

Towards the Post Modern 1990-1999

The journal for 1990/92 signified the end of a rich period in Oread achievement. The alpine tigers had aspired to the classic greats and had successfully transferred their skills to the higher ranges of the Himalaya and elsewhere.

During the early 90's a number of recent activists disappeared from Oread affairs, and others became attached to other groups. There was a distinct dilution of club spirit. The affairs of the club continued to be administered by a band of long serving members, but there was a shortage of young enthusiasts willing to perpetuate the spirit that had made the Oread a very special club since its earliest days.

It is, I am advised, a universal problem. In this post modern era it is hardly necessary, or even preferable, to belong to a climbing club in order to engage seriously in the great outdoors (or indoors). Climbing, mountaineering in general etc., have always attracted the individual (non team player) and clubs, as the Oread, have only provided a matrix that has created friendship, and some corporate spirit, from the myriad idiosyncrasies of individual members. It is a delicate balance and, over the years, ebbs and flows according to contemporary fashion.

In 1999 it seems likely that most clubs that have prospered from the simple but abiding friendships of the past are heading for a post-modernistic future – one that favours the anarchic and the transitory. But we shall see.

In many ways any literary traditions that the Oread still aspired to largely evaporated after the Journal 1990/92. Monthly Newsletters resumed but in a miniature desk top publishing format under the editorship and production facilities of Rob Tresidder, who handed the job onto Clive (Rusty) Russell in June 1993. These brief monthly Newsletters are the only written communication circulated throughout the club in the 1990's and, although concentrating on Meets, Hut information, and some post meets reports, often contain esoteric personal interventions by the Editor that might be more appropriate to a Mensa publication, and are little understood by the ordinary member – those below the intellectual salt.

Since they provide mainly factual information, and are not generally rewarding to literary beach combing, they are not rich in source material.

It seems right then that this Journal, up to now a distillation of recent history, should conclude with a number of contributions that reflect the present — *Editor*.





Cradle Mountain, Tasmania (see article by D. C. Cullum). *Photo: D. C. Cullum.*



50th A.G.M. Meet at Heathy Lea, April 1999. Rear: Harry Pretty, John Shreeve, John Fisher, Brian West.
 Middle Row: Colin Hobday, Rock Hudson, Anne and Reg Squires, Uschi Hobday, Janet Ashcroft, Stuart Firth,
 Derrick Burgess, Gill Keeling, Tony Raphael, Mick Keeling, Margaret Russell, Roy Eyre, Derek Pike, Clive Russell.
 Front Row: Hereward Tresidder, Rob Tresidder, Freda Raphael, Jenny Raphael, Mike Wren, Andy Oakden,
 Digger Williams, Tim Cairns, David Jones. *Photo: Jack Ashcroft.*

A SHORT DAY IN THE ITALIAN ALPS WITH OREADS OLDISH AND NEWISH

DAVID JONES

Possibly the best thing about the OMC for us “slightly younger” folk is that we can see that neither the patter of tiny feet, nor the advance of years, need stop the enjoyment of crags, hills and mountains. Putting it more simply, growing older gracefully or sedately isn’t compulsory. It is also apparent that the OMC upholds some of the best traditions of the British abroad: natty dress, healthy diet, lavish lifestyle, etc.

The Alpine trip of 1997 exemplified all this, combining mountaineering, nappies, grappa, sunbathing and smelly hellies in one heady whirl. And in the midst of it, passing through the meet as part of his season’s mission to finish off the Alpine 4,000m peaks, was Dave Penlington: Oread and first ascensionist of old. The Oread trip was to the Gran Paradiso area, based at Pont, and the Gran Paradiso was one of the peaks on the Penlington hit list. So good weather inevitably led to a foray up the thing, specifically Dave P., Tony Raphael, Richard Coghlan and I.

Despite valiant attempts to outflank him, D.P. still outpaced the rest of us to the Vittorio Emmanuel II Hut. Deciding to avoid the crowds as much as possible, we spurned the beds of the hut in favour of a bivvy, but didn’t spurn it’s beer and food for lunch. Up the tourist track we plodded until we could gain the right moraine of the Gran Paradiso Glacier, and joined the broad west ridge, where good bivvy spots can be found amongst the pancakes of rock.

An early start from the bivvy took us across the glacier and onto the bottom section of the NW face, heading diagonally up to the col between the Gran Paradiso and the Piccolo Paradiso. Our guide book, a 30 year old magazine article, gave the ridge from this col to the summit of the Gran Paradiso a rave write-up.

Unfortunately, water ice was met almost immediately after the bergschrund, and soon we were moving as two pairs, both ‘pitching’. After three pitches I must have decided that things were going too easily, as I cunningly managed to drop my ice hammer (after putting in a couple of screws), cords and all, and away it whizzed to the crevasses below, never to be seen again. Three ice tools between two people on hard ice didn’t work very well for traversing, so Tony and I devised a cunning plan and decided to go straight up the NW face. After several pitches of front pointing, and one steep ice bulge, we were able to gain a steep rock rib, with the leader sending the hammer down the rope to the second at the end of each pitch. All pretty secure, but slow.....

After two pitches on the rock, and after waving off the unwanted but persistent attentions of a helicopter touting for business, we decided to rejoin the ice, where the afternoon sun was saving us labour by allowing the ice screws to be merely lifted out of their holes. Sadly, the presence of a broken pair of sunglasses on a ledge had removed any faint notion that the rib hadn’t been climbed before, and more to the point, we were going even slower than we had on the ice.

A broad couloir brought us up towards the West ridge. A steep and soft snow ridge brought us to the summit ridge just as the sun set, our once-soggy ropes already frozen hard.

We hadn’t seen Richard and Dave for many hours, and vaguely assumed that they were already down at the bivvy site or even slurping beer at the VEII hut. But wait! What was that well-spoken voice that rang distantly but clearly through the still dusk air from the North Ridge, below us? What was it saying? It sounded suspiciously like “climb when you’re ready, Dave”. And there they were. Richard and Dave had had an afternoon exploring the summit of the Piccolo Paradiso in search of alternatives to going along the ridge to Gran Paradiso, but had ended up reverting to ‘plan A’ and found it easier than they had expected. By the time that all four of us reached the vicinity of the ‘tourist summit’ it was getting distinctly dark and we were still atop a rock ridge with no obvious descent.

However, flat ledges and clear skies meant that the bivvy option wasn't too daunting, so we took it. Only Richard had a bivvy bag, but everyone else seemed to have a reasonable night (although it was cold enough to freeze in Pont). My pathetic aluminium bag tore apart as soon as I turned over. My cosy little nook turned into a wind-funnel. I couldn't get all of me into my rucksack, no matter how hard I tried. As the sky paled and morning approached, I must have looked a sad state.

A moment changed all that. We noticed a lone figure coming up the glacier on the 'tourist route' towards the rock ridge with the Madonna statue, separated from our bivvy point by only a modest gap. Instantly we perked up and assumed a nonchalant air. What a beautiful spot! What a beautiful sunrise! what a good idea of ours to come and see it. The lone figure across the divide scrambled to the Madonna, keen to have the summit to himself, and then peered nonplussed across at the bivviers (who, he now realised, were higher than the 'tourist summit' on which he stood).

We called to him. "Hello there! Good morning!"

The lone figure replied, "Hello, lovely morning. I thought I'd have the place to myself. How are you?"

We rose with the sun and, after paying our respects to the Madonna, headed swiftly down the glacier and ridge back to the previous night's bivvy site for a late breakfast in warm sunshine (though I discovered my gloves, which had got wet the day before, still frozen hard in my sack). Then back down to the VEII hut for a well earned beer and lunch.

Even I was conscious that amongst the generally lightly laden and smartly turned out folk on the terrace, we stood out in our drab clothes, worn looking kit, and pale faces. I saw a couple of people look at us quizzically. One of their colleagues turned to them and said, by way of complete explanation, "Inglese!". Naturally!

ALL AT SEA WITH THE OREAD

ROY HORATIO SAWYER

When I was a mere lad or 45 or so and revered such icons as H. Pretty, R. Handley, D. Burgess, P. Scott and C. Radcliffe, imagine how delighted, nay, humble, I felt to be invited to the Golden Oldies October-Fest.

This annual informal gathering of elder statesmen usually took place somewhere on the west coast of Scotland. I thought it would be great to tell the grandchildren that I had actually rubbed shoulders with some of the Oread "Greats".

We were to stay in the bunkhouse in Kinlochewe and I duly arrived on the Friday evening having travelled with Ron Chambers (pre ear-ring era), Graham Foster and the small but not so perfectly formed Weston – "the elder" (or should that be Weston – "the old").

My bright eyed, bushy tailed enthusiasm was soon dampened when a Captain Mainwaring type figure (Pretty) decided to put me in my place: "Now listen Sawyer, you are only here on sufferance because my mate Appleby couldn't make it, so don't get any ideas beyond your station". The thrust of this dressing down was somewhat diluted by his attire. He was wearing a shrunken vest type garment with the faded words "Fleet Air Arm" across what may once have been a proud chest. Red tights did nothing to enhance his authoritarian image.

At this point a rakish, lothario type person slid from the shadows. The epitome of a louche Sergeant Wilson to Pretty's Captain Mainwaring. An ally I thought, but Peter Janes only joined in emphasising my lowly position.

Slightly crestfallen I surveyed my hitherto revered companions. On one side of the table Fred Allen and Jack Ashcroft were wrestling over a half eaten tin of corned beef (we all knew it belonged to Ashcroft as its sell by date went back to some 1950's Norwegian expedition). Derrick Burgess in his inimitable way was half through Ron's semi cooked carrot cake, and Graham was in the corner fiddling with something smelly, old and wrinkled, which in the event turned out to be his usual piece of German sausage.

We had a wonderful week with incidents too numerous to mention. The walk from Dundonnell to the Bothy at Shenavall then onto and over Sgurr Ban and back to Kinlochewe. The climb over Ben Alligin in wild weather, fishing, and pool (snooker) at Badachro with Dave Appleby, (who had joined us later in the week) all set a precedent for the following years of "oldies" fun on the West Coast.

As the others had always organised our trips I felt that perhaps I should do my bit. But where to go – what to do? After seeing an advert in a sailing magazine I suggested chartering a sixty foot skippered ketch, sailing from Armadale on Skye and exploring the small Isles of the Inner Hebrides. The cost was about £150.00 for the week and apart from Burgess declaring that £150.00 shared between eight people was a bit steep, it was all systems go!

Derrick, Graham, Dave Weston and a close friend of mine, one Michael Dunn of drinking fame, embarked on a Saturday morning. A rendezvous with Pretty, Janes and Dave Appleby had been arranged for the following morning in Arisaig Harbour.

The skipper (Charles) an ex-submariner/lay preacher (a bit incongruous we thought) motored us over to the Isle of Eigg and, after dropping anchor in the sheltered bay between Kildonnan and Galmisdale, the four of us traversed the "Sgurr" in thick mist whilst Charles prepared supper for our return. The evening was spent eating and drinking around a full size log burner onboard before turning in, sometime in the early hours.

The cabins were all of a good size with Burgess bagging what he thought was the best. In his haste, he overlooked the oily steering gear above his bunk and the bilge pump handle at the end. The gear deposited crud over his borrowed sleeping bag each time we changed direction, and he was required to pump the bilge handle each morning – at least that's what he said he was doing.

After gathering the remains of the crew at Arisaig, we sailed away and visited many places not on the normal itinerary, such as – the Treshnish Isles, where young seal pups let us within a few feet: Iona, with fresh fish and the peace of the Abbey: Staffa with a very hairy landing inside Fingals cave. We then sailed to Scavaig and found an anchorage adjacent to the J.M.C.S. Hut where some of the party had spent a very wet and wild week on a previous October outing.

Whilst the skipper collected mussels for our tea, we rowed ashore for a walk around Loch Coruisk before setting sail back to Armadale. Our last evening was spent ashore enjoying a meal and lots of drink in the Hotel at Armadale. Janes eventually forgave us for accidentally locking him into Charles's house and leaving for the pub without him.

The whole trip left us with many happy memories and after a few years the call of the lonely sea and Skye was upon us again.

We left Skye from the same starting off point but with none other than Stan Moore as Skipper. For those of you who have never had the pleasure, Stan Moore is an ex Oread not to be missed.

The boat this time was an Oyster 38 with separate aft cabins complete with en-suite facilities. Of course these quarters were taken by the skipper and his lackey (Pretty) whilst we mere A.Bs. were crammed into the rest of the boat. Dave Weston sleeping on little more than a shelf, and Peter and George shoehorned into the pointy bit. The general consensus was to head north and, avoiding the tide race at Kyleakin, pass under the new bridge and continue north to Torridon. Passing the Crowlin Islands it was a little disconcerting to hear the radio announce that "submarines are operating in your area". But Harry knew all about these things and assured us that all would be well. We had a wonderful sail down Loch Torridon in an ever increasing wind but managed a peaceful night anchored off Shildaig.

Moving in to Torridon proper, the next day saw us arrive at our anchorage in strong north westerly winds and heavy rain. We dropped the hook about 3 to 4 miles from The Ben Damp bar whence followed a strange walk through rhododendrons which had formed a canopy about shoulder height along the path. A typical Oread rowdy lunch time led to the return journey in torrential rain, bent almost double trying to avoid the overhanging vegetation. A great way to see off the alcohol!

As time to return to home port drew near it proved necessary to set sail in a force 6/7 storm. Around the north of Raasay proved quite exciting with my lunch only being "borrowed" for a short time.

After four to five hours of relentless pounding we finally entered the sound of Raasay and thus into Portree Bay, past *H.M.S. Montrose*, a frigate, which to us seemed concreted to the bottom. Little did we realise that the crew of this vessel were soon to be brought into action.

Pretty had done a sterling job helming the boat all the way from Torridon and only when he steered towards a mooring buoy did we realise that something was wrong. The cable linking the gearbox drive had sheared, leaving us in "forward", thus making it difficult to stop.

The seas in the harbour were still steep and therefore Stan thought it prudent to call for technical assistance. The good old Royal Navy intercepted our call and we soon had an engineer on board to help us moor alongside the jetty.

After repairs, we made our way back to Armadale and experienced one of those rare Scottish days, whether in the hills or at sea. Calm at first, with a watery sun pushing through the mist, the wind picked up to a force 2/3 and, by afternoon, we were anchored opposite Eilean Donan Castle at the foot of Loch Duich. We had a lazy time, wandering ashore, or fishing, followed by a long motor home. The wind had dropped completely, leaving the mountains reflected on a glassy sea.

Perhaps we might have walked the hills a little more, but sailing these waters is definitely a different way to see Scotland. The company was great and my personal thanks go to Stan Moore who helped me achieve a life long ambition. As in all trips there are incidents and experiences, arguments, and many times of mutual enjoyment. Trying to relate a few of these in a short piece is nigh on impossible, but I hope I have given a flavour of another aspect of Oread activities.

It subsequently came to our notice that Princess Anne's husband was at that time, skipper of *H.M.S. Montrose*. It is possible, of course that he assumed that R. G. Pettigrew was aboard our vessel —
Editor.

ROCKING THE CRADLE

DOUGLAS CHARLES CULLUM

Deloraine, Elizabeth Town, Moltema, in grey pre-dawn light. Try as I might, I couldn't screw more than 130 out of Art's ancient 2.6 litre Datsun station wagon. Kimberley, Railton, Sheffield, and a sudden and splendid sunrise behind us. Some biggish-engined cars are gas guzzlers, but Art's Datsun is an oil guzzler. "Fill her up with 20/50, and check the petrol while your at it." Art, by the way, is a buddy from way back, who had generously given us the free use of his house in Westbury and this old car. Claude Road, Gowrie Park, some spectacular glimpses of an alpine-looking Mount Roland through gaps in the clouds, and at last the National Park Visitor Centre at 8.30 a.m. We had to pay to get in, but you do get a lot for your money. Did I mention that speeds here in Tasmania are in kph?

It was unexpectedly cold, and the clouds were thick and low. The previous day we had had 38 degrees, but up here it was struggling to get into double figures, and we only had shorts and tee shirts. Also the pretty Thai girl in the pub in Launceston the previous evening had told us that Cradle Mountain enjoyed only fifteen fine days a year. We were not ecstatic. However, the visitor centre was

impressive, and the ranger said that it might clear up by eleven and added that they only had 10 fine days a year. We drove up to the car park at the north end of Lake Dove and parked facing down the lake towards the mountain. We waited. By 9.30 some of the clouds had golden edges, and by 10 odd scraps of blue were showing through. Good enough. The sack (very small) was packed – tins of fizzy drinks, some chocolate and a very light sweatshirt each. So, up into the singing mountain, but first we signed in, with details of our planned route (obligatory), and made use of the palatial public loos, paid for out of the admission fees.

We headed roughly west along the Wombat Track, where a helpful sign gave a detailed description of wombat turds (they're square and conveniently divided into bite-sized segments). Soon we passed Lake Lilla on our left, very pretty in the strengthening sunshine, and Thrush Forest on our right, and soon afterwards the Wombat Pool. No wombats, but incredibly beautiful, like Disney without the vulgarity. Here the track swung south, and we came to the boardwalk, also paid for out of the admission fees. It's not there to keep your feet dry but to protect the flora and the surface from the effects of tramping boots. We climbed to a grassy ridge where we joined the Overland Track, and could look down to Lake Dove to the east and Crater Lake to the west. It isn't really a crater, but it looks as if it might be, with a cirque of steep crags rising straight out of the water round the southern end. Next there was a short steep bit of scrambling. Nothing to a pair of ageing Oreads, of course, and we soon reached Marion's Lookout at the top, and an easier gradient over Cradle Plateau. The wild flowers were abundant and often spectacular. I wish I could tell you their names. It was starting to get hot, and there was no longer any doubt that this was one of the Ten Fine Days. We plodded on, and suddenly there it was, Cradle Mountain in all its splendour. You may have seen it in calendars – no self respecting pictorial calendar of Tasmania would dream of not having at least one shot of it. It is a dragon's back, running south west to north east, with many jagged spires, and the main summit (1,545 m) is at the extreme right hand (south west) end. The left hand end drops from a great pinnacle called Weindorfer's Tower to a col, then rears up to a lower but very shapely peak called Little Horn, and the whole looks like an old-fashioned cradle. The complete traverse gives an excellent day and is not difficult, but it does need at least two competent climbers with all the gear. Mary hates rock-climbing and we didn't have any gear. Ah, well, another time. We took the first photo's, but had to keep taking more as we drew closer.

At about 12.30 we spotted the Kitchen Hut, which was our intended stop for lunch. It was a very strange wooden building, like a large garden shed, but very tall and with two doors, one directly above the other, i.e. about seven or eight feet above the ground. Well, why do you think? It snows a lot here in the winter, on many of the 355 days that are not fine. Inside there were some primitive bench seats and a table. We had a bite and drank more than was prudent of our drinks and set off up the final wall. Well, it looks like a wall, but it's more of a scramble. No more than 600 feet to the top, and way-marked for the benefit of the stupid and incompetent.

After a short distance the track divided. The way-marked half traversed right and disappeared round a corner. The other half went straight up, clearly the dirittissima. I took the latter. Mary argued (what's new?) and took the way-marked half. "See you on the summit," I said, as she set off, taking the very small sack. With the drinks. And my camera.

The dirittissima got steeper and less well marked. After a while I found myself doing moderate rock climbing, then the track more or less petered out, then the climbing became diff. I was beginning to ponder the wisdom of continuing when suddenly I found myself on a summit. Not *the summit*, a summit. It was Smithies Peak, the second summit, and separated from the main summit by an unbridgeable gulf. Clearly I would have to descend all the way back to where the track had divided, and take the way-marked route. Down then. Ah. Exactly which way is down? Here, in the corner? No, it was more like that slab over there. Or perhaps that little arete to the right? No, don't remember that. I had no idea which way I had come up. Never mind, I'd find the route sooner or later. Or maybe not. It occurred to me that I might be here all night. I was already thirsty and soon I would get hungry. Mary had all the food and drink.

I regarded with greater interest than before the helicopters that were shuttling building materials to some point over the horizon. God, how long shall I have to wait before Mary misses me and raises the alarm? How will they know where to look? How embarrassing, having to be helicoptered off a peak that's no more than a scramble! And how expensive! And how bloody cold in the wee small hours! I wondered if you could freeze to death up here on a summer night, if you were only wearing shorts and a tee shirt. I thought you probably could, and addressed myself more urgently to finding the way down. After a couple of false starts I cracked it, and after that it was all downhill, so to speak.

By the time I reached the fork in the track I was very hot and *really* thirsty. I set off up the way-marked track, which, you will recall, is for the stupid and incompetent, and at last caught up with my spouse. She had followed the proper route without difficulty, but was now slightly gripped by the prospect of the final couple of hundred feet. The top of Cradle Mountain consists of a pile of huge dolerite blocks, scattered in disorder like giant's building blocks. Many are the size of a double-decker bus. The route is a strenuous scramble. She was not to be persuaded to give it a go, so I drank as much as I dare of our remaining liquid and prepared for the final assault. But first, "Where's my camera?" I asked.

"I gave it to a girl."

"You gave it to a girl? What, a hundred and fifty quids' worth of Olympus? Jesus H, what did she do to deserve that? Couldn't I have done it? And do you think she'd do it for me?"

"Well, I thought you'd go straight to the summit, and I'd given up, so I sent it up for you. She hasn't come back yet, and she has to come this way, so she's still waiting. I told her to look for a short fat hairy old Pom called Charlie." "Gee, thanks."

I scrambled up to the summit. It was straightforward and Mary could have done it easily, but she is a decisive woman, and no means no. (What's the old joke? If a lady says no she means maybe, if she says maybe she means yes, and if she says yes she's no lady. My wife is a lady. She has never been known to say yes.) It was very strenuous, and by the time I reached the summit I was sweating like a Pom and dying of thirst again.

There is no water on the top 1,000 feet of Cradle Mountain. On the summit was a very pretty girl with an older woman I took to be her mother. The pretty one had my camera round her neck. "You must be Charlie," she said. Being the only short fat hairy old Pom present, I had to admit it, and camera and owner were reunited. The views in all directions were sensational and I got a few good shots. I spent maybe 15 minutes on the summit and then rejoined my keeper. I was parched, and so was she, for she had been sitting in the blazing sun for an hour or more. We shared the remaining drink but our mouths were too dry to eat anything.

The descent to the end of the boardwalk was uneventful. On the way we met a bloke who commented on how lucky we had been with the weather, because Cradle Mountain only had five fine days a year.

We had chosen to go back via the Face Track, which crosses the northern end of the mountain. On the map the track looks more or less flat, but it zigzags up and down a lot and you have to do several hundred feet of each before you reach the Rangers' Hut at the eastern end. It's very strenuous, the sort of thing you can do without when you're in the early stages of knackeredness and thirstier than you can ever remember. It was still hot and we got thirstier still. It was impossible to speak or even swallow. I tried the old dodge of sucking a pebble, but it just left a taste of pebbles without squeezing out a single drop of moisture. Mercifully when we reached the hut there was a pool that seemed to be flowing a bit, so we deemed it drinkable and had a good guzzle, and then another.

From the Rangers' Hut the track swings north and traverses Hanson's Peak, named after a hunter who died of exposure. There is a steep drop on the left down to the southern end of Lake Dove, which was very beautiful in the late afternoon sunshine. On past some little tarns, the Twisted Lakes, over Bert Hanson's little hill, then lovely views of the same chap's Lake nestling in a deep shady cwm on the right, and finally according to the map, a steady, gentle gradient all the way down to the car

park. But what's this? "Track closed because of erosion. Please use alternate route on left." Gulp. Naked rock, if you'll excuse the term, about the height and angle of the east face of Tryfan but without all those comforting ledges. However, someone had thoughtfully banged in some reassuringly hefty iron spikes and attached a beefy chain to them, and the idea was to scramble down hanging on to the chain. It was easy enough, but a fall would have had dire consequences.

The last bit was along a broad track by the waters of Lake Dove. Clouds were forming around the crags and the mountain looked very impressive. The sun was setting as we reached the car park and signed ourselves out. Ours was the only car left, and thank God, there were some spare cans of fizzy drinks in the back. They were luke warm and horrible, but we gulped the lot.

What a wonderful day it had been. When you come to think of it, not very different from many a day in Wales or the Lakes – no more than six or seven miles, maybe 3,000 feet up and a mini-epic almost worthy of Ashcroft himself. No, not very different at all, apart from the temperature, and the appalling thirst.

And the little wallabies that were coming out to graze in the dusk as we started the long drive home.

Cradle Mountain stands near the northern end of the cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park in western Tasmania. There is a strenuous but very popular five-day backpacking trek from Waldheim at the northern end to Derwent Bridge at the southern end. You can, of course, do it from south to north if you wish. There are huts along the way, and plenty of mountains to climb – Mount Ossa at 1,617 m is the highest – and breathtaking scenery. There must be lots of rock climbing, if you can manage the gear. You have to carry everything. I'd like to do it before I am summoned to that great Climbing Hut in the sky. Any takers? Note – the inhabitants of Tasmania are called Tasmaniacs.

THE JOHN MUIR TRAIL

WILLIAM KENYON

The John Muir Trail is arguably the most scenic high level backpacking trail in the world. It traverses 220 miles of the High Sierra in California from Yosemite valley to the summit of Mount Whitney (14,500'). It winds through four wildernesses and passes of 10,000' are common, the highest being Forester Pass at 13,200'. From the rounded, ice smooth granite domes of Yosemite, you travel through 1,000 year old forests, along rushing rivers at 9,000ft and thundering waterfalls in canyons 7,000' deep. one passes through the most diverse scenery imaginable, set with thousands of jewel-coloured lakes. best of all, the climate is sunny and warm – most of the time.

Ann calculated our high calorie food requirements for 19 days trekking, plus two rest days. I wrote and reserved two wilderness permits. at the airports my pack weighed 77lbs and Ann's 38lbs.

We took the bus from San Francisco to Happy Isles camp site in Yosemite where we camped. We had lectures on hanging food (to keep it out of reach of the bears), the bears themselves and boiling water to avoid Gardiasis. Heading for Little Yosemite camp we followed a column of massive wobbly buttocks for half a mile, with both sexes dressed in bermuda shorts.

When we reached camp, the resident ranger warned us about attempting Half Dome as thunder and lightning looked imminent. We hadn't realised that there was a cabled route up the back, a perfect lightning conductor to burn off the unwary in a storm.

That night, more food thieves were on the prowl. A visit from bears resulted in teeth marks on the fuel tin, plus a third of our oil had been drunk. It was remarked that the bear would be able to excrete through the eye of a needle next day.

The morning greeted us with air of such clarity that Half Dome looked only half an hour away. It was a hard pull up through Incense Cedars and Ponderosa pines to the cables where we "hung" our sacks. Then it was up to the summit, over sheets of exfoliated granite, hauling on the cables. The views of the High Sierra were stupendous and worth losing one of our rest days.

Soon, another food thief appeared. As we chatted to two climbers, a little racoon stole our bar of toblerone chocolate. Behind schedule, we camped in failing light at the first spring we came to, in a dense wood. I found a suitable tree and threw the rock weighted bear-line over a branch, only to see the rock carry on minus the line. Ann laughed dementedly at each successive misfire. A counter balance of about 10' 6" was eventually achieved.

Several pairs of green eyes could be seen at various heights in the wood, reflected by our head torches. We retired uneasily, and sure enough – Crash!

Down came the bags and I leapt out like a greyhound – stark naked, brandishing a slick and bellowing, only to see the butt end of a mother and baby bear retreating with one bag plus bearline. The baby had climbed on mum's back and ripped the bottom out of one sack. Disaster!!

We sat up all night on guard by the fire and watched the full moon rise and set. We traced and retrieved the line amongst dried onions, curry mix and coffee next morning. Anything with curry in it had been discarded. We had lost about a third of our high calorie food but Ann decided we could make it if we went on iron rations.

We climbed stiffly over ridges and glacial deposits past Cathedral Peak – solo climbed by John Muir in 1869 – to Tuolumne Meadows where climbers kindly invited us to share their camp before they climbed Half Dome and El Capitain. We fell asleep in front of their fire. Next morning we set off up Lyell Canyon, heading for snow-capped peaks.

On the trail was a very large snake with black and yellow stripes from head to tail. We were apprehensive but it watched us with a curious rather than a menacing manner. We ascertained later that it was a Racer Snake which eats Marmots and Rattlers but is harmless to humans.

Our camp was below Donohue Pass where we met a climber with a badly damaged kneecap and fed him a little rice and olive oil. He was literally fishing for his supper. With splendid views of Mount Lyell, aromatic scents and a hot sun on our backs we headed for Donohue Pass (10,00') on Yosemite's border. We lunched in the snow where a marmot made a daring frontal attack and pinched an empty tin of pate. It jammed on her teeth and made a humorous photo.

Down through meadows of Indian paintbrush flowers we cast a last look at Mts Banner, Ritter and Lyell which we climbed a couple of years later. Suddenly the white cotton wool clouds became dark thunder and my bald patch felt the rain. Arriving at Garnet Lake, the free runner was erected with practised speed. As we cooked a meal inside it bucketed down – just like Wales.

We heard a person shouting about exposure and his lost friend, but he was gone when it stopped raining. What a glorious morning, snow girdled Ritter and Banner silhouetted against the sky and reflected in Garnet Lake.

The terrain was now like a roller coaster past lakes of trout and warm volcanic springs. We saw few people for three days and the opening gambit of every conversation was the storm. We headed for the last trail head at Reds Meadows, along dust pumice trails, past a national monument called the Devil's Post Pile (columns of hexagonally-jointed basalt). On arrival, we purchased meagre supplies of bread and cheese and stashed our bags on top of the toilets. We were awakened by a noise like the Anvil Chorus only to see the "garbage bears" flinging the steel doors of the rubbish skips open and rooting like terriers after moles.

We were now in the "Ring of Fire" – 165 miles left to Lone Pine with no road heads, two or three days walk out and a rumour that the steel bridge was down over Fish Creek. What next? We decided to continue. The next stretch was between two wilderness areas with pools of hot water whose mud bottoms bubbled like witches' cauldrons – no good for bathing.

Here we met a large dog called Clive, carrying two panniers on his back. His owner gave us quantities of home made gorp (???) mixture. We camped at Indian Creek and in the night heard Indian chanting, drums and horses neighing. It must have been the music of falling water or lack of food – or was it?

The aura of mystery remained next day. Anxious to get to the bridge, we were more than relieved to find the rock battered steel span of twisted girders still crossable. It listed at a crazy angle, 500ft above the river, entailing a precarious vertical scramble. I noted with professional interest that none of the friction grip bolts had sheared.

Singing, we trudged up Silver Pass to camp at Squaw Lake. A rampart of rock partly captured the lake from where we had excellent views over Cascade Valley. Ann washed a woollen cardigan (without soap) and found it next morning nibbled full of holes like a paper doily. I laughed until I saw my pullover also looking like a moth-eaten rag.

Over Silver Pass (12,000'), descending via rounded granite domes and waterfalls to Bear Ridge, a daunting sight which has seventy formidable switch backs and no water. Ominously Ann warned that we would have to husband our resources carefully.

To my delight I discovered abundant quantities of Boletus and Edulis but was warned by a passing scoutmaster that they were probably poisonous. I told him we had been eating them for a week and showed him the poisonous Fly Agarics, which contain coatrophine and muscarine which were used to make intoxicating drink during Prohibition, cheaper than bootleg whisky! Impressed he gave us some cereal, almost as good as singing for your supper.

Camping at Sally Keys lake we met a camouflaged group of men carrying bows and arrows (deer hunters). The next morning was sharp and frosty with a smoky mist above the lake. Two timid mule deer, their hind legs hidden in the mist stood outside the tent. Two parties of "Robin Hoods" arrived to shatter the idyll. We sang "Ilkly Moor Baht Hat" to scare the deer away and avoid being shot.

We diverted to Diamond Horse Ranch to visit Adelaide Smith regarding her not answering my request for a food drop. She gave us the pick of discarded trail drops, ten tea bags and tin of "wartime dried egg". Ann was presented with an ancient Piute Indian obsidian arrow head for fortitude.

Back to the trail, up a ferociously steep climb, the river thundering over granite terraces surrounded by the jagged peaks of Evolution Valley. We camped by a clear bubbling spring and some wild onions and mushrooms livened our curry that evening. Next morning we forded a particularly treacherous creek with glacier rounded rocks underfoot and a waterfall 60' below. And this was at 10,000'. I tried not to think about it.

At last we could see Mounts Huxley and Darwin, they looked near enough to touch in the frosty air. We had reached the Goddard Divide, what joy. In all their bleak beauty the Jurassic era peaks complemented the stark terrain. We shared lunch with three climbers (theirs) at the hut. The grandfather of one came from Derby. She served us up a veggie meal in his memory.

We traced an indistinct route down a dynamited section of the path to camp with views of Thunderbolt (14,000') and Mount Sill, which we climbed on a later visit. A food check revealed we needed to tighten our belts even further. My beard meanwhile was horrible since my wash bag had been stolen by some creature way back.

Were we going to make it? At first light we retraced 14 miles back up Coute canyon, up the Golden Staircase in a terrific hailstorm which had killed three grouse chicks. We greeted two astounded retreating locals on the Mather Pass, which was now covered in hailstones. Ann found an expensive water bottle but discarded it when she saw the word "piss" written on it.

We spoke to two rangers on horseback leading four burros. They said they had a tough time due to hard snow on the pass. "One falls, they all go," they said. What the heck's in store for us, I thought.

We camped at Palisade Lakes where we met Bob, a ranger, who entertained us with tales of the methods bears use to obtain junk food. Cub on mum's back (our loss), climb tree to gnaw branch, even kamikaze bears who climb above then jump onto the branch to dislodge the food. There was also "Highway Annie" who used to hide behind a rock and chase back packers until they dropped their packs so she could feed. She was shot!

In the night we thought we heard wolves but Bob told us they were coyote. As the passes became higher so did the campsites – colder, and no wood fires, plus the lakes were too cold to swim in. There were still two bears however.

Reaching Woods Creek, the bridge was gone and, fording the fast flowing channel, I lost my footing on a loose rock and soaked myself to the waist. A German youth laughed and took a photo. He had abandoned after five days with blisters – they looked like hinged dustbin lids.

A superb campsite at Dollar Lake with magnificent sunset views of Fin Dome and Dragon Peak gave us a good rest before an exhausting two mile haul up to Glen Pass. The reward was an exquisite panorama of the Kearsage Pinnacles, Rae Lakes, and the distant Forester Pass and Mount Whitney.

We found a good camp with a bear tree and warm granite rock next to the tent. Whilst bathing, Ann remarked how skinny I looked and reminded me of the tale of the woman who gave her donkey a little less to eat each day and had got it going nicely without food when it died.

We waved to two passing vagabonds, the younger one, wearing a Janet Reger garter headband, was carrying the piss bottle and drinking from it!

The next day entailed five miles of exhausting climbing up to Forester Pass (13,200') lagging behind my racehorse wife. I was now hungry enough to eat a horse and it's jockey. We rested and ate our rations and picked out Diamond Mesa and Mount Tyndal, where Clarence King found an Indian arrowhead on the summit in 1860. Two marmots hastened our departure by rolling rocks at us, in an effort to eat our crumbs.

One of the PC trail lads took our photo and we descended to Tyndal Creek, where we were given burnt spaghetti and cheese by some climbers. In the night we knew Bruno had visited them by the noise of spoons on tin plates which sounded just like Ravel's Bolero. Next day I was lucky to photograph an eagle dropping it's prey as it took fright and swooped away.

The rangers' notice board at Crabtree told tales of woe about bears and their victims. Camping high at Guitar Lake, we were thankful for our winter gear (-5 degrees and frozen water bottles). A donation of peanut butter and honey from some chaps spurred us on to Trail Crest. We left our sacks open, taking food and valuables out first, since we had heard that during a trail repair a marmot's nest was found stuffed full of dollar notes and passports.

Then to the summit of Whitney, with Owens valley 10,000' below. We had made it!! We descended to Lone Pine with \$64 left and went for a shower in the barber's shop. I had a shock when I looked in the mirror and saw this bearded skinny ruffian behind me. It was me! No one would take American Express, so a man called Mike gave us a lift to Bishop where Pete and Cheryle gave us dinner, bed and breakfast in their home. Next day I gave Danny some advice about welding and fabrication and he gave us \$100 and a lift to Merced.

The food shortage had taken it's toll. I started out a lean 150lbs and ended a skinny 135lbs.

MURRAY KNOWS BEST

BRIAN WEST

On the shoulder of the Ben we went our separate ways. Rob Tresidder and Radders, heavily laden, continued steadily up the Pony Track; great men intent on great things. They planned to set up a bivouac on the summit, then drop down to their chosen route. That left us – myself, Stuart Firth and Helen Griffiths – to fend for ourselves. We turned for the Half-Way Lochan and in unexpected sunshine strolled round to Coire na Ciste.

The right hand icefall of Italian Climb looked to be complete. With three on the rope and a limited amount of gear a route with the crux lower down would be ideal. A descent of the easy half of Tower Ridge offered a quick return to the corrie floor.

Addressing the first icefall it became apparent that Stuart's Ascenbrenner was more or less redundant, a loss resolved by the leader clipping one rope, then when belayed sliding a hammer down the other rope.

In this curious fashion we progressed up pitches various, the main objective danger being the regular approach of a Terror Hammer, coming down your way fast.

Late afternoon saw us sat on Tower Ridge feeling mighty pleased with ourselves. Route done, sun out, and a relatively easy way off. What more could one ask? Well Stuart asked for Tower Ridge; and up not down.

He had a point; here we were, almost halfway, with the whole ridge to ourselves. And was there ever such a ridge? Of course we could do it. Probably finish in the dark, but not to worry. Hadn't Murray himself stated that there is nothing to fear – should one lack moonlight, one has nevertheless a competent party and torches, by means of which one can climb well – nigh anywhere. There was, I half remembered, something by way of a caveat tacked on to this, but what matter to us? Were we not a competent party? Had we not torches? – and a full moon to boot? Onwards and upwards!

The daylight did seem to drain away rather quickly, and where was that moon? Moving out on to the Eastern Traverse we met the advancing shadows, and within minutes the very muscle-tone of the mountain firmed up beneath our axes. The trickles on the rocks have turned to ice.

Lighting up time on the Ben: away across the gulf of Gardyloo twin pricks show high on the last snowy ramparts. Rob and Radders on the finishing pitches of Hadrian's Wall? Down below – a long way below – lights sweep anxiously over those nasty bulging slabs on Observatory Ridge. It is true then, there's always someone worse off than you.

Together under the Great Tower we reach for our head torches. In the mind's eye I see it still: Stuart stretching his brand new Petzl over his helmet; letting go; then staring in disbelief as the bloody thing catapults itself off and into space.

Oh dear. So it's not true then. There isn't always someone worse off than you.

For one mad moment we contemplated resurrecting the Italian Climb system, the leader sliding a torch back down the spare rope. But only for a moment. Anyone who has been the proud possessor of an Achille Little Wonder Lamp will blanch at the prospect of launching same with any expectancy of it arriving in one piece. I always fancied that lamp as a contrivance exported by cunning Frenchmen intent upon confounding perfidious Albion. Anyway, Helen announced that, if pressed, she would prefer to stay tied to her torch rather than to us, thank you very much. So that was that.

Wherever we tried to move up the lamp revealed a similar circle of slippery rock, and beyond the beam nothing that one dared think about. Despite Murray's assurance that we could climb anywhere, it was becoming only too obvious that we could climb nowhere. So much for Murray. At least we wouldn't be needing to worry about Tower Gap.

If it wasn't to be up, then it would have to be across. Could we find a way into Tower Gully? New territory for all of us, but it looked like being a long cold night, and we would keep warm trying.

Working out leftwards, linking up snow patches and ledges that showed well in the darkness, we continued traversing below and then beyond the Gap. Two hours later, the slopes eased and we were in the Gully – Aschenbrenner country.

It would be satisfying to record that here we set to with a will: standing straight in our steps, cutting hard and true from the shoulder; exulting in the fierce joy of battle as the ice-chips flew, etc. etc. Murray would have loved that. But we didn't. We plodded wearily up a winters accumulation of bucket steps, and I was glad of every one.

Above us the gash of the cornice exit stood sharp against the night sky. Toiling upwards, it became something to look forward to, an end. It turned out to be something to look out from, a beginning.

As we broke through to the plateau, the truant moon was there to greet us. After hours in the gloom, the very air itself seemed charged with light. Blinking, we beheld a world wrapped in silver splendour. All the vast sweeps of Lorne and Lochaber lay luminous about us; hill after hill rolling out and away as far as mind could reach. Above, the firmament flashed an infinity of fire. Awful, in the original sense of the word. And not a sound, nor a breath of wind.

Far out on the snow pack a constellation of tiny lights gleamed like earthbound stars: Rob and Radders in their bivouac, brewing up by candlelight. Moths to the flame, we crunched clumsily over to them, our steps out of step with the stillness. Another scraping of snow settled into the pot.

And so, on the midnight of March Full Moon, an Oread party took tea by candlelight on the summit snows of Nevis: and I for one do not expect to do it again – ever.

A week or so later, something was still niggling away at the back of the brain, as these things do. Murray had made his night-climbing assurances conditional, but upon what? I found it at last in "Rocks and Realities", and here I quote: "By means of torches, a strong party can climb by night well-nigh anywhere – provided the line of the route be known." Absolutely correct. Murray knows best. But then he always did.

This was not the first Oread encampment on the summit of the Ben. See Disastrous Chances and the evacuation of Betty Emery's body off Tower Ridge by an Oread party, Easter 1954, and Phillip Falkner's Memories of the Oread in the 50's. From a summit camp Falkner and Cartwright did Tower Ridge and North East Buttress in one day. Subsequently Sutton and Pretty did Observatory Ridge (Zero Gully continuation) and North East Buttress — *Editor*.

MEMORIES

PETER SCOTT

I had only been to the pub in Dufton once before, heading north along the Pennine Way. Ten years later, quite by chance I was in the pub for the second time and casually engaged in conversation with a young German. "I talk your Pennine Way because in Germany I read in our walking magazine about zis Englishman who says, "It was an experience as special as climbing the Eigerwand."!

I could not help but agree since the person he was quoting was myself, a quote from an article written by a German friend from Dusseldorf.

"... your mother will be proud of you ... you didn't do it to earn memories, but memories you will have in abundance, for the rest of your life ..."

A. Wainwright

But on the Pennine Way

"....there's nowt ter see but 'ills 'n' trees 'n' watter!"

And the Eigerwand

"....is hollowed like a sick man's chest, often veiled in mist or blotted out by clouds, a heaving vomiting mass of rock and ice!"

Well not quite. There exists an essential difference between one who has been and embraced with all their senses, and one who has not, and relies on a series of conjured sterile images. If the sum total of any single experience in the hills comprised a series of visual images then mountaineering would not exist. The experience is complex, involving all available senses and emotions interacting with the physical environment, other people, and events.

Ten years of reading and looking at images and then the real mountain. The adventure, agony, success or failure. What was to be my lot? Success was likely to be praised, failure to be damned and condemned. Was I experienced enough, how hard was it really, was I strong enough to survive the cold and wet if the weather broke? I almost felt embarrassed at my presumption. The train jerked into motion and whined powerfully up the gradient to Alpiglen. ".....come back safely, my friends."

It began to hail as our fingers clutched the cold rocks of The Wall.

That summer we made a casual last minute decision to walk The Pennine Way and found the promised Arcadia in Teesdale and rested in sylvan sweetness and dreamed. On The Cheviots, we camped on beds of heather and bilberry surrounded by stars and night breezes.

Bernard and Jean-Pierre gave welcoming grins: we were going to have a crowded bivouac on the Swallow's Nest. Suddenly the presence of these two friendly Frenchmen gave a boost to our morale. The 'bedroom' was cramped, but we managed to lash three of us lying down to the ledge while Chris slumped in an ice filled groove.

The lightweight tents in a corner of a field sheltered a slumbering group of Pennine Way friends and walkers from many parts of Britain and Europe. The silence was shattered by a cacophony of bad language from the four occupants of a nearby canvas castle who had recently returned late from the pub. Anger born out of frustration boiled over.

Shortly before dawn we choked down a breakfast of muesli and tea..... and our fear.

The morning was cold, the sky was clear.

We climbed out of the Swallow's Nest up a short vertical wall down which hung a length of fixed rope. Five or so controlled arm-pulls, crampons grating furiously on smooth rock and we pulled onto the First Ice-field. We felt very small and vulnerable.

".....The die was cast, we must win through or die."

At Colden, Lothersdale, and Dufton, farmers provided for our simple needs and around kitchen tables we chatted, drank tea or ate hearty breakfasts as if one of the family. What was the magic ingredient which lifted the heart, brought a smile, a spontaneous thanks and left us with those memories?

In the middle of the Second Ice-field Bernard's axe slipped from his fingers. We watched mesmerised, and reflected, as the axe fled, cart wheeling down the ice to disappear in seconds over the lower edge and down to the meadows thousands of feet below.

What happened to my childhood memories of the farm in Wensleydale? Hot summer days, picnics brought out to the hay makers in the fields, fetching the cows from pastures by the river for milking, the barns, farmyard hens and geese, rides on the tractor, a raft on the river, a myriad childhood

sensations. Were they false? There was now no sign of livestock, no meadows or hay making required, and where were the poultry? The barns were sterile units converted to a camp launderette, toilets, shower, and shop. Who was the stranger? Was he born when I was a child?

Death Bivouac!

"...and they went out like a match in the rain. The seasons with their storms passed over, the ropes turned to straw, and one day the rock was bare again as in the beginning"

The ledge was a depressing place that day, banked up with snow, and with water pouring from the bulging rock above. Round the corner danger lurked. One more stepnow?

Great swelling Cheviot fells, rough grass and reeds grazed by sheep, silhouetted against a threatening sky. Stretches of heather, bilberry, cotton-grass and sphagnum relieved the bleakness of the windswept landscape. We remained close together in this lonely spot although the land reached out to meet the sky at every horizon; an illusion of space. Danger. Keep Out. Military Zone. Bombs. Shells. Shooting. Which do you prefer?

'Make tea, not war' some passing wag had remarked wryly.

At that moment a loud detonation high among the summit cliffs froze our gaze to the tiny specks below. Seconds passed as the rocks sighed downwards before raking the ice-field far below. The inevitable happened and one of the tiny figures shot silently downwards.

The Eiger climb was over for the Jugoslavs.

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. 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 in our faces. Waves of snow and rubble from the summit slopes hissed past. Four more rope lengths over 'black tiles' then suddenly it was there, a white summit ice field, now bathed in evening sunlight. We cramponed up the gleaming slopes and along the ridge to the summit. An icy wind was blowing as evening approached.

We passed by farms, windows and doors open to the sun and breeze on a summer's day, and reflected on the free and gentle aspect of the scene. Harsh reality was inconceivable, winter storms and deep snows for months, killing every single living beast at Birkdale, forcing retreat and loss of freedom for a man who was his own master. Life had returned to Birkdale, the door stood open.

The dream had been translated into reality.

OBSERVATIONS FROM PEMBROKE

BOMBS AWAY!

KEITH GREGSON

On one occasion I remember watching D-C (Derrick Carnell) gardening a new route. We (Les, Patti, Eileen and self) were sitting on a promontory looking across at him rolling huge turfs down a slab. It was one of those hot days with hardly a breath of wind and the gardening had been in progress for several hours, as could be seen from the trail of grass sods and heather which meandered out toward the horizon. Nat was supervising the project and belaying a rope on the cliff top. D-C was swinging about below and was gradually peeling a huge carpet of grass and bracken, a veritable axminster, which was maybe 5 yards wide and had been neatly rolled into a yard or more diameter – probably

a couple of tons of vegetation, soil and rocks. As he merrily jumped up and down on this potential avalanche there came the unmistakable “put, put, put” of a small inshore fishing boat. We shouted a warning and took cover. I was reminded of a picture on the cover of a Famous Five adventure in which the children were lying in the long grass at the top of a high cliff looking down at a boat in the sea.

The boat came chugging round the point and into the swamp, we couldn't understand how the fisherman could be so oblivious to his grassy surroundings as he checked his lobster pots. If he had chanced to look up his erstwhile tranquil day would have taken a rapid turn for the worse. A hundred feet above him, the carpet was gently rolling and growing, like a huge snowball, while D-C, cowering above it, was doing his best to simulate “zero g”. At best the fishing would be a write-off, which was altogether a better alternative to being buried at sea! But he didn't, instead he continued with his work, totally oblivious of the earth and debris which continued to shower about him. We all held our breath for what seemed an age before the boat moved on.

But move on it did, followed shortly by a substantial tidal wave. I often wonder whether the boatman noticed. If so he probably tells an interesting tale of an evening in “The Sloop”.

THE NORTH TOWER OF ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL

It may come as a surprise to some of you that the Oread can lay claim to a climb on St. David's Cathedral. It's not a long climb so I'll make this a short story. It came about one afternoon following a session in “The Farmers” or was it “The Grove”? We'd been there in order to allow the tide to go out, or maybe it was to come in? Anyway the result was a visit to Cathedral Slabs where we did a couple of routes and were treated to the usual description of latest and possible new routes. D-C mentioned that the arete to the right of Grey Slab hadn't been done and said something about “man for the job”. Being gullible, and not of sound mind due to several portions of ‘Feeling Foul’ ale, I was easy prey. The climbing looked reasonable, the possible fall off the edge appalling and the protection none-existent. Nevertheless D-C assured me that, should I come off, he'd catch me! How gullible can you get? Anyway, once you start laybacking an arete, there are only two things you can do; either continue or fall off. The upshot was a route called “Might'er”. However if you want to repeat it you can't because apparently God, during one of His rest periods, let St. David's Cathedral decline a little and so the lesser powers-that-be in that part of the world decided to repair it with our climb! But I'm assured that it still makes a fine line and would be a magnificent and unprotected lead. Maybe one Saturday night late . . .

HOME OF THE PEREGRINE

“I say young man! You can't climb here.”

This was clearly inaccurate since I had just ventured over the top of the cliff wearing a rope and all the other stuff which climbers carry.

“I'm sorry?” I questioned. The tweedy lady was clearly confused and it's always a good idea to give a protagonist another chance.

“You can't climb here” she repeated, in that I'm a conservationist voice.

“Oh! and why is that?” I asked.

“Because of the rapture!” she said. (At this point an excitable young man might have risen to the occasion.)

Ah! you mean the peregrine I said. At this she was slightly taken aback.

"You know about them then?"

"Yes, of course we know about them, the peregrines nest in a crack in the cliff which we (climbers) dug out. Before the peregrines could get in, it was used by a kestrel, now the hole is bigger the peregrines can use it. They wouldn't be here if we hadn't cleaned out the crack in the first place."

"Oh! I never thought of that!" she said.

It turned out that she was a member of the nature conservancy and by the time Rock joined me at the top of the crag we were very nearly bosom friends. Ah well! you win some, you lose some.

PURPLE CRACK BY MOONLIGHT OR "CHRIS-TENING THE TENT!"

We'd been to The Rugby Club in St. David's. We always used to go to The Rugby Club on Saturday night, and we always used to get back sometime early on Sunday morning. Chris Bryan and I were about to crawl into our bags when somebody had the idea that we should climb Purple Crack by moonlight. We could see it from the campsite and it did look inviting. So we did. The climbing was excellent and we enjoyed ten minutes at the top watching the moonlight on the waves. Then we crawled into our pits, and Chris threw up! It was the first time I'd used my new tent. Ah well! you lose some, you win some.

TOASTER ABUSE

BRIAN WEST

The curtain rises, disclosing an otherwise empty pub lounge, with large window looking out over car-park to distant hills. It is a fine evening, the sort of evening to be out on those distant hills. For some, however, duty calls....

Four men sit round a table. TITFER and BERKLEY agitated, LUCID calm, FRANKLYN WATTS-DELANEY putting on his glasses....

TIT: Somefinks got to be done about it!

LUCID: About what?

TIT: That toaster. They will keep using it.

BERK: Well if it's a problem it'll have to go. They don't deserve one anyway.

TIT: I've seen 'em doing it! They put muffins in it and spiced buns, and pitta breads... then when it's bunged up they poke about in it wiv their fingers.

BERK: They don't deserve fingers. They've got it all sorted in Chile, y'know. If we were in Chile they'd have had their fingers all cut off by now...

LUCID: I'm sure it's only a littul problem. All we need is a bit of a tightner and...

FWD: We mustn't give them any excuse for misoperation. We'll have to put up a notice where they can't miss it.

TIT: P'raps by the socket marked "toaster"...

FWD: Yes, Titfer. I'll draw up a list of instructions, and next time I'm down I'll...

BERK: But what if someone gets their fingers caught in it? Are we covered?

TIT: I fought they hadn't got any fingers anymore...

BERK: EH!...Oh, I see...It's a joke...This is serious. We must get a grip of the situation. Do we let just anyone use the toaster? We're leaving ourselves wide open y'know...

FWD: We'll have to come up with some sort of bread – gauge then...

BERK: Eh!

FWD: A bread-gauge Berkley. You know, you can only put the bread in the toaster if it's passed the bread – gauge first. Better get Ernie in on this. It'll have to be made of stainless or something that we can sterilise. We don't want E Coli in the club do we?

TIT: Why? Hasn't he been on enough meets? Never been on a working party?

BERK: Eh?

TIT: E Coli. Not been on enough meets. It's a joke. Get it?

BERK: Eh? Oh I see...

TIT: Have you heard the one where Maggie Fatcher goes into...

FWD sighs, crosses to the window and gazes out upon a magical twilight. The last embers of a stunning sunset glow softly upon the far horizon. somewhere out there Burgess is trying to pull in another route. Lost in appreciation, FWD lingers at the window...

LUCID: Magnificent, isn't it?

FWD: Yes Lucid. The Turbo makes all the difference...

TIT: Ev'ryfink OK, FW?

FWD: Yes, Tiffer. The cars are still there. (returns to seat.) Now about the toaster...

BERK: We could perhaps say that it's to be used by Full Members only...

LUCID: What about visiting Clubs, and children?

BERK: That's their problem. They didn't ought to have children anyway. Irresponsible, that's what they are... How about then, only if accompanied by a Full Member?

LUCID: I think we can sort this out. It's only a littul problem. Just a simple note in the Newsletter...

TIT: Somefinks got to be done about it!

LUCID: About what?

TIT: That Newsletter...

BERK: Quite right. It's an abuse of power, that's what it is. If he'd been in Chile, he'd have been machine-gunned by now What I want is facts and information, not what his dog's done. What use is a brain-teaser to me?

TIT: Just what I was finking...

BERK: Eh?

TIT: What use is a brain-teaser to you...

BERK: Eh?...Oh I see...It's a joke...

TIT: No, that's Not a joke. This is a joke; "Mister President, Mister President, the Martians have landed"...

FWD sighs, crosses to the window, and gazes out. A warm, velvety dusk caresses the casement, those distant hills limned black against a sky of darkest blue. Somewhere out there Burgess has made it to the pub and is scrounging a light for his Castella. Snoddy and Gabbo are still on the crag, but so what?

Anxiously scanning the car park, FWD catches the reassuring glint of chromium...

TIT: Ev'ryfink OK,FW?

FWD: Yes Titfer, the cars are still there. (returns to seat.) Now shall we have a basket of chips or carry on with this toaster business?

We are spared this decision. The curtain falls abruptly, and of it's own accord. It has had enough.

JUST A LITTLE SPANISH (A TALE OF ANDEAN INSPIRATIONS)

MIKE WYNNE

Titicaca. Machu Picchu. Inca. Nasca.

There can be few people for whom these words do not cause some sort of magical bells to start ringing. Why?

The Corner. The Gates. Dream. Diagonal.

All magical routes at one time in any British climber's life. Routes to inspire which, once achieved, will have left one with an immense feeling of satisfaction and the desire to set new targets for the future.

But what are the connections between these magical, inspiring, routes and the magical names from Peru? In order to find out about the magic of the classic, quality rock climbs one needs time, a partner, the desire and the ability to succeed. To discover the magic of Peru one needs time, money and just a little Spanish . . .

Peru is a high country – very high – or at least the more interesting parts of it are. Trapped between the western and eastern cordilleras, Lake Titicaca stands at an altitude of 3,800m, a respectable altitude by alpine standards. However, when there, due to the immensity of this, the world's highest navigable lake, the brain is tricked into thinking you are at sea level – until you start to climb uphill that is! Here are wild open spaces, great views, and the healthy feeling one gets as one becomes acclimatized to the altitude. At night the skies are crystal clear, silence abounds and there is freedom from pollution. Here the traveller can be rewarded with the same feelings that one experiences on a comfortable, high alpine bivvy when the route is going well. Here life's batteries can be recharged or refreshed, away from the hustle and chaos of our busy lives, congested roads, congested cities and our congested country.

Having been involved in travel (both through work and as an independent traveller) for fifteen years now, I have sometimes been a bit blasé about visiting what should be exciting new parts of the world. In July 1998 my latest venture was to lead a school party on a three week trip to Peru – part trekking, part travelling and sightseeing, which was to leave me with a variety of realisations, new inspirations and a refreshed outlook on life. Peru is responsible for this and for that reason only it deserves some sort of promotion; which is one of the aims of this article.

The second aim is to explore the realisation of acceptance of change from a climber's point of view. When I was younger and freer, a very large percentage of my leisure time was spent rock climbing, mountain walking, or mountaineering. As time has gone by I do not feel that my love for the mountain

environment has diminished in any way, but the means of achieving satisfaction from it has changed. Much of the rock climbing has been replaced with fell running, the satisfaction of succeeding on a hard route replaced with the satisfaction of improving one's time over a specific race route or even achieving a respectable finishing position. Much of the mountaineering has been replaced with trekking and travelling, where with opportunities to work as a leader of groups in many mountain regions throughout the world, I have been able to visit and experience areas to which I am certain my own climbing would never have taken me.

Despite all this I still sometimes experience the 'climbers' guilt feeling – I must get out on the rock soon or I will stagnate! One can never forget the immense feeling of satisfaction gained after succeeding on a hard quality route, especially if climbed in good conditions and in pleasant surroundings, and followed with a few good pints of ale. But how often do all these conditions come together? How many despondent hours are spent tolerating grotty weather, feeling that the climbing is not going as well as it should be, wet, greasy rock, before finally experiencing that magical moment when it all comes together at once. Surely, if we have to live in England, there must be easier ways to get through the damp, dark, winters and the damp but not so dark summers, and to still get a lot of satisfaction out of our mountains throughout the year. There are ways – as long as one can dispel the feeling that one 'ought' to climb.

The endemic Peruvians seem to have it sussed. Maybe one reason is due to the fact that their weather is a little more predictable than ours. They get fairly well defined wet seasons and dry seasons; they know when to plant their corn and their potatoes and can be fairly sure that they will grow. The Incas and the pre-Incas have left evidence that amazes and baffles us. Our western technology has recently enabled us to take our rock sport indoors by artificially recreating the natural outside environment under cover (but sadly lacking the ambiance of the outdoors). However, between 500 and 1,000 years ago, the Incas and their predecessors were able to shift whole rock faces in blocks weighing 200 tonnes or more considerable distances and up slopes, and fit these blocks together again with millimetric accuracy. In doing this they were not building climbing walls but temples that seemed to double up as sun observatories to assist them with the correct timing for their cultivation. Simply to see some of this famous stonework in its mountain setting, for whose construction methods modern science has no answers, is certainly inspiring.

Being on the move is definitely satisfying. Who can claim that (with the exception of the occasional rare combination of superb scenery and weather) that they actually enjoy sitting on a belay, being holed up on a bivvy or in a tent, or freezing the gonads off in the howling wind on a ledge in the midst of a Scottish winter? At the end of any epic, pub-talk will diminish the misery we have all felt at times when we are stuck in one place for an unexpected length of time. Travelling, trekking, and fell-running, do overcome this problem to some extent as one can be more in control of oneself and be able to keep on the move if desired.

You may be thinking that I have become a disillusioned climber – which is certainly not the case. I'll still go out when the time allows and the weather looks good, and have a great time. The great discovery though is to find and enjoy the alternatives that suit one when climbing is simply not the best thing to be doing. Being broad rather than narrow minded in one's approach to the outdoors enables one to get far more enjoyment out of it. The Peruvians have *ayni* as a strong part of their culture. This is the mutual agreement to help each other when necessary. The local guides and porters in the Andes could not be nicer people. They work willingly and do not ask for anything beyond the usual rewards for the service that they provide. As a leader I never expect everything to go to plan and am therefore quite happy to accept things that may not be acceptable to a highly structured western way of life.

The Peruvian Cordilleras are very accessible. Being such a narrow range, roads approach close to the peaks. Buses are frequent, cheap and seem to be generally on time. Although my 1998 tour had been prearranged, it was a credit to all the people in Peru involved in its organisation that all the connections from bus – train – plane – boat went like clockwork. During the three weeks that we

were there we experienced only one late train! Shops in the main centres provide everything a westerner may desire, while the local markets provided the local flavour. You do not have to eat guinea pig every day; there is plenty of excellent pizza around! The currency is stable and US\$ are widely accepted and obtainable from cash machines on credit card. Getting there is not cheap but can be done for around £600. Our summer (July) is the height of their dry season, so why not think about it as an alternative to the Alps one year?

It would help to know just a little Spanish....

BREGAGLIA 1998 – PIZ BADILE

(CASSIN ROUTE)

MICHAEL HAYES

Dover Sole on the Ferry, Schnitzel in Germany, Raclette in Switzerland and pizza in every village from St. Moritz to Bellagio. The holiday as usual was going to plan. 10 days of Eastern Alpine sunshine with a few thunderstorms thrown in for good measure, swimming by Lake Como, and eating our way through seven countries. What more could you want?

"Daddy why did you bring your climbing things?" I guess its time for a little exercise!

A warm up was needed! The Leni Route on the Spazzacaldeira, and the Steiger Route on the Punta Da L'albigna, not only provided a suitable introduction to the granite but also managed to wear down the finger ends. A rest was needed (so was more pizza!) The Badile would have to wait.

Three Days of clear weather came at last but was there still time? With everyone heading home the arrival of Paul from Holland gave me one last chance. Sorting gear out was interesting – Spaghetti Bolognaise for the bivvy, Chilli for the Summit, I'll take the gas, you have the stove. It was all going to plan. 7.00 pm in the evening lying in the sunshine on the Bivvy we knew it was going to be a good evening. Soup, spaghetti, cheese and sausage were rounded off by a display of head torches descending the North Ridge. The clear morning sky's meant there would be no turning back. The Cassin was about to take it's revenge.

Pitch after pitch of superb climbing, the occasional peg put to good use and the ever present sun. Time was moving on, quick gulps of water and some melting chocolate passed for dinner, (didn't any one know I needed regular food stops!). Leading VI/A0 on an empty stomach and another sip of water led finally to the exit chimney. Hand jamming with a sack on my back,(I didn't want any skin on my arms any way!) at 8.00 pm we emerged onto the North Ridge. Relief and enjoyment were all too brief. The last of the water consumed – now how do we get down?

An hour of abbing brought us to a small ledge already occupied by 6 Italians. It was here we realised we were to spend the night. It was going to be an interesting evening. Tied to the rock, feet in the rucksack, and sat on a rope shivering, waiting for the sun to rise. Dawn brought its own challenges. First get warm, next team up with 6 Italians and relay 8 abseil ropes down to the col. A huge stone fall passing only 20 meters away on its journey down the north west face had us hugging the rock and glad to be on our way down. The bodies hanging from the helicopter meant not everyone had been so lucky! Finally after 16 hours without water the top snow field offered the first relief. The realisation was beginning to grow. We had done it, were back safe and it was time to get on with the holiday. The family were waiting, the memories would live forever.

After soup and beer in the hut I returned to find Helen busy packing the last few things into the car. Time for one last celebration meal in Vicosoprano before the night drive to Munchen and the luxury of a real bed.

ORDEAL ON CRAIG MEAGHAIDH

JULIA STOWELL

I am dozing; too late in Andy's van along with four others. Even Dave Mawer has yet to wake. When he does, the reality of a winter weekend in Scotland will begin.

We discover Graham Weston has been bivvying in the snow outside Kev Allsobrook's car. Soon, everyone is heading expectantly towards the lochan under the crag. The usual banter prevails although it is not long before I am left behind, slithering awkwardly over the bog-avoiding duckboards. A beautiful approach walk, I think, heedless of a moderately heavy sack. In no time at all we are there.

"Well, who's doing what?"

Swift negotiation divides the party into: Kev, Graham, Daryl Kirk and Dave to have a go at Nordwand; me, Trevor Willis, John Salmon, Andy Gale and Robin Van der Heyden to do Staghorn Gully, a suggestion of mine which seems acceptable. Within the second group I am paired with Trevor whom I have never met before. He eyes me suspiciously and enquires politely if I know how to tie on. He relaxes a little when I tell him that although I haven't much winter climbing experience I have been to the Alps, and have been known to lead on rock.

We move together at first and then pitch it on easy ground rapidly catching up with the other three. It is warm; too warm and the slush wets everything and slides off the soft turf below in great dollops. I can hear John ahead questioning the sense of carrying on.

"Just do one more pitch to see if it gets better higher up" is the consensus.

It does, marginally.

After the approach ramp the correct selection of gully is fundamental, as Grade IVs lurk to either side of Staghorn. Robin's team check it out and now we are positioned at the entrance of Staghorn, to one side of the first ice bulge, in pole position. I belay Trevor but cannot see his frustrated endeavor. I can tell though – the lack of demand for rope says everything. Be patient, I tell myself, he must be putting gear in. Indeed, he has an excellent ice screw in lovely turquoise ice but the material above is diabolical and disintegrates at each placement attempt. Eventually we give up. Robin has a go and with determination succeeds to get high enough to latch onto better ice. Now we must climb as a five for this pitch as I am unable to lead it. I patiently wait until last as Robin's team, then Trevor go up. I have little experience of winter gear and find the ice screw placement reassuringly difficult to get out. I am convinced of its security. Still, 'Don't fall off in winter' has been drummed into my head.

I am climbing now, trying to find some purchase for my feet as the bulge disintegrates further. A momentary secure hold is all I need to swing both axes into sounder ice above and I am up into typical gully climbing. Rejoining Trevor and Andy on the belay I discover that we will stay as a five. Probably wise as there are two more ice bulges to deal with and if they are anything like the first we could have problems. In the gloom I can see John belaying Robin. The conditions are better with some frozen turf but the weather is clagging in. And it is late; too late. First Andy, then Trevor leaves the stance and I am left to be patient once more. After an age I surpress the urge to shout and tell myself to wait. At length the all clear to climb drifts down. I have begun to get cold and welcome the chance to warm myself.

The following pitches are a continuous round of climbing; greetings at the belay; disappearing comrades; waiting; cold; waiting; irritation at the delay; waiting; shouting "What's happening?"; waiting and once more climbing.

Now it is dark and I have my head-torch on. It is snowing too and the wind is gusting. The final ice section is steeper than ever and the base has almost completely fallen down. Somehow I manage to struggle up, my awareness confined by the immediate pool of light in front of me. The extra effort

involved results in a pain-consuming minute of hot aches in my fingers, worse than I can remember from my years of winter rowing. I arrive at the belay to find everyone together; a mini-triumph as the last ice bulge is behind us. But the elation is short lived because now we must get to the top and navigate off. Will there be a monster cornice? No. Mercifully there are only steady snow slopes to the top but the welcome on the ridge is fearsome. It is very dark but in the torch lights we can see the snow driving horizontally. We can't hear each other over the wind and huddle together to look at the map. I stare and try to make some sense of it but my brain is reluctant to work and I am aware of a desire to lie down. It is perhaps 8.00 pm but feels like 2.00 am. We have been on the go for 12 hours.

John and Robin have decided on a bearing. I feel inadequate but am glad for their competence. Even walking on a bearing, roped up, is difficult in the buffeting wind. We walk straight into it, heads bent to minimise the blinding effect of the driving snow. Andy shouts a warning that we have moved off the level ground of the ridge and we correct ourselves. I catch sight of a marker post, a reassuring landmark that Andy remembered from a summer walk several years ago. Then another one. We are on the right track. Looking slightly away from where I think the Lochan should be I can make out a pale shape but if I look directly at the place it is elusive. I sink down in soft snow and hope the slope we are descending now is not avalanche prone. Relief floods through us as we reach the Lochan and the walk out seems academic. We stop for a bite to eat.

I am asking Andy once again for a rest. He is encouraging and patient as I slump down, convinced I cannot go on but knowing I must. The track is interminable before we reach the duckboards but worse still after – they seemed to come so soon after starting this morning. Now it goes on forever, our Creag Meaghaidh ordeal, until we find the sanctuary of the van.

The Nordwand team have abandoned us and gone home, anxious to avoid the possibility of having to send out a search party. But I don't mind, I just want to sleep.

THE OREAD FAMILY

USCHI HOBDA

I was first introduced to the Oread in 1962 who, at that time, met regularly at the Bell in Sadler Gate, Derby. The club was full of young and single chaps, all on the lookout for a partner and ready to pounce if a suitable fair maiden appeared on the scene. Well can you blame them. It was never easy to find a partner who also enjoyed extreme sports like climbing, mountaineering and skiing, and prepared to rough it on cold and windy campsites in tiny Vanguard tents. As it happened Geoff Hayes and Colin did succeed in luring Anne and myself into marriage even though we played hard to get.

When I returned from Germany in 1965, having just married Colin, things seemed to have changed. Various people had got married in the meantime and there were lots of young couples about. In the first few years, the Oread became my replacement family and helped enormously to settle into my new life far away from the "real" mountains and my old climbing friends. We went away most weekends and generally had a good time. Various couples already had children but I was too busy to take much notice. There were the Ashcrofts, Allens, Janes, Prettys, Penlingtons, and of course the Welbourns and the Westons.

However, things soon changed. The moment our first offspring Steff arrived in 1967, we suddenly had become a family and had to re-orientate ourselves, as things were not so easy anymore and every weekend away needed a lot of planning and organising.

We were in the throngs of the baby boom years of the sixties, not just nationally but also within the Oread. I believe this generation of kids were the first truly mobile ones. It was now possible to take babies out in slings and carriers from a very early age, which made life much easier for the young

Oread families. (This meant that we Oread mums did not have to spend every weekend at home minding the children) Some of our equipment came from Ruth Welbourn who had bought it in Norway and both Lisa and Helga were introduced to the hills from a very early age.

We now tended to get together with other Oread families in a likewise predicament. In those days children were not allowed in any pub so consequently, on a day out walking or climbing, the route was not chosen according to where the pub with the best beer and food was, but where the best shelters were for eating sandwiches and feeding stations for babies. So we were normally huddled behind a wall for shelter.

As is typical of the Oread, something funny usually happens. I particularly remember the year the Ashcrofts travelled with their boys Ian, David and Peter to the Alps, loaded to the top with a borrowed luggage rack. Somewhere along the Autobahn, the whole load took off and discharged itself onto the motorway. There were pushchair babywalkers, coloured wooden bricks, camping equipment etc. scattered at a distance of 100m. Jack stopped on the hard shoulder, rushed out to retrieve the bits, but luckily the motorway was not too busy, so it was relatively safe. Just as everything was tied down safely, the Police arrived, issuing a warning to Jack saying in a stern voice "You cannot stop here, move on". Jack was only too happy to oblige and grateful for his lucky escape from a heavy fine.

We had good weekends at Tan-y-Wyddfa, especially when the children were small, as even then it was fairly comfortable and reasonably dry and warm which is worth gold after a wet weekend camping with small children. There were of course always those, who did not like young families taking up bed space and disturbing the peace of the Hut, saying this is a "Climbing Club". Just to mention John Fisher, who called them "Hammelkeule" which translates into "leg of lamb". It was one of the words which John picked up in Germany and one which he liked the sound of, so consequently he used it frequently. He also gave them ear rubs. This resulted in them usually trying to avoid him whenever they could. Nowadays, of course, things are very different, since he has become father to Peter and Robert, even though he is financially "RUINED" since becoming a family man.

Our best times were the Alpine Meets, where we all got together as one big family. There used to be a great exodus from Nottingham and Derby, with about 40 to 50 people arriving in dribs and drabs at the chosen campsite. Frequently it was chaos, but so what. I always remember the Ashcroft boys as being very lively and active, especially David who impressed everyone with his gymnastics and backflips. He later became Junior Gymnastic champion of Sheffield. Some years later we were joined by new members Roy and Chris Eyre with their three girls, who were on their first Alpine Meet. It was in the Aosta valley, a very popular meet, to be repeated several times. That particular year, little Heather was not very well, so they called in Nurse Sue Wren for a consultation. Nurse Wren soon diagnosed "Mumps" and immediately mum and the girls were put under quarantine, leaving Roy free to carry on with the climbing. It was really hilarious. We made a big sign, "Danger – Keep out – infectious disease".. No doubt it was not amusing for Chris. However, we kept them well supplied with food and gossip. Ever since then Heather has been left with the name "Mumpy".

Mike and Sue Wren had a sure method of keeping their children under control. Whilst climbing on Birchen, they simply tied Lucy to a tree, gave her a banana to keep her happy and got on with the climbing.

Eric and Merle Wallis went even one step further, they tucked their children into a backcarrier and climbed with them on their backs. At that time Eric was working as a climbing instructor in Wales.

Reg and Anne Squires, however, took their boys into deepest Africa for 2 years, perhaps to teach them to speak like the Zulus or to learn how to track wild animals.

Whilst there were so many youngsters within the Oread, Rusty got rather fidgety and restless. All his friends were slowed down by children and the mileage for the day's walking was not at all to his liking. So in turn he carried them all on his broad shoulders. It was one way for him to work off surplus energy. Believe it or not, even now, 25 years later, he still needs slowing down, and he still carries Oread children on his back.

In 1978 a large group of Oreads and their families went to Trafoi – Italy, to climb in the Ortler Region. The campsite was very small, no facilities, no shop, no restaurant, in the middle of nowhere. Even now in 1998 Oreads still talk about the fantastic campsite, its atmosphere and its situation. It was the washhouse, which became the focus over the next two weeks. As the campsite had no electricity, the camp warden arrived every morning very early to light a wood fire in the boiler house. Soon after we had hot water to wash and shower. At that time the Church of Rome was in the throngs of electing a new pope. As is the custom after each round of voting if black smoke rises from the chimney of the Vatican, no one has been elected, however, if the smoke is white, then we have a new Pope. So our first look in the morning was the boiler of the chimney house to look for the colour of the smoke. Soon after, Pope John Paul III was elected. When we were all in basecamp we tended to frequent the local pub where they made us very welcome. On the last evening we all went there for dinner and we presented the landlord with a carved wooden plaque with a mounted Oread badge. I have it from a reliable source, that it still graces the shelf behind the bar. The only real problem with the campsite was the walk back in the dark. No streetlight to guide you, just the stars. We had to walk through the fields and through the churchyard. Austrians tend to have the eternal candle burning on the graves. The flickering lights made it really spooky, and it became a real test of courage for the children.

When I think of the Hut in Wales it reminds me of the wonderful Christmases and New Years. The community spirit of the Oread was brilliant in those days. Everyone brought goodies for the communal dinner and everyone helped to cook under far more primitive conditions than now.. Everybody exchanged presents, the children thought it was wonderful, specially fetching your own Christmas tree straight from the forest. There was no need to go out to the pub, entertainment was in the hut. I can just visualise it when I close my eyes, the lounge, a big fire roaring, Ernie Phillips sitting comfortably in the big red velvet chair near the fire fast asleep. On the table a barrage of bottles, the children playing games, and everyone happy. New Year used to be just as much fun, with a great buffet in the dining room contributed by all, and the old traditions being kept alive with silly games like the submarine, and the statue of Nelson, and bringing in a piece of coal as well as bread and salt straight after midnight. Frequently the chaps took their sons and walked up Snowdon to welcome the New Year with a sunrise.

More frequently however, it was dull, grey and wet, and no sunrise to be seen. Sadly those days are gone, when it was a fight to get into the hut. There were always the Gadsbys, the Welbourns, the Squires, the Hobdays, and Ernie and Ronnie Phillips, and others. Now sadly, year after year, the hut is empty at Christmas. Do we like too much our home comforts or has the community spirit gone?

Not many of the Oread children carried on with the mountaineering tradition in their adult life or kept their ties with the club.

There is of course Michael Hayes, who plays an active role, as a climber, mountaineer, and also as an active committee member. We have Lisa Welbourn, a good climber and skier, now heavily into Trail Quest competitions on mountain bikes. She became Great Britain Ladies Champion in 1997. She too played a role as a committee member. There is also Graham Weston who leads meets for the younger generation, attends Alpine Meets, climbs and skis. There is also Chris Bryan who climbed very hard routes in the Alps when quite young, specifically with his dad Ken Bryan. Of the younger ones there is Matt Chambers, a prospective member, and Jenny Raphael, now married to Dave Jones.

Those that are still active but live away are Roger Penlington, Steff Hobday, who has climbed in America and in the Alps in summer and winter, frequently with Graham Weston. There is Simon Wren who became a very hard climber who often takes his father Mike on desperate routes on the climbing walls. Annette Hobday who has been living in Germany since 1992 has the Alps at her doorstep and attends an Alpine Meet if it is in Austria. She skis seriously, snowboards, and does mountain biking. Peter Hayes also lives in Munich and attends most Alpine Oread family meets.

To finish off I give you an amazing statistic. This is only rough, and I may be out by a few on my count, but the Oread in the Sixties and Seventies either produced or adopted more than 70 children. Well done you Oreads. It just goes to show how active the Oread was in more than one way. However out of these only 8 have become actual members in their own right.

In the Eighties there was a big lull in new children and only now in the last 7 years or so, is there a new batch of small children and a new group of Oread parents who go together on meets, who socialise with each other, and actually organise their own family meets in the Hut in Wales. So the cycle repeats itself. May the Oread continue to prosper and continue to be a family orientated club. Lots of people grumble that the Oread does not have many hard climbers, but to me a Mountaineering Club means everything from walking to mountaineering to skiing, etc. To me, the Oread has given me 33 wonderful years of companionship, wonderful weekends in the hills and on Alpine Meets and, for that, I am grateful.

Sponsored by Mothercare and Aldi — *Editor.*

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT MUNROS?

EASTER 1994

JACK ASHCROFT

I returned from the Highlands on the 9th April 1994 after what must have been the worst Easter weather that I can remember. It snowed on the mountains every day with considerable accumulations in the corries, and the formation of large unstable cornices on the tops. The beginning of the week had the added bonus of gale force winds. These calmed by the end of the week. Temperatures increased a little and it was rain in the valley. That was a general report of Easter 1994 in the Glen Affric and Strathfarrar Hills. Not that it made too great an impact on a determination to get on the hill. A brightening of the sky and Nick Evans enthused "The sun will be out soon". "And so will the thaw" was the rejoinder. Caution was high with some of the team, particularly bearing in mind that from the word go on the Saturday John Linney, followed by Colin Barnard, had the misfortune to walk through a cornice in white out conditions and gale force winds. They had found themselves alive several hundred feet down the east slopes of Tom A'Choinich, Colin having leapfrogged over John. On stopping in the murky conditions, John shouted uphill "I'm OK" to Colin who had arrived stationary on the slope below him.

They gathered themselves together and descended the mountain on a route which had been rudely determined for them by the involuntary fall. The major injury was a bruised leg and sprained hand for John. Colin had lost his axe and compass. That was bad news.

The good news was a day when Rock Hudson, Nick and I traversed Mam Sodhail and Carn Eighe via the Sgurr Na Lapaich Ridge. The day started in bright sunlight with an inch of fresh snow on the road up Glen Affric. From Affric Lodge the whole setting was idyllic. Glen Affric was living up to its reputation of being the most beautiful glen in the Highlands.

This was only short lived, and at the 700m contour in came a storm. Crampons on, we walked over Sgurr Na Lapaich cairn in the face of a further deterioration in the weather. At this time the Elder of the party began to whimper "Not going on in this", reversing the bearing on his compass. "Stop Moaning" was the retort through the blizzard. The Elder had traversed the main summits many years ago in fine weather. What the hell was he doing traversing them again in poor weather. Ah well "Don't split the party". The young men wanted their Munros – "Don't mess the day up", so on we went.

Half an hour later there was a clearing of the sky and a ray of sunlight – just before a rise in the ridge blended with one of the most spectacular mushroom cornices I've seen for many a year. Camera out, waiting for Nick to walk onto the top, photograph taken, but a minute too late. The ray of sunlight and the cornice silhouetted against the unlit summit ridge behind had been a perfect picture. The image remains a memorable moment.

A few minutes later storm again, the camera went back into the rucsac and remained there for the rest of the day. The last few hundred feet of the Sgurr Na Lapaich Ridge to Mam Sodhail looked a spectacular icy edge but proved easy. Snow arêtes often appear more spectacular than they are.

Our arrival at the large circular cairn, which was a principal point on the primary triangulation of Scotland by the Ordnance Survey in the 1840s, coincided with the arrival of two others who had walked to the summit via Coire Leachavie. They said their route at the head of the corrie had proved difficult – too much fresh snow. The five of us sat at the summit munching our lunch relatively sheltered in the lee of the cairn. In 1840 the cairn had measured 60 feet in circumference and 23 feet high. It had shrunk since those heady days when the Industrial Revolution was gaining momentum across the world. But the now modest size, worn away by the ravages of nature over the previous 150 years, was appreciated as a shelter for our lunch on one of the two highest mountains west of the Caledonian Canal.

There was a strong wind as we set course for Carn Eighe, but the visibility was good in reasonable sunlight. Soon over the summit we embarked on the long east ridge of Carn Eighe, onto the narrow rocky ridge with a snowed up crest, and fine views in all directions. The Elder must have been engrossed with the temporary magnificence of the situation since he got his rucsac jammed in a little 'V' notch near the summit, with crampons flashing in space. The tail man, Rock, gave a 'heave-ho' to the sac and a sense of terra firma was re-established. The bealach between the Pinnacles and Sron Garbh, the weather having come in again, decided us on a direct descent south into Glen Nam Fiadh, and so it was a steady 500m descent at speed as, simultaneously, the snow storm gathered pace.

Some two and a half hours after a laborious plod through soft snow we descended to Glen Affric Lodge and the car park. The sun came out again to end the day. The late afternoon sun gave Sgurr Na Lapaich an ethereal presence. Glen Strathfarrar was visited, and Sgurr Na Muncie, but we'd had enough of snow blizzards and soft snow by Friday.

Only Nick who was intent on Tom A'Choinich (hill of the moss) ventured far. A straight forward stalkers path in summer, but in stormy winter conditions and poor visibility, he experienced a similar day to the one with which John and Colin started the week. When overcorrecting his compass bearing to avoid their error, he in turn plopped through a cornice. No harm done.

Jack Ashcroft had completed the Munros by 1994 — *Editor*.

A COMMENT – OUR CLIMBING HERITAGE

JACK ASHCROFT

When Ronald Clark and Edward Pyatt wrote, in the final chapter of their excellent book, *Mountaineering in Britain* (1957), of “the cheer leader philosophy of mountaineering”, I am sure they hardly saw the great growth in climbing wall development and its coming to majority in the 1990's.

Their thesis in 1957 was that climbing as a spectator sport, much the same as tennis and cricket, would rob mountaineering of much of its original appeal – wildness and solitude of hills.

No problem. I would advance the proposition, that we have weathered the storm and the competitive and technically competent have moved into the gymnasium where points can be awarded by judges for standard of difficulty, stylishness and speed on artificial slab, crack, chimney, groove or overhang. If you wish to translate onto the crag O.K.:- Green Death – Millstone; Quietus – Stanage, Kilnsey roof – Limestone. More reasonably, Allen’s Slab – Froggatt; Grooved Wall – Gardoms; Trafalgar Wall – Birchen.

My objective in these few comments is to quickly recap on how one unapologetic club mountaineer sees the development of our recreation for the better: one who has often glanced through contemporary British climbing guides and found nothing accomplished above 5a – and it won’t be again! (?sic — *Editor*).

The unique value of our recreation is that whatever innate ability you may possess, what ever skill you may demonstrate on the hill, whatever your age, you can take part with unabashed enjoyment. Of course no one denies a level of general fitness is desirable. But that comes with regular exercise, fresh air, the company of friends, or by ones self. You can derive from the mountain environment, speed, suppleness, and stamina, and develop the mental and physical balance to truly gain satisfaction in mountain and moorland activity. Agreed, things slow up a bit with age. But you can still get out there without getting too uptight about the big ‘C’ of competition and the wages to go with it.

You can enjoy recreation in the hills of Britain, the Alps, the Himalaya, or where-ever, and take on board the recent words of Ken Wilson (AJ 1998) “....quite easy climbs can contrive to offer high challenge to the person of matching experience or fitness. In this manner far from being elitist, a sport that takes care to preserve the full character of its environmental challenges, remains demanding at all levels and thus quintessentially egalitarian. A sport rigged up for safety and performance will probably soon become highly elitist and at the same time be performance obsessed and conformist”..... Ken Wilson on Traditional Values and protection on climbs.

The next time you visit or cycle along the High Peak Trail, look up at Black Rocks (Putrell, Harding, Moulam); or Mickleden, Rossett Ghyll, or the Stake Pass (Dolphin, Bower); Sty Head (Haskett Smith, H.M. Kelly); the Miners Track, Ogwen (Kirkus, Edwards, O.G. Jones). The list associated with tradition on nearby crags is endless and I haven’t mentioned Snowdon, Glen Coe, Nevis, Skye or indeed Birchen, Gardoms, Curbar, Froggatt and Stanage. An ageless tradition. And finally, on the Pennine Way, Widdop and Laddow. Full circle – walking and climbing.

FAR KINGDOMS

‘Tis distance lends enchantment to the view
And robes the mountains in its azure hue.

Pleasures of Hope – Thomas Campbell, 1777-1844

JOHN (ROCK) HUDSON WRITES....

High altitude forests with a weird flora of giant groundsels and lobelia, the flash of the malachite sunbird, the hum of countless insects, adjacent to the ruined Kitandra Hut, at 4,027m, deep in the Ruwenzori Mountains.

The only thing out of place is Dave Penlington peeling potatoes. No dried pom for him, for he remembers that fish and chips were staple food back in the early days of Oread meets in Derbyshire. So why change in the heart of Africa. We had obtained not a single view from the summits of Vittorio

Emanuelle, Stanley, or even Baker. But the mists cleared and the rock and snow peaks of Mounts Philip and Elizabeth appeared. Dave noted that these mountains were only recognised and named a couple of years before the founding of the Oread. Who would have thought in those days that members would be able to climb amongst them within a holiday of three weeks?

Editorial Note:

Hudson is writing about his venture, with Penlington, to Uganda and Kenya in 1994. Penlington's travels in the distant ranges, are only rivalled by those of Rock Hudson, although other Oreads have followed in their footsteps and yet others have struck out on their own to many far flung corners. In this context it is worth recording Penlington's long term achievements, unique in the Oread, at home and abroad.

Both Penlington and Ashcroft completed the Munros at different but unspecified dates but D.P. notes that the Ben was his first in 1947. Penlington has also completed the Alpine 4,000m peaks. He writes: "The first 4,000m came in 1951, with Ken Griffiths, during a failed attempt on Mont Blanc. We had been snowed in at the Gouter Hut for two days. The Custodian had taken everybody down shortly after K.G. and I arrived. We refused to go. The storm started two hours later and continued for twenty four hours".

"Two feet of new snow and cold forced us to give up our attempt about thirty minutes from the summit. If I had known we were so close, we would have made it. Anyway we had been over the Dome de Gouter but I did not realise it was in excess of 4,000m until years later. My last 4,000m peak was the Piz Bernina, solo in 1997, third time lucky, but not by the route I would have wished; the Biancograt. Thus the Munros and the 4,000m tops occupied forty six years".

"My best day in the Alps (not 4,000m peaks) was the Wildefrau, Morgenhorn, Weissefrau, Blumisalhorn traverse with John Fisher, a 6½ hours round trip, about half the guide book time. I had done it the previous day with Peter Biven, John and Mary Fowler, and was so impressed that I had to get Fisher onto it on one of his "official off days".

Since retirement Penlington's activities have spread widely beyond Europe as the following list shows.

- 1991 Himalaya; Rowaling peaks with Rock Hudson
- 1992 New Zealand/Australia
- 1994 Africa; Ruwenzori and Mount Kenya
- 1994 Tien Shan (Kazakhstan) with Richard Coghlan
- 1996 Tien Shan (Kirghistan) with Rock Hudson (Kaingdy Expedition)
- 1996 New Zealand/Tasmania
- 1997 Tien Shan
- 1998 Peru/Bolivia with John Green

In addition to the above Rock Hudson has been displaying his bachelor characteristics on a regular basis;

Cordillera de Blanca, Peru including Aconcagua

Himalaya: Karakorum trek

Nepal: Mount Api, Mount Chamar, and Island Peak (Winter), and in 1998 he managed to pull in Greenland (East Coast), Tibet, and Cho Oyu.

A quick survey of other Oreads displaying in distant places shows that Myke Wynne has circled the world in his quest for mountains. Jack Ashcroft has travelled widely in Ladakh, Kulu, and Eastern Nepal, and Richard Coghlan, when not accompanying D.P. to the Tien Shan, has (with Julia Stowell and other Oreads) ventured to Aconcagua and Mount Mera, Nepal.

1998 has seen Oreads scattered around the globe: The Eyres in the Karakorum, Daryl Kirk on Mount Kenya, Helen Griffiths in the Canadian Rockies, Ron Chambers and Ruth Allen in Nepal and, in June, a few Golden Oldies, The Reynolds and the Gadsbys, met up with the Prettys in Alaska.

Also in 1998 the Great White Sahib, R.G. Pettigrew, did a moderate tour of Kulu with Ernie Phillips and Digger Williams – to the D.H.E. '61 base camp with six porters and six ponies.

Since Kharcha Kund in 1987 Peter Scott and his partner Judy have not been idle and post cards, recording arduous travel through Hunza and Chitral to the meadows below Nanga Parbat, and across the Bolivian Andes, have been a regular feature.

The above listings do not include the Hopkinsons and the Males who climb regularly in North America, or Gregson, who commutes to Oregon to disperse his particular brand of Yorkshire humour (at an academic level of course). Nor does it take account of Bill and Anne Kenyon trekking widely in the Himalaya and an Oread first, completing the legendary John Muir Trail. Nearer home, in the late eighties, Pretty, Janes, Williams and Appleby wandered the badlands of Corsica and H.P. subsequently produced a new guide to the G.R. 20 and other long distance routes. During the same period Pretty completed an obscure long distance walk from Mt.Grammos (Zagoria) to the Agrapha Mountains through the North and South Pindos (Greece), taking in many of the big peaks en route.

But one could not complete this discursive overview without mention of the man in black, Christopher Radcliffe, depositing his boxes of milk tray around the globe. From the Drakensberg to the Bugaboos his privately chartered helicopters are even now searching for new peaks and passes. If it has been climbed, or has potential, Radders has been there, or is about to go. There is a whole secret world here of mystery and intrigue that we shall never know unless it explodes in quadraphonic sound; the only true accompaniment to the master who may fade in, or fade out, but always in exemplary style.

Harry Pretty

*Rites of
Passage*

RITES OF PASSAGE

The Oread year is marked by certain events in addition to A.G.M.s and Annual Dinners. These are the rituals whereby the Oread marks the passage of time each appropriate to the season.

John (Rock) Hudson throws some light.

CLUB MEETS (WEDNESDAY EVENINGS)

ROCK HUDSON

For the rock climbing section of the club, changing from G.M.T. to B.S.T. is something longed for, because they can now be out knocking off the routes midweek. For over two decades now, with near universal car ownership, increasing numbers of members form part of the Wednesday evenings climbing scene. From midday in office, factory or while teaching, they have one eye on the weather, hoping it will keep fine, or if raining stop before six o'clock, so that two or three hours sport and freedom can be spent on limestone or gritstone cliff – from Cromford to Dovedale, Roaches or Stanage.

The Dolomite limestones of the Brassington area are the traditional venue for the first evening, being easy of access, short in length and not too serious. The evening, also short in length, so there's pressure to solo though, on Trident Buttress, Colin Hobday and Clive (Rusty) Russell are roped on Trident Arête, while Tony Raphael and Tony Smedley tackle Trident Face, using a selection of modern protection. Back in the early sixties, Ray Handley made the first ascent with only hawser laid rope and perhaps a single rope sling.

Back at the Gate Inn in Brassington village the group meet up with those who have been on Rainster Rocks. Had a good evening? Great, and nobody was stung to death by nettles on the way in. Another succession of routes soloed, though Nick Evans and Roy Eyre were impressed by Penlington's Progress and Two Step, first climbed by Dave Penlington way back in 1950, no doubt with only a length of hemp and not a bit of protection.

Must be at least twenty out on a dull but dry midweek evening on Gardoms Edge. Parties of twos and threes gravitate to the Apple Buttress Area, crags having a close association with the Oread, particularly in the early years, when some members were part of that select band of 'hard men', able to put up new routes, which were considerable achievements for the period.

Mike Hayes and Mike Wren are soon on Finale Groove, while Rock Hudson, Keith Gregson, and Beryl Strike go for the exposed Apple Arete, both routes first climbed by 'Penno' in 1951 and 1952. Several ropes are tackling the routes of Capillary Crack and Babylon's Groove, while Kevin Allsebrook and Daryl Kirk are coming to terms with a typical route put by a young Oread Tiger, Ernest Marshall in 1953, Orchard, and still graded at HVS.

There is drizzle in the air, so down to the Robin Hood for the second phase of the evening. A beer, and we talk of the climbing skills of those Oreads, with the most basic equipment nearly fifty years ago.

The evenings have lengthened by July, so the venues are further afield. Willersley is on the calendar, but typical of the Oread's fickleness we hear later, at the Queen Victoria, that many have been elsewhere.

Derrick Burgess went to Willersley and climbed Babylon (HVS), noting that Derek Carnell's route was no 'walk over'. On Wildcat, Tony Howard, Steve Bennet and Gill Heyes, considered Cougar Cleft a death trap, not easy for severe. On ticking it off in the guide it was noticed, that it was the first route climbed and that back in 1948 by Nat Allen.

Another party arrives, darkness having fallen ages ago. All confirmed it was a beautiful evening, and the last route climbed was 'topped out' as the last rays of the sun lit up the sky. What a great classic is Nat Allen's Slab to finish off the evening, though the earlier attempt on another of his routes, Neb Crack, was found to be beyond their abilities, even with friends. They were still wondering after the second pint of beer, how it could be climbed without any protection. It's closing time, so a quick drive to the nearest fish and chip shop: By the time they roll into bed, there's only a few hours of sleep before those eight hours of work reappear.

The Quiet Woman at Earl Sterndale is packed with climbers after attending the last of the evening meets, for it's mid September, and the days are drawing in. There's a typical atmosphere, with Brian West bemoaning the fact that another summer is over, and it's going to be a long cycle home unless some kind person will find room for him and his bike in the back of the car. Gordon Wright is moaning about the beer, but he's already tucking into the fourth pint. Burgess is telling the story of the first ascent (1965) of Cumberbund on Ossam's Crag and how clean it now is compared with then.

Ron Sant is given a pint by a prospective member for taking him up his first VS, Simeon, on Tissington Spires while, out of the spotlight, young Chris Bryan, is now making steady progress, chatting up a pretty female with no transport. Chris is asked about plans for ski-ing this winter, only to turn round and see that Pete O'Neill, twice his age, has smartly stepped in. Can't mix climbing and pleasure, some observant member says.

A closely packed set of bodies are asked "what they've done on Beeston Tor"? or "what happened on the Alpine Meet?", while others show off a bit of new gear, and Ron Chambers passes a comment that "Storm" on Thor's Cave is never 5a, which brings Pete Scott into the conversation, recalling that it's another good route put up in the past by Dez Hadlum and Eric Wallis. Wendy Lawrence, probably the youngest in the bar, is congratulated by Burgess, having seconded her hardest route – The Webb, complaining that his joints would not allow a repeat of his first ascent.

Final order please! A few go for a last pint (jug). Others make late arrangements for a coming meet, while information is asked for and passed on about crags, routes and campsites, or somebody remembers the holiday photographs of America or Asia, which only brings forth more questions and answers.

"Good evening, Great! Lot of climbing done – It was a beautiful walk down the dale, see you in Wales this weekend, yes?", "or, on the climbing wall next Wednesday?"

WINTER TALKS

ROCK HUDSON

Where can you go for the price of less than a pint of beer on the first Tuesday evening between October and March and see a series of talks on the widest range of topics, be it travel, exploration, mountaineering or rock climbing? It's the Oread!

For many years members have been welcome at the Royal Oak in Ockbrook. In rain, snow, frost or fog, between 20-100 have been able to spend a few hours sharing the experiences, knowledge, problems of both members and guest speakers, on the widest range of mountaineering topics. However, to provide even more interest, you can take part in a quiz. Though questions such as; the size of Reg Squires' boots, the maiden name of Sherpa Tensing's mother, or highest mountain in Madagascar, were only known to a few. We all like a true bargain, so the Oread provides an auction. Bidding is slow, very slow and members ignore any level of inflation. Nearly new boots can go for five pounds, a pair of ski for little more, while a set of rusty old nuts are withdrawn at twenty pounds for not reaching their reserve price.

A new season with Chris Radcliffe's extravaganza of quadraphonic music, synchronised projectors with fade in and outs, produced from hours of dedicated planning, only to be let down by an intermittent power supply. John Hudson takes days drafting introductory maps, diagrams and archival illustrations only to run out of time during the narrative. Tim Cairns turns up with a few tatty slides, a completely discounted commentary, but provides the greatest of laughs for the whole session. We see the wonders of caves with K. Waltham, the pleasures of ski-ing in New Zealand with R. Hoare, and the desperation of portage over the watersheds of Canada with Hank Harrison. Crossing the White Spider with Robin Sedgwick, or achieving the first ascent of the Croz Spur in winter by P. Holden and C. Radcliffe, to the reminiscence of Ray Colledge on the first British ascents of Nesthorn and Grosshorn.

Over many visits Denis Gray has given his life story but, up to now, only reaching his early thirties! We all know the Tatra by following Colin Hobday, and vast areas of the Great Himalayan Range from Jack Ashcroft and others. Those present, wish they too could join expeditions to Alaska with Roy Ruddle, the wastes of Greenland with Phil Nixon, and the Whittaker Couloir on Mount Everest with Ken Rawlinson.

What's the rock like on Jersey? Ian Smith told us. 'How easy are the routes in Wadi Rum? Tony Howard told us. Travelogues from Bleaklow to the Bregaglia by Gordon Gadsby, and around the world from Mike Wynne.

All Oreads know it's better value than looking at 'soaps on the box' or seeing all that bare flesh at the cinema.

Rock Hudson, a confirmed bachelor, has a strange notion of what most red blooded Oread men would prefer — *Editor*.

HUT WORKING PARTY

ROCK HUDSON

On the meets calendar, it's a working party at the weekend. The name implies two days of unremitting toil, damaged fingers, fear of not being able to knock in a nail straight and, for the prospective member, the trauma of being black balled by the hut sub committee for failing to achieve levels of competence.

The Welbourns are up at the crack of dawn and by 7.30 we are handed tea in bed by Ruth. For work must start at a respectable hour. After a healthy breakfast of bacon, egg, beans, sausages, black pudding and fried bread, we, skilled workers, assistants, support staff and 'bodies', are "lined up" by the bosses in the form of John Shreeve and Chuck Hooley. For months they have been planning; drawings, materials, tools needed, manpower required to fulfil the endless list of jobs to be done.

They scrutinise us all, for the difficulty of the task must match the real or perceived D-I-Y skills – not easy, and mistakes over the years have led to disaster. Typically, Ron Chambers, the plumber, is given the painting job, Kim Davidson, the policewoman is to sort out the electrical supply but, being young and pretty, will later become John Shreeve's personal assistant. Volunteers are asked to dig out and remove trees from the garden, but nobody steps forward so three are conscripted, and the rest start cutting the grass, painting the hall, while curtains are hung by two females.

Minutes pass and the most important person on the work party Margaret Hooley says: "Tea is ready!".

Michael Hayes is painting the back of the lounge magnolia, but Tony Raphael, following orders, is painting it white, while Nick Evans is repairing the back door, and Richard Coghlan is putting hinges to a new one. Stuart Haywood is putting up a panel with six inch nails, when all the power tools fail due to an electrical short.

Tea and sandwiches are taken outside, and conversation as ever ranges from Chuck recalling jobs done in the early years, to Rock telling about his last trip, and Daryl moaning that he's losing a good weekend on the crags. Down from Snowdon come a bunch of walkers and ask what the cost is for food and drink. Keith Gregson tries the old dodge, about needing to get a saw from the village before it closes at 2.30 p.m.

By now three small jobs have been done, one of which required Chuck to put up another notice; "a guide to understanding the hut notice board". On the negative side a tin of paint has been spilt over the new carpet and the new doors fitted in the kitchen prevent each other from being opened. In the hall, painting is stopping the laying of new tiles, the stair carpet is too short and, now that the old ceiling is removed, somebody recalls that he's left the new plaster board at home. The final straw: the total work force has to go outside to prevent the bonfire spreading onto tinder dry grass on the slopes up to Snowdon.

The hut sub committee calls all the experts for a meeting on how many sticks should be cut for winter and how many toilet rolls should be kept in stock.

Outside a team is painting the walls, while in the bedrooms Lisa, Shirley and Uschi have replaced all the mattress covers in minutes. It's mid afternoon, tea and home made cakes, then back to finishing off a new bit of wiring, cleaning the chimney, realigning the shelves from the previous working party.

It's good sitting in the lounge, chatting about the climbing, ski-ing, and what's proposed for the autumn work party only to be interrupted by Steve Bennett, who informs us that it's pouring with rain and the paint is washed off the outside walls, the gutters are blocked, and, he believes there is a patch of damp rot by the back door.

Oread Meet Wednesday Before the Wednesday Before Christmas

Rock Hudson

What sort of mountaineering club would include on its calendar of events, an evening's climbing in mid December and then call it 'The Wednesday before the Wednesday before Christmas'; it's the Oread.

Another car pulls into the car park below Black Rocks, followed by another. Indistinct figures are pulling on tatty, very tatty anoraks. Another calls out that we must all be a load of silly buggers while someone else drapes a rope over his shoulders, its looks indicating its age. But then traditional club members never heed the call of the modern retailer and their intense sales campaigns. A prospective member asks, "Shall I take a couple of racks", only to be informed a couple of slings will do and those PA's, which only shows up his age, are bloody useless on a night like this. Yet another body calls out: "Anybody got a spare head torch?"

While wandering up to the crag we hear yet another tale, regarding what happened on this evening the previous year. Two panda cars sped into the car park, out tumbled, what appeared to be a number of under employed constables: "What are all those lights doing scanning the sky?" asks one. What answer could a sharp Oread give, apart from:- "Searching for enemy aircraft!" A flood of questions followed; "Who are you all? What are you doing? Have you permission?". "It's a climbing meet",

explained Keith Gregson. Blank faces indicated that this was more than strange. The interrogation continued:- "Are you all experienced? Have you got your equipment? Don't you think the weather is too bad?" Without answers we are informed that the police do not want any more details. Finally we are told not to expect any help if there is an accident, the police have better things to do than rescue people like us!

Below the crag shadowy figures answered to their names on enquiries as to who they were, while others shone the torches upwards, picking out a section of rope, before it was lost beyond the rim of light. Higher, but at an unknown distance, there appeared a series of dancing fairy lights, at times in twos, then in threes, now rotating, followed by swinging left and right.

It started to sleet and gusts of cold wind, followed by "climb when ready" brings you back from day dreaming. Only a 'diff, but tonight the rock has a veneer of shiny green slime in the light beam. Vibrams slip and find no purchase, hands are cold and wet groping for a hold that is merely an illusion. On Queens Parlour Slab somebody is gripped, another unsure of the line; while nearby grunts and groans, a rapid scraping boots, indicates a little epic. Someone states it's impossible to judge distances to holds with head torches and comes onto a tight rope to prove it. Out left, a voice tells us that the pockets are full of frozen slush, while above, another with no name, gives a sigh of relief, for he's on top. A leader is 'farting' about on Queens Parlour Chimney, so several teams are passing the time at the belay, asking each other what they are doing for Christmas. A couple are off to Spain to climb in the sun, another off to France ski-ing, while another is down at Tany-y-Wyddfa to enjoy the company of Oreads and the hope of a few days out on the hills.

In the depths of Original Route, flashes of light indicate a little progress. Then it's pitch-blackness, followed by swearing and cursing from the man at the sharp end, who announces that he's knocked his head torch off. This only brings comments: "I'm cold", or "hungry", "prat", or "it's time we got off to the pub", from those waiting below. With bruised shins, skinned hands and banged head the leader emerges to sliver clouds scudding across the moon's face, while the lights from Cromford to Matlock cast an orange glow up to the sky.

Walking back to the car one feels content as are those, met on the way, who have had a walk along part of the High Peak Trail. All agree it's been another fitting end to the year's activities. Down at the car park some late comer has arrived, having cycled up from Derby. In the gloom, those present are informed that the meet leader has booked pie and peas at the pub and also Keith and Mike have their musical instruments so, after the shouting match, we can have a good sing-song.

Before Their Time

Brian Cooke 1923-1981

Oliver Jones 1906-1983

J. Norman Millward 1928-1990

Nat Allen 1928-1995

“..... for enriching my life, giving, not just for me, but for many others, a different perspective on life itself, an enthusiasm for it, and an even greater satisfaction from it. I am proud and happy to have known you.”

Derek Carnell

BRIAN JOSEPH COOKE

1923-1981

Brian Cooke's sudden death robbed the Oread of one of its most loyal and long serving members. Brian, with his wife Marion, first came into contact with the Oread one evening in late 1952 in the Llanberis Pass. Some six months or so later a change of job brought them to Derby – thus began a long, devoted membership of the Oread. Very shortly after election to membership, Brian became a committee member, which was quickly followed by a long term as General Secretary. On the 3rd March 1962 he was elected President.

Brian became interested in the hills at a very early age. Evacuated to Penrith at the outbreak of the war, he was soon rock-climbing in the Lakes. War service took him to India and the Himalayas. His coolies on an expedition into the hills considered him to act in a most dangerous manner when he climbed bare rock rather than, as they did, the vegetation.

After the war, he returned to his native Newcastle and made a major contribution to the production of the Northumbria Climbing Guides. During this period he came to know the Cheviots in detail and produced a number of fine rock climbs. Many members have experienced Brian's patient encouragement, whether they were a novice receiving advice and instruction or a tiger putting out a new route.

Brian, a Civil Engineer, also left his mark on many fine road works and bridges. The older Nottingham members appreciated the original improvements to the A52. A major bridge over the Mersey cut the time of travelling to the lakes by hours. One of Brian's later achievements was the Keswick By-pass.

Brian was a man who was dedicated to helping others, of a high standard and integrity in all that he did, winning the respect and affection of all those who came to know him.

David Penlington

The world will be a sadder place without Brian Cooke. He was quietly dedicated to his work and recreation. His family have requested donations to the Coniston Mountain Rescue Team. He was first on the scene after the accident on Dow Crag in 1971 when Geoff Hayes, with whom he had climbed a lot, died. He was forever appreciative of the prompt help the team gave on that sad day.

Jack Ashcroft

CRAG LOUGH

A cold depressed cliff,
A precipice to the lake below,
Diminishing in size; reeds devouring all;
Silver boughs sway, bare of leaves:
Autumn is near.

As predictable as the next blade of grass
For the sheep on the hills,
The unchanging posture of climbers on the rocks.
Wind tearing at their clothes,
As they proceed strategically across the face.

A clicking of hammers against metal,
 An occasional word catches one's ear on the wind –
 Climbing jargon, relevant only to climbers.
 Ropes strung across, uniting
 The elements of achievement.

Margaret Cooke, 1974

OLIVER JONES

1906-1983 (HON. MEMBER)

Oliver died on the 19th April after a short illness. A loyal Scot, he was born in Glasgow in 1906. He was elected to club membership in 1949, the year of its foundation. He remained an active member throughout his life. After having two artificial hip joints fitted a couple of years ago, he climbed in South Africa and was on Ben Nevis the following Easter. His climbing itinerary was simple – Ben Nevis at Easter, Glen Brittle for two weeks in August, with Wales and, to a lesser extent, Derbyshire and the Lakes in between. There were also trips to the States, Canada, Arctic Norway, Switzerland, South Africa, etc....

At sixteen he left home for America and, in the next five years, he had 50 or so jobs ranging from cleaning sewers, to building aircraft, to being a lumberjack, etc.... In his later years, up to retirement, he ran his own engineering works in Birmingham with a product range from cake trays for Lyons to the famous 'cuillin' climbing nail – he also made 'B.P.' nails for his competitors.

Oliver was not only a mountaineer, he played rugby (until well after retirement) for the Old Edwardians in Birmingham. His support of international rugby took him on regular visits to Cardiff, Twickenham, Paris, and so on. The Americans loved him and a number of features on the O.A.P. player appeared in various 'States' and South African newspapers.

After rugby came Scottish Dancing, swimming and cycling, the latter activity leading to his arrest on the M6 motorway extension into Birmingham. This, in the end, turned out to be very embarrassing for the two policemen involved – how could they do such a thing to a poor O.A.P.!

Oliver's background made him an ideal member of the Oread. After a hard day, out would come the guitar for an equally long session of singing and drinking. In Glen Brittle the Macraes invited him to play with the other pipers at the annual Summer Ceilidh, indeed a unique honour. Most members will remember Oliver as the bachelor who presented the tankards to the newly-weds at the Dinner. This tradition, which commenced with Nan Smith and Keith Axon in 1950, was only broken in the one year when Oliver was in dock being re-fitted with his new hip joints. A tradition which will no doubt have died with Oliver.

A great man in so many ways. He will be remembered by countless members who have enjoyed sharing his life, whether actively or just watching from the sidelines.

David Penlington

J. NORMAN (NOBBY) MILLWARD 1928-1990

"Nobby was a very private person" to quote Ernie Phillips, who, of course, was a fellow member of the Stonnis M.C. in 1946 when Norman started climbing at Black Rocks. But there was a lot more to Nobby Millward than that, and I am grateful to Tony Moulam for a few snippets from their early climbing days on Gritstone and in North Wales.

A.J.J.M. remembers meeting him for the first time at a Black Rocks Stonnis Meet in September 1946 in the company of Peter Harding, Ronnie Lee (later Phillips), S. Ball, K. Brindley and R. Bickerstaff. Moulam also recalls Nobby belaying when Harding and A.J.J.M. were trying the then unled Prom Traverse, and subsequently joining them on the same route in October 1947 ("all in rubbers"). There is an early marker for Oread "Wednesday before Wednesday" antics when, after a Stonnis November A.G.M., they climbed at Black Rocks in the dark, in a state of inebriation, after a surfeit of fish and chips. This was followed by Nobby participating in the traditional Christmas Day ascent of the Grinnet – and a first ascent of Chalkren Stairs on Gallt yr Ogof, "after many fraught attempts".

Nobby appeared in Oread circles before the demise of Bryn-y-Wern, following the migration of those other R.R. characters (ex Valkyrie, Stonnis) Janes and Handley. Although originally a railway engineer he translated smoothly to nuclear engineering and achieved distinction, if not legendary status, by solving lesser men's complex problems on the back of his fag packet. An amazingly modest man it was a long time before one realised that he could tailor a suit, or an overcoat, with the same expertise that he built an extension to his home, turned out a superbly finished tool on his lathe, or led a hard severe on sight, and all with the same matter of fact economy of effort that left ordinary mortals gasping.

In the early '60s', before the later mass invasion, small Oread family parties spent Bank Holidays encamped on the north coast of Pembroke, and on the headlands of the Llyn Peninsula, where night time fishing inevitably meant descending, traversing, and escape climbing unknown cliffs. Occasionally these jaunts became small epics and, although we never recorded a single climb, it was generally Norman who cracked it to ensure that Janes and I (and occasionally Paul Gardiner) returned safely to camp – generally after sunset.

Not physically strong in terms of carrying heavy loads, he was never a participant in the rough excesses of Pennine or Welsh long walks but with Norman and Judy, Molly and I spent some of our happiest days exploring odd corners of Derbyshire with a 25,000 map for he was, as in all his activities, a consummate map reader, a man with style, a complete original, and ten years later I miss him dreadfully.

Harry Pretty, 1999

JOHN REGINALD (NAT) ALLEN 1928-1995 (HON. MEMBER)

When, on the next Bank Holiday, I travel down to Pembroke, it will be in the knowledge that a major strand in my life is broken and that an era is ended. With the death of Nat Allen in June, the interwoven pattern of our lives was ended, and the spirals of our rope forever severed. Now, whilst I grieve his loss, the many, notable memories of the 46 years I spent climbing and socialising with Nat, remain at least to cheer me. I remember my first climb with him – Black Slab on Stanage – then many more on Gritstone, Limestone and Granite peaks: in Wales, the Lakes, Scotland and Ireland too. The Alpine holidays, rock climbing and mountaineering routes among the great and lesser ranges. In good or bad weather, scorching heat, frozen, wet or baked – we tried them all, but always his enthusiasm, skill, and indomitable spirit, coupled with an innate stubbornness to achieve his goals, made Nat a cherished partner.

From the 1960s until his death, we found a common purpose on the Pembrokeshire sea-cliffs, regularly climbing together, doing new routes (some 200 plus), and with others, exploring the possibilities. Nat's enthusiasm was boundless. He always had ideas on where to go, what to do, and was a source of inspiration, if not competitiveness amongst our little group. 'Secret Craggs' abound, and we hugged ourselves, each time we forged another route.

My final memory of Nat is of climbing together in Pembroke on the last day of May this year; neither of us in the best of health – me with a knee op, he with the debilitating effect of his illness. We both crept (in every sense of the word!) away from our friends doing their hard routes, to climb a couple of slabby V Diffs in a secluded bay. Summer's End was to be the last climb Nat did in Pembroke. We sat, watching the setting sun pointing a rosy finger along the sea in Ramsey Sound and I saw a serenity in his face and felt with him his pleasure at having done the routes despite his illness. Ruth had joined us and we laughed and talked easily in the euphoria of just sitting there, in the grass, above the crag, above the sea, reliving the earlier times and making plans to visit Ireland again before too long. Just over 3 weeks later Nat was dead.

With his death the climbing world loses a most active, erudite and friendly man; one who had managed to mix easily with people of all levels, ages and experiences while still remaining true to his own principles. On the personal side, I lost the truest, closest friend that I have ever had. Thank you Nat for your steadfast and reliable companionship in the hills, for enriching my life; giving, not just for me, but many others, a different perspective on Life itself, an enthusiasm for it, and, an even greater satisfaction from it. I am proud and happy to have known you. You live forever in our hearts.

Derek Carnell



SNOWDON FROM GLASLYN

End Game

“They think it’s all over”, at least I did before the post brought three contributions that I would not want to leave out. Peter Holden adapts, with tongue in cheek, Brian West is at his magisterial best, a lesson to us all, and finally young Michael Gregson (aged 11), with impressive simplicity, is wise beyond his years — *Editor*.

OREADS

High above – teams ascending
Where crags are bare and steep,
You may see the Oreads clinging
Where awesome voids are deep.

The glistening summits they beckon,
With ‘friends’ and wired ‘rocks’,
They climb so steadfastly,
Clipping pitons and their ‘chocks’,

Feet swathed in ‘Fire’ slippers,
Stealing up the finest routes,
No fear or wilting bodies,
Keeping rock-fast with their boots.

Wraiths of the ‘Rock and Ice’,
Even up the frozen waterfall,
Mate with us – do be ‘nice’,
‘Case we fall, – we fall.

Peter Holden

Adapted from August Oreads, The Faery Calendar by Bernard Sleigh and Ivy A. Ellis.

TAN-Y-WYDDFA

In echelon facing Snowdon: this is how our cars should sit.
I tried at times to find a space but never seemed to fit.
Too late, perhaps, when I arrived, and always there the doubt
That should I ever once get in, I never would get out.
And so I park beyond the pale; beyond the security light;
Where it helps to have a little torch, and familiarity with the night.

In echelon facing Snowdon: in procession past the hut,
They all go to their mountain. That gate does not stay shut.
A recommended track upon a map they did not help to make.
Content, it seems, all towed along in someone else's wake.
Performance by prescription; not hard to understand,
Life taken from the guide book can at best be second-hand.
What exists in this to set the mind alight,
To fire imagination, to clarify the sight?
In echelon facing Snowdon: alignment is implied.
But with whom, with what, we each of us decide.

Sometimes in the still of a sea-trout night, where Llyfni meets the sea,
And shooting stars clash with the lighthouse flash from far – off Anglesey,
I catch the siren – song of those hut-bound souls who own to a different custodian,
But am not moved.
For I fear they lie sleeping there, in echelon facing Snowdon.

Brian West

UNTITLED

My dad and I go to the mountains,
To look at the hills and the sky,
We walk over the hills in the sun, rain and snow
And marvel at all things, wherever we go.

My dad and I go to the mountains,
To climb on rocks, never mind why,
We've looked down on buzzards and eagles
As they soared down below in the sky.

My dad and I've been to the mountains,
Been lost in the fog up on high,
And seen the white hare and wild ponies
On the slopes of the wild Carneddau.

My dad and I've been to the mountains,
Had a swim in the lake and the stream,
And sometimes, when we can't get back there
We just lie on our backs and we dream.

Michael Gregson, aged 11



APPENDIX

PRESIDENTS

C. B. Machin	1949-1951
E. Byne	1951-1953
G. A. Sutton	1953-1955
H. Pretty	1955-1957
P. R. Falkner	1957-1959
R. G. Pettigrew	1959-1961
B. Cooke	1961-1963
J. Ashcroft	1963-1965
P. Janes	1965-1967
R. Handley	1967-1969
D. Burgess	1969-1971
P. Gardiner	1971-1973
N. Allen	1973-1975
G. Gadsby	1975-1977
C. Hobday	1977-1979
C. Radcliffe	1979-1981
P. Scott	1981-1983
K. Gregson	1983-1985
R. Sedgwick	1985-1987
J. Linney	1987-1989
J. Hudson	1989-1991
R. Gilbert	1991-1993
R. Chambers	1993-1995
B. West	1995-1997
C. Russell	1997-1999
H. Pretty	1999-2000

HONORARY SECRETARIES

G. Sutton	1949-1950
E. Say	1950-1951
H. Pretty	1951-1952
G. Gibson	1952-1954
C. Webb*	1954-1955
B. Cooke	1955-1957
L. Hatchett	1957-1959
R. Handley	1959-1961
P. Janes	1961-1963
C. Hobday	1963-1964
R. Turner	1964-1965
Mrs. V. Langworthy	1965-1968
L. Langworthy	1968-1971
P. Scott	1971-1975
C. Hobday	1975-1977
D. Williams	1977-1980
R. Sant	1980-1987
C. Barnard	1987-1988
Miss L. Welbourn	1988-1990
S. Bashforth	1990-1997
Mrs. S. Wainwright	1997-

* C. Webb's period of office was interrupted by his joining the British South Georgia Expedition.

NEWSLETTER EDITORS

D. C. Cullum	1953-1958
H. Pretty	1958-1959
T. Frost	1959-1961
R. Turner	1961-1963
G. Hayes	1963-1970
C. Radcliffe/P. Scott	1970-1971
C. Radcliffe	1971-1973
P. Bingham	1973-1975
K. Gregson	1975-1977
Miss B. Strike	1977-1978
R. Sant	1978-1980
C. Wilson	1980-1981
R. Freestone	1981-1984
J. O'Reilly	1984-1986
R. Larkham	1986-1987
J. Hudson	1987-1988
Miss H. Griffiths	1988-1990
R. Tressider	1990-1993
C. Russell	1993-

JOURNAL EDITORS

P. Bingham	1974-1975
D. Appleby	1975-1976
Mrs. J. Gregson	1976-1978
R. Sedgwick	1978-1981
J. O'Reilly	1981-1984
C. Wilson and J. Hudson (Joint)	1984-1985
J. Hudson	1985-1988
R. Gilbert	1990-1993

HONORARY MEMBERS

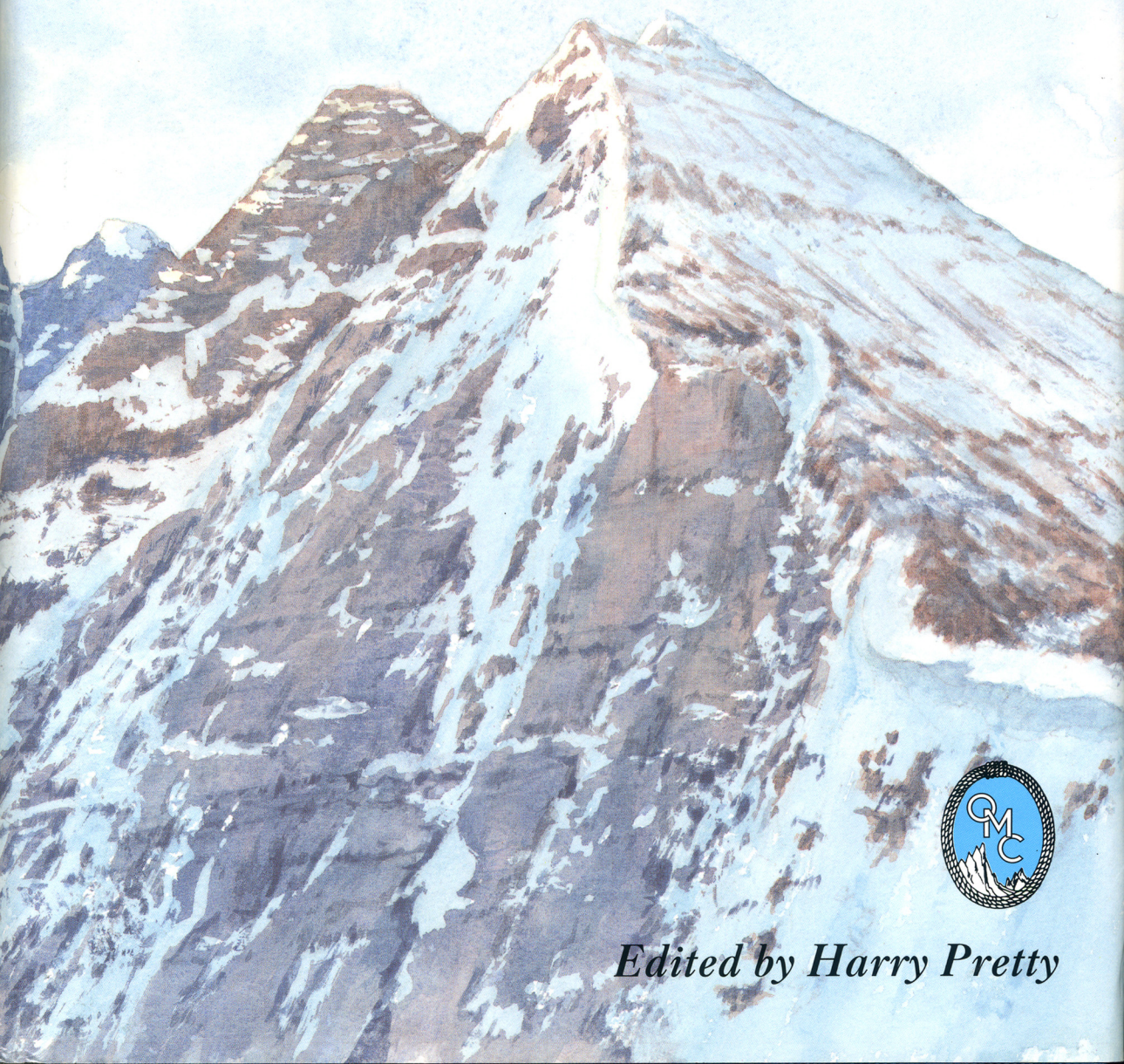
C. B. Machin	1951
E. Byne	1953
A. Bridge	1956
Jack Longland	1956
G. A. Sutton	1959
H. Pretty	1960
N. Allen	1963
L. Burns	1971
C. D. Milner	1973
M. & C. Hooley	1984
J. Welbourn	1984
E. Phillips	1989
K. Griffiths	1989
D. Penlington	1989
D. Burgess	1993
C. Hobday	1993
D. Gray	1993
J. Shreeve	1995
P. Janes	1998



CRIB GOCH

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

50th Anniversary Journal



Edited by Harry Pretty

Other more senior clubs have lately published Centenary Journals and this offering of a Half Century Journal may, in some quarters, be thought the product of an overwhelming presumption. But I hope its contents will lead to a different conclusion.

The Oread M.C., born shortly after the Second World War, in achieving its 50th birthday has occupied a particular niche in the history of mountaineering. It has witnessed the demise of the insularity that marked many of the pre-war mountaineering clubs and, in its earliest years, was a force in the spread of more egalitarian principles.

From its involvement in the earliest Gritstone Guide Series (1950/51) a nucleic group of Oreads set standards for small expeditions to little known mountain areas: Arctic Norway (1951), Spitzbergen (1952) and, in 1954/55, went south as the British South Georgia Expedition. These were remarkable achievements for a small group at a time when travel was more difficult and even basic food was still on ration across Europe.

A later generation has also left its mark and few small clubs have recorded successful ascents of the Eigerwand (three times), north face of the Matterhorn, the Walker Spur, and the Croz Spur in winter – all within the space of a few years.

But these, mere climbing achievements, are only part of the story.

Perhaps the most interesting element in any mountaineering club is the remarkable disparity among individual members, and the quality of expression that many possess. In selecting pieces and extracts for this book a primary function has been to maximise this individuality, to find the humour, and that self-deprecatory style that hangs in the memory.

Generally it is the men and women who are the main characters, not the mountain. The play and counterplay of all these assertive individuals is the story. The stirring Editorials of D. C. Cullum; the wandering prose and poetry of J. Kershaw when “signing on” or philosophising by some remote Hebridean shore; the driven aspirations of C. Radcliffe and P. Scott; the dubious privilege of being fitted up by Tricouni; and the astringent asperity of B. West . . . they are all here for your entertainment and to brighten the memories of those who also took part.

Nearly 100 photographs from the personal collections of current club members, mostly never published before, are chosen to illustrate the life and times most memorable. Aesthetic landscapes, though technically brilliant, have not found favour.



Harry Pretty, born 1925, was educated at Burton-on-Trent Grammar School and Derby Art School. From Liverpool University he joined the Royal Navy in 1943, qualifying as a Fleet Air Arm pilot. Demobbed in 1946 he served as a Volunteer Reserve pilot 1947-51. In civil life he worked in the construction industry as a professional quantity surveyor until retirement in 1990. Both Harry and Molly Pretty were Founder Members of the Oread in 1949. Harry was also a member of the Oread Lyngen Expedition 1951, and the British South Georgia Expedition 1954/55, and was responsible for survey activities. President 1955-57 and elected Honorary Member 1960. Assisted in organising Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition 1961, and has served on committee in various roles. Negotiated first lease of Derbyshire Hut (Heathy Lea) with Chatsworth Estate (1967). Favours untrodden places and has walked and climbed extensively in Pindos (Greece) and Corsica, producing a Guide to GR 20 and other Long Distance Walks in Corsica, (Robertson McCarta) 1989. Since retirement has reverted to early days: writes and paints watercolours.

The Oread Mountaineering Club 1949-1999:

“The Oread came into existence part on cue. The men (and the women) matched the need, and they were inspired by a fanaticism about mountains . . . but always mitigated by a humour which would not let them take themselves too seriously, by a Rabelaisian anarchism which inspired their doings in huts and pubs, by the civilising influence of girlfriends and wives who sometimes climbed as well as they did.”

Sir Jack Longland

