

climb if you will

introduction by Sir Jack Longland

Geoff Hayes, who was killed whilst climbing at Dow Crag in the Lake District in 1971, was a member of the famous Midland mountaineering club — THE OREAD.

SIR JACK LONGLAND (President of the Alpine Club) writes in his Foreword to the book: "...In my experience the Oread Club is unique in the British mountaineering scene, whether in the number and variety of real 'characters' to be found among its members, in the comprehensiveness of its activities in or near the hills, and in the imaginative and outrageous Saturnalia which it inadequately describes as the Annual Dinner ... And that has left out the Antarctic expedition to South Georgia and the climbing of Mount Brooker; many Himalayan peaks of far greater stature have offered less resistance than this fine mountain; less have been climbed by so small a unit.; and the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition."

GEOFF HAYES was one of the most popular members of the Club. In this book over 30 of his friends and club colleagues have written of good days on the mountains on expeditions to such far flung places as Antarctica and the Himalaya; on Oread meets to the Alps or Scotland; and summer evenings on Derbyshire crags.

ERIC WALLIS a guide for the British Mountaineering Council writes of Geoff "His tremendous walking ability — an image readily springs to mind of a wiry bespectacled figure, calf muscles bared to the elements, hands in his pockets, Bergan rucksack on his back, bouncing up and down with his untiring gait, over the wild desolation of Bleaklow or the Fourteen 'Three Thousand' feet peaks in Wales."

DOUG SCOTT who has twice battled with the elements on the South West Face of Everest, writes of an epic day many years ago... "Keep the wind on your left cheek" yelled Geoff. No talk of going down. This was our Everest that day and at the time, an easy walk made hard for youthful climbers in those conditions. We kept on over all five summits in the full fury of the blizzard."

Geoff Hayes leading the final pitch of Bramble Buttress on Craig-y-Geisal, Tremadoc, North Wales in 1971.

Photo — Gordon Gadsby

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Jean Lussell

Talk Longland
Anne Hayes

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Peter

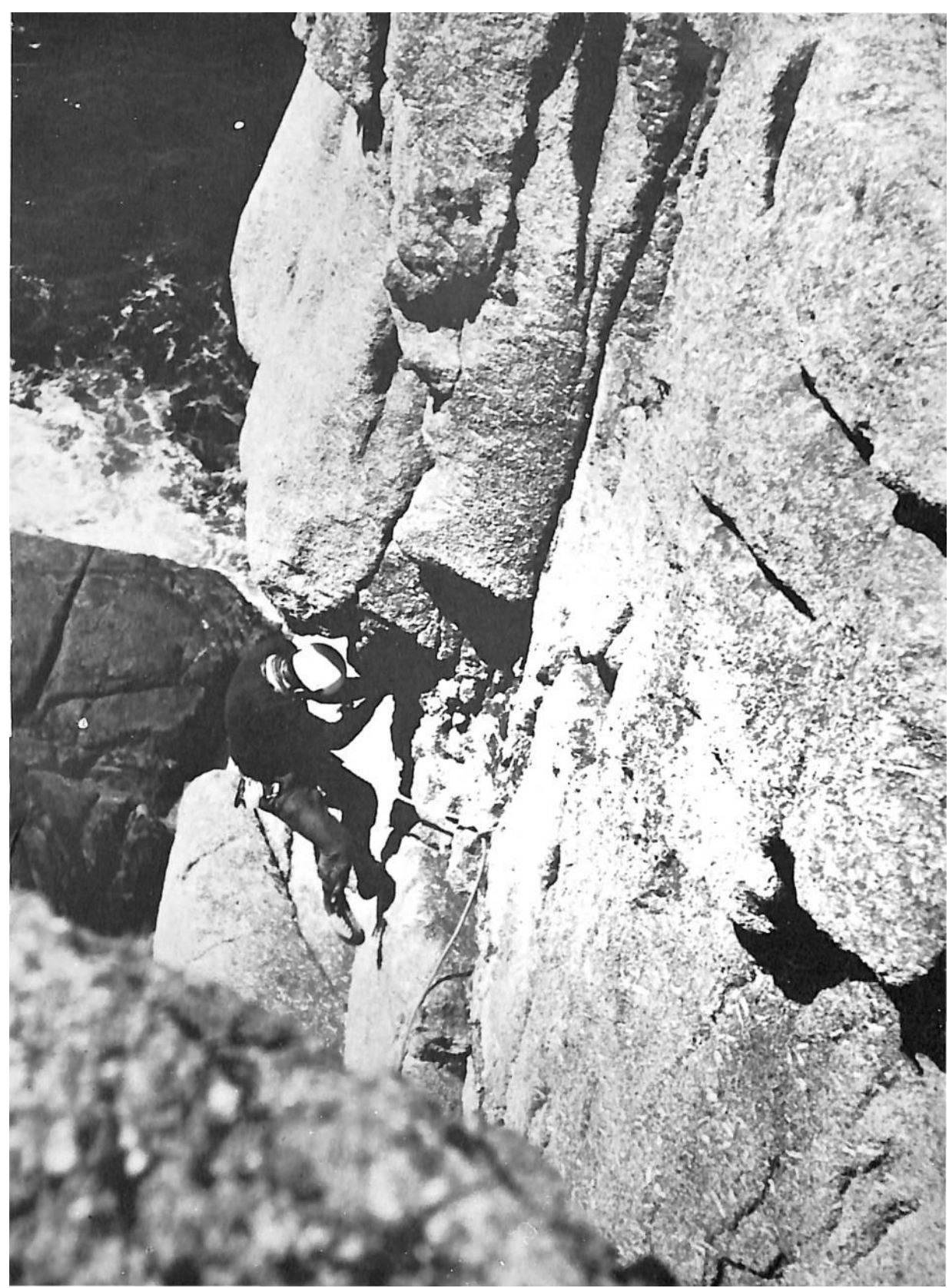
Michael

Edith Hayes

To Michael and Peter

***Michael and Pater Hayes at Wasdale Head on Oread Mountaineering Club Meet in July 1973.
Photo — Gordon Gadst***





climb if you will

a commentary on Geoff Hayes
and his Club — The Oread Mountaineering Club

compiled and edited by Jean Russell

in association with
Jack Ashcroft, Mike Berry, Gordon Gadsby and Paul Gardiner

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Many people have contributed to the production of this book by writing articles, loaning photographs, giving help and advice. It would be invidious to name just a few and take up too much space to list them all. We are grateful to everyone connected with this book, and hope that it will be a fitting tribute to Geoff and to the Oread.

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FOREWORD

This is a book about a man and his Club, and also about that Club and its members, and the common thread that binds them together is the shared passion for the mountains. If the portrait of the Oread Club sometimes looms larger than that of Geoff Hayes, I do not think Geoff, who was a modest chap, would have minded; and anyway the mountains in the book loom larger than either. So, although the book is written in two halves, it has one continuous theme which holds it all together.

Geoff Hayes was wholehearted about his mountaineering. "The weekend for Geoff was not complete until each hour had been used to the best possible advantage." And whether he was on his way to Wales or to the Alps 'to stop whilst driving was time wasted which could be spent on the crags and hills.' Geoff was not in the front rank of mountaineers, but by any standards he ranks among the great hill-walkers. A good many people have done the Welsh Fourteen Peaks, but few have repeated the walk year after year, as Geoff did, usually with additional and lengthening trimmings. You will find many tough friends recording in this book how hard it was to keep up with him — 'his clockwork legs were continually worked to a pitch which resulted in one pace only — fast.' Moreover, he made those legs take him in the right direction: in cloud, blizzard, darkness, he was relied on as a superb navigator.

There is a lot more to him than all that, though that would have been more than enough for most of us. Again and again we note how his friends looked to Geoff as the natural leader: on a tricky Alpine pitch, or as the obvious choice to lead the Oread mountain rescue team, as the man to save the newsletter from its problems, or as still utterly dependable at the end of the long day. He loved his hills too much to treat them as a competitive arena, and believed that mountaineering was a bigger thing than pure rock-climbing. And as Gordon Gadsby writes: 'Talk about getting as much into life as one can, this was probably Geoff's greatest gift.'

This book is not only a tribute to Geoff Hayes by his friends, but also, and quite unselfconsciously a 'Salute to a Club.' In my experience, the Oread Club is unique in the British mountaineering scene, whether in the number and variety of real 'characters' to be found among its members, in the comprehensiveness of its activities in—or near—the hills, and in the imaginative and outrageous Saturnalia which it inadequately describes as the 'Annual Dinner'.

Born in 1949 of a mixture of ex-service men and their girls, and some Burton Technical College students, with tents, anoraks, and probably ropes, but not the girls, all ex-W.D., the Oread came into existence pat on cue. The men (and the women) matched the need, and they were inspired by a fanaticism about mountains of which George Sutton was perhaps the High Priest, but always mitigated by the humour which would not let them take themselves too seriously, by a Rabelaisian anarchism (and here we think of Harry Pretty) which inspired their doings in huts and pubs, by the civilising influence of girl-friends and wives who sometimes climbed as well as they did (Ronnie Phillips, Doreen Hodge,

Beryl Turner and Janet Burgess), and of course by the middle-ageing process which comes inexorably on all new-minted revolutionaries, but which the Oread has managed to shake off by timely injections of new and tigerish blood (Ray Colledge?).

From less than 20 members at the start in 1949, the Oread had grown to a hundred ten years later. In the interval the Club had done most of the work on a new gritstone guide-book, organised a splendidly successful — and very inexpensive — expedition to Arctic Norway, equipped with ex W.D. tents and other gear, established a still-running newsletter (Charlie Cullum), survived a couple of Palace revolutions, and had found, laboriously developed and been thrown out of one Club hut, only, at the end of the decade, to have bought a second at Rhyd-ddu, on which even more hard work has been lavished by members. And that has left out the Antarctic expedition to South Georgia, and the climbing of Mount Brooker: ‘Many Himalayan peaks of far greater stature have offered less resistance than this fine mountain; less have been climbed by so small a unit.’

In the last dozen years come Bob Pettigrew’s intensive campaigns in Kulu, including the largely Oread-manned Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition, 1961. Meanwhile the Oreads at home, Nat Allen and Derrick Burgess conspicuous among them, turn increasingly towards the limestone crags, and write the early guidebooks for them. Eric Byne held his thirty-eighth — and last alas — camp below Birchen Edge, and the Club, Harry Pretty insistent, acquired a hut on its own home ground, anchoring itself to Eric Byne’s favourite territory.

The last few years have seen the Oreads triumphant among mountains abroad. Ray Handley and Derrick Burgess, Pete Scott and Chris Radcliffe climbed, among many other things, the North Face of the Petit Dru, that route by which Tom Bourdillion put the English on the Alpine map again, soon after the war. Chris Radcliffe also settled an old Pettigrew score by climbing Ali Ratni Tibba, and the same year the evergreen Ray Colledge polished off the Walker Spur, the Viadella Pera, and the Eigerwand — climbed two years later by two other Oreads, Pete Scott and Chris Radcliffe. Whatever the boasts of the Rock and Ice, the Oreads are still in there, pitching.

So how to finish this very cursory comment on an admirable book, produced by devoted team labour? Geoff Hayes: we remember, with John Crosse, that his ‘boundless vigour was not just apparent in the hills, but was the essence of his whole life.’ And as for that delightful, disreputable and defiant Club, the Oread, well, may be George Sutton’s definition is not so far wrong:

“The gay audacity; the friendly welcome of novices; the high standard of allround ability; the philosophy of loving to climb hills to see hills to be among hills and not to regard hills as merely a display case for prowess.”

Jack Longland
President Alpine Club

INTRODUCTION

Saturday September 11th 1971 was a magnificent day for climbing. The Oread Mountaineering Club were up and about early at Trancarth (the Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club Hut at Torvor, overlooking Coniston Water) and before 9 a.m. a long straggle of climbers strode their way over the Lakeland turf, across the Old Walna Scar Road hot foot for the well known climbing rocks of Dow Crag. Very late that same night after a beautiful sun dappled day those climbers carried down from the rocks two of their members — Lloyd Caris, critically injured, and the other — Geoff Hayes, one of the most well liked and generous mountaineers in the Club, who would never again set eyes on the hills he loved so well. Geoff died at the end of a day of good climbing, when a belay came away on North Wall Climb, a hard severe above Great Gully. A little earlier that day he had ascended Eliminate A — a VS climb for whose conquest he had long held ambitions.

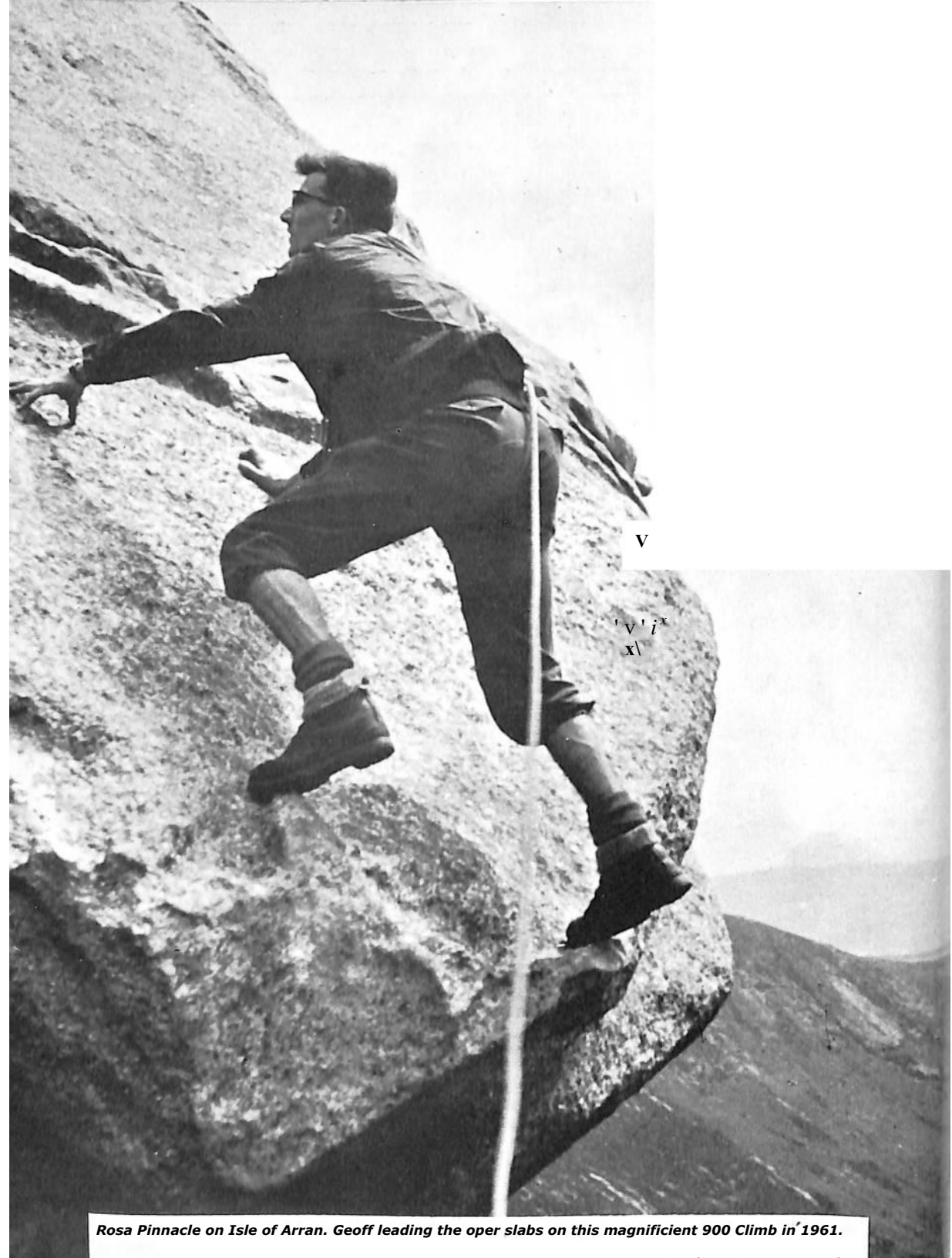
This book is a tribute to Geoff and to his climbing club, the Oread MC. Geoff was not a famous 'tele' climber like Joe Brown, nor was he a great expedition man in the Chris Bonington image. He did lead a couple of first ascents but he was not in the same class as Don Whillans and Dougal Haston. He combined a lean, lithe figure with more than the normal amount of nervous energy and a great love of long walks and high places, with a delicate bold style of rock climbing. He was very much the club man, the heart and soul of the Oread scene. Our loss is enormous, he will be missed by many and especially by his family for whom we, his friends, have set down our recollections of good days in his company on the hills of Great Britain and the Alps.

Many young climbers owe their first introduction to the hills to Geoff, for he always went out of his way to welcome young newcomers to the Oread. He was always the first to offer lifts to distant meets, and was ever eager to share with them their first experiences on rock and high mountains.

This book will be published in March 1974 at the time of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Oread Mountaineering Club. Climbers and mountaineers will find it a fascinating commentary on the exploits of a club which started in the heart of industrial England and within two years had embarked on a major expedition to Arctic Norway.

Due to the large number of contributors and their differing styles of writing, this book does not have the uniformity of a great literary masterpiece. To those who knew Geoff Hayes, whether as a businessman in the bookshop in Beeston Nottingham, or as a mountaineer or friend, there is much here to please. And for those who did not know Geoff but just love the mountains, to raise a smile of recognition. One of the titles suggested for this book was 'Remember and be glad' — surely this is how Geoff would have wished it to be.

Jean Russell
Rookery House,
Parwich, Derbyshire.



Rosa Pinnacle on Isle of Arran. Geoff leading the oper slabs on this magnificent 900 Climb in 1961.

Photo — Doreen Hodge

CHAPTER ONE

EARLY YEARS

“Home is behind, the world ahead and there are many paths to tread”

J.R.R. Tolkien ‘Lord of the Rings’

Geoffrey Hayes was born on 29th November 1937 in Beeston, Nottingham, the only son and eldest child of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hayes. Geoff and his sister, Barbara, like so many others of their generation, spent the first few years of their lives in an environment of rations and restrictions. Geoff's parents own a bookshop in Beeston, and during the war had considerable staffing problems. He therefore spent a lot of time with his grandparents who lived nearby, to whom he was very attached. The nature of his upbringing was probably some cause of the independence and self reliance he was to show in later life.

Geoff attended a local primary school where one of his best friends was Barry Shakespeare, a boy who many years later was to become a fellow mountaineer. After his primary school education Geoff attended the Becket School, a well known grammar school in West Bridgford, Nottingham, some ten miles from his Beeston home. The ‘approved’ method of transport for Geoff and other children in the same situation from Beeston was to take one bus to Slab Square in Nottingham City Centre and another from Slab Square to West Bridgford. Geoff and a few other ‘hardies’ chose however to scorn this soft approach and by using various techniques on their parents they acquired racing cycles. It then became a question of who could reach school or home in the minimum time and unofficial races were frequently held along University Boulevard. It was during these days that Geoff came to know Mike Berry, a lad who cycled along the same route each day, to another school in West Bridgford. Shortly after their first meeting, Geoff's interest in mountaineering started in 1953 with a Youth Hostelling trip by himself to North Wales. This paved the way for the development of his climbing career by numerous weekend trips with Mike Berry and other friends, on bicycles or by bus to the gritstone edges of Derbyshire.

Probably even before Geoff realised his potential love for the ‘open air’, cycling acted as the stimulus. His developing individuality caused him to shun team games although he did play the occasional game of cricket or football. He enjoyed swimming but never took advantage of the opportunity to join the school rowing crews, rowing being a speciality at the ‘Becket’. In outdoor activities at school Geoff was happiest in cross country runs where his fitness enabled him to return some fast times.

It is interesting to note that in Geoff's favourite sports, cycling, running and later, mountaineering, there is more time to think than in most team games. Whilst his best friends would never have called him an academic, he was certainly a deep thinking person. In this respect he preferred to develop his own thoughts

rather than absorb digested material from his teachers. By the time he entered the fifth form Geoff was far more interested in leaving school than taking his 'O' levels but he left with a modest three passes to his name.

Although Geoff was only too keen to leave school, he was by no means certain that he really Wished to enter his parents' business since in a sense he would be bound by the same society framework. A sense of duty and responsibility was however uppermost in his mind and the outcome was never really in question. He did enter the business and worked hard to assist his parents. There is no doubt that the existence of this ready made career for him also went towards diminishing his academic efforts at school, since it would not have made much difference to the business whether he had obtained a degree in Mathematics or one in Medieval Mongolian Architecture, although literature did eventually play an important part in his business life.

Geoff's parents sensed his trepidation at working with them. They knew well that he was worried about being stifled, and therefore they did not pressurise him. In order to offset any feelings of claustrophobia after he joined them, they allowed Geoff a fair degree of freedom and in his early days he only occasionally had to make up the papers on Sunday mornings in the newsagency side of the business. Thus he was able to spend many weekends away in the hills. Geoff's father has suffered from recurrent lung congestion due to an early accident which left him with only one lung, and this also had its effect on Geoff's decision to enter the business.

Geoff was taught self reliance from an early age. His parents were by no means poor, but felt that free pocket money should be restricted and that the adolescents' spending power should be amplified by earned income. Thus at the age of fifteen or thereabouts Geoff turned towards sports reporting for the Nottingham Newspapers and covered several matches each Saturday. Cricket reporting was his first love and this he thoroughly enjoyed, especially as it meant dashing on his bicycle from one ground to another, payment being dependent on the number of games he could cover between certain hours during the afternoon.

One particular incident in his reporting life typifies his keenness. He was due to spend a few days holiday at Mablethorpe with his Mother and some of her friends, but he was not sure how he could do this and also report his 2 p.m. Saturday cricket match. Geoff decided to take his cycle with him and ride the last forty miles home from near Lincoln on the Saturday morning. At almost the stroke of 2 p.m. he arrived at the shop looking very much the worse for wear with red face and tired eyes. Imagine his deflation when he was told that the local newspapers had 'phoned during the morning to say that they did not want any cricket reports that day, but that if he could find any football matches in the area he could 'phone in a few lines. Geoff had never been interested in the finer points of soccer and consequently his expression was pitiful to see. Forty dusty miles of slog and sweat against the clock only to be told his services were not really required was just too much. However the outcome was not too bad since his father had been a keen footballer and had anticipated the situation, with the result that that afternoon Geoff had his first lesson in football reporting. He soon acquainted himself with the technique and for several months reported matches

with the enthusiasm for which he was later well known.

After these literary beginnings Geoff, some years afterwards, became the Oread Newsletter Editor. This often caused him to burn the midnight oil as he wrote passages, typed whole newsletters on a doubtful typewriter, and afterwards inked-up to the eyebrows faced the problems of printing on a cranky duplicator. He took all this in good heart however as it was all in the interest of the Club and mountaineering as a whole.

Another interest of Geoff's during his early teens was tennis and having a good eye for a ball, he was quite a passable player. At this time his father was deeply involved in the administration of the local Youth Centre and Geoff was able to take advantage of the excellent hard court facilities which existed. He was with a British Youth Party which visited Germany in 1951, one of the first to go into Schleswig Holstein after the war. At this time Geoff was about thirteen and had hoped to play some tennis in Germany. He was most surprised to find that the game was hardly known in that area and was informed by the family with whom he was staying that 'Tennis is only for the very rich.' Geoff thought that this was 'very rich'. Later however when mountaineering entered Geoff's life, tennis along with several other interests went by the board.

Following his first North Wales youth hostelling trip, Geoff spent many days and weekends in Derbyshire. In 1955 with four other friends he attended a summer meet of the Oread Mountaineering Club at the Roaches in North Staffordshire. The climbers that he met and the 'camaraderie' of mountaineering club life convinced him that this was the club for him and he was elected a member in 1956.

The election to the Oread really marked the end of Geoff's adolescence because every meet he attended away from the family influence served to increase his self reliance. In fact even before the date of his first meet in 1955 his cycle had become progressively less used as his weekend trips became further and further afield. Early in 1955 he bought himself a new 150cc B.S.A. 'Bantam' two-stroke motorcycle and this facilitated his travels to Oread meets.

In these early years, Geoff, having read the tomes of Whympers, Tilman, Smythe, Shipton and the like, had the usual desires of the young mountaineer in wishing to travel widely and go on expeditions. Owing to his father's poor health and Geoff's loyalty to his parents, these thoughts were sublimated and he worked hard in the shop, his enormous energy resulting in a work output far above that of the average youth of his age.

In all newsagency businesses it is necessary to cope with the early morning job of making up the paper batches for the newsboys to deliver. Geoff therefore had to arrive at the shop at around 6 a.m. to perform this chore. Although he was sometimes late this was rare. On occasions Geoff's father would go along to assist him if there had been difficulties, such as newsboy trouble. Invariably on these occasions it would be noticeable in the shop that 'things were late'. Once, a customer, seeing the disarray, remarked, 'Are you behind the clock Geoff?' "Yes," he quickly replied, "my father's been helping me."

Geoff reached the age of 18 in 1955 following two very active years of midweek work in the shop and weekend climbing. He would normally at this age have been

eligible for National Service but acquired extended release on compassionate grounds because of his father's health. The net finally ensnared him on 23rd January 1958 when he joined the Lincolnshire Regiment. Geoff, like almost every active weekend mountaineer of his age, felt that National Service was a threat to his personal liberty. However, as was typical of him, he stoically accepted his fate and rarely complained.

Now that he was based in Lincoln the 'Bantam' motorcycle which Geoff had bought for mountaineering purposes again showed itself to be useful. It gave him the facility for speedy travel between home and barracks, and enabled him to nip out into Derbyshire and back on a Sunday after preparing the papers. During this period newsboys became climbing friends and climbing friends became newsboys. Ken Beech, Eric Wallis and Mike Berry were all involved in these activities. On the occasions when Geoff's father was well enough to do the Sunday papers himself, Geoff would attend a local, Welsh or Lakes Meet of the Oread and would return late on Sunday pausing at home only long enough to say "Hello". He would then be off again to Lincoln, or later and for the majority of his National Service, to Chester barracks, home of the Royal Signals Regiment to which he was transferred.

During his service at Chester barracks Geoff did quite a lot of climbing as Helsby rocks were virtually next door and North Wales only a couple of hours away even by 'Bantam'. Another Oread member, Brian Cooke, a civil engineer employed as resident engineer on a nearby roadworks contract, was a close climbing companion of his during this period and the pair did many routes together, particularly on summer evenings at Helsby where Geoff learnt the highly specialised techniques of climbing on friable sandstone.

Geoff never rose out of the ranks during his military service, but this was probably due to the fact that he made it quite obvious that he would not extend his service period beyond the mandatory two years. In fact he was discharged on compassionate grounds, his father's health again, after only eighteen months on 19th June 1959. The greatest tribute to his performance in the clerical job in which he found himself was given on his discharge certificate by his commanding officer. After awarding him the highest possible military conduct grading of 'Very Good', his testimonial read: "He is recommended for any civil employment which he chooses, as a thoroughly reliable, honest, capable and likeable young man."

This testimonial shows that between the ages of 20 and 22 Geoff had become mature enough to put everything he had into something which basically he did not even like. How different from the schoolboy who passed only three G.C.E. 'O' levels. Apart from realising the effect of the beckoning call of the hills on the youthful mind it can only be supposed that his teachers failed to reach his mind at school. They must surely bear a large part of the blame for this 'loss' since it is hardly conceivable that he would have failed to shine academically if even a small part of his prodigious energy had been brought to bear on the job in hand.

By the time he was discharged from the Army Geoff's personality was fully established. Apart from mountaineering proper he had developed interests in skiing, photography, music and drama. He was a member of the small group of

people living in and around Nottingham who climbed together at weekends, but were frequently to be seen at the old Nottingham Playhouse, at the Theatre Royal for the all too infrequent visits of the Carl Rosa Opera and Sadlers Wells Ballet, and at the Nottingham Albert Hall for orchestral concerts.

The Hayes family, whilst having a normal interest in sport and the arts, shared little of Geoff's enthusiasm. His passion for writing, evidenced by the large number of diaries in which he chronicled his mountaineering life, was however shared by his grandfather, who wrote poetry, and father, who was a local correspondent for the Nottingham newspapers for almost twenty years. Geoff's parents were therefore able to understand some of the reasons for his passion because of this and his father's keen interest in football and his long career of sports reporting.

Geoff's parents can only remember making one brief visit to an Oread meet campsite. This was some years after Geoff had got married, when together with other Oreads, he and his family were camping at Beeston Tor in the Manifold Valley in Derbyshire. On this, the only time his parents saw him on the rock, he was climbing 'The Thorn' a very severe and exposed route. On seeing this Mrs. Hayes was quite understandably concerned for the safety of her only son and was not particularly keen to see him climb again. Mrs. Hayes did on one other occasion go for the weekend with Geoff, her daughter Barbara and Geoff's friends to the Oread Club Hut at Rhyd-ddu on the south side of Snowdon. The Hayes family were of course kept up to date with Geoff's exploits by seeing most of the excellent colour slides taken of various meets and climbs.

As a result of his tremendous activity in his business and leisure world Geoff had had little inclination to be interested in girls, but by the time he was 19 his attitude was changing, although it was some years later that he started taking girls seriously. One cold weekend in December 1956 on the back of the X2 bus returning from Bakewell, Geoff and Mike Berry were introduced by Barry O'Connell and other friends to three girls whom Barry had met a little earlier. The girls, who had taken up walking only a short time before, were Jacqueline Conroy, Celia Fox and Margaret Attwood. Jacqui and Margaret were trainee nurses whilst Celia worked in a photographic studio. Friendships were soon established and the group later went on many meets together. That Christmas Geoff did not go on the annual pilgrimage to the Kingshouse Hotel in Glencoe with his friends. The boys who went however met a Mr. and Mrs. Hartley, their daughter, Noreen, and their son Raymond. The Hartleys were also staying at the hotel, but not in the bunkhouse, (a shed with simple cooking and sleeping accommodation reserved for the hardy and less affluent), which was all the lads could afford. The Hartleys invited them to their home in Nelson, Lancashire two months later, so that Widdop rocks and the famous Pendle Hill could be climbed. Geoff accompanied the lads on this occasion and became a close friend of Noreen and her parents until the day he died. Of that first weekend, Norn (now Mrs. Lobo, a much travelled teacher married with two small children) writes* —

“We first met the group, affectionately known to us as “The Nottingham Boys” in Glencoe Christmas 1956. Geoff was not among them that year, but we were to meet him a few weeks later when he came with the other boys to spend a weekend at Nelson with us, an event which was to take place regularly throughout the next few years. We immediately became very attached to Geoff with his warm and friendly disposition, and we thought of him as one of the family from then on.

That weekend was, I believe, Geoff's first potholing expedition. It was Alum Pot in Yorkshire which we tackled, not too difficult, but it just wasn't our day! Shortly after setting out, Geoff, two girls and I took a wrong turning and found ourselves crawling along on hands and knees in water one foot deep towards an opening through which we could see daylight. Unfortunately to get to that daylight we found we were obliged to sink lower and lower in the water as the gap between its surface and the roof of the cave gradually narrowed to a mere six inches! With our chins actually in the water we finally emerged to discover that we were about twenty feet away from the original entrance. Although soaked to the skin almost before we had begun, we did catch up with the rest of the party and Geoff, at least, managed to reach the bottom of the Pot.

The next Pot was Lost John's in August 1957 when Geoff went the furthest of the party on a rope. That was also the weekend we decided to climb the famous Pendle Hill of the witches. It was Midsummer Eve and our aim was to see the sunrise from the top. Geoff had a great gift for turning even such a tame outing into an exciting adventure, and we were a group of ten teenagers, Geoff and his cronies, my schoolfriends and myself, who set forth at midnight. Having half-terrified ourselves into the right frame of mind with a mock-Ouija session beforehand, we were all set to see the witches. We saw none, neither did we see the sun, but the climb itself, in the pouring rain and pitch-darkness, was worth it just the same.

Christmas 1957 we again met up with “the Nottingham Boys” in Glencoe. That Boxing Day after “doing” the Aonach Eagach ridge and getting drenched to the skin, the lads came back to the hotel, tucked in to an enormous Christmas dinner and were more than ready, one would have thought, to spend a cosy evening snoring by the hotel's blazing log-fire. They weren't however destined to enjoy that nap. My mother suddenly remarked that, while we were all sitting there warm and well fed, there was that poor sheep back down the valley stuck on a ledge over the Glencoe gorge and doomed to die. Without a second's hesitation Geoff was off to the rescue with the rest of the boys. His kindness and unselfishness even extended to dumb animals, and it would just not have been Geoff to sit in comfort when he knew a living thing was in danger. Two carloads went down to the Glen to commence ‘Operation Sheep’.

To attempt the rescue Geoff first crossed the gorge with a rope, another man stood waist-deep in the water, and the rest waited on the other side. As Geoff neared the frightened animal it gave a great leap and landed right in the torrent. The rope was stretched taut and the sheep, in an effort to keep its head above water, tossed back its horns, which caught on the rope and miraculously held

fast! It was then dragged to safety, hauled up the opposite bank (no mean feat with the great weight of all that wet wool), and returned to the cottage at 'The Study', where the door was opened by a lady whose full evening dress caused Geoff to exclaim "My Gosh!" or words to that effect!

The same group also spent the next Christmas in Glencoe. We had perfect weather, with a thick covering of snow on the mountains, clear blue skies and warm sun. Geoff was always most considerate and patient with those of us who were by no means climbers in his sense of the word; with my parents, whom he took up Sron na Creise in the snow, with me as I puffed and panted my way up Beinn a' Chrulaiste, and with my young brother, then aged 14, whom he took up to Ossian's Cave in Glencoe. Always mindful of the safety of others, he gave me a ticking-off the day we climbed Sron na Creise, for walking up behind him too nonchalantly without an ice axe in the steps he had so carefully cut in the ice. Geoff's wonderful knack of making one see the humour in the worst situations was something we all loved. There was the time we had to cross the fast flowing river Etive, and the 'bucket' normally used was out of action. It was therefore a choice between fording the river on foot, which my mother tried with her boots slung around her neck, but was forced to abandon the attempt, or straddling the four cables on which the bucket was suspended. This is what we did with Geoff's help. He was most careful to attach each one of us by a waist rope and karabiner to the top cable and to see each of us across in turn. It was pretty hair-raising in the middle, I recall, when the cables began to bounce and spread ever further away from each other and it was extremely difficult to keep a foothold on them. But Geoff's marvellous sense of humour and complete unflappability turned even this uneasy moment into a joke. Without him not one of us would have thought ourselves capable of crossing that raging torrent, but he gave us the confidence we lacked."

The group continued to spend every weekend they could out on the hills. Jaqui, who was a very strong walker, became Geoff's close mountaineering friend, although they were never romantically involved. Eventually Jaqui married an orthopaedic surgeon and moved out of the climbing circle, although she remained in contact with Geoff and his friends. Jaqui recalls one amusing incident early in their friendship: "One incident I remember well was when Geoff asked me out to the theatre. My friend Margaret was in tucks; we were both nursing students at the time and she could not believe that he had actually asked me out, other than to go climbing. She even stayed up until I came in, to know what sort of an evening we had had. She promptly collapsed laughing when she heard the story. After the theatre we went for a walk around Nottingham Castle and after traversing the grounds three times we sat down on a park bench where Geoff immediately produced a map of Derbyshire. We spent the rest of the time I was allowed, discussing our next trip out into the hills."

Noreen and Margaret married and moved out of contact, Celia and Mike Berry married each other in 1962 and Geoff was the best man at the wedding, looking unusually resplendent to those who had known him mainly on the hills. Although he didn't really like ceremonies he handled his duties well and gave an amusing speech which set the mood for the reception. Rumour had it that he was

also responsible for the confetti bomb which was sent to the newlyweds in their hotel at Aviemore with drastic results to the porridge. The vast quantities of confetti which 'friends' had also packed into the luggage, nearly blocked the maid's vacuum cleaner.

Geoff's 21st birthday occurred during his period of National Service and quite by chance it fell on the Saturday which was also the day of the Oread Annual Dinner. He was able to get the weekend off from his Unit and returned home on the Friday night. On Saturday morning he did his usual early morning stint with the papers at the shop and returned home at about 11 a.m. for breakfast and a ten minutes long 21st birthday celebration before dashing off into Derbyshire. He had of course forgotten to tell his parents that he had arranged for Noreen Hartley, who also wished to go to the Oread Dinner, to come to the house for a lift on the motorbike. He had also forgotten to tell Noreen that it was his 21st birthday. Geoff's parents, who knew hardly anything about his male mountaineering friends, never mind his female friends, were very surprised indeed when Noreen arrived just as Geoff was receiving his 21st birthday presents from his parents and a close friend of the family. A glass and piece of cake were thrust into her hands and a few minutes later she and Geoff were off in a cloud of blue two-stroke smoke to Birchens Edge near Baslow.

After his discharge from the Army in 1959 Geoff bought an A35 van, to be used for the family business, and more particularly to pack in climbing gear as well as innumerable climbers for his weekend excursions. On one occasion whilst returning from Stanage Edge with a load of seven climbers crammed into the van, Geoff suddenly pulled up to offer a lift to a couple of girl hitchhikers. The girls were from the Rock and Heather Club and the looks of amazement when they tried to get in the van had to be seen to be believed! Whilst he had his motorcycle Geoff had been a good but unspectacular rider. With the van however he began to realise his driving potential and he used to drive fast but very well. He became a skilful driver with exceptionally fast reactions, for which any of his friends who accompanied him would vouch. His main fault when driving was an inability to appreciate the inadequacies of the lesser mortals on the road. He regularly 'dropped' his friends in accompanying vehicles without particularly trying. It was just that the gap between the vehicles inexorably increased until Geoff was no longer visible. Geoff was well known for his ability on the motorcycle as well as in his van, to get behind the wheel at the start of a journey and not budge until the destination was reached. The only things which impeded his progress were the necessary stops for petrol. On these occasions his passengers would all pile out in a frantic rush for the 'bogs', knowing that the next opportunity would be many hours ahead. Ruth Welbourn, very pregnant, a passenger on one occasion, was heard to yell while Geoff was careering up Hard Knott Pass, "If you don't slow down Hayes, I'll have this baby on the spot."

His natural abilities notwithstanding, Geoff had several accidents in his driving life. In fact the immediate reaction of his close friends to being told that he was dead, was that he had been killed in a motoring accident. His first mishap was shortly after he bought the motorcycle when he skidded on ice and fractured his arm. On this occasion he even rode with his arm in plaster, but it is doubtful if

today he could have got away with it. The second occasion was a Winter meet of the Oread in Wales when Geoff, travelling with Gordon Gadsby, Doreen, and Paul Craddock completely wrote off his A35 van in collision with an 18 ton coal lorry near Shrewsbury. The lorry overturned shedding its load and blocking the main A5 road to Wales for more than four hours. Such was the impact that five pairs of skis took off from the roof of the van, sailed over a hedge and ended up unbroken in a field 40 feet away. On his behalf it must be said that the accident, on snowy roads, was not Geoff's fault. Doreen, with several broken ribs and a punctured lung, and Paul, with a fractured skull and concussion, were hospitalised, but Geoff with concussion and a cut forehead and Gordon with broken hand were not detained. Geoff and Gordon were picked up at Shrewsbury hospital by Mike Berry and Celia who were following in an attempt to attend the same meet. The quartet spent the Friday night sleeping out in the roofless bandstand in Shrewsbury Park (of Percy Thrower fame). The bandstand had been offered by the local police as an ideal place for injured mountaineers to bivvy the night as all the hospital beds were full. It says much for Geoff's and Gordon's constitution that, although suffering from shock, multiple bruising and broken bones (these latter were only discovered at the hospital the next day) they survived that bitterly cold winter night of February 1963 during which four inches of snow fell on their sleeping bodies. They had to be thawed out in the gardeners' hut in front of a huge log fire before being taken as quickly as possible back to the hospital for another check up! After a weekend of visiting the invalids in the hospital, Geoff and Gordon returned home with Mike and Celia on Sunday night, but it was about two weeks later before Paul and Doreen left hospital.

This crash slowed Geoff down considerably for a short time after he took delivery of his new A35 van, but he did manage later to rip the side out of this van when cornering on the door handles on the way to Wales. His last vehicle was a Volkswagen Dormobile Caravette which he bought after Michael was born, and with his family aboard he at last drove with circumspection although seldom slowly.

During the period when Geoff had his first A35 van a customer at the shop said that her daughter was very interested in going mountaineering and would Geoff teach her to climb. Geoff, always willing to help out, said that he would teach her mountaineering and thus a friendship developed between Geoff and Margaret Lowe, which was to last for quite a long time. Margaret had a genuine interest in mountaineering and she was soon able to lead routes of a creditable standard. In a short while she became an Oread Club member and an enthusiastic meets leader. Geoff's friends were not surprised when the couple became engaged in 1962. But it was not to be, and not long after this Geoff and Margaret realised that in some ways at least, they were incompatible. The engagement was amicably broken off and Geoff returned to climbing with his mates.



Beside the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest 1952.
Mr. Hayes, Barbara, Mrs. Hayes and Geoff.



The Nottingham Group' in 1959 at Parley Dale. Wes Haydn, Doug Scott, Geoff Hayes, Ken Beech, Mary Shore, Beryl and Roger Turner, Annette Rabbits, Mike and Celia Berry.

Photo - Doug Scott



Geoff and Anne's Wedding at Chilwell Road Methodist Church, Beeston on 25th June 1964. (From Left) Jack Ashcroft, Colin Hobday, Brian Cooke, Mr. Hayes, Mrs. Kail, Wally Smith, Rod Craddock and Marion Cooke.

CHAPTER TWO

MARRIED LIFE

"She had come at last into life, here in the high snow, against the stars. " D.H. Lawrence "Women in love"

In 1963 Geoff met Annemarie Kail of Aachen, Germany and married her at Beeston Methodist Church in 1964 with the usual bevy of mountaineering well wishers present. On this occasion Mike Berry was best man, returning the favour which Geoff had paid to him two years previously.

Anne had visited Britain as an au-pair girl with her friend Uschi in 1961 and although Geoff had known the two girls, who were living at farms in Shardlow and Kirk Langley, he did not really become serious about Anne until she and Uschi had returned to Germany. Whilst the two girls had been living near Derby they had become interested in the Oread Mountaineering Club and Uschi had become friendly with Colin Hobday, another active club member. During the summer following the girls' return, Colin persuaded Geoff to accompany him on an Alpine climbing holiday with the two girls in the Ortler group of mountains in Austria.

In 1964 when Geoff asked Gordon Gadsby to lead his Glencoe Easter Meet so that he could go climbing in the Ardennes near Aachen, the rumours began to fly. Three months later Geoff married Anne, who was a full member of the German Alpine Club, Aachen Section, and in true fairy tale tradition, Colin married Uschi. The two girls thus returned to the 'Oread' fold.

Uschi Hobday writes here of those early days when she and Anne first came to England as au-pair girls:

Au Pairs in England

"Anne was the first one to find out about the Oread. We were quite surprised to hear that even in a town like Derby one could find a climbing club. Up to then England had seemed completely flat to us. We found out that the Club met every Tuesday night in a pub called the 'Bell' situated right in the heart of Derby. One night Anne went to the 'Bell' to meet John Welbourn and Tom Frost, friends of the Chamberlain's, the people on whose farm she was living. They introduced her to the Club. She must have been welcomed very much because the next day she was full of it and the following week I joined her. The first person we really got to know was Johnny Welbourn, whose wife Ruth is also from Germany. Everything was so strange and new and there were so many people. The first one to catch our eye was Chuck Hooley who even then sported a massive black beard. Later Chuck and Margaret asked us round quite often to spend the evening with them. But it was John Welbourn who first said, "Come and see us, and come out with us on Sunday." At that time they did not have a car so it was a rush to Derby Bus Station for the 9 a.m. bus.

Our first introduction to Derbyshire was to be Lathkill Dale, which we enjoyed

very much. Anne had brought her walking gear with her to England, whilst I had never thought of the possibility of going walking or even climbing. I had to manage in a pair of light blue slacks, which soon changed colour and had holes in the knees from climbing. I felt rather silly, as in Germany you only go out climbing in proper climbing breeches, but nobody seemed to take any notice of me.

Later we went to visit Birchens Edge where we met Dave (Digger) Williams, Dave and Pam Weston and Colin Hobday. Colin asked me to have a climb, and in spite of never having climbed on gritstone before, I accepted. He took me up some routes, but to be honest I didn't really enjoy it, it was so different to the Alps where there always seems to be a good flake or hold for one's fingers. After that it was Anne's turn and I felt rather relieved.

At the end of August we had a trip to Ashbourne. Colin, John and Anne met in Derby. I was collected at the doorstep of the farm in Kirk Langley. We left the car at the Peveril of the Peak carpark and walked over Thorpe Cloud to Wetton. We had lunch in the 'Red Hurst Farm' and walked through the Manifold Valley in the pouring rain to Throwley Hall where we sheltered for a while, but as things did not improve we returned via Ilam Hall to the Peveril Hotel and back to Derby to the Welbourn's and Ruth, where Anne and I borrowed dry clothes and then enjoyed our tea. Dorothy on the farm realised by now that Colin and I were courting and there were long telephone conversations between her and her sister, on whose farm Anne was living. Anne had to report whatever she knew about Colin and me, and later on I had to report how Anne and Geoff were getting on together. We had lots of fun out of it and were not really giving anything away.

In September we had our first trip to the Club Hut in Wales. We got to Rhyd-ddu rather late and after a quick snack Anne and I went to bed, only to find a pile of stones hidden in our keeping bags; we had a big giggle and swore to have our own back on the lads the next day. On the Saturday John brought tea up for us early in the morning, which we thought was a marvellous custom. That first day we did the Snowdon Horseshoe from the Pen-y-Pass. On the top of Snowdon we bumped into Margaret and Chuck and their dog, Kim, a cocker spaniel. We had completed the whole horseshoe in approximately seven hours by the time we got back to the Pen-y-Pass. On Sunday we climbed up Mynydd-Mawr, a rather unfriendly and bleak summit. The whole area didn't tempt us at all. The weather was awful on the top, windy and rainy. At teatime when we got back we cooked Hungarian Goulash and potato dumplings. Everybody came to try it and in the end there wasn't very much left over for us. Later on we went upstairs and stitched everybody's sleeves on their anoraks and pyjamas, but we were so giggly that we couldn't keep straight faces and they soon found out.

On the Monday the weather was still bad, so we decided to go with Chuck and Margaret to the coast to a little bay at Morfa Nevin where it was more sheltered and there was a pub right on the shore. We even had a paddle, but Chuck had a proper dip in the sea in his string underpants, which left us quite speechless. We had never thought that 'an all correct Englishman' could do things like that. Thinking back, the Oread was really an eye opener to us, showing us the way English people really behave, not just like it says in the English Language text

books in Germany.

Within no time our whole lives revolved around the Oread. We enjoyed the outdoor life and joining a club seemed the only sensible way of getting out and being in good company amongst mountaineers. We could never have done all those walks on our own. The countryside in Wales, Derbyshire and the Lake District is so very different, and once up on the moors and hills, we used to lose all sense of direction. We had to learn to find our way by means of map and compass, these things are usually not necessary in the lower Alps of Germany as every footpath is clearly marked, with signposts at all junctions telling where the path takes you to, and how many hours it takes to get there.

Some time in November a great milestone occurred in Anne's life. We had an invitation to go to Jack and Janet Ashcroft's for a musical evening. On that occasion Geoff was present, and suddenly Anne and Geoff seemed to be on the same wavelength as they both loved music very much. The music that I remember most of that night was 'The Trout' by Schubert, which reminds me so much of home.

Geoff took Anne home that night and from then on the two went out together, and Geoff introduced her to various Nottingham concert halls and theatres. The months went flying by and our time in England was almost over.

In early December I celebrated my 21st birthday by holding a joint party with Anne, who was soon to leave for home. We went to a lot of trouble providing the food, which we made as continental as possible. We used the big farmhouse drawing room and Dorothy did all the baking, and John Buxton provided the drinks. Colin printed some lovely invitations. Our guests taught us a lot of new games, so of course Anne and I were the ones always being told to wait outside the door. We had a good sing song and Geoff recited one of his endless ballads of a climber's life. John recorded some of it on his tape recorder including our joint masterpiece 'I'm a climber from Derbyshire way'. John has still got the tapes even now ten years later and occasionally brings them out. The party lasted until quite late and then the lads went off on their annual Bullstones meet. We didn't envy them this at all as it was a very cold night. It was almost breakfast time when the partygoers joined up with the rest at the Bullstones cabin. They announced their arrival by hurling boulders on to the tin roof, much to the annoyance of those sleeping inside.

It was a fitting end to our stay in England as au-pair girls. Soon after Christmas I returned home to Munich in time for the 'fasching' and to feel the pulsating life of a big city again."

Geoff's enthusiasm for climbing seemed to increase rather than otherwise with Anne's presence, although his parents must have had mixed feelings about this due to the expanding family business. Geoff had been to the Alps several times before, but now since his marriage Alpine visits became a regular summer feature with Geoff stopping at Aachen to pick up Anne's widowed mother on his way south to take her on the holiday with them. Mike Berry remembers that for one particular trip with Celia, Geoff and Anne to Mayrhofen in Austria, Mike's Volkswagen 'Beetle' was used. On the return through Aachen the party was

amplified by Frau Kali and the luggage, a bicycle and about three dozen pots of homemade jam on the roofrack—some load for a ‘Beetle’ — it never seemed to be the same afterwards.

Geoff and Anne bought a house in Endsleigh Gardens, Beeston, only a few minutes away from the shop by Geoff's hairy legs. The vehicular traffic in this pleasant cul-de-sac immediately trebled with the visits of Oread members, but their conduct was of course impeccable and complaints were very rare.

Michael Hayes, Geoff and Anne's first child was born at No. 18 in November 1966 to be closely followed by Peter about fifteen months later. It was not long before the family were travelling in Geoff's Dormobile to Oread meets all over this country and abroad. The boys quickly acclimatised themselves to the open air life, the vehicle being equipped with all the home comforts it was possible to assemble on four wheels. Michael may have unknowingly created something of a record when he climbed Great Gable in the Lake District, strapped to Geoff's back in a ‘Papoose’ carrier when only a few weeks old. Anne had to be very well organised. She recalls:

“We had all the gear in one room of the house to make the packing quicker on a Friday afternoon. I had to have the car packed by the evening when Geoff came home, but it would often be fairly late because Friday was always busy at the shop. This did not give him much time to have tea before we were on our way, and we usually had to pick up someone else to whom we were giving a lift. So he was often having sandwiches whilst he was driving or we would stop on the way for fish and chips, which were usually consumed quickly to prevent delays.

When our first son, Michael, was born we wondered what was best for the baby and us, so we decided to have a Dormobile in which we could live at weekends in any weather and also take everything which Michael would need. We soon got so used to this that it did not take long to pack the caravette as most of the things stayed in permanently.

Before I met Geoff I had been a member of the German Alpine Club (Aachen Section) and had made many expeditions into the German Alps. This had fostered my love of the high places and so after we were married I naturally accompanied my husband on all long mountain walks and on Winter snow climbs in North Wales and the Cairngorms. On rock climbs I preferred to watch, but occasionally to please Geoff I did a climb such as the Outside Edge route on the Great Slab in Cwm Silin.

After Michael and Peter were born, however, I had to undertake shorter walks near the campsite with our boys. When evening came I cooked a meal and had it ready for about 6 p.m., but Geoff hardly ever came back until it got dark. Although I knew this I made the same mistake over and over again, and as soon as the boys were asleep I waited impatiently. On very nice days we took the boys long walks carrying Peter in the ‘Papoose’. Michael would walk quite a distance at an early age and sat on Geoff's shoulders from time to time. I carried the rucksack whilst Geoff had both the boys and they enjoyed every minute of it.”

With the coming of the family the Summer alpine meets still continued with possibly Zermatt as a favourite venue. Anne's mother was conveniently picked up at Aachen and spent the holiday with the family. Mrs. Kail was also a frequent



Mrs. E. Kall, Anne and Geoff in Derbyshire.

Photo – Uschi Hobday



Geoff, Peter, Anne and Michael near Chrome Hill, Derbyshire.

Photo – Colin Hobday

visitor to Beeston and always accompanied Geoff, Anne and the family on weekend meets in the Dormobile. As with most mountaineering families, Geoff and Anne settled down to a normal but never boring routine of midweek work and weekend meets.

Geoff used his mountaineering agility to good effect in several amusing episodes of his domestic life. The first occasion occurred during his late 'teens. He was much attached to his Grandma Kirkby who had been a widow for many years and he was a frequent caller at her nearby house. It was a favourite trick of his to go and knock on her front door and then 'chimney' up the porch so that when she opened the door she would find no-one there. Geoff would then startle her by saying "Hello Granny" from this elevated position and then jump to the ground. This always amused his Grandma who used to recount these episodes to Geoff's mother.

Another tale recounted by the late Reverend Matthew Pickard at Geoff's funeral service was of how Geoff climbed the drainpipe at the Minister's house to let him in after he had locked himself out. Geoff was not a regular churchgoer but he believed in Christ and this, together with his very humanitarian approach to those around him, made him a Christian in the truest sense of the word. He was however such a busy person that going to church for others to see did not figure significantly in his life. He usually however attended the Christmas Carol Service.

An amusing incident, shortly before Geoff died, occurred one day whilst visiting his parents' toilet. Michael then aged four and Peter aged three dashed upstairs and sat outside the door to trap their Father inside. Sitting there chuckling the two boys were more than puzzled when Geoff some minutes later walked upstairs and frightened them. They still do not know that Geoff hopped out of the toilet window onto the flat garage roof and then down a drainpipe.

Despite settling down into family life Geoff was a restless person being full of nervous energy. He always had to be doing something. He abhorred dressing up and being a socialite. As his Father had been a past President of the Rotary and the Chamber of Trade, Geoff could have been present at many special functions but he usually declined such invitations. He was once due to attend a one week Booksellers Managerial Seminar at Cambridge University which was due to start at 3 p.m. on a Sunday. This did not however prevent Geoff from visiting the Lake District the previous Friday night for a meet and dashing 200 miles home on the Sunday, to change out of his climbing gear. He then went on to the University in his Dormobile in which he elected to sleep rather than take advantage of the comfort of the Hall of Residence. This behaviour was puzzling to his parents, for he was a fairly good mixer, but it would have been understandable to his climbing friends.

Towards the end, Geoff's life would have appeared to the outsider to have been frenetic. On a typical day he would have been at the shop marking papers at 6 a.m. and would have returned home at about 10 a.m. for breakfast. After less than an hour he would have been back at the shop. Following a brief break for lunch he would then deliver parcels of textbooks to local schools, pausing to drop Anne, the boys, Gisela (a German friend) and children off at Bramcote

Swimming Baths before dashing to Nottingham for goods awaiting collection. He would then call back at the Baths for the family and return to the shop for a closing time of 6 p.m. or thereabouts. In summer he would often be out for an evening meet with the Club in Derbyshire after closing the shop.

This however was the essential Geoff. He would not have wanted it any other way. Something always had to be happening and if it wasn't, Geoff would promptly generate an active interest in something else. Geoff was never intolerant of idleness in others, but in watching him one felt that sloth was almost a mortal sin. His lifestyle was a living example of how to get a quart into a pint pot. In terms of a normal man's effort Geoff had already lived a long and full life when he died so tragically.

CHAPTER THREE

INTO THE OREAD

“Men work together” I told him from the heart, “ Whether they work together or apart.”

Robert Frost ‘The Tuft of Flowers’

The first entry in Geoff's mountaineering diaries was made on Tuesday, 23 rd August 1955, some two and a half years after his first important outing at the age of 15. It is related here as it was written and I think it gives a good insight into Geoff's character.

“Looking back over the time that I have been mountaineering I think I would like to keep a record of what has happened to me in such a wonderful sport. Apart from one or two trips into Derbyshire, I first started mountaineering when I went on a Youth Hostel trip to North Wales at Easter 1953, and was taken over Crib Goch and Snowdon to complete the ‘Horseshoe’, by Mr. Jones, a Liverpool schoolmaster. I cannot thank him enough for awakening my interest in such a sport. I still remember the way he went up grass slopes, scree and rocks with ease, although he was approaching 50 at the time. I met him exactly one year later at the same Youth Hostel and had the great pleasure of retracing the same route, except that this time we cut down the Llechog ridge from Snowdon summit and went over the col to the foot of ‘Cloggy’. How I remember that massive cliff of which I had heard and read so much. I wondered if some day I might climb such difficult routes.

Thinking back as I write, my only sorrow has been that I did not start this diary when I began mountaineering. It was really wonderful to gain the summit ridge of Crib Goch and then to stand for the first time on the top of Snowdon. The weather was good with glorious views of Cwm Glas, Llyn Llydaw and Glaslyn. Later I went over Elidyr Fawr and Y Gam, down the Devil's Kitchen to Idwal to stay at the Cottage, What a thrill the first time I saw the Kitchen, the Slabs and Tryfan. The following day I climbed Tryfan on my own by the North Ridge and down again for dinner, Llangollen and home.

After that first glorious trip to Wales, I started mountaineering in Derbyshire, especially on Kinderscout which I look on as a mountain of major importance. Whilst walking in the mountains of Derbyshire and Wales I saw many rock climbers and became ambitious to join them, but determined in my mind never to give up mountaineering for just pure rock climbing. I still hold that view now, but even more so. I joined a series of classes held every Winter by the Nottinghamshire Education Committee to teach mountaineering and rock climbing. Bob Pettigrew, a first class mountaineer, was the class lecturer, and it was under his guidance that my interest grew. I have always looked upon Pettigrew as a wonderful chap, for ever encouraging people to join the mountaineering fraternity. The course taught me a very great deal. During the course I started to rock climb, my first route being with another beginner on the Black Rocks at Cromford. I have since climbed many times at Black Rocks and have enjoyed every single moment.

Soon Barry Shakespeare, Mike Berry, Pip Hopkinson and I began to go every weekend into the mountains of Derbyshire to gain valuable practice in every aspect of mountaineering except ice work. I hope that I will soon be able to rectify this omission. We visited Black Rocks, Kinderscout, Birchens Edge, The Roaches, Cratcliffe Tor and Robin Hood's Stride, Gardoms Edge and Brassington.

Recently I visited Wales at Easter and did some wonderful mountain routes on the Glyders¹ and on Snowdon where to my surprise I again met that fine man Mr. Jones. The weather was again good.

At Whitsun I went again to 'good old Wales' with Barry Shakespeare and Murray. We crossed the Glyders in bad weather and climbed the Milestone Buttress (my first rock climb in Wales). Later Baz and I went up Snowdon in better weather, by the route which follows the rail track. Wales was visited a few weeks later when I went with Mike Berry and Pip Hopkinson on a course with Bob Pettigrew as leader. It was on this course that I first gained an idea of the wonderful routes to be found on Tryfan. We did Pulpit route on the Milestone Buttress followed by Grooved Arete. Bob Pettigrew was leader with Pip Hopkinson as second and Gwyn Kirk as third, myself following on the end of the rope. We then descended Tryfan at a fast rate and the next day we did Amphitheatre Buttress, a fine route on Craig Yr Ysfa and my best day so far in the mountains. We stayed at the Climbers Hut 'Helyg' and ascended from Tyn y Shanty to the climb in 1 1/2 hours. The very next day we went round the Snowdon Horseshoe in 3 1/2 hours in very hot conditions and followed this by a swim in Llyn Llydaw. I returned home from that course full of mountaineering.

After the course I went to Kinder with Mike Berry, did a good route on Kinder Great Buttress, and had a walk round the tops. After a full week in Wales we felt very fit. The next day I went again with Mike to Black Rocks and had a great time as I usually do there. Since then I have been to Gardoms Edge and last week we went to the Roaches. This was my first visit to the Roaches and on this occasion I went with Pip, Mike and Baz. We met the Oread Mountaineering Club and I spoke to that fine chap Eric Byne. I led a good route, Central Route on the Great Slab, and we all had a great weekend.

Bob Pettigrew has still not returned from the Alps with my boots, which I lent to him.

This is as much as I can write at one time, but I mean to keep my diary from now on."

Mike Berry continues:- "Although I was one of Geoff's closest friends, it is typical of his reticence in emotional matters that I only heard of his diaries some years after this first entry. Geoff's story of those early days is enjoyable to read despite the schoolboy prose, because those of us who walk and climb can recollect how we ourselves felt in our early years. Geoff was obviously so overwhelmed by these early experiences in the mountains that all he wanted to do was to recapture them in words, irrespective of the grammatical quality.

It is clear that contact with the Oread had a dramatic effect on Geoff since it was at this point in time that he decided to recount his experiences in the above diary entry. We had climbed together and with our other friends, Barry Shakes

peare (a childhood friend of Geoff), Johnny Russell, Pip Hopkinson, Barry O'Connell, George Potts, Harry Cluro and Brian Guy, to name but a few, for about two years — our group was loose knit and unstructured. We moved in and out of the ranks of the 'Rock and Heather', the 'Sherpa' and the 'Summit' clubs, but none of these offered what Geoff was after. In the Oread Geoff found the maturity and permanence that he respected. The Club added the air of respectability to mountaineering that he had associated with his reading of the classics of earlier years. To be truthful, if he had lived in a different area he would probably have joined another of the senior mountaineering clubs resident in that area. As it was, our association with Bob Pettigrew led us to the Oread Mountaineering Club. Geoff and Johnny Russell joined the Club on the same day in 1956 and I joined in 1957. Johnny later left the Club when he emigrated and travelled to Canada and New Zealand, but he has since returned to Britain to lead a more sedate married life away from the world of mountaineering.

From the time of this first meet at the Roaches, Geoff was usually to be seen on indoor and outdoor meets. Indoor lectures at the St. James Hotel, Derby received almost 100 per cent attendance from Geoff and he rarely missed the usual Tuesday soiree at the Bell Hotel. In Winter one or two frozen motor-cyclists would stagger from his two-stroke Bantam into the Bell for the usual repartee and a jug of ale. Half a pint was about Geoff's limit before the effects were noticed by all and sundry and consequently he nearly always drank shandy or lager. I remember him recounting how he finished one Welsh walk to the Oread Club Hut, Tan Yr Wyddfa, in Rhyd-ddu almost completely slewed as a result of drinking two glasses of beer on the Snowdon summit on a very hot day.

Due to his intense feeling for mountaineering and the Oread Club, Geoff wished that others would share his enthusiasm. I was one of the first 'victims' of this enthusiasm, although I cherish everything that happened to bring me into the world of mountaineering. Following our early associations, racing each other to school, our relationship became one of master and servant. I took a Sunday newspaper round with the Hayes Newsagency. Geoff or his father would number the papers and I would be one of the newsboys scurrying to complete his round as early as possible. The earlier I could complete the round, the earlier we could get out to catch the bus or the train to Cromford or Edale. Sometimes Geoff would help me out after he had delivered his own papers to the University.

I was followed in this job, after I had gone off to College to study Chemical Engineering, by Ken Beech and Eric Wallis. Both Ken and Eric listened to Geoff's words of wisdom and joined us on the hills. Ken later joined the 'Summit', a Beeston based Club well known at that time for its hard climbing, hard drinking members. The more informal atmosphere in the 'Summit' appealed to Ken, together with the fact that he wanted to climb hard routes. On one occasion I remember him climbing Goliath's Groove on Stanage Edge, at that time regarded as a Hard Very Severe climb, seven or eight times in swift succession to demonstrate technique to the less adequate climbers grouped around. He was later heard to say with that typical cheeky grin on his face: "I think I'll switch Clubs and become the 'Joe Brown' of the Rock and Heather!"

Eric Wallis joined the Oread and under Geoff's wing he swiftly developed his

interest in climbing and walking. Eric had always been a keen competitor since his cycling club days, but it was not until one warm Sunday morning, after making a clean lead of the very delicate Moyers Buttress on Gardoms Edge, whilst a throng of climbers sat beneath the crag and mentally urged him on, he appeared to realise that he could climb with the best. Eric admired Geoff's style of climbing, the way he used to climb quite hard routes in difficult conditions, wearing boots and without apparently trying very hard. The competitive instinct emerged and with a rigid diet, regular exercising and hard climbing every weekend he was soon able to lead the best routes in the country. Eric, a Civil Engineer by profession, is now a B.M.C. (British Mountaineering Council) Guide, and lives in North Wales where he combines climbing with rebuilding the roads, which carry ever increasing numbers of tourists and climbers.

On the 1955 Notts. Education Committee Snowdonia Course Bob Pettigrew was the leader and Geoff, Pip Hopkinson and I attended as students of mountaineering, although we had been climbing for two years. The course was to us a good way of having a cheap weeks holiday in North Wales. The fact that we had a good time was made evident in Geoff's diary entry noted earlier. The following two years we again attended the course but as instructors.

It was at this time that Bob Pettigrew's father was an almost daily caller at the shop in Beeston, on his way to work at the nearby Chilwell Ordnance Depot. His visits were not only to pick up his daily paper, but also to chat with Geoff with the object of learning Bob's current movements. Little did Bob know that his father knew more than he thought about his activities through his father's skilful pumping of Geoff.

For the first two of these three years Bob Pettigrew was again Course Leader. We enjoyed ourselves immensely, but realised some of the difficulties in controlling and safeguarding groups of 14-17 year old schoolboys in the mountains. Geoff's natural leadership asserted itself and he realised that he had a flair for teaching mountaineering. This ability probably stemmed largely from the fact that he wanted to share his knowledge with others so that they could also share his enjoyment of mountaineering. I again instructed on the 1958 course, but without Geoff who was in the middle of his National Service and without Pip who was somewhere in the Swiss Alps.

Geoff continued with his part-time career as an instructor by spending many weekends of the early '60s at Whitehall, the Derbyshire Education Committee's Outdoor Pursuits Centre near Buxton. Staff members at that time included such well known figures in the climbing world as Joe Brown, Eric Langmuir, Harold Drasdo and Gordon Mansell. He also spent the occasional weekend as instructor at Plas Y Brenin, the Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Capel Curig in Snowdonia, and at Glenmore Lodge near Aviemore in Scotland. Particularly as a result of the Whitehall weekends, he met a number of young people whom he introduced to the Oread. When interested people turned up for the first time at the Tuesday night meetings at the Bell in Derby and later at the Wilmot in Borrowash near Derby, Geoff was always one of the first to make them feel at ease.

In the winter of 1965 Geoff undertook the first of his mountaineering courses at Ilkeston College of Further Education. It was a great success and he repeated it



each year afterwards until the year before his death. Geoff very rarely missed a lecture during this period, but was on occasion helped out by Gordon Gadsby, another Oread member who had learnt a great deal of his mountaineering from Geoff, and myself.

I am sure that no better tribute to Geoff as a human being and to his skills as a mountaineering lecturer can be given than in the following tale by Kathleen Bramwell, an Oread member who attended one of Geoff's courses at Ilkeston.

The Turning Point

"Hello, I'm Geoff Hayes." Little did I realise when I heard those words what a turning point I had reached in my life and what a range of wonderful experiences was about to open out to me. The advertisement in the newspaper had said:

'Ilkeston College of Further Education — Rock Climbing and Mountaineering for Beginners: Mr. G. Hayes.'

A friend of mine, John Dench, and myself had immediately been interested because we had been looking around for a course of this nature for some time. Our mountaineering experience up to then had been confined to a couple of trips by train to Edale (just scratching the surface of Kinderscout), and a few evenings scrambling on Birchens Edge, Derbyshire. We felt that before we tried to do anything more ambitious we should get some kind of instruction-on technique.

'Anything more ambitious' then meant attempting a few of the harder routes on Birchens or even having a day's 'expedition' to Stanage Edge, near Sheffield — now that really was ambitious! Climbing in Wales and the Lake District, skiing in Scotland, and mountaineering in the Alps was then the stuff that dreams were made of, that other people did and I read about. That was before I met Geoff.

As I drove to Ilkeston on the first night of the course I had a picture built up in my mind of what this 'Mr. G. Hayes' would be like. I imagined a big, husky mountaineer, probably with a bushy beard, always in control of every situation. The result was that when the slim, rather studious-looking clean shaven man with glasses stepped forward, shook my hand and said, "Hello, I'm Geoff Hayes", I could hardly believe it, and I was, I confess, a little disappointed. The fact that we had to stand outside on the pavement for half an hour (because Geoff could not find a caretaker to let us in), and that it looked as if I was the only woman in the class, did not do much to dispel my feelings of gathering gloom as eventually we took our seats in the classroom.

I shall never forget that first evening's session of the course as long as I live. Geoff always started his courses with a slide show (probably to show us what we were letting ourselves in for!), and in all my life up to that moment I had never seen such wonderful sights. Derbyshire's dales and hills, Wales, Scotland, the Lake District and the Alps, mountains and valleys flashed on to the screen, and with each one my earlier impressions of Geoff disappeared completely and were replaced by a respect and admiration that I have never lost. I drove home that night feeling breathless with all I had seen and I must admit, more than a little

scared! I found it impossible to believe that one day I might stand on those same hills and I could hardly wait for next week.

The second week John joined the course and from then on as the weeks went by Geoff taught us the techniques of rock climbing and rope work, map reading, basic survival and mountain rescue. I had not realised that there would be such a lot to it, but Geoff impressed on us how important they all were if we were going to be safe in the mountains and always instilled in us the maxim that it is 'better to be safe than sorry'.

The course started in September 1966 and the following March as it drew towards its end, I began to dread that this would be the end of it for me because I could not see how it would be possible to get to all those wonderful places on my own.

Geoff, as usual, provided the answer. On the last evening of his course he told us all about the Oread Mountaineering Club, of which he was a member, and he invited those of us who were interested in carrying on to come with him as his guests to Wales for a weekend meet of the Club at their Welsh hut. I did not need asking twice! What a memorable weekend that was!

I had a lift down to Wales with two other members of the course and we arrived at about midnight. There was Geoff at the front door of this big white house which did not look a bit like a 'hut'. This was not the only big surprise of the weekend. As we stepped over the threshold I was amazed to see a huge bearded man rushing about in only his underpants and roaring "Hayes, what have you done with my bloody trousers?" I thought he would have retreated in embarrassment when he saw us, but to my surprise he came and solemnly shook hands as Geoff said, "Meet some more members of my class."

Even more shocks were in store when Geoff took us up to our rooms and I realised that I would be sharing a bedroom with Geoff and three other men! Visions of Roman orgies swam before my eyes and I began to wish I had made a few more enquiries before I had agreed to come! However, after investigating the other rooms and finding similar sleeping arrangements, and after being told laughingly by Geoff that this was the tradition of the Oread and many other Clubs and I wasn't to worry, I began to relax a little.

Saturday morning dawned and Geoff told us that we were going to climb Snowdon by the Miner's Track. This meant little or nothing to me so I eagerly got ready.

My memories of that climb are a bit hazy as I seemed to have spent most of the time wondering how much further I would be able to go before I collapsed finally and died. All my romantic visions of how I would feel as I climbed my first mountain were quickly dispelled, and I came down to earth with a bump as I forced one weary foot in front of another, egged on by Geoff in the front and literally forced on from behind. I had not realised that mountaineering would be such hard work!

At last, one final push and we were at the top. But, oh dear, where was the panorama of scenery I had expected? As we stood there we were enveloped in white swirling mist and a cold drizzling rain that obscured everything at more than ten yards visibility. Geoff, (who seemed to be actually enjoying himself),

chose this of all moments to do a compass and map reading exercise (which, in retrospect, under those conditions was quite logical, but at the time seemed to me to be the last straw!).

I have only vague recollections of the walk off Snowdon. No green grass, no blue sky, no anything, but everything white and wet. That, and the endless walking, zombi-like, never losing sight of Geoff's boots. I think my spirits were at their lowest ebb ever as we stumbled back over the threshold of the Hut that evening. But not for long; I began to cheer up when I realised for the first time that day that all the other members of the class were feeling just as bad as I was, and two of them (who shall be nameless) even worse. They looked positively green! Then one Oread member, Lloyd, said to me, "Well lass, you had some pretty foul conditions for climbing your first mountain and your first mountain always feels the hardest. Today will make you really appreciate the good ones, you'll see."

This, coming from a man who, with his build, his beard, and his attitude, was in fact a manifestation of all I had thought a mountaineer should be like, made me feel as if there was something to be said for mountaineering after all. I was just too impatient. I had expected everything to come at once and mountaineering is not that easy! After dinner Geoff got us all together and said "Well done". Gradually our depression lifted.

Geoff then took us all to the pub in the village and there I became aware of yet another facet of mountaineering — the great comradeship between mountaineers. The pub seemed to be packed with people of all ages in climbing gear (mostly 'tatty') and all swapping experiences as if they had known one another all their lives. If we had ever had any worries about people accepting us they soon disappeared, in fact people seemed to be more friendly than ever when they discovered we were new to mountaineering, as they listed the mountains and rock climbs we must be sure to 'do'. Never have I felt more at home in a strange crowd than I felt that night.

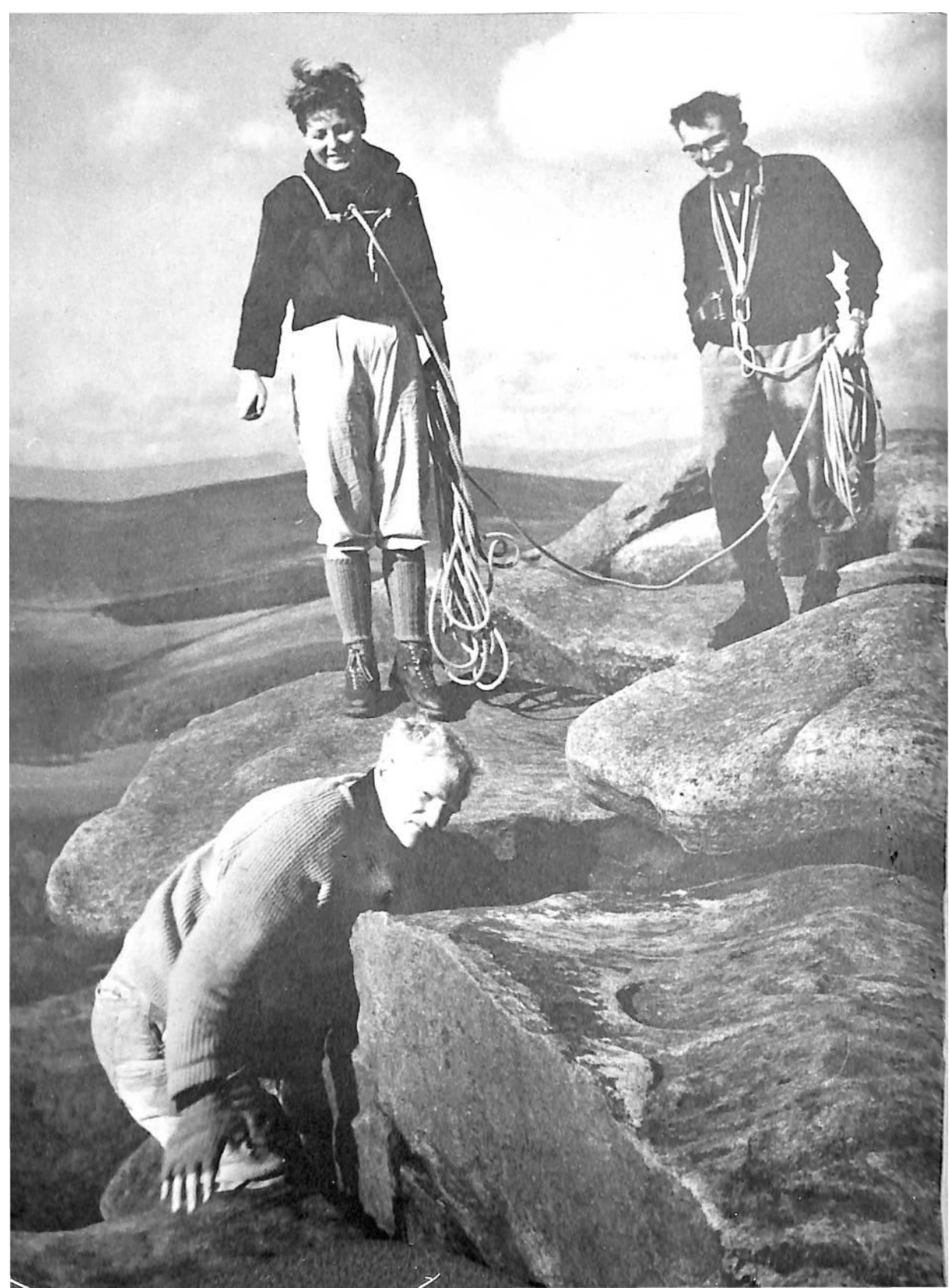
Back at the hut afterwards as we all sat around the fire chatting with our 'nightcaps' and listening to the other members of the Oread talking, I began to realise that this was an entirely different world I had moved into and I remember feeling very thankful that I had found it.

The next day Geoff took us on some easy rock climbs where we practised what we had learned on his course. I remember noting that, however easy the climb might be to him, Geoff always used all the safety precautions he had taught us, and this inspired my confidence in him to lead me up the rock.

This then, my first Oread weekend meet, marked the beginning of my active enjoyment of the mountains.

Subsequently, I did all Geoff had promised I would. In the months that followed I went with the Oread walking and climbing in the Lake District, ski-ing in Scotland, and finally mountaineering in the Swiss Alps. I often shudder to think what I would have missed if I had not listened to Geoff's encouragement after that first ordeal climbing Snowdon so long ago."

In October 1967, eight Czechoslovakian mountaineers visited Britain. They



stayed in Britain for two weeks as guests of the British Mountaineering Council and the National Association of Youth Clubs. During the brief time the Czech mountaineers spent in Derbyshire the Oread Mountaineering Club acted as their hosts. Two of their members, Michael Lichy and Maria Kasalicka, stayed with Geoff and his wife Anne as their house guests. Geoff was one of the principal Oread members who took their visitors climbing on Stanage Edge near Hathersage. On this occasion the group climbed with Lord Hunt, formally Sir John Hunt of Everest fame. Some of the other Oread members involved on this occasion were Harry Pretty, Pete Janes, Dave Weston, Nat Allen and George Reynolds to name but a few.

About two years later Harry and Molly Pretty and Pete and Barbara Janes of the Oread made a return visit to the High Tatra mountains of Czechoslovakia.

Oread Team Alpha

In the mid-1960's the Oread joined the ranks of those clubs and organisations contributing to Mountain Rescue in the High Peak. Many club members felt that it was essential that the Club should form a mountain rescue team if it was to support the Oread's position in Peak District mountaineering. Team Alpha was the name given to the mountain rescue team which was created by Chuck Hooley, and by general consent Geoff was chosen as team leader. Chuck, who describes himself as 'Team Alpha's Godfather' is secretary of the team and a member of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Committee. Here he gives a short account of the team's formation and work:

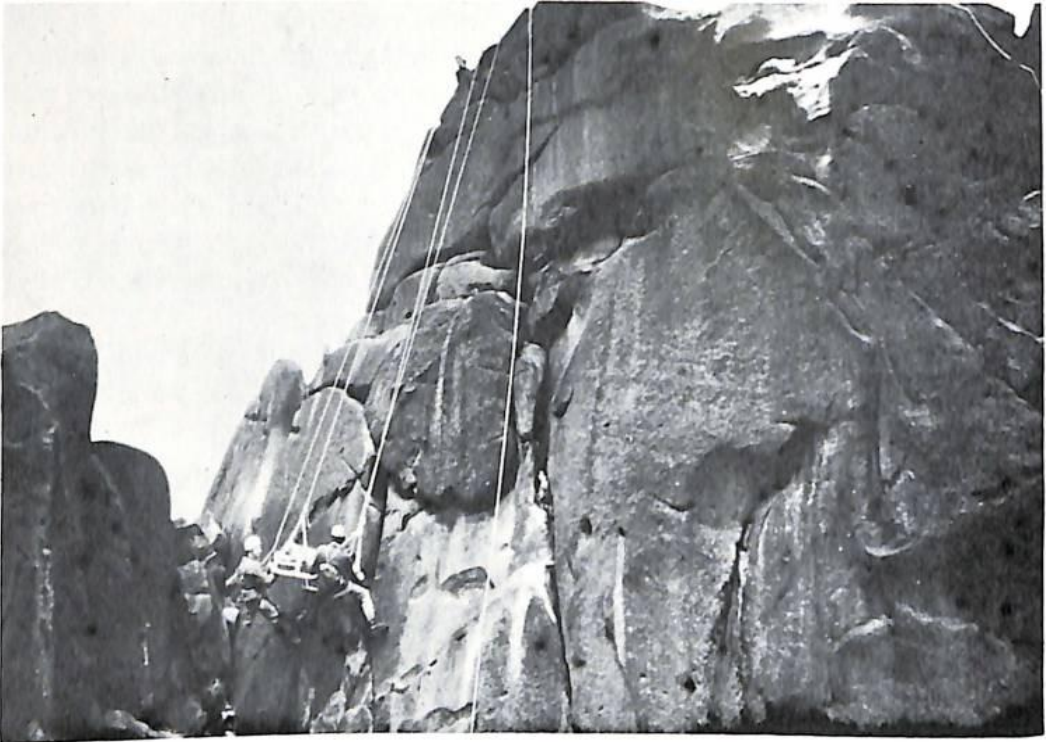
"On the weekend of Saturday, 14th of March 1964, three Rover Scouts who were taking part in the annual Four Inns Walk over Bleaklow and Kinderscote, some of the wildest country in the Derbyshire Peak District, lost their lives in severe weather conditions made up of torrential rain and high winds which turned into a snow blizzard.

There was no official mountain rescue organisation in the Peak District at that time, only the R. A.F. Mountain Rescue, the Derbyshire Cave Rescue and one or two small local rescue teams who were able to help the police that weekend. Several members of the Oread M / C who were staying in Baslow took part, one of whom was Geoff; they were awakened around 05.30 a.m. on the Sunday by the police and were asked to assist, which of course they did, in the search.

In September 1964 as a result of the Four Inns tragedy, the Peak District Mountain Rescue Committee was formed and I, being a member, was asked to form a rescue team from my own club, the Oread Mountaineering Club.

The team was given the code name 'Alpha' and had an initial membership of twenty eight. The membership over the last few years seems to have levelled out at around thirty one.

Because of his previous experience, Geoff was elected as team leader by unanimous vote and his enthusiasm soon began to infiltrate into the team. He skilfully encouraged members to organise raffles and lectures and to raise money to buy rescue equipment. For example, John Crosse undertook a sponsored walk and raised £80 for a two-way radio. Geoff was always there on training exercises, urging, criticising, cajoling the team onto greater effort thereby forming them



Mountain Rescue Practice. Team Alpha Members Bill Kirk and Paul Bingham guide casualty Shirley Goldsmith down Birch Tree Wall at Black Rocks.

Photo - Margaret Gadsby



Members of Oread Team Alpha Inspecting the MacInnes Stretcher. (From Left) Dave Weston, Colin Hobday, Paul Gardiner, John Crosse, Clive Russell, Jack Ashcroft, Bill Kirk, Dave Brady, Mike Keys, Chuck Hooley.

Photo - Gordon Gadsby

Individual team members including Geoff put this training to good use on many occasions during club meetings in North Wales and elsewhere. When accidents have happened nearby they were able to give immediate expert assistance and organise more help quickly and efficiently. No-one could have visualised that he would become the recipient of such help on that tragic day in the Lake District when he lost his life whilst climbing on Dow Crag. I know that Geoff would have been proud of the way in which members of his own team who were present at that time, helped to effect his own recovery and the rescue of his injured colleague Lloyd Caris.

Team Alpha and I have lost a good leader and a personal friend.”

A final anecdote exemplifies the regard for Geoff in many circles outside the Oread. He was not on the telephone at home because, due to his long hours at the shop and the fact that he was away most weekends, he preferred that his time at home should remain undisturbed. As recently as August 1972 Geoff's father received a telephone call at the shop from someone who said, “I am a student and have arrived in the Midlands. I was told that if I wanted any information about climbing in Derbyshire, I should contact Geoff Hayes at this 'phone number. Could you ask him if he could suggest a programme for a few days climbing.” The caller, who said that a Mr. Williams had made the suggestion didn't leave a name. This conversation took place at least eleven months after that fateful day. Mr. Williams has not so far been traced.

CHAPTER FOUR

ON BRITISH CRAGS AND MOUNTAINS

WALES

"In this short span between myfinger tips on the smooth edge and these tense feet cramped to the crystal ledge I hold the life of man."

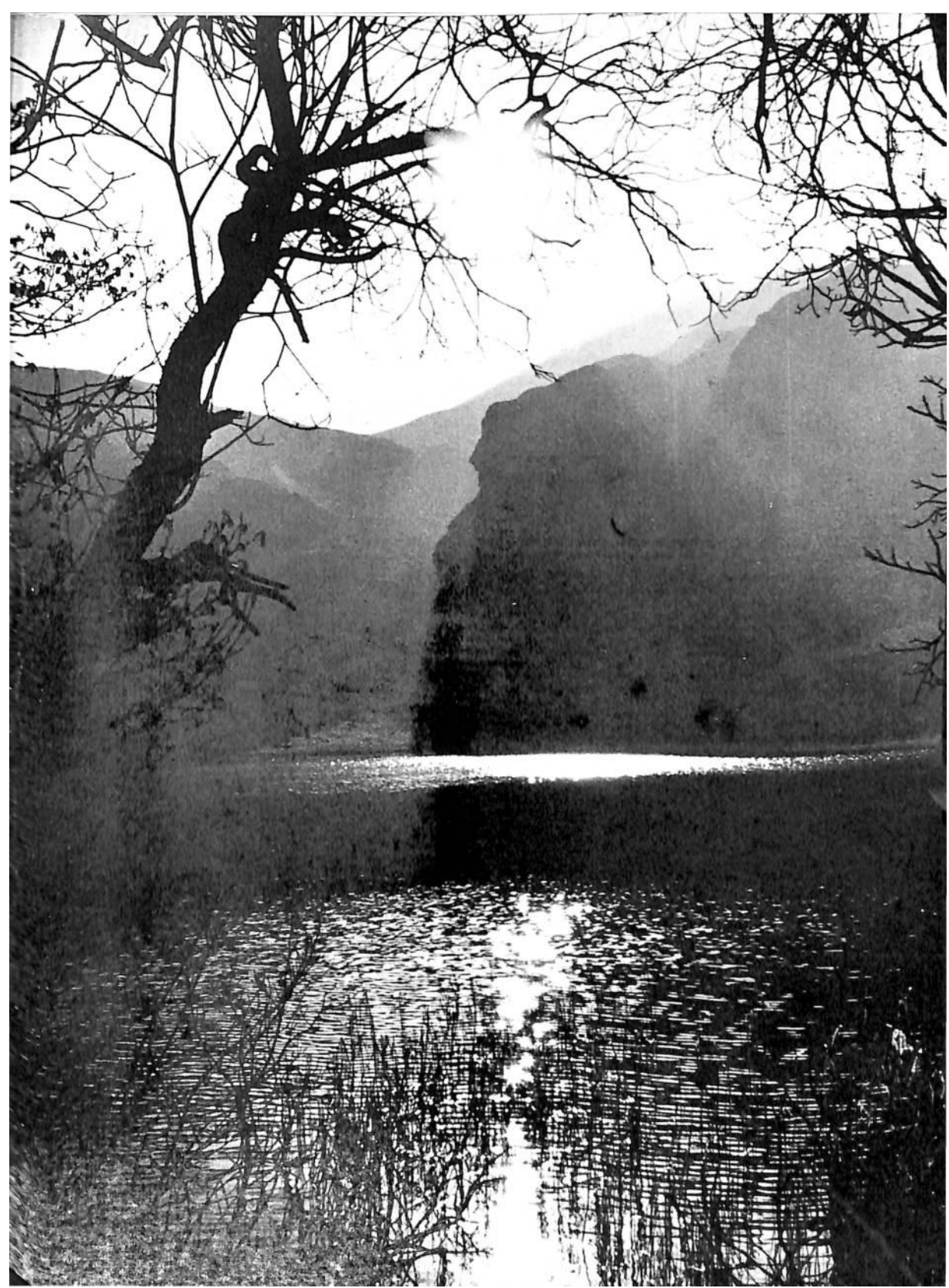
Geoffrey Winthrop Young "The Cragman"

When Geoff joined the Oread as an associate member in 1956 at the age of 17 it coincided with the inauguration of the annual Welsh Walk which has throughout the years become so much an enlivening feature in the Oread calendar. Dave Penlington was largely responsible for this move and innocently enough titled the meet "Welsh Training Walk". It was meant as a training walk in readiness for the alpine season and in 1956 was planned to traverse Snowdonia between Penmaenmawr and the club hut, Bryn-y-Wern, in Cwm Pennant.

The route planned covered some 40 miles over the highest mountain group in England and Wales with approximately 30,000 feet of ascent and descent. No mean task for a days walk! There is no doubt that this first meet in 1956 influenced Geoff's enthusiasm for the long walk in mountainous country and an appreciation of its value to those intent on greater mountaineering such as in the Alps. Bob Pettigrew wrote about this time in relation to the walk. "There is little doubt that the original plan arose as a direct result of the abandonment by the Club of long training walks over homeland moors such as the Marsden-Rowsley and later the Colne-Rowsley. These were subjected to a good deal of adverse criticism because the limits were expanding and the pace increasing until Rowsley was once reached in under twenty-four hours from Marsden. That was not a good time, but it illustrated that the Oread had potential ... Destructive criticism such as the taunts of "Cross-country runner" and the like should not deter those who wish for good general fitness in preparation for the Alps or elsewhere, from attempting ambitious mountain walks. By this means, stamina and speed, qualities for which average British parties in the Alps are not noted, can be improved. The resulting improvement in efficiency makes for more enjoyable ascents and a greater margin of safety."

'Abandonment' was probably the wrong word to use of long training walks over homeland moors since, particularly in the case of the Marsden-Rowsley walk, this continued to appear on the Club meets list and has done so into recent years. I'm sure bog-trots over Bleaklow and Kinder will never be abandoned. Oread roots are deep in 'The Peak'* and I know many members will continue to take advantage of the walking which the area has to offer, either on the odd individual evening walk when many thousands of feet of ascent and descent can be 'arranged', or organised weekend meets.

**High Peak*' by Eric Byne and Geoffrey S. Sutton (Seeker and Warburg) — the story of walking and climbing in the Peak District.



Fourteen Peaks Plus!

Reverting to the 1956 'Welsh Training Walk' Phil Falkner wrote an account of the walk which reads like an episode from the Frankie Howerd television series of the late sixties 'Up Pompeii'. He titled it "Follies of 1956" and in the Prologue we read "Many years ago when I was a young lad, I used to spend my summer holiday with my people at Penmaenmawr. From there I used to make excursions into the mountains, and, venturing a little further each year, in 1943 I succeeded in walking from Penmaenmawr to the top of Snowdon. In later years I looked back on this feat not without a certain pride, but nevertheless regarded it as a piece of juvenile folly which I would not care to repeat. This year, however, with the Colne-Rowsley walk deleted from the meet list, someone decided that a new marathon must be invented. So it came about that at 10.30 p.m. on Friday the 1st June, I found myself bivouacing in a wood above Penmaenmawr in the company of four other maniacs (and more arrived later) bent not only on repeating my youthful exploit, but extending it to include Moel Hebog and thus to end at Bryn-y-Wern, in the Pennant valley.

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

The account goes on "In the lead were four enthusiasts, Penlington, Pettigrew, Hayes and Russell, who had the wild notion of including all 14 'dreitausenders' en route. The other group, Dearden, Parslow, Kershaw and Moore (Mike), confined their ambitions to reaching Bryn-y-Wern by any reasonably direct route. Somehow I became separated from both groups and did most of the walk on my own."

Phil then goes on to recount that the weather deteriorated, "heavy rain and a furious gale — conditions which threatened to exhaust us all very quickly." The 'enthusiasts' arrived at Gian Dena about 11 a.m. "having already stained their escutcheons by omitting Yr Elen." Phil met Bob and Geoff, 'the two surviving enthusiasts' as he approached the summit of Moel Hebog. "We reached the summit at 9 p.m. and feeling very weary but mightily pleased with ourselves, plodded into Bryn-y-Wern at 10 p.m." The distance had been walked but not as planned by the 'enthusiasts' to include the 14 — 3,000' Welsh Peaks.

In 1957 the meet was again on the list and on Friday night 28th June a goodly number of Oreads were to be found again bivouacing in the wood above Penmaenmawr. Geoff recorded in his diary "nobody seemed to want to have a bash at including the 14-3,000', but at the last moment Bob Pettigrew came back to Nottingham after six weeks instructing on the Outward Bound at Patterdale, and this was to be his final meet before going to Malaya."

In his account of the walk, Bob described the arrival at Penmaenmawr of two parties and then went on:-

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

Stopping only to write ‘Penlington’ on a grinning horse’s skull, the party moved over Drosogl into dubious navigational prospects. Fortunately the early morning cloud cleared and the summit of Drum, 2529’, was crossed at 05.00 hours. The uplands had yielded all their water and some time was spent searching for a spring from which to fill water bottles. The party was well strung out on Foel Fras and the rock-strewn summit was crossed independently at about 07.00 hours (3092’). This was our first three-thousander of the day.

On Foel Grach, 3196’, Phil decided to repeat last year’s ‘bee-line’ route. A short discussion took place on Carnedd Llewelyn, 3485’ at 07.45 hours about the possibilities of covering the Fourteen Peaks over 3000’ en route for the hut. The outcome was a deviation West by all except Phil to embrace Yr Elen, 3152’, at 08.15 hours.”

Jack Ashcroft recalls the break on the summit of Carnedd Llewelyn. “It was a magnificent calm clear morning and Geoff and Bob were obviously overjoyed with the prospects in contrast to the previous years experience. With a sweep of the arm towards the Glyders and Snowdon and with his characteristic broad smile, Bob announced “It’s in the bag” and continued to enthuse on the planned route. I had only recently returned to the Oread scene after two years national service and this meet was my first encounter with the active young Hayes and in exchanging a few words with him on the Club’s experience in the atrocious weather conditions of the previous year, it was obvious the lively spirit of the Oread still prevailed.” Bob Pettigrew’s account continues:-

“The long curving ridge bridging Llewelyn and Dafydd was entertaining and afforded magnificent views to the East and West. The Craig Yr Ysfa col did not look unattainable as it does from the end of Llyn Llugwy on a warm day.

Carnedd Dafydd, 3427’, was ascended at 09.40 hours and we approached the last obstacle, Pen Yr Olewen, 3211’, 10.00 hours by the rocky sweep of ridge bounding Cwm Lloer. The party split up to descend to Gian Dena each by the route of his choice, but Penlington’s cunning and skill in cutting back to good scree in Cwm Lloer must be recorded. At Gian Dena the project was stimulated by the presence there of Cyril Machin, an ex-President of the Oread, who appeared very fit. He kindly offered us tea and a general refreshment was called. The party became attenuated again since a start was made for the North ridge of Tryfan before Mick Smith arrived at the Hut. However he was spotted plodding down the track and the assault of Tryfan proceeded. Somewhere up the ridge Dave complained of foot trouble and withdrew from the Fourteen Peaks attempt. Jack Ashcroft and I then set off after Geoff Hayes and Phil who had rejoined them at Gian Dena. With some surprise, we encountered tents on the summit of Tryfan 3010’ at 12.00 hours.

During the descent of the South ridge of Tryfan into Bwlch Tryfan, the minute

figures of Hayes and Falkner were seen occasionally straddling the Bristly Ridge. We toiled after them and were united on the summit block of Glyder Fach, 3262', at 13.15 hours. Here Falky startled us all by going down on all fours and lapping like a dog from a small rain puddle. He showed such enthusiasm that pausing only to remove a snail, I proceeded to drain the puddle.

We arrived at another cross-roads, for those anxious or fit enough to attempt the fourteen had to deviate Westwards to cover the outlying Elidir Fawr etc. After Jack had gallantly shared out a small tin of pears, Geoff and I veered off towards Glyder Fawr, 3279', and crossed the summit block at 13.45 hours. During the descent to the Devil's Kitchen, we met the Mountain Club party engaged in the traverse of the fourteen peaks from the South. We attribute the finding of a cheap pocket watch to their passing, Larry Lambe please note! Y Garn, 3104', went very quickly from the col, we were climbing swiftly and in identical rhythm. We skirted the cairn at 14.40 hours. The prospect before us now revealed a wide crescent-shaped ridge, with points to the South, terminating in the craggy bulk of Elidir Fawr — a quarry-scarred mountain. Quarries or not, it had a dark dignity enhanced by the cumulo-nimbus racing up from the SouthWest. The rain was refreshing at first and we allowed it to soak our shirts before we donned anoraks against the chill wind which sprang up. Cramp attacked Geoff's left knee at frequent intervals now, and a halt was called for massage. Quick shelter was obtained in the summit rocks 3030' and at 15.30 hours the descent to Nant Peris over slippery slate remnants was begun. As lower levels were gained, a watery sun broke through and reflected from Llyn Peris, and beyond from the shapely Padarn.

We entered the general store at Nant Peris at 16.00 hours and bought foodstuffs ranging from tomatoes to dolly mixtures. A roadside cafe provided first two glasses of salt water each, and second, a jug of coffee made with milk. The good lady in charge philosophically accepted our order, but later we caught her eyeing us strangely from a safe retreat.

Passing the time of day with Frank Fitzgerald, ex-President of the Sheffield University Mountaineering Club, we entered Ynys Ettws (the Climbers Club Hut) drive en route for upper Cwm Glas. The cloud protection had vanished and the ground was dancing under the impact of the sun. Opposite Cyn Las we ascended directly into upper Cwm Glas and turned North East towards the upper North Ridge of Crib Goch and spontaneously we each remarked upon its rich red hue.

Though a useful and speedy descent by its nature, the screes of the North Ridge do not recommend it for upward progress. The descending escalator action brought on another attack of cramp for Geoff, and he sat disconsolately nursing his knee. Ploddingly we made height and approached the summit, 3023' at 18.15 hours. The top and the ridge were deserted and, expressing surprise, we started the traverse. Beyond Bwlch Goch we met a party from which a familiar face emerged. It appeared that I had helped to carry him down from the Cioch in Skye where he broke his leg fourteen months ago. He gave us news of Jack and Phil seen on Snowdon summit three-quarters of an hour before. Encouraged by this, we tackled Crib Y Ddisgl with new zest and crossed the summit plateau.

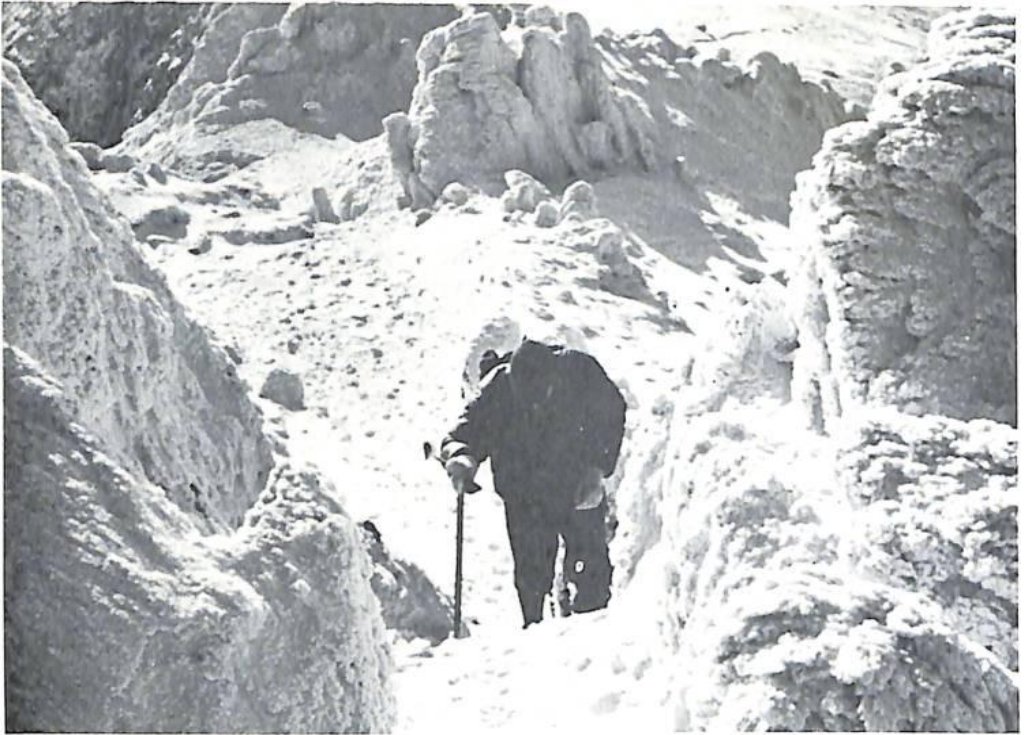
3493' at 18.45 hours. Making good speed up the railway track we arrived on the summit of Snowdon 3560' at 19.00 hours. The fourteen peaks had taken us eleven hours and forty-five minutes.

Three glasses of milk and two bottles of limeade were taken aboard in the summit hotel. There seemed to be no limit to the amount or type of liquid we could imbibe. Before we parted on Tryfan, Penlington had gripped my arm and announced in dramatic tones that, "It won't mean anything unless Yr Aran is pulled in too!" When I mentioned this to Geoff he merely linked Penlington with an obscenity, a fine piece of spontaneous alliteration. We arranged to meet at the Forestry camp site beneath Moel Hebog, now towering up impressively across the valley. I set off for Yr Aran from Bwlch Main and climbed it by the North ridge 2451' at 21.00 hours. Descending over Craig Wen, I met Geoff as arranged and we set out to discover a diagonal fire break which we had picked out from Snowdon as a good route to the East ridge.

Although in theory it provided an excellent approach, its surface was littered with recently felled timber and the climb became an extended steeplechase. Ultimately we emerged onto the East ridge which reared up as the last obstacle, apparently twice as high, steep and long as any other in the previous seventeen hours. We learned later that Moel Hebog had mutely borne the curse of Phil and Jack so it knew what to expect as we dragged our protesting frames up and over its elusive summit 2566' at 22.30 hours. But what bliss to sink down by that cairn! Side by side we sat without conversation and within seconds were dozing. Realising the futility of a rock couch, we commenced the descent down the long gentle spur towards Pennant. Sufficient after-glow remained to indicate dykes and barbed wire entanglements, we called these Celtic Mantraps. Two bright lights convinced us that Phil, anxious for our safety, had placed them in the windows of Bryn-y-Wern. I am not suggesting that Phil was not anxious for our safety, but the fact remains that the lights did not belong to Bryn-y-Wern, and in getting to a remote farm, a mile north up the valley, we crossed the river and the road, under the impression that they were further Celtic Mantraps. We reached Bryn-y-Wern thankfully, at 00.30 hours on 30th June, having taken nineteen hours over the route."

Geoff's diary in relation to the pull up Moel Hebog states "... halfway up the ridge it became very desperate. I was very tired and in a bad way." Phil and Jack Ashcroft had similarly experienced this and we had missed out the long walk to Elidir Fawr, the drop down and climb out of Nant Peris onto Snowdon. It had obviously been a fine performance by Geoff and Bob to have covered at least 36 miles including 14 Snowdonia peaks over 3,000' and 4 over 2000' for good measure.

Phil Falkner summarised the progress of the rest of the participants thus "Just below the summit (Hebog) we met up with Mike Smith again. Realising that he was far behind at Ogwen, he had hitched a lift to Pen-y-Pass, and resumed operations from there. He must have been only just in front of us for a long time. The summit was reached at 21.20 hours; there remained only the long steady descent to the hut and we literally staggered in at 22.35 hours. We were surprised to find Dave already there. Leaving Pen-y-Pass after us he'd omitted Crib Goch,



Geoff Approaching Snowdon Summit by Llechog Ridge.

Photo - Gordon Gadsby



Oreads on Summit of Snowdon.

(From Left) Laurie Burns, Christine Craddock, Eric, Ashley and Merle Wallis, Anne Hayes, Dave Brady, Tom Green, Paul Craddock, Dave Guylar, Geoff Hayes, Jim Kershaw, Wendy Allen, John Welbourn and Kiwi

Photo - Chris Radcliffe

and putting on a spurt up Snowdon by the P.Y.G. track, had taken the lead.” In the final analysis Mick Smith, Dave Penlington, Phil Falkner and myself had traversed 11, 12, 13 and 14 peaks respectively. But what did it matter; it had been a good day. Laurie Bums and John Bridges who had ignored the call of Hayes at 4.00 hours Saturday, arrived at Bryn-y-Wern 16.30 hours Sunday having taken a relaxed two days over the walk.

It may be said that after Geoff’s epic walk with Pettigrew in 1957 he had graduated as a mountain walker! The ‘Welsh Training Walks’ of 1956 and 1957 gave him his enthusiasm for marathon type walking and his regular support for walking in the Oread calendar of meets.

He continued with his enthusiasm for the 14 Peaks and over the years walked it at various times with various friends, sometimes from North to South, sometimes South to North. He never attempted to break any records in crosscountry running style. He just approached the walk in a traditional mountaineering way. A typical time was recorded in 1962 when he covered the distance in 10% hours:

Start:

Aber	7.00	Glyder Fawr Y	14.00
Foel Fras	8.30	Garn Elidir	14.40
Foel Grach	8.50	Fawr Depart	15.40
Llywelyn	9.25	Nunt Peris Crib	16.00
Yr Elen	9.45	Goch Crib y	16.30
Dafydd	11.00	Ddysgl	18.10
Penyrolewen	11.15	Snowdon	19.0
Gian Dena	11.45	Depart Rhyd	19.15
Depart	12.15	ddu	19.30
Tryfan	13.00		21.00
Glyder Fach	13.40		

He enjoyed the romp over hill and down dale boots and rucksack part of him. As Eric Wallis has said:-

“His tremendous walking ability — an image springs readily to mind of a wiry, bespectacled figure, calf muscles bared to the elements,* hands in his pockets, Bergen rucksack on his back, bouncing up and down with his untiring gait, over the wild desolation of Bleaklow or the 14 peaks or even the Marsden-Matlock walk. He made the ideal partner for a long walking expedition and his cheerful ambling figure will be sadly missed but not forgotten by all his friends.”

Over the years the Oread have walked the length and breadth of Snowdonia and Mid-Wales on many ‘Welsh Training’ type walks. To mention some main traverses; Bontddu to Rhyd ddu via the Rhinogs and Moelwyns; Cynwyd to Dinas Mawddwy via the Berwyns and Arans; Llanuwchllyn to Rhyd ddu via the Arenigs and Moelwyns; Devils Bridge to Dolgelly via Plynlimon and Cader Idris; Abergwesyn to Pont-rhyd-y-groes via the remote and boggy moor land of Esgain Garthen, to quote Pyatt “the most remote area of Southern Britain.” There are many Oread characters who figured regularly on these weekend meets, such as Harry Pretty, Pete Janes, Fred Allen and Dave Williams, but



Cefn Mawr – in middle of Migneint Moor. Welsh Walk 1965. Colin Hobday, Geoff Hayes, Pete Janes, Digger Williams, Ray Handley.

(H. Pretty)



Oreads camping near Abersoch 1966.

From Left - Barbara Janes, Molly Pretty, Betty Gardiner, Ruth Williams, Pete and Stephanie Janes, Valerie Torrance, Paul Gardiner, Laura Pretty.

Front - Simon Pretty, Nobby and Judy Mill ward, Douglas Gardiner.

Photo – Harry Pretty.

always an ever present figure was that of Geoff Hayes — usually striding out in front. In 1960 the Oread had a highly successful meet traversing the Rhinogs and Moelwyns, bivvying the Friday night above Bontddu and finishing at Rhvd ddu. On descending Y-Llethr on the Saturday morning so magnificent was the situation by Llyn Hywel with Rhinog Fach towering above, that the party chose to sit by the Llyn for mental and physical relaxation (the mental relaxation on such occasions frequently takes the form of the unique Pretty-Janes-Williams variety of repartee — often harsh and insulting in the extreme, but none the less enlivening). On this occasion Hayes, Wallis and Jack Ashcroft decided to break with the party and attempt the walk in a day. This was done but not without pain. The last pull up the Watkin Path and over the col between Snowdon and Yr Aran required great determination as the evening light faded. Hayes was up there in front as usual. We had been rather unsociable. The rest of the meet took two days over the walk bivvying the Saturday night above Maentwrog under Pretty's Good Companions 'Llynhut' the veteran of many such bivouacs. It had been a pleasant walk for two days over the 25 odd miles mostly above the 2,000' contour. But it is the broken, often trackless nature and thigh deep heather that gives the strenuous character to this marathon. The hardest will find it testing to do in a day.

Geoff always enjoyed his long mountain flogs, though not all of them were in the same class as the Rhinogs walk, and many followed after the main rock climbs of the day had been accomplished. Dave Weston, here describes just such a day.

Great Gully Craig Cau-Cader Idris

“We had left the campsite at Dolgellau fairly early, promising the girls we would be back for 4.00 p.m. It was Sunday, so that evening we had to drive back home. It was a brilliant day and we were soon moving fast up oh to the ridge of Cader, then up the long long slope up to the summit. The Great Gully on Craig Cau was our objective. Geoff and I had talked about it in the past and it happened to be one of the very few places I had been in the mountains that had not been visited by the bog-trotting-heather-crossing Hayes. Geoff was in great form, going at a speed that is known to leave farmers behind, and although I had been telling myself this was the one day I was going to manage to keep up, he was soon drawing steadily away and I was beginning to sound like a candidate for an iron lung. Thank God we didn't have to go quite to the summit, the path managed to just skirt round and lead to the col between Cader summit and the summit of Craig Cau. Geoff must have been there at least ten minutes and when with a grin he jumped up to go, I just collapsed, not even the breath left to curse him. This was how it was to be. We both knew we had to 'go at it' to do what we wanted to do in the time.

I could manage to stand now and looked down into Cwm Cau to see the cloud all held low down in the Cwm. As we descended the scree path into the mist I realised it was going to make finding the gully that much harder. It was Geoff who found the Gully with that built-in-radar of his. On my first ascent we had

traversed in from the side as there is a very large chock stone in the bottom of the Gully. ‘The Great Gully’ on Craig Cau is a classic mountaineering route, not a hard rock climb. Geoff was for a direct ascent up over the chock stone. For once I found myself on the sharp end and I moved up to a very wet completely moss covered chock stone with Geoff saying, “You will manage O.K. George Abraham did it with that ruddy big camera and tripod in 1923.” With the help of a good runner, a lot of struggling and not a dry stitch of clothing left, I eventually made it. “Right now you bugger, Hayes” I thought, I was certain he was in for a gripper as it usually was for me when following Geoff. But no such luck — up he came in no time carrying the rucksack with two wet patches on the knees of his well used climbing breeches.

We finished the route leading through on to grass and scree and the odd rock pitch for a thousand feet and we both enjoyed it very much. From the top we walked to the summit of Cader, then ran all the way down the Foxes Path and back to the campsite. So ended another hectic day with Hayes. There was one of us that could have done it all again even in the dark, and it certainly wasn’t me.”

A Night to Remember

The weekend of Bill Kirk’s 21st birthday party at the Club Hut in Wales will be remembered by many for the absence of guests who spent the long hours benighted on Lliwedd, one of whom, Stuart Bramwell, recalls:

“It was five o’clock and the light was getting worse. Alan Woods turned to me and said, “Well, we could abseil off,” but a four hundred foot abseil down Lliwedd in the dark wasn’t my idea of trying to get off in one piece, so we made preparations to stay the night.

The day had started unusually warm and sunny for February and Geoff had suggested he and I climb Avalanche. We were about to leave the hut at Rhyd ddu when Alan Woods asked if he should join us and the three of us left around eleven o’clock. We crossed the saddle below Yr Aran and stopped for lunch on the Horseshoe before dropping down to the foot of the crag. We eventually found the start of the route and Geoff led off. Everything was going smoothly and we were making steady but slow progress. We were within a hundred feet of the finish of this climb when we realised we were off the main route. To get back onto it meant an awkward traverse to the right. The climbing above looked easier but this meant tackling a large overhanging block.

Geoff cracked this problem at the second attempt after having to retreat and remove his sack. When he was belayed I brought Alan up to me and then set out to struggle with this overhang carrying both my own sack and Geoff’s. Eventually after a lot of tight rope I reached Geoff’s stance in an almost complete state of physical exhaustion. Alan was brought up and it was at this point we realised that the light was getting worse and the situation was looking bleak since the top of the route is about halfway up the crag and a considerable amount of scrambling lay above us to the summit. We decided it would be better for all of us if Geoff could solo onto easier ground before the light went completely, and organise a support party from the hut to get us off the following day. So with a



quick ‘Cheerio’, Geoff disappeared into the gloom and Alan and I found a couple of secure belays. Our position was somewhat cramped to say the least, since the ledge was only large enough for the two of us. I was rather worried about Geoff climbing on his own under these conditions since it would be dark before he reached the top, but we heard nothing more and assumed he must be all right. Obviously I didn’t realise the man’s capabilities.

I don’t remember much being said during the night except the occasional request for another piece of dry bread to stave off the hunger pangs and knowing that Bill Kirk’s 21st birthday party was in full swing back at the hut didn’t help matters much.

Sometime around ten o’clock a small cluster of lights appeared at the far end of Llyn Llydaw, detached itself from the Miner’s Track and came round the southern side of the lake towards the cliff. This seemed a bit odd at first, since we couldn’t imagine why anyone should want to do midnight ascents in February. It turned out to be Geoff and our rescuers who had come to see that we hadn’t fallen off and were still in a position to be rescued. After a few shouted words they left saying they would be back at first light. During the night I remember being thankful that we hadn’t made a hasty job of the belays, as I nodded off a couple of times and found myself being pulled up by the rope.

After what seemed an interminable wait, the dawn eventually began to appear and then our rescue party was calling to us from the northern flank of the mountain. They were soon within-talking distance and Gordon Gadsby let Geoff down on a rope to us and we were moving again. Joints were rather stiff after sixteen hours restricted movement and it was quite a struggle to get up to Gordon, but we made it eventually and found he was belayed on a grass ledge which seemed to have the proportions of a municipal playing field compared to the one which we had just left. The rest was easy scrambling which, to my surprise, I quite enjoyed, and we were soon on the summit.

Quite a crowd had been pulled out of their beds to get us off. Bill Kirk, Mike Stone, Dave Weston, George Reynolds, Gordon Gadsby and of course Geoff, all members of the Oread rescue team — rather a lucky stroke. I shall always be grateful to those concerned in getting us out of an awkward situation.”

Weekend at Cwm Cowarch

Still in Wales, Fred Allen relates here a typical day with Geoff on a meet at Cwm Cowarch in 1968. “I remember when Geoff’s ability and courage triumphed over setbacks and turned a mediocre day into one never to be forgotten.

Cwm Cowarch is an area well known to the Oread, due no doubt to our association with the Mountain Club and the use of their club hut.

The area of Cwm Cowarch abounds with good mountaineering walks, but unfortunately the rock climbing, apart from routes like ‘Styx’, is poor compared with better known areas. The weather on this particular weekend was not good. The whole valley was dripping with water and misty.

Nonetheless a small party of us set off to examine the rock in the hope of doing

an easy route. Having committed ourselves so far we felt compelled to do something to justify our weekend, and chose a route opposite the hut, the main feature of which was a steep slab.

Geoff and I shared a likeness for long mountaineering walks and often found ourselves on the same meet. But I cannot remember partnering him on a rock climb until that weekend. I had suffered a severe skiing accident in the winter of the same year and I was not going very well at all, and Geoff's kind offer to lead the climb was quickly accepted.

We were the last pair of three ropes and Ray Handley was having considerable difficulty up in the front on a wet and greasy slab. The holds were small and the protection poor, and we all heaved a sigh of relief when Ray reversed. Geoff, who was climbing in boots, offered to have a go. This was typical of Geoff when the going was difficult or tough.

We watched as he carefully edged his way upwards, his boots seeming to stand on nothing, and we raised a cheer when he arrived at the stance. My turn came next and I enjoyed the challenge of the pitch, but I must confess that I was pleased that the rope was in front of me.

We all assembled at the top of the route at 2.00 p.m. in thick mist and dripping wetness. It was too early to descend to the hut for a cup of tea, so we decided to traverse the valley and back down the main stream bed. However Geoff had other ideas and already had the map out and suggested Aran Fawddwy. It was not so much the effort of climbing to the summit cairn, but finding it. Geoff was adept at finding his way in thick mist so we agreed to follow, but somehow something went wrong with his route finding, through a clearing mist we found ourselves too far east of the summit.

I was utterly weary and would have been quite happy to retrace our steps back to the hut, but not Geoff, from the brief glimpse of the valley he had taken another bearing and set off back up the hill. We made Aran Fawddwy and traversed across the head of Hengwen, pausing at the monument to an airman (RAF mountain rescue team member struck dead by lightning about 1961) and down the swiftly dropping path back to Bryn Hafod. '

The main party had drawn ahead and were leaving the path and plunging down the steep ravine and across the stream. I was at the back just managing to put one foot in front of the other, but happy in the thought that I had completed the circuit. Handley up ahead provided the laugh of the day by slipping as he crossed the slabby smooth bed of the stream and falling on his back in six inches of water. He was soaked and the air was blue with his language. We arrived back at the hut to receive large mugs of tea from the ladies."

Great Gully on Craig Yr Ysfa

This climb is one which Pip Hopkinson remembers from their very early Welsh days.

"I climbed Great Gully on Craig Yr Ysfa with Geoff, Eric Wallis and Beryl Turner. It rained and drizzled as we started the Gully and became fine again nearer the top.



We decided to solo the first few easy pitches and put a rope on when the climb started to go across the right hand wall of the Gully. Geoff roped up with Beryl and myself with Eric. This part of the climb was very wet and greasy and we were constantly being sprayed with water. The climbing was nowhere hard although the grease made it feel a bit of an epic. We reunited as a party under the Great Chimney. Geoff and Beryl, who had been in the lead up to now, had to go back down the Gully to recover a karabiner. I led the chimney very gingerly (it was perhaps the greasiest pitch I have ever climbed) putting on a lot of protection — to the cries of derision from the others. The move out of the chimney to the niche on the right I protected by a jammed knot. I got about five runners on the pitch. I brought up Eric who left my protection for Geoff and Beryl. It had taken me three quarters of an hour to lead the chimney and it took another hour and ten minutes for the rest of the party to reach the crowded stance, Geoff and Eric climbing together. Some of my slings perhaps still hang on the first large chock- stone in the chimney. At the top of the chimney there were no more rude comments about how I had stitched my way up the pitch. We quickly arrived at the capstone to the gully and made, as described by Haskett Smith, “very ungraceful pirouettes to escape the gully and reach the setting sun.”

Cwm Eigi^u and Cader Idris

The ladies have always played their part in the Oread scene, and here one of their active members, Pam Weston, describes walks with Anne and Geoff at Cwm Eigiau and Cader.

“Dave and I travelled up to Cwm* Eigiau with Anne and Geoff in their caravette (we were camping by the Dam wall). What a bumpy ride once we had left the main road. Dave was trying to read the map by the light of a torch sitting in the back. Geoff took a wrong turning and it was like being at sea (Eve never been to sea in rough weather but I shouldn’t think there is much difference). Dave and I climbed with Doug Cook that weekend which was so misty that we could hardly see a thing. I’ve never been to Cwm Eigiau since and I think it would be rather nice to go sometime to see where I have been.

We climbed Amphitheatre Buttress, so we left the rucksack by the rocks to collect it on the way down. Could we find it — No. We were late as it was and Geoff and Anne wanted to be away early. I recognised the place by an old beer can and we found the rucksack and hurried back to the campsite where Geoff and Anne were cooling their heels waiting for us. It’s ironical when one thinks of all the times people have waited for Geoff to come from climbing or walking and this must have been about the only time that Geoff was waiting for someone else.

One October or November weekend, Geoff, Anne, Dave and I went to Cader and camped in the usual spot by the stream. It was a gorgeous weekend for weather, but not for the marathon walk which we did. We went onto Cader via the Foxes Path along by Craig Cau and down to Llyn Minffordd, along the road to the lake. I’d had enough by then and we still had an awful long way to get back. What a ‘thrutch’ we had over the never ending moor land. It was dark long before we reached the ridge of Cader. Geoff had his torch on and Dave was trying to

make me eat chocolate. I never thought I'd see our tent again, but Geoff seemed to go just like a homing pigeon. We all flopped into the tent where Geoff proceeded to light his primus in the back of the tent and it had a 'flare-up start' which nearly burnt the tent down, and to cap it all — that night as we got ready for bed we discovered that Geoff and Anne had a lilo each, but Dave and I had none — the tent is the width of three lilos, so I leave it to your imagination as to how we all slept.”

CHAPTER FIVE

ON BRITISH CRAGS AND MOUNTAINS

WALKING THE HOMELAND MOORS

..The man who never was lost, never went very far. "

G.H.B. Ward in "High Peak" by Byne and Sutton

On the 'homeland' moors of the Peak many will remember Geoff for his remarkable sense of direction and many are the Oreads who have followed on his track over Kinder and Bleaklow in dense mist conditions. For many years now a hardy perennial in the Oread calendar has been the Bullstones Meet. Traditionally, this used to be led by Harry Pretty and recently that tradition has been carried on by Don Cowan. The nature and distance of the walk has varied over the years and now involves a Friday night crossing of Kinder having first spent a convivial .hour or so in the Nags Head in Edale. But for a long period the meet took the form of a December weekend out on Kinder and Bleaklow bivvying the Friday night in Poltergeist Barn, on the slopes of Grindslow Knoll above Edale, and Saturday night at Bullstones Shooting Cabin below Howden Moors near the Head of the Derwent. Unfortunately Bullstones cabin was destroyed by vandals in the mid-sixties and the Saturday night bivouac site is now 'another' shooting cabin deeper into the heart of Bleaklow.

Much could be written about the characters and experiences on such meets during the past 20 years, but all those who have been on Bullstones meets will associate the name of Geoff Hayes with his nocturnal arrivals. Those soundly asleep would curse the disturbance which invariably occurred with the arrival of the 'Nottingham Shower', but those who had joined him on the trek from Edale during the hours of darkness held nothing but admiration for his navigation over Kinder and Bleaklow. Geoff frequently brought his own team along starting from Edale about 9.00 p.m. after a day in the shop. Often the shooting cabin would be bursting at the seams with human bodies and he would bivvy outside in company with those sometimes new to the rigours of such a weekend. Needless to say some novices were never seen again, but others have stayed the course and have become keen club members. Geoff's wife, Anne, was one such member, who met the Oread through being dragged up to Bullstones Cabin in the early hours of the morning.

Bleaklow and Kinder in December can be damp and miserable or lashed with rain or blinding snow storms, but many are the crisp frosty weekends with a weak wintery sun lending a fascination of its own to the wild open landscape — probably the moors at their best. Bleaklow and Kinder have lost in Geoff one who knew them intimately and appreciated them in all their moods.

Two classic walks on 'homeland' moors which must be mentioned are the Marsden-Rowsley and the Horseshoe of the Peak. The Marsden-Rowsley walk is an extension of the Marsden-Edale walk and first appeared on the Oread Meets list in 1952. from Marsden it follows the Wessenden Valley over Black