appalling: tomorrow, we were being told, would be even worse

We rose early but not very early, kitted up in the hut and then emerged onto the tiny concrete terrace half banked up with snow. I was strangely glad to climb down off this, the scene of windswept nocturnal terrors on the journey to the bog, overhanging the north face.

Some easy soloing guided by Jan avoided the hard pitches of two days before and then the abseils started.

My hands had been frozen for the first half hour and then all of a sudden, the wind dropped, the sky cleared to give splendid panoramic views: Breithorn, Monte Rosa and then right round to the Dent d’Herens. The sun came out and we were buzzed by two inquisitive helicopters. The whole “epic” suddenly assumed a dream like quality. Had I been a victim of a kind of mass hysteria?

I thought back to other occasions when my judgement might have been interfered with by outsiders. On almost my first Oread meet, at Gardom’s, I was warned off soloing a route by a senior Oread, later to be a President, with the advice: “I’ve seen Pete Holden back off that.” I resented the interference but retreated in the belief that I was acting independently.

More recently a friend of long but infrequent experience expressed dismay that he had not been dissuaded by members of his new club from soloing the route he subsequently fell off. He seemed to me to be out of touch with “the ethics and etiquette” of our sport which have caused all of us at one time or another to guard our tongue even when confronted by dangerous bad practice.

In the afternoon and back in the security of the Hörnli hut, the storm returned with increased ferocity.

## ERITRICHUM NANUM

King of the Alps, Lord of the Heights,  
 Above the Pousett cwm.  
 Your small blue petals flutter; in the  
 Wind of the afternoon, the wind  
 Of an eagle's downward touch,  
 As he passes you in flight.  
 Oh, if only you had flight my friend, if only you had flight.  
 You'd soar above the snowy alps,  
 The icefall and the sky,  
 And land in some green meadow  
 With water running by.  
 But you would not linger long my friend  
 For you would surely die, in that  
 Meadow with the buttercups  
 And the waters running by.  
 High, high above is your domain  
 With the seekers of the heights,  
 The Chamoix and the Ibex  
 The Eagles and the Kites.  
 But when the great north blizzards blow,  
 They flee the spindrifts fun  
 And leave this world to you my friend,  
 You've won, you've won, you've won.  
 King of the Alps, bluest of blue,  
 Small flower of a thousand dreams,  
 This is your kingdom here in the snow  
 Not down where the buttercups gleam.

*Gordon Gadsby*

## IN MATTERS EDITORIAL

In short, in matters editorial, contentious and deplorable  
 I am the very model of modern mountain phantasmagorial.....

*with apologies to W. S. Gilbert*

Newsletters, in much the same style, containing editorial, meets reports, general articles, and club gossip continued up to and including 1975. Radcliffe passed on the editorial chair in 1973 to Paul Bingham, who carried it for two years, until David Appleby took over for a brief period in 1975/76.

This period was also notable for the publication of *Climb if you Will* in 1974. Largely inspired by the death of Geoff Hayes, it told the story of the first twenty five years. Its publication was principally inspired by the late Jean Russell (Editor) and her team: Jack Ashcroft, Paul Gardiner, Gordon and Margaret Gadsby, Mike Berry and Anne Hayes.

At that time I was not very supportive of their aspirations and suspected illusions of grandeur, and an element of pretension, after only 25 years. But I was probably wrong since the book, of very limited circulation, has become much sought after and, on arrival at this half century year, a very valuable source.

For reasons too obscure for current exhumation, the old style newsletter died, but an Annual Journal (editor: Jill Gregson) appeared for 1977 and, from this date, annual Journals came out spasmodically: 1978/79/80 (Ed. R. Sedgwick), 1981/82/83 (Ed. J.O'Reilly), 1984 (Ed. J. Hudson, C. Wilson), 1985/86/87 (Ed. J. Hudson), and 1990/92 (Ed. R. Gilbert).

*Editor*

## EDITORIAL (*EXTRACT*)

*Journal 1981/82*

But what of the future – the mainstay of any strong, progressive mountaineering club is its calendar of Meets and the attendances achieved on those Meets. It is to be hoped that a balance can continue to be achieved here which not only caters for all tastes but which tends to unite the various sections within the Club. For this to be effective, a change in outlook is called for in some sections of the Club – too many Members glance through the Meets List and mentally write off half the Meets as not being for them. If everyone was a little more flexible in outlook and was prepared to try Meets, which, in previous years, they have always missed, they might be surprised at the results. The Members who tend towards the walking and mountaineering Meets could well find they fare quite well on what are ostensibly the 'rock athlete's' Meets – conversely, the latter might discover that there are rewards to be gained from a good mountaineering day which they had not thought possible. In the long run, this could only serve to strengthen the Oread as a Club and to avoid a tendency towards, to quote the words of a previous Editor, 'an amorphous association'. We must all remain aware of the need for the expanding Oread to grow together as a club, hence maintaining the spirit which has characterised it in recent years.

*John O'Reilly*

## EDITORIAL (*EXTRACT*)

*Journal 1983*

A late night discussion at a recent M.A.M. Meet threw up one of those perennial topics of conversation in established clubs – a topic that I commented on in last year's Editorial – why do younger members not go on the mountain/walking orientated Meets? Ignoring the reverse argument, which is probably just as valid, I looked around the people in the discussion. It occurred to me that the younger members who attend regularly on a Tuesday evening at the Rowing Club, would probably have a fairly fixed view of a lot of these older members – they would be glued to an armchair (emerging only with difficulty to heckle at the A.G.M or Dinner), hero-worship Mallory or Kirkus, and think that chalk has got something to do with Dover or blackboards (the President, despite attending at the Rowing Club, seems strangely to also hold this latter view).

Given that it is not possible for everyone in the Club to attend the Rowing Club, this communication problem (which is what it boils down to) could be alleviated somewhat if members made more use of both the Journal and, particularly, the Newsletter. Without undermining the Journal and its usefulness in this respect, I feel that the power of the immediacy of the Newsletter is overlooked by many members. Where are the short post-Meet reports and snippets of information that everyone should be contributing to the Newsletter? So, for 1984/85, don't be shy – write a few items for the Newsletter each month and give the Meets Secretary the problem of what to leave out.

*John O'Reilly*

# JOURNALS 1981-1990

## “INTERNATIONAL ROCK ATHLETES . . . YOUTH” (EXTRACT)

PAUL GARDNER

*Journal 1981/82*

Le Demande is one of the longest routes in the Verdon, making its compelling way up the full height of the Gorge. To reach its foot involves a walk in from the Couloir Samson through the intense darkness and hidden puddles of the tourist tunnel. Pete Holden, our team coach, had woken us before dawn in the frosty cold and driven us to the tunnel end. He left us just as the sun was coming over the horizon melting the frost and warming the air.

We had met Pete in the bar a few days earlier. He and Howard had been driven off the Eiger – it was too warm. We were all camped on some open ground by the river after being driven off the campsite by the mayor – the campsite wasn't open because it had no hot water, the solar panel being elsewhere. The mayor was very excited about us being there, so much so that we couldn't understand his machine-gun delivery. We heard rumours of his anger and experienced it in the early morning of our second day. Robin attempted to get him to slow down but he just wandered off – something snapped and the teacher in Robin came out – “Hey, come here sunshine, I'm talking to you!” Unlike the lower band fourth years at Bemrose, he was not impressed and went off to throw stones at some Swiss next to us. We loaded everything into the van and moved off down the road.

Pitch followed pitch with complete disregard for Livesey's attempt to define or grade them. Only sections stand out in the mind and even their order is now a jumble. There was one pitch where progress involved scrambling from one twisted sappling to the next, barely touching the rock for twenty or thirty feet, marvelling out loud at the strength of these twigs. Stances came and went, some spacious, others a peg and a horizontal, twisted twiglet. One such stance separated two magnificent groove pitches; leaning out and bridging onto 'goutte d'eau', clipping pegs, deciding which ones to miss to avoid running out of krabs after half a pitch, feeling the sharp-edged holds bite into the pads of our fingers, being aware of the river getting further and further below, but feeling so secure that the space was part of the joy.

Finally this came to an end as the crack, in a remarkable short distance, became a chimney. However, the evil moment when the chimney had to be tackled was put off for a while by a traverse out of the line to avoid a desperate struggle in an off-width, overhanging chimney-crack. A little overhang led to a beautiful airy traverse back in above the monster crack. A stone dislodged by Robin bounded clear to the foot of the route without touching anything. Delightful though it was, the traverse must have been superb before some hammer-swinging vandal had smashed the pockets/sides in to 'improve' the holds, marking the grey rock with yellow scars. After this the chimney was unavoidable.

Pete had briefed us on these chimneys. “Absolutely smooth”, he said; “no gear” he said. When he was there, Chris Gibb had failed. We gasped “Chris Gibb!” He had knee-jammed the back crack deep inside, in shorts. “In shorts!” Our eyes were as wide as saucers. “No gear”, he said. “Don't bother taking any big stuff”, he said. Fortunately, we disregarded this piece of advice. Take a number nine hex.

Actually, the walls of the chimney were not smooth, rather they had the texture of pebble-dash. After this pleasant surprise, the thirty feet to the first runner did not seem too far, particularly as its placement was obvious every time you looked up.

The top came very suddenly. One moment I was pulling onto a ledge with a short wall behind and the next I was on the top. A deeply channelled limestone pavement stretched down to the thorn bushes which masked the road. We had finished the route. Now we could look forward to the bar.

## CLIMBING THE NAPES NEEDLE (*EXTRACT*)

A. A. MILNE

*Journal 1983*

Ken and I went to the Lakes together in August 1902, staying at a farmhouse in Seathwaite. We had decided to do a little rock climbing. We knew nothing about it, but we had brought a rope, nailed boots, and the standard book by Owen Glynne Jones. The climbs in this book were graded under such headings as Easy, Medium, Moderately Stiff and Extremely Stiff. We decided to start with a Moderately Stiff one, and chose Napes Needle on Great Gable, whose charm is that on a postcard it looks Extremely Stiff. Detached by the hands of a good photographer from its context, it becomes a towering pinnacle rising a thousand feet above the abyss. Roped together, since it seemed to be the etiquette, Ken and I would scale this mighty pinnacle, and send postcards to the family.

We were a little shy about the rope when we started out, carrying it lightly over the arm at first, as if we had just found it and were looking for its owner.... and then more grimly over the other arm, as one who makes for some well, down which some wanderer has fallen. The important thing was not to be mistaken for what we were: two novices who had been assured that a rope made climbing less dangerous, when, in fact, they were convinced that it would make climbing very much more so. There was also the question of difficulty. To get ourselves to the top of the Needle would be Moderately Stiff; but it was (surely) Extremely Stiff to expect us to drag rope up there too. I felt all this more keenly than Ken, because it had already been decided, anyhow by myself, that I was to 'lead'. Not only had I won the Gymnastics Competition Under -14 in 1892 but, compared with Ken's, my life was now of no value. Ken had just got engaged to be married. If I led, we might both be killed (as seemed likely with this rope) or I might be killed alone, but it was impossible that I would ever be breaking the news to his lady of an accident which I had callously survived. I was glad of this, of course; but I should have liked it better if it had been I who was engaged and Ken who was being glad.

An extract by A. A. Milne from his autobiography 'It's Too Late Now', published in 1939. Submitted by Gordon Gadsby.

A somewhat offbeat inclusion in an Oread Journal unless you are aware that Gadsby was understudying for Christopher Robin in the Oread Panto. Due to a "confusion of authors" he ended up playing Capt. Hook to P. Janes' Peter Pan — *Editor*.

Further adventues with Poo and Tigger:-

## THE BELPER CRACK

30' HVS 4c

In the convent grounds on the E. side of the A6, just to the N. of the bridge over the railway at the N. end of the town.

Takes the obvious overhanging crack on the highest part of the crag. Not well protected.

First recorded ascent: R. Tresidder, R. Larkham, 16.5.84

This is the eyecatching crack on the left as you approach Belper after being rained off at Matlock. Parking at the foot of the climb.



TOM THUMB – PRINCE OF DARKNESS (*EXTRACT*)*BRIAN WEST**Journal 1983*

I first met the Oread about seventeen years ago. After walking from Wirksworth to an evening Meet at Cratcliffe, I was duly recruited to a rope of half-a-dozen hopefuls who were to attempt Bramley's Traverse.

After much heaving and ho-ing we puffed onto that capacious ledge and there clanked to a halt like a goods train at the buffers. Les Langworthy led the abyss, followed trustingly by Howard Johnson – all blow-wave and tight trousers. Then it was me. Or rather, it wasn't me. One look down that groove and I decided to stay; and, despite all coaxing, stay I did.

With typical Oread solicitude, I was jettisoned and left to my fate. However, I did not go down immediately. I sat for some considerable time on that ledge, fascinated by this Oread chain-gang as it shuffled past, happy in its bondage. In a way I am sitting there still.

"Enough of this ancient history!", I hear you cry. "Who is this Langworthy wally? Who is this Johnson wimp? This is 1983!"

Alright, its 1983; a Wednesday night, and I'm at Cratcliffe again. Unfortunately, so is everyone else. The fair flower of youth blossoms on every conceivable line, and on some that are quite inconceivable. I recognise one wilted bloom levitating mysteriously up an improbable bulge. It is O'Reilly, giving a fine impression of a haul-sack to an unappreciative Martin Roome. Martin hangs tight to his belay; teeth clenched, hernia imminent.

Now all this is bad news, as they say. My repertoire at Cratcliffe is not very extensive. It finishes, quite symbolically I always think, where adjectives fail and numbers begin. Furthermore, I am climbing with Helen (she of the stretch jeans and maidenly blush), and Helen is no mean climber if kept beyond the grasps of her twin gods, Beer and Chips. So here I am, with a personable young lady to impress, and nothing in sight that I can actually climb.

A glance along the crag confirms the worst. I am left with either "Savage Messiah" or some gem quaintly entitled "Reticent Mass Murderer". I can hardly think that either will be suitable for persons of a nervous disposition.

## A FAIRY TALE

*Anon**Journal 1984*

Once upon a time in the far flung right hand corner of Drinkbok galaxy on the outer reaches of the known universe was a small pink planet called Dorea upon which the Doreans lived in peace and harmony for around  $257\frac{3}{4}$  glinks, (approx.  $5,000\frac{1}{4}$  of our years). They were led by a president and his inner cabinet but were greatly influenced by an ancient guru of the Fuzzyfiz sect – Grumpencrapp the miserable. A short portly chap who was followed by several disciples of the same sect.

These Fuzzyfeeze had long ago lost the ability to speak coherently and communicated by a series of knowledgeable grunts. This was for the sole reason that they participated in the disgusting habit of seitt smoking. A seitt was a massive bowl on the end of a stem in which was incinerated huge amounts of weeds, herbs and grom dung from which was emitted great palls of stunkensmoker. These palls had gathered over the glinks to form massive clouds, and because there wasn't any wind on Dorea (due to it having two axes and not knowing which way to turn) the Fuzzyfeeze had lost touch with the other inhabitants and only communicated with the other members of their sect via their peculiar guttural grunt.

Around about the fifteenth millenium a.p. there came from the neighbouring galaxy a huge comet which had a cataclismic effect on Dorea. For this comet which had been called Dicda-Odd-Dangler, passed so close that the jetstream from its tail set up mighty winds across the surface of Dorea clearing all clouds of stunkensmoker from sight, and for the first time for many many glinks, in fact the very first time for the younger generations, all Doreans could see their little pink planet.

Now the youngsters were beholden at the marvellous sights before them, but not so the Fuzzyfeeze for much had changed since they last cast their eyes about themselves, and as the scientists had calculated that the winds would last for the next 500 glinks they were sore afraid. The youngsters felt free at last, but the fuzzyfiz sect felt naked and exposed and petitioned their government to take some action. The cabinet thought hard and long and finally made a decision. El Presidente Vastmember decreed that a massive windbreak called a musson would be built and behind it the land would be divided into a grid. Each square of the grid would be allotted to a Fuzzyfiz so that he could smoke his seitt in contemplative peace. He would be compelled to record his position on the grid on a document. This great constitutional document was then known as the seitting plan, and until the planet split along the fault line between its two axes, everyone lived happily ever after.

## THINGS DON'T CHANGE (*EXTRACT*)

*ROCK HUDSON*

*Journal 1984*

The same old argument, people wanting change, others that don't. The comments on levels of skill, involvement, good membership or commitment. The pettiness in trying to uphold a minor so-called tradition, when the important point is to still be part of a greater one. Are we to allow members to sit on a fence and look at the view instead of being in that view? Time will only tell, when we find ourselves in that view, with its then welcome fence to sit on.

## TAN-Y-COED LLAETH

*BRIAN WEST*

*Journal 1984*

It is a sodden, sullen night, windy and Welsh-wet. Rain-assailed, tight-nailed casements weep wantonly, lamenting a long lost line to a long lost estuary.

Hush now; it is Tan-y-Wyddfa and the Oreads are sleeping. The hopeless, the hopeful, the damning, the damned; all tomato-saucily sardined in beer-black oxygen-lack torpor.

Come closer; peep into Aran, into Clogwyn, into Hebog; peer at rows of sleep-sacked, cheese-toastie-packed bodies duck-downed in sweet and sour slumber.

So it seems; only you can see their hopes, their fears, their dreams.....

Pete Scott is suffering. A cold sweat beads his brow. It is raining on his Gore-Tex.

A similar sweat beads O'Reilly's brow. It is raining on Pete Scott's Gore-Tex.

Martin has a visitor. No it is not Ingrid. It is the Ghost of Craps Past. Martin re-lives actionreplays of those matchless motions of yesteryear, when the world was young, fresh and just waiting to be crapped on.

Sighing contentedly, O'Reilly gently caresses taut swelling curves; curves that belong to the wallet pop-riveted to his armpit. The wallet bulges with Radder's insurance money. John is on to a good thing. Whose gear shall he set fire to next?

Tip-to-Toe in figure-flattering black, Radders is hanging from a helicopter. Torn by self-doubt, he stares indecisively at the snow beneath. Chris is worried; are his skis quite the right length for the job, and what does he do with the Cadbury's Milk Tray when he gets there?

Martin has a visitor. No, it is not Ingrid. It is the Ghost of Craps Present. Like the Andrex dog, Martin romps in a surrealist splendour of soft tissues, shimmering pink, white, blue..... Even though he can still outcrap Maurice, and the cool kiss of Twyford's Adamant has lost none of its allure, the reckless days of Izal Medicated are but a fond memory.

Doormouse-deep in her bag, Helen smoulders on. With her metabolism fuelled to magmatic intensity by liquid carbohydrate, she has achieved earth-orbit and now lies dormant, a dying ember. She dreams of more beer.....

Dave Wright has had more beer and is orbiting Silverstone. His adoring public roars its approval as he laps Niki Lauda for the second time. Showing masterly control, Dave waves nonchalantly to the cheering crowds. Al Ames, not yet quite so disciplined, lurches reluctantly to an unscheduled pit-stop.

Martin has a visitor. No, it is not Ingrid. It is the Ghost of Craps to Come, looking remarkably like Ray Handley. Martin recoils in haemorrhoidal horror at the Savlon-scented, pebble-dashed portrayal of his anal future.

Pete Scott smiles. The rain has passed, and through the thinning mists a girl bounds bouncily towards him, her long hair flying, her arms outstretched.

"Peter, Peter", she cries, longingly.

Ineffable joy flares in Scott's bony breast. It is Clare!

The smile freezes; that jaw juts. In six-million dollar slow-motion, Clare is about to plunge into a puddle left by the rain. Should he sweep down his Gore-Tex before her? Oh cruel dilemma!

The smile relaxes. Fair wear and tear!

Black dread clutches at O'Reilly's innards. His armpit throbs.

The smile is now confident. There's always the BMC insurance. Down goes the Gore-Tex!

The smile slips. Set to welcome his heart's desire, Pete stares aghast as Clare springs past and on into the mists. There is more than one Peter in the world, it seems; and more than one rip in the Gore-Tex. Scott is having a rough night.

Martin has a visitor. Yes, it is!

Field-Marshal Fisher, Lord of our far-flung battle-line, receives grim news from the Front. The Fuzzy-Wuzzies have taken Smethwick; the Celtic riff-raff are poised to cross the Stour. Corporal Kipling groans in despair.

"Bear up man, bear up!" barks Lord Fisher, stiffening what passes for an upper lip.

Remember, Rudyard, if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs ..... "On your way, Gunga!"

A sharp cut from his Malacca speeds a native runner out into a hail of Welsh Nationalist spite; a gunboat is despatched to Stourbridge.

"Grease 'em, baby!" snarls Fisher.....

Ego-driven mercilessly, our hapless players blunder on through the mental maze. Outside the deep, dark, deep-dark night drips on into a wet-slate-gleaming dawn; the rain tempers to a trickle.

Looming out of the sea-fret, Y Garn blows its ballast-tanks and surges skywards, slicing the cloud-wrack in conning-tower majesty.

The Oreads will soon be waking. These mobile, expressive features will slowly congeal, setting into the final familiar masks of everyday. Rebelling, the mutinous neuroses will be thrust deep into spiritual stuff-sacks; horizontal and vertical holds will be adjusted to stabilize the various images for the coming day. Let us be discreet and leave the Oread to its cosmetics.

Already bladders are signalling frantically and Gordon Wright is making an infernal row in the kitchen. Helen is preparing for re-entry, and Radders will soon be down, impossibly hearty, all doubts about the Milk Tray Box completely erased. Fisher will lie long abed, testing his words of the day for euphony and resonance, before articulating his inanities like some hesitant blackbird essaying the first querulous notes of the dawn chorus.

It is time to go. Remembering not to stub you toe on the chunk of Snowdonia that lies athwart the hall, tip-toe quietly down and .....soft! What's this? Pondering great truths, a noble youth lies austere before the fireplace; a jug of pure spring-water at his elbow; a crust forgotten, on the floor. A young Greek god, taken unawares?

No, it's only me.

Now we know – that empty box of Milk Tray in the drying room — *Editor*.

## THIRTY YEARS BACK (*EXTRACT*)

*ROCK HUDSON*

*Journal 1985*

For 1955, there are 18 reports on club meets lodged in the Oread Log Book. These show that 40% of them were in Derbyshire, no doubt due to the lack of private transport to go elsewhere. However, despite this, 30% of meets were in Wales and further 10% in the Lakes. Generally meets provided the opportunity for undertaking a spectrum of activities which are appropriate to members of a mountaineering club.

On 55% of meets rock climbing predominated, while walking took place on 60%. Snow and ice climbing was only practised on 5% of meets – again due to the difficulty of reaching the mountains. Or perhaps because it was a poor winter. Interesting to note that for the year only 5% had a social content.

I checked up on the weather reported in these meet reports and found 20% were blessed with very good conditions. 20% had good weather, whilst only fair conditions accounted for 20%. Bad to terrible weather was reported for the rest.

One author complains about the lack of support, a sentiment still heard from someone who has taken the trouble to organise a meet, only to have it very poorly attended.

New members will not unfortunately have the pleasure of staying at the Barnsley M.C. hut on the Snake Pass, for hill creep has made it unsafe and it had to be closed – a great pity. As an innocent youth (some still say so) it was here that I first came into contact with mixed sex sleeping arrangements and that mad rush down to the pub, in this case the Snake Inn, after a day out on the hills.

I'm really just a 'young-un', thus lacking in a vast amount of Oread history and of course associated mountaineering folk-lore of the past – omissions for which I apologise. I don't know the derivation of the name Chinese Butress, but I know some older Oread will. With all these accumulated years of being part of our sport, they must surely hold a vast store of knowledge. Perhaps one of them would like to answer the above point on Chinese Butress, or on any other facet concerned with the Oread's past. The editor looks forward to future contributions.

He didn't have to wait too long. A contribution by Jack Ashcroft in the 1986/87 Journal provided detailed evidence (with illustrations) for the naming of Chinese Wall. I would also argue about Hudson's sense of priorities. The "mad rush down to the pub" generally preceded the "mixed sex sleeping arrangements" — *Editor*.

## BULLSTONES '85

*BRIAN WEST*

*Journal 1985*

Having been importuned quite relentlessly by the Hon. Editor to provide a Meet Write-up, I have had to cobble together something to shut him up. Unfortunately I can raise little enthusiasm for Write-Ups, Journals and the like. To my mind climbers exhibit an amazing conceit, childish almost beyond belief, that their doings are of surpassing significance, their reports awaited eagerly by a world agog. In most circles the subject 'What I did on my holidays' is exhausted usually towards the end of Junior school. It will be less tedious for me, and probably for you if I write not about this Bullstones in particular, but of Bullstones in general.

It occurs to me that there must be a substantial number of what Radcliffe would call 'activists' (a nebulous term referring to the constituents of one's clique) to whom Bullstones connotes nothing at all. Well, the name Bullstones belongs properly to an outcrop on the south flank of Outer Edge, and by association to the cabins once situated nearby. Oread meets were held here until the cabins fell into desuetude and were eventually wrecked. Both the name and the meet live on: a winter weekend traversing the hills, carrying all one's gear and generally roughing it. A form of back-packing, I suppose, if one wishes to use the dreadful neologism.

As a digression, it is interesting to note that these shooting cabins came in pairs, or, if only one, it would be divided internally with separate entrances. The Gentlemen would use one cabin, the others the other. Interior fittings will usually show which one was used by which, but in cases of complete demolition a statistical analysis of the surrounding bottle glass should give the Socio-Archaeologist a ready means of demarcation: a preponderance of clear glass indicating a 'Them' region; of brown glass an 'Us' region.

Now for the heavy going and a pertinent question. The Bullstones and like Meets, have they a place in the Oread of '86 and beyond? I think that their importance is increasing and will explain why.

These meets are needed to maintain the balance of the Oread. They remind us of a simpler and easier time when money was shorter and climbing broader; and they provide links with the origins of the Club, origins rooted in a love of hills for their own sake, of wild places in wild weather, and of the unique camaraderie engendered thereby.

It is by such continuities, insignificant perhaps in themselves, that is preserved the nexus which enable a club to change with time without altering its precepts or its character; an evolution that presently perplexes the Oread.

Climbing Clubs to-day are ten-a-penny; as often as not so are their members. It is not all their fault; one cannot miss what one never knew. The shame is that without some effort they will never know. As in all matters of personal choice, the undiscerning will always take the easy option; they will always follow the crowd; and modern pressures conspire to promote the athletic at the expense of the aesthetic, the shallow at the expense of the profound.

Meets are now anything but. Affluence and personal transport have removed the necessity for making the best of conditions as found and of companions as found. Much is lost thus.

The demand now is for hard rock, dry rock, – quick rock. Indeed, one suspects that for some climbers one of life's dirtier tricks is that rock tends to outcrop in nasty wet windy places, miles from anywhere and usually distinctly uphill. The hill is in fact an embarrassment that could well be done without. Now these conditions, so abhorrent to the rock-athlete, are the very ones which bestow character on our native hills, and which to the mountaineer, give them their perennial appeal.

It should now be clear that we are playing different games: at the limit, mutually exclusive games. It is becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile these two aspects, both at a personal and at a Club level; and it can only get worse. This is the dilemma which confronts the Oread. I will outline one way to avoid the horns; drastic, but logically rather elegant.

Despite what some would have us believe – some indeed, who ought to know better – the Oread is not a climbing club. By its very constitution, the objects of the Club are defined as 'mountaineering in every aspect' Climbing is only a part of that manifesto. Well would it be to remember this. At present, rock-climbing is rapidly becoming an end in itself; it is attracting the attention of the media manipulators; competition climbing is a possibility. Bullstones, Welbourn's Wander, and the like, can maintain the balance of the Oread until extreme rock-climbing reaches the stage, as it almost has, where it abandons any allegiance to mountaineering. At this point, when rock-climbing is de facto a sport in its own right, it can be safely declared beyond the terms of reference of the Oread constitution and consigned to whatever private hell it has wrought for itself. This will leave the Oread free to sneak off quietly whilst the competition climbers and their ilk are belayed by the Sports Council or whoever. I shan't miss them.

Oh yes! This is supposed to be a Meet Write-Up! Bullstones '85 – seventeen people, one dog. I hope that everyone got something out of the weekend: I know that the dog did.

Here is irony or even ambivalence. Embued with "little enthusiasm for write-ups, Journals and the like" the writer exposes himself (again) as a master craftsman..... pamphleteer, and polemicist manqué — *Editor*.

Mountains! What stuff has been written in praise of them  
what bunkum from dithyrambic pens.

## A LONG WALK – LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS

*Editor*

In 1985, between 25th March and 18th June (79 walking days) Gordon and Pauline Wright walked 1,124 miles from Lands End to Duncansby Head, averaging 14.23 miles a day. This route took in the north coast of Cornwall and Devon, canal routes to the Midlands, the Pennine Way (part), the Forest of Bowland, The Lake District (Kentmere, High Street), the Southern Uplands, a miserable stretch on roads from Edinburgh to Stirling, the old railway from Callender to Crianlarich, the West Highland Way to Fort William, the Caledonian Canal (part) and Lochs Arkaig and Quoich to Glen Shiel, Glen Elchaig to Achnashellach, the Whitbread Wilderness (Shenaval) to Dundonnell, and on via Loch Shin to Strathmore, to Tongue, and along the coast to John O'Groats.

Pauline wrote an account in the 1985 journal, summing up by writing: "It was not our intention to break any records. The aim was simply to get there without walking on roads unless forced to. The further we walked, the more difficult it became to share my thoughts, even with Gordon, and even more difficult to write my diary. Maybe it was the long spells of solitude, and the vastness of the country, with times of complete quiet which impressed me. At times it seemed that everything was there just for the two of us. We had moments when we fell about laughing and others when we didn't. It was quite a way to celebrate our 35th wedding anniversary."

## KHARCHA KUND NORTH RIDGE 1987 (PATRON: SIR JACK LONGLAND)

*PETER SCOTT*

Bobby Gilbert, Robin Beadle, Rob Tresidder and Pete Scott, all members of the Oread M.C. climbed the North Ridge of Kharcha Kund in Alpine style. The mountain is 6,612m in altitude and situated in the Gangotri Glacier area of the Garwhal Himalaya, India. The summit was reached on the morning of 18th September, 1987 after a 5½ day ascent and a 1 day approach from base camp at Sundaban. Descent was by the normal West Ridge route and took 1½ days to base camp. A total of 7 bivouacs was made. The North Ridge comprises a number of rock towers connected by elegant snow/ice arêtes. Difficulties were encountered on rock up to Alpine VI, A1 and ice up to Scottish V. It was the first ascent of the ridge and first British ascent of Kharcha Kund.

The expedition took a year to organise, including defining a suitable objective. We were fortunate after much research to discover and gain permission to attempt an inspiring unclimbed line on an attractive looking mountain suitable for a small team climbing in Alpine style. Two previous teams had made successful ascents of Kharcha Kund via the West Ridge, three teams had previously failed in their attempts to climb the North Ridge, primarily due to poor weather. The weather conditions were exceptionally good in the Gangotri region during the 1987 "post monsoon" season.

The cost of the expedition was £5,000, members contributing £1,000 each. Grants were received from the M.E.F., the B.M.C., Derbyshire County Council, and Oread M.C.

A helpful, detailed expedition report is available.

*BOBBY GILBERT (EXTRACT)*

*Journal 1987*

I arrived in a corner with a very steep exit, placed a large rock runner and pulled up on it to see what I could see. The groove above was blank. So was the one to the left. The runner was wriggling around quite alarmingly, but a couple of blows from my ice hammer had it well jammed in (it was probably Robin's). The thought of coming off with a big sack on, and understandably being pulled backwards didn't bear thinking about.

I decided I would have to aid the next bit, and so I clipped a sling into the runner, stood up, and managed to bang a three-inch blade in about an inch. I tied it off, thinking it would have to do, and stood up on it, praying it wouldn't pull out. The groove above was under two inches of thick lichen and I spent five minutes hacking this away with my hammer before placing another very small bendy blade. This I clipped into and stood on, watching it bend.

From here I could just step into the next groove again on very small holds. I put my right foot on a tiny hold on the vertical wall, smeared my hands on small sloping holds, and leaving the safety of the sling, swung my unwieldy weight across and grabbed a good hold, thankful that my feet hadn't shot off! I was totally exhausted. Hard stuff at 6,000m. The last seventy feet was all steep but on huge holds, so I shot up, belayed and brought Robin up. Whilst he sorted out a bivvy ledge, I 'abbed' down to take the rope across to the others who were waiting at the bottom. I then had to prussic up the pitch again.

Robin had found some small sloping ledges which we tied ourselves onto, and bivvied. We were fairly well sorted out by the time the others arrived. I had my food and brew as quickly as possible and got in my pit. Meanwhile the other two were sorting out their belay in the dark.

The ledge I was sitting on sloped at about 30 degrees and so every time you started to relax, you slipped and were grabbed in the crutch by your harness. This called for careful positioning.

About half an hour after we'd settled down there was a bit of a disturbance from the boys next door. There was a great crash and jangling followed by loud oaths and raised voices. Apparently Rob had put a peg in, belayed to it, hung all his gear, rucksack, crampons, etc. on it and sat underneath it and the whole thing had come crashing down on top of him! I just pretended to be asleep. I didn't want to have anything to do with it.

Next day we got over the next of the GNT, a knife-edged ridge, and then abseiled down two vertical pitches into the unknown to arrive at the North Col. Unfortunately there was another pinnacle in the col, which we were unable to get around, and so had to climb over. This involved hard ice climbing, one pitch led by Rob on rock, hard vertical ice, which we had to traverse. A superb lead, which we took advantage of by all tying on and seconding him. A Scottish Grade V pitch! Then more hard rock climbing up a chimney, and some awkward abseiling and climbing on poor snow, led up to another bivvy site. Our fifth on the mountain. That night the temperature was - 15 degrees Centigrade. Fifty degrees colder than Delhi!

We were within three pitches of the far side of the North Col and so got there in good time after a hard traversing ice pitch (Rob Tresidder speciality) and jamming of one rope, making it necessary to cut fifty feet off it. (Yes it was my bloody rope!) We spent the rest of the day digging a snow hole in the col, ready for an early start for the summit on the following day.

The summit day arrived as our alarms went off at 3.00 a.m. We all had a brew, then promptly all went back to sleep again. Everyone seemed pretty dispirited at this stage. Finally we got up at 6.00 a.m., and after a long plod up the steep snow of summit dome made the summit at 9.00 a.m.

The weather was brilliant. Clouds in the valley with mountains sticking through them, clear blue sky above. We could see for miles in every direction. We spent half an hour on the summit, taking pictures, shaking hands, looking at the view. It suddenly all seemed worthwhile. All the months of preparation, all the hassles of getting to base camp, all the hard work on the climb, but we made it. The first ascent of the North Ridge, and the first British ascent of the mountain.

### *PETER SCOTT (DIARY EXTRACT)*

#### ALTITUDE

Two deep breaths, one more step  
 Must rest, twenty gasping breaths.  
 Now unconsciously holding breath, compose picture, press shutter, utter collapse.  
 An age to recover.  
 Now one more step, up steeply, crampons bite, axe holds.  
 Suddenly ice brittle, picks no longer hooking in, try again, no good, tiring now,  
 try again, useless, tiring, desperation, steep drop, rope spins down.  
 Finally pick drives home, collapse, twenty gasping breaths.  
 Back to normal, one more step.

### *THE COMMITTED (EXTRACT)*

*MIKE WYNNE*

*Journal 1990*

Taking a last deep breath of the 'fresh' smog filled air outside. M entered the smoky alehouse. After acquiring a pint of 'Brunswick No. 29' (whatever happened to the wonderful names such as 'Bertie's Bottom Blaster?'), he wound his way up the half finished stairs to the little room above.



A quick glance around showed him that he was not the last to arrive. Some of the more strongly committed were there already; some seemed as if they had been there forever. Some looked as if they were not really there at all. Fagin was already there, as usual, peering through his thick lensed spectacles at his book of numbers. He would continue to do this all through the meeting, thought M – as he always did – yet he would still seem to make the right comments at the right time. Did he really listen to all that was said? Or was much said anyhow that was worth listening to?

The note-taker was there – early as always. The job of transcribing the meeting's discussion into a brief set of comprehensible notes is an onerous task and obviously not something that we were taught at school. Even with the help of the most up to date word processing machines, the job is not made much easier – yet he sticks religiously at it, year after year. Fortunately, as the note-taker's position is of such importance, the system has provided for a standby in case the note-taker is absent or overworked, a clever little loophole which on occasions can give the notetaker a good opportunity to 'pass the buck'.

Then there is the inner circle of the ultra-committed. This is the team without which the whole organisation may collapse. It revolves around the assets which in theory, are owned and run by all the members, but in practice, are run by the 'cosy little number' who are dedicated enough to put in the time and effort to do it. Various grumbings are often detected within the membership about the situation but they seem to be generally happy with it, being able to enjoy from time to time a few days of palatial luxury in their time-share apartments in the mountains over the border to the west, or even in their more mediocre accommodation which they lease on the local Duke's Estate.

Just as the proceedings are about to start, the latecomers arrive, hot foot from their body building course which always finishes just too late to enable them to arrive at the meeting on time. Brandishing beer and sandwiches, the 'post and publicity' comes in armed with various papers, mumbles the obligatory round of 'eh-ups' to those already present and settles in his place. Next but by no means least comes the Obermeister. In traditional manner the assembled rise, each raising a clenched right hand in salute, symbolising a hand jam in a mean gritstone crack. This is the guy who all the members have chosen by a totally democratic and unbiased election to be their figurehead for two years. His stout stature, rugged features, bulging biceps and chalk under his fingernails, identify him as a real mountain man. He has scaled the steepest cliffs, dangled from the rustiest pegs, survived the most harsh conditions that a Scottish winter can throw at him AND DOES NOT SKI! This is the man who is leading the club into the nineties.

Not one who likes to mess about with trivialities, he uses his new-found power to start by completely rewriting the Agenda for the evening; maybe because he has inadvertently lost or forgotten his copy, or even never received it. There is no arguing with this man – despite the fact that he is veering dangerously away from the 'traditional' way of doing things. Everyone scribbles down the new Agenda:–

1. Potential climbing wall for Redby
2. Publication of magazine/Journal
3. Monthly 'E' point tally
4. ScotInd's opening hours – an appraisal
5. Annual disco arrangements

and if time allows,

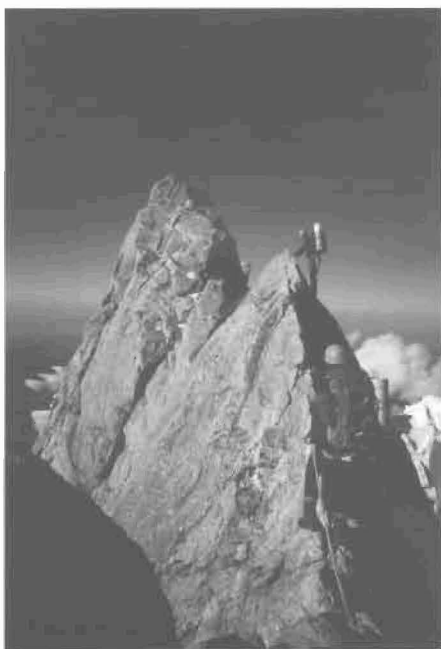
6. Financial Summary
7. Property analysis
8. Correspondence and communications
9. A.O.B.



David Penlington, upper slopes of "A.B.C.," Tien Shan, 1995. *Photo: Rock Hudson.*



Ali Ratna Tibba (5,500m), Kulu Himal. *Photo: D. Williams.*



Kharcha Kund (6,612m), North Ridge 1987. *Photo: Peter Scott.*



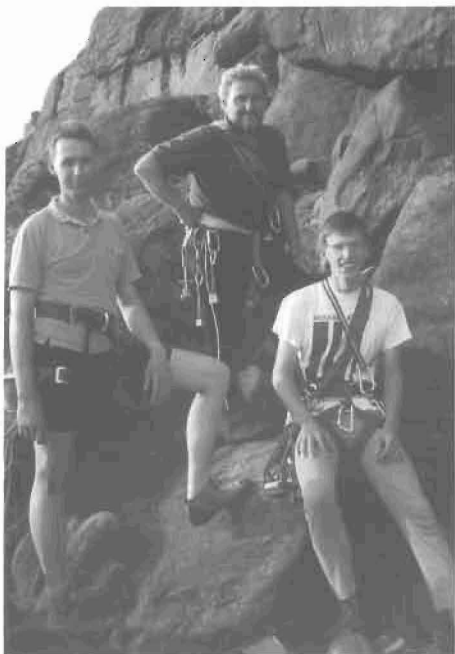
Kharcha Kund Expedition 1987. P. Scott, R. Beadle, Sir Jack Longland (Patron), R. Gilbert, R. Tresidder. *Photo: Unknown.*



White Edge, Derbyshire 1994: John Shreeve, Auntie Wainwright, Anne Squires, Anne and Bill Kenyon, Peter Janes, Roy Sawyer, Janet Reynolds, Dave Weston, George Reynolds, Colin Hobday. *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Oreads at Sea: George Reynolds, Roy Sawyer (helm), Dave Weston, Stan Moore (skipper, at rear). *Photo: H. Pretty.*



Darryl Kirk, Gordon Gadsby and Mike Hayes,  
Froggat 1995.  
*Photo: Tony Smith.*



Eric Beard (Beardie) and Des Hadlum.  
*Photo: Dennis Gray.*



Annual Fell Race, Heathy Lea, Chatsworth: Roy Eyre, Roger Larkham, Richard Hopkinson, Chris Radcliffe.  
*Photo: Chuck Hooley.*

## THE NOVICE SUPERVISION SUB-COMMITTEE

RICHARD COGHLAN

*Journal 1990*

Friday evening saw the usual rush by the O.M.C. at Portmadoc Station to bag an entire carriage for themselves and their obese rucksacks. Tomorrow's weather forecast was open to some interpretation but was not good. It didn't matter anyway, the details of the previous day's committee meeting in the Brunswick were still fresh in my mind:

"John's still got one to do. You're going to Wales this weekend Richard, can you look after it?"

Damn, I'd copped for it again. I had planned to do some proper climbing with Andrew. After all, that was the whole idea of going to Wales this weekend. He would have to find someone else to climb with. The journey didn't take long because we were being pulled by one of the new Diesels. They saved the Steamers for tourists, and tourists didn't usually want to pay to go on joy rides at this time of night. It still gave time for John to ask all the questions that I would have expected, so I launched into my customary spiel.

"They effectively stopped cars from entering the park in 2002. The rules still say at least four people per car and the toll is now over five hundred ECUs. That's why we're leaving the car in Portmadoc. You don't have to pay if you're on the A5 in transit through Ogwen, but you're not allowed to stop if you haven't paid. I remember when I started climbing, anyone could drive straight in, leave the car anywhere they liked, and walk anywhere they liked".

Streaks of rain began to appear on the windows. At least the hills hadn't changed, nor the weather. I could feel fairly confident that we would be back down the railway to Tremadoc next day. With the current situation that meant Christmas Curry before being able to turn our attention to anything else. John needed to lead another severe on a designated training route before getting his climber's licence.

Christmas Curry hadn't been the same since they put a bolt every 4 metres up the route, but I would still expect John to place gear as if he weren't also using the bolts and, of course, mark the quality of his efforts. I always thought it strange, every time I did this, because I had never been able to do much above V.S. myself. I had been around long enough to gain the status of club instructor. Experience and the ability to climb were all that was needed for this according to the B.M.C.

The train arrived at Rhydd-Ddu station and the carriage emptied into the hut. It was John's first time at Tan-y-Wyddfa, so I had to show him 'round. Who are all these people in the photographs around the room?

"Oh, past presidents. We get a new one every couple of years. Its quite a prestigious position because they say who's in the club and who's out".

What a change from the good old days! The new laws forbade walking away from the road unless one belonged to a B.M.C. recognised club. The club size was limited to 150 in the case of the Oread. The limit on numbers kept down erosion on prime sites such as Snowdonia, and elevated the Oread M.C. and similar clubs to institutions of national repute. John wouldn't get in. Newly qualified climbers needed a few years to 'prove themselves' to stand a chance against the committee and avoid the president's veto.

Working within the confines of European law was not easy at first. All insufficiently active members had to be chucked out. It caused quite a furore when some of the pioneers of the sport had to go, but what else could we do? I kept my place by volunteering to supervise novices. Others made sure that the president was well supplied with beer at the Brunswick.

John was working backwards from the recent, formally posed, suit and tie portraits to the slightly faded photographs of past presidents actually climbing.

"I see some bright red sweaters and some very odd pairs of trousers were in fashion in the early '90's". "Yes, I used to know the individuals concerned. I remember John Hudson leading me up the Triple Buttress on Beinn Eighe."

I didn't admit that I had to glance at the name plate. I couldn't remember names even in my youth. The noise of the front door being shut diverted me from my reminiscences. I remembered that time was pressing, yet everything had to be done by the book because of the legal implications of even a minor accident the next day. No problem. I turned to John and said,

"Coming down the pub? We'll do the briefing session there".

