

CHAPTER 11

'THE RECENT YEARS' 1966-74

"But the word 'impossible' has no permanent place in a climber's vocabulary ..."
Tom Patey 'One Man's Mountain'

The year of 1966 began with a sad event when a member of the Summit Mountaineering Club of Nottingham fell to his death on Ben Nevis. Sid Webb, though not a member of the Oread, was well known to many members and in the spring of that year Nat Allen and Derrick Burgess did a hard climb on the unclimbed section of the main wall on Beeston Tor left of Bertrams Chimney in memory of Sid, and named it 'The Webb' graded HVS. Later in the year Nat and Derrick continued with climbs in the Manifold Valley produced the great slab classic Central Wall, the 220' V.S. West Wall Climb and a twin route to The Sweep was added, Inferno graded HVS. Nat and Derrick also completed the Chatsworth Edge manuscript for Volume 4 of the Chatsworth Area Guide, which was not published until 1970 due largely to lack of finances and the massive gap left in administration work on the Guide Book Committee by the death of Eric Byne early in 1968.

The Easter meet of 1966 found a number of Oreads deserting the hills for the sea cliffs of Swanage. Nat Allen, Ray Colledge and Derrick Burgess put up a new hard severe route they named Legend on the undeveloped Guillemot ledges. Redressing the balances a little, Tom Frost wrote an article in the newsletter on a few winter days with Brian Cooke in the Cairngorms. They climbed a gully in Coire-an-t-Sneachda and generally wandered about Cairngorm and Ben Macdhui plateau.

Whitsun found a mammoth turn out of members in Eskdale with most of the Scafell classics done during the course of the weekend. On the Welsh scene Merle Wallis gave a detailed account in the newsletter of how a rope of three, including herself, were forced to bivouac near the top of Cloggy after the ascent of White Slab.

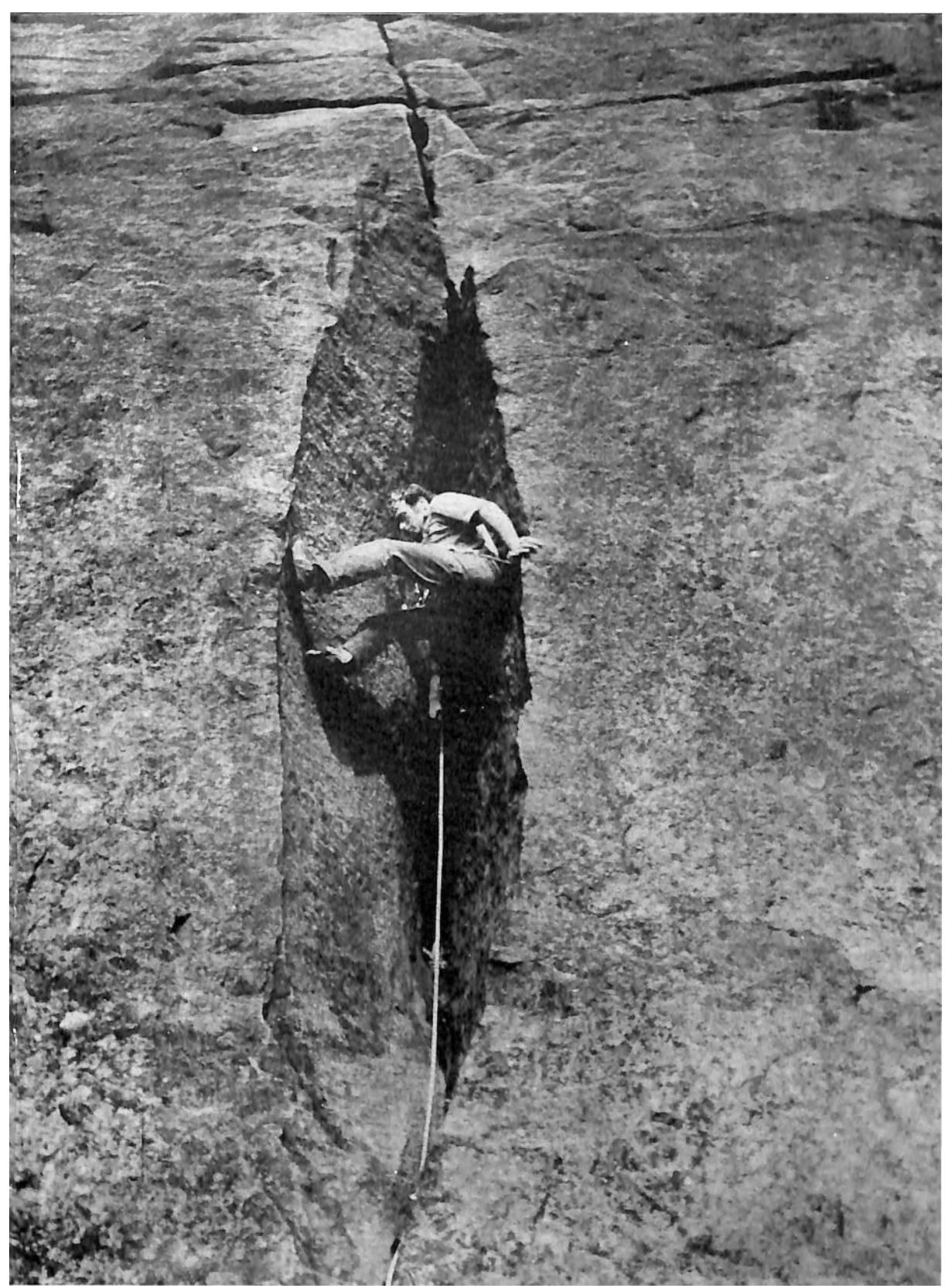
As regards walks in 1966, the highlight appears to have been a large party doing the Lyke Wake Walk which was obviously an enjoyable epic from the account.

July/August found a large number of Oreads camped at St. Moritz in the Engadine which resulted in a highly successful social and climbing holiday. Many routes were accomplished but the best was the Scerchen/ Bernina traverse done by Derrick Burgess and Ray Handley — a long sustained route and much prized classic of the Bernina Massif.

Colin and Uschi Hobday visited the Karwendel and Kaiserberge of Austria for two weeks, and although an enjoyable time was had, poor weather curtailed their activities.

In the Himalaya Bob Pettigrew led an Indo-British expedition which made the second ascent (after 54 years) of General Bruce's Solang Weisshorn 5930m.

The year of 1967 seems marked for the activity by relatively new members. Those regularly attending meets included Ron Chambers, Roy Sawyer, Tom



Green, John Dench, Reg Squires, Howard Johnson, Stuart Bramwell, Christine and David Brady, Matt O'Brien, Chris Taylor, Mike Stone and three married couples, John and Binnie Cross, Ken and Margaret Hodge and John and Veronica Corden. Another relatively newcomer to the Oread was Bill Kirk who received mention in the January Newsletter for distinguishing himself on two accounts. He won the 1966 photographic competition and was the first Oread to the Club's knowledge to achieve a Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award. The gathering at the Palace for the Presentation was not unlike an Oread Meet, according to Bill.

The meets throughout the year were all the old favourites, Ogwen, Langdale and Dow Crag. There were two meets at Easter, one led by Geoff Hayes in Glencoe, memorable for its atrocious weather — "Who's for Swanage next year?" was Geoff's final comment in the report — and one in Snowdonia at the hut led by Gordon Gadsby when better weather was experienced with snow on the tops. Whitsuntide was the usual gathering at Brotherilkeld Farm. Eskdale led by Nat Allen, but the weather was poor. Walking meets included the Lyke Wake Walk again when 22 people took part! Nineteen of them completed the crossing in the remarkably fast time of 11 hours 45 minutes plus a one hour stop; the youngest being Fred Allen's son Richard, aged 14, and the oldest Fred himself. The 14 peaks was also a successful meet when nine members completed the walk having bivvied the Friday night on Snowdon summit railway platform.

At the Annual General Meeting held at the Royal Oak, Bakewell on Saturday, 11th March, Geoff Hayes proposed to the meeting that it was now time the Oread looked into the possibility of obtaining a hut in the Peak District. There was some heated discussion on this proposal, some feeling the Club had enough difficulty with the upkeep of the Welsh hut at Rhyd-ddu. Support came from Nat Allen, that if a hut could not be purchased close to the edges, then at least a field should be purchased for an Oread camp site. Harry Pretty said that from the earliest days of the Club it was always hoped to obtain a hut in Derbyshire. Geoff's proposal was eventually carried by a substantial majority that the committee should look into the possibility of obtaining a hut in the Peak District. A Derbyshire hut sub-committee was formed under the chairmanship of Harry Pretty and by the end of the year, due almost entirely to the efforts of Harry who spent considerable time and correspondence with many people, the Club were on their way to having a hut below Chatsworth Edge.

In June for many years Eric Byne led a meet at Birchens Edge. It was a joint meet of the many clubs with which he had built up connections over the years. The following article appeared in the June 1967 newsletter.

Birchens Edge — June 17th-18th — Eric Byne

After nearly 10 days of continuously fine weather I began to wonder if the conditions would hold out for this 38th rock climbing anniversary of mine. However my week of effort on the family prayer mat proved successful and the whole weekend was nothing else but fantastic. After counting 220 people I knew, either by name or familiar face, I gave up, but roughly estimate that about 250



Sir Jock Longlana



Charlie Cullum Photo - Harry Pretty



Phil Falkner

Photo — Harry Pretty



Photo - Harry Pretty



Laurie Burns

Photo - Gordon Gadsby

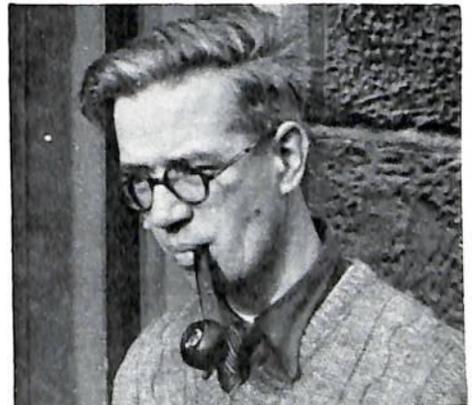


Photo - Harry Pretty

people turned up from such sources as the Oread, Mountain Club, Midlands Association of Mountaineers, Peak Climbing Club, Sheffield University Mountaineering Club, Harrow Mountaineering Club. Amongst these were such prewar climbers as Harry Dover (whom I hadn't seen for 30 years) and Fred Jones, the original founder of the S.U.M.C. There were also many odd bods from such far-flung places as London, Lincoln; Leeds.

As near as I could work out, there appeared to be about 50 Oreads plus their offsprings, which is a confirmation that 'tradition plus fine weather plus the Peak District' is an unbeatable combination. Unfortunately I can no longer identify every face by name — I easily get confused these days, especially when I am having such a happy time greeting everyone. Janes was there of course, looking as tough and leathery as ever and still full of those caustic flashes of humour which have always been such an essential and individual part of him — Nobby VI ill ward was nursing him along making sure he didn't get into any serious trouble and keeping a wary eye on both was Judy Millward. What a wench! Where Judy is concerned words fail me! In my humble opinion Judy was always one of the most beautiful young girls to ever drift into the sphere of the Oread, and now well I guess she's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen sitting on the top of Birchen Edge, and that's saying something, for I've seen a few in my time and the Oread has always been noted for fine looking wenches from Molly Pretty onwards. Needless to say Molly and Harry were there. It wouldn't have been so good if they hadn't been, for Birchens and Prettys are part of my life, and there's a never forgotten occasion when on Molly's 21st, I got lost in the depths of Ladder Chimneys on a dark midnight clutching her bottle of rum and imbibing at frequent intervals whilst Harry, Paul Gardiner, Keith Axon, and others, cursing obscenely, wandered along the top looking for me — however that's a tale of its own.

Nevertheless to see Paul again at Birchens, and Betty Gardiner gave me a great kick Johnny Welbourn too, who judging from the way he was spouting to a group on the camping ground about real estate and how to make a fortune selling houses looks like becoming a bloody baron. Strangely enough I saw him do more climbing this time than I've ever seen him do previously. One mustn't forget Jack Ashcroft, looking as well as ever although somehow we never seemed to get together for a chat properly and Dave Penlington, growing grey, and in shorts. I don't think I've ever seen him in shorts before. And Janet Penlington, looking as young and charming as the day Dave first snared her - how do you do it Janet?. Nevertheless you made me feel younger.

Some where I caught a glimpse of Laurie Burns. I don't think he owes me anything. Anyway he steered clear. Doug Cooke was there, and Jack Leeson, and Jim Kershaw let me buy him a drink in the Robin Hood, whi privilege, for you might not believe it. but I've tried **before without success**. These are but a few of the names that come to mind. I hope the others will forgive me for not mentioning them. I ought really to have had a register book at Nelson's Monument. The signatures would have proved interesting and. ..
ihfonr.at ive

One last thing - believe it or not — I did climb. I led all those mods and diffs

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

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

Thank you all for coming,

Eric Byne

This was to be Eric's last meet at Birchens. He died of cancer 6 months later.

Another event during 1967 was the visit to England by a group of Czech climbers. The Oread acted as host to the group on the crags of the Peak and also went to Wales with them.

The Alpine meet was held near Courmayeur but probably the best routes done in the Alps that year were by Nat Allen with 'Speedy' Smith and Des Hadlum, who went to the Dauphine and did the South Face of the Meije Direct, the South Face of the Aig Dibona and the South Face of the Gugliermina.

In the Himalaya Bob Pettigrew led a small expedition intent on climbing Peak Papsura, a beautiful symmetrical peak of 6451m. The team did eventually succeed but not without Bob being seriously injured during a reconnaissance. Bob wrote to Geoff Hayes the Newsletter editor, and the following is an extract from his letter.

News from Kulu — Stop Press

Bob Pettigrew

"You will be surprised to hear that I am lying here convalescing after my first serious accident in the mountains. It occurred during our reconnaissance of Papsura. We were three on the rope, descending a steep couloir. The lowest man slipped out of his steps, the second man's steps collapsed and the two of them dragged me off. We fell about 200' and came to rest in the bergschrund. The other two were dazed but unhurt, but I fell across the lower lip of the 'shrund and dislocated my left hip. Ultimately I diagnosed this myself. John Ashburner (my former pupil at Derby School) got me installed in a tent just below the couloir that night. The next day they shifted me to the highest camp on a stretcher improvised from skis and aluminum pickets. There I lay for seven days while they organised a stretcher team of porters from Manali. The journey across the mountains took eight days (I'm claiming a stretcher record!). It was 16 days before I was X-rayed in Manali hospital and the diagnosis confirmed. By then I'd got used to seeing my left leg two inches shorter than my right!

By a lucky coincidence a professor of orthopaedic surgery was holidaying in Manali. He decided to try and reduce the joint under spinal anaesthesia — thus averting a serious operation which is the usual course after such a lapse of time.

He was successful and I am now encased in plaster from chest to left big toe for six weeks.

I'm glad to report that a determined final bid for the peak by Colin and Geoff was successful.

My salaams to the Oread,
Bob.

The death of Eric Byne on 2nd January 1968 at the age of 56 was a sad blow to his many mountaineering friends and to gritstone climbers in particular.

An Honorary Member and former President of the Oread, he loved the Peak District more than any other and to quote from Harry Pretty's subsequent appreciation: "It is ironic that he should have died in the year that the club was on the verge of obtaining a hut in Derbyshire, a goal with which Eric had been obsessed for many years."

Unfortunately the negotiations for the lease of Heathy Lea were hampered early in the year by an extensive outbreak of foot and mouth disease during which 'townies' travelling in the country were discouraged.

The Welsh hut was closed during the outbreak and with Wales and Derbyshire 'out of bounds' the Oread resorted to quarries in Leicestershire, the Matlock Tors and even football on Markeaton Park, Derby.

Fred Allen on a skiing holiday in Zermatt came a cropper and broke his pelvis but was consoled during his convalescence by Bob Pettigrew, newly returned from India and also in plaster from his fall on Papsura.

At the Annual General Meeting Ray Handley entered his second year of office as President, Dave Appleby took over the Hut Warden of Rhyd-ddu and a membership of one hundred and eight was reported.

During 1968 meets were held at Langdale, Ravensdale, Beeston Tor, Pembrokeshire and in Dovedale. The rendezvous selected for the Alpine meet was Grindelwald and the attendance surpassed all previous efforts. Unfortunately the weather was not good but achievements included a traverse of the Schreckhorn, an ascent of the North Face of the Doldenhorn and a mass ascent of the Mdnch, this latter commencing at 10.00 a.m.

A great deal of effort was now being put into the newly acquired Derbyshire hut, Heathy Lea, a cottage adjacent to the pumping station below Chatsworth Edge; The first jobs being to clear a car parking area, clearing out of the cottage and barn and the provision of cooking facilities. The hut warden, with a sub-committee and many willing helpers quickly transformed the place into a hut worthy of Eric Byne after whom it was subsequently named.

The photographic meet in October was judged once again by C. Douglas Milner with the following result; first Chris Radcliffe, second Gordon Gadsby, third Laurie Bums.

The 1968 Annual Dinner, organised by George Reynolds, was a sell out with an attendance of a hundred and forty members and guests who were entertained with speeches by the comedy duo of Al Alvarez and Ian McNaught Davis.



In 1969 Derrick Burgess was elected to the Presidency of the Oread and amongst newcomers to the committee were Ron Chambers and Ken Hodge. This committee eventually succeeded in the belated task of publishing a new club handbook, the old one being 5 years out of date!

Members were active on British hills but the outstanding achievements of the year took place in the Alps and the Himalaya. Pete Scott, accompanied by Ron Lake, made a successful ascent of the North Face of the Matterhorn at the third attempt, the first two being aborted due to soft snow and the volume of water pouring down the face. Nat Allen and 'Speedy' Smith climbed the Cassin Route on the North East Face of the Piz Badile and Ray Colledge with one 'Dan Boone', whom he met by accident in Chamonix, opened his Alpine fortnight with a warm up training climb of the Walker Spur followed by the Pear Buttress on the Brenva Face of Mont Blanc! Having done this the pair moved across to Grindelwald to 'look at' the Eiger and the following is Ray's account of the ascent of the North Face.

North Wall of the Eiger

Ray Colledge

"We arrived at Grindelwald just after 5.00 p.m. somewhat exhausted from the heat of the day and driving on tourist laden mountain roads. Dan went to bed early in the Gasthof Glacier dormitory, after we had eaten. We also checked the weather forecast, which would only commit itself up to 24 hours. However, it seemed set fair. For myself, I stayed up to drink a large bottle of beer. I drank it slowly because I reasoned, it might have to last two or three hard nights, if only as a pleasant, memory. Sleep came easily that night.

After a leisurely breakfast we bought provisions for three days before catching the train to Alpigen from Grund station, where car parking is free. Before leaving Grindelwald we had looked through a telescope to see two climbers on the second icefield. This was slightly disappointing as we had hoped to have the face to ourselves, but in fact we were to see no trace of their passage except on the top part of the Spider.

The sky was lightly overcast as we walked up the grassy slopes of Alpigen, but we did not really notice this for we felt very confident. The limestone wall was immediately steep for laden men and we roped up. We may not however have chosen the best line to start the climb. Still we met no major difficulties and only slight stonefall, for quite some way, until really steep rock forced us to the 'Difficult Crack'. Everywhere was dripping water now so that we looked with longing at dry rock above the crack. To climb the crack however meant pulling strenuously up a waterfall for a few feet before an escape could be made into a less wet groove, even so I remember being partially blinded by spray in the groove and grateful for pegs already in place.

At the top of the 'Crack' the climbing became easy and leisurely as we made over towards the Hinterstoisser Traverse, drying out in the sunshine which was now putting in an appearance. The 'Traverse' was appalling. A wall of water dropped directly onto the traversing line where fortunately a rope was in place. Yet we dare not bivouac this side as occasional falling stones still came down. So



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each of us lunged across in his turn, eventually to arrive at the 'Swallows Nest' bivouac ledge, slightly damp under our wet anoraks.

During the night we slowly dried out in our bivouac bags despite the constant dripping of water from the overhang above us onto our gear. We were not worried about damp clothing, as we knew that the higher temperature which was causing the excessive melt water would also stop us from freezing.

Apart from one or two small avalanches down the first icefield, the night was at first enlivened by three hours of extensive fireworks display in Grindelwald and nearby places. It was of course August 1st, the Swiss National Fete day. After that we slept fitfully but warmly. I had only a down jacket as extra clothing, but Dan had a jacket and waist length down sleeping bag. The latter item became soaked in his rucksack and was useless. As it was expensive he elected to carry the sodden feathers up the climb rather than jettison the article. This was a misfortune. Fortunately our jackets remained dry.

Dan wore a British climbing helmet of the type which covers the ears and back of the neck and as a result communication between us was difficult, although we were slow to realise this fact. As he was sitting nearest to the exit from the bivouac I asked him to go first and belay around the corner, so that we could select the best way. It seems he did not hear me and climbed past a rock peg on the edge of the first icefield, to take a false line to a rock rognon above the bivouac. Half an hour later he called me to follow and I realised he was stuck at the foot of a very difficult groove. We were committed to forcing it, but eventually we climbed another groove close by after losing much time. Two Swiss climbers almost caught us up by taking the correct line up the first icefield below and to the left of the rognon. They must have slept lower down the face.

The rocks to the left of the Ice Hose and then the upper part of the Ice Hose went quickly enough. Once on the Second Icefield I shouted down to Dan my extreme pleasure at being now fully committed to this superb route. I recalled that when thoroughly happy and relaxed at the foot of the Red Tower on the Walker Spur, an Austrian climber had said, "One waits for years to get on a climb like this, and then once on it, one cannot wait to get off it." I felt sad for him. Certainly I never looked at it that way on the Eiger, although I suspect Dan had moments of doubt.

The icefield had a covering of up to six inches of soft snow, with several wide bands of bare ice. There was no need to cut steps anywhere and we could use the ice screws under the snow for belays. Above us the rock wall looked harmless although occasional small stones came down from high up to give the right sort of atmosphere to the situation. Under these very easy conditions we kept in the centre of the icefield on a slightly ascending traverse line. We should have moved very quickly but Dan is a rock climber, not an ice climber. The Swiss now came up behind but did not try to overtake. At one time I became increasingly depressed by our slow progress and started to take a pessimistic view of our chances, but my companion could not move any faster.

At the end of the ice of the last section, after we had taken to the upper rim of the ice for a short distance, we arrived at a rocky ledge below an overhanging wall, which was split by a narrow chimney. This was the start of the so-called

'Flat Iron' buttress on which we had to arrive. The Swiss climbers having beaten Dan across the last ice pitch, politely waited for us to climb the chimney. As Dan had not yet arrived I offered them the lead, perhaps because I wasn't used to such politeness in the cut and thrust of modern climbing. The first man attacked the chimney as Dan arrived, this being the signal for the first major stonefall. A shower of stones, fortunately never large ones, then came down about every minute. One would cautiously glance up for the next lot, and there, very high in the sky, were many black objects like birds. Shortly after they would arrive, whirring and screaming in every pitch and tone.

It took the Swiss a long time to get clear. As soon as possible we followed, moving from bulge to bulge in between stone falls, never actually climbing until the stones had diminished. Fortunately it was not a very difficult pitch. However we now once again paid a penalty for our slow traverse of the icefield, as dense mist blotted out everything, and it was only with difficulty that we roped our way up to the 'Death Bivouac' shelter. The two Swiss decided to stay put, but the impatient British started across the third icefield, for after all they only had to make a horizontal traverse. The leader traversed twenty feet, then came back. "Dan, where are we going?" "What is this ramp?" "How far is it?" We joined the Swiss under the bivouac overhang somewhat depressed because it was only mid afternoon, but feeling certain that it would have been stupid to go on. Next day we saw what was involved and knew we had made the correct decision.

We were not particularly happy as we sat in our bivouac gear in the wet clinging mist, water dripping off the overhang. To start with we couldn't eat heartily, for when buying food I had assumed that we could traverse the icefields at my normal pace, thus putting us at least at the top of the Ramp that day. As it was we now had to ration our food. If we had been only half an hour sooner across the second icefield, we would have arrived in the Ramp where the mist could not have stopped us and no doubt we would have bivouaced at least on the 'Traverse of the Gods', but then we would have missed an exciting finish in the exit cracks.

As it was the Swiss produced a radio set to hang above our heads. The strains of 'pop' music floating round the 'Death Bivouac' were never more gratefully received, as indeed was the reasonably optimistic weather forecast. The mist produced light rain, then light snow, but suddenly at 8.00 p.m. it lifted completely. Once again the night was not unduly cold. The only one seated on snow, I was fortunate to find a piece of old foam mattress partially buried nearby.

Our Swiss friends made a hurried get away in the morning but we were not far behind. We soon saw that a horizontal traverse in the mist would have landed us on some nasty looking slabby rock. As it was we ascended perhaps fifty feet diagonally on the ice to a rock for a peg belay, after which a traverse of about 120 feet took us to a rock belay on the far side of the Third Icefield. No one paused to cut steps. When Dan arrived I asked him to descend the ice to a corner where he should be certain to find a belay peg. I could then lead up to the first rocks of the Ramp. Because of his helmet he evidently did not hear. After putting a running belay on a peg below me, he arrived at the corner, went round it, and then to my horror actually started climbing up the ice towards the Ramp, out of sight or

sound due to the buttress which formed the corner. We had lost contact completely. Soon I had only a few feet of rope left and I took it from my shoulder to give him more. I was holding about three feet of spare slack, determined not to unclip from the peg in such a situation whatever the cost, when suddenly with a cry his red anoraked figure came into view, hurtling down the 60° ice of the icefield. Hastily I pulled the slack over my shoulder, but there wasn't enough for normal belay tactics and before I could pull in any more the load came on me, the jerk throwing my helmet off my head (it had only a single strap) and the rope tore my anorak and down jacket.

As Dan lay still, after bouncing over a rock band onto ice again after a total fall of almost 120 feet, I felt grateful for the presence of the Swiss now in the Ramp. My helmet finished its bouncing down the icefield and disappeared from view. Suddenly he moved, rested a little, then started pulling hand over hand up the rope. As he did so I noticed feathers drifting around me. "Feathers on the Eiger?" I thought, then noticed my torn clothing. This time Dan found the peg in place just round the corner and I descended and then went up the ice to the Ramp. He told me that he had tried to climb the ice using rock holds on the retaining wall, and when these ran out, pulled up on a flake of ice; it broke. He had lost his axe but retained a long-shafted hammer with a long spike.

Once in the Ramp we moved quickly to make up for lost time. We overcame the nasty looking awkward wet chimney and the bulge above, the latter in crampons of course, to arrive on the snow/ice slope at the top. The Ramp is not only the most difficult part but also the most closed in. One is glad to climb out into the open again on the 'Traverse of the Gods'. Here we met sunshine and a blue sky, and also a drying breeze. In the Ramp the water had run down the rope to soak whoever was holding it below. Our clothing became rather wet in places.

After the Ice Bulge Dan had begun to feel the effects of his fall and we slowed down considerably. The 'Traverse of the Gods' soon brought us with a delightfully exposed passage, to the 'Spider' snow slope. Looking at it I calculated a quick ascent since I would always be above Dan, and to make sure I suggested we eat the remaining food. This I thought would help to combat any ill effects from the fall. Certainly a quick ascent of the Spider was essential because of the obvious stonefall danger. However it was of no apparent use, and our ascent was very slow. The first third was snow then we ran onto ice. I ran out 120 feet at a time to speed things up, without steps of course. The last 150 feet or so was steeper, smoother ice, but here we could still do the same, thanks to a single wide step every twenty to thirty feet, the first trace we had seen of our predecessors of the day before. It was pleasant and less gripping to be able to crampon from step to step, in one continuous movement. We were not surprised to see the two climbers who had cut these steps, still in the Exit Cracks, with our Swiss friends below them. As I reached the top of the Spider, to find a rock peg belay in place, the mist and light snow arrived once again, but not before we had seen our line up the cracks above.

After we had removed our crampons, Dan moved off up difficult and wet rock onto easier ground and so we continued. About half an hour after leaving the Spider we saw the only fall of bigger stones we experienced. These swept down

our line of ascent on the Spider, but too late to catch us. The few stones which did fall while we were on the Spider were mostly to one side but without my helmet I felt rather exposed. About this time Dan recovered his energy and we made good progress despite the wet rock and mist. After climbing a white quartz crack we arrived at the last major difficulty, an overhanging crack of IV Sup.

Before we could attempt it, it suddenly started hailing. A strong down draught of air brought snow and hail in dense quantities at a fast speed. There were several distinct increases of speed until we felt we could not stand another increase, so intense was the downpour. Unseen the lightning flashed, but the thunder was ear splitting; of course we could not look up, but to one side a white river of snow and hail hurtled downwards at a terrifying speed, the gully being too shallow to take it; so that the white column rose above its banks. This lasted perhaps half an hour, perhaps an hour; we lost all count of time. Very soon a rucksack on the ledge disappeared from view and our boots vanished as the snow crept up above our ankles. It was very wearing on the nerves. It finished as suddenly as it began, leaving us in a world of steep snow covered rock. One shudders to think what it would have been like on the Spider.

Without a doubt we would have to bivouac a third time, I was not unduly worried about the weather, as all the signs indicated an afternoon thunderstorm as forecast, however fierce it had seemed at the time, whilst the temperature was still above freezing. However I couldn't be certain of what would happen later and deemed it advisable to put ourselves above the snowed up overhanging crack as soon as possible. This was not a time to consider whose turn it was to lead. As Dan was the stronger rock climber I asked him how he felt. He hesitated, then advanced. His feet shot in every direction, but with pegs in place he arrived below a bulge. An aluminium wedge placed in a crack which split the bulge gave him protection for the pull over it. He stood on top of it, to see that the remainder of the crack was smooth and could not be pegged. Every inch of rock was coated with slippery wet snow. However at head height to the right was a last peg and from this he had the brilliant idea of an easy safe diagonal rope move to the left across a blank wall into a climbable groove which put him on a good ledge above the crack. We were one up on the Eiger thanks to Dan.

After he had hauled up his sack I started to climb, carrying my own sack. It was appallingly slippery, the rock having a sort of slushy covering. To speed things up I did not stand in slings as Dan had, but to help with the strenuous pull over the bulge I did pull on the sling attached to his nut runner. As it popped out of the crack I hung like a sack below the bulge. Dan of course was ready for this, but as I pulled myself back onto the rock he gave me a serious talk on how one should be more careful when pulling up on nuts. I grunted agreement as I grasped the slippery rock to pull over the bulge.

I arrived at Dan's stance and then proceeded to throw away all the hard earned advantages that Dan's fine lead had given to us. In the thick mist and snowed up rock I missed the correct line. Oh yes, I traversed the smooth slab as advised in the route description but arrived at a fixed cord which continued further left for several yards on fairly easy ground. We could not understand



The Petit Dru 12,315"

Photo — Eileen Gregory



Alpine breakfast. Brian Cooke on Zinal Rothorn 1971. East Ridge of Weisshorn in profile in background.

Photo — Jack Ashcroft

and we knew we had to climb a shallow gully from the traversing ledge. We were both very suspicious for it did not look as if it was the correct line. On the other hand no other line looked right either, due to the dense mist and the snow covering. Dan started up to investigate, advancing reasonably well before placing a doubtful peg and retreating before darkness caught him, leaving the rope threaded through a snap link for the next day.

After putting pegs in we tied on and then sat on a snow covered ledge with legs hanging down the slab. We now had wet boots and no dry socks, whilst my wool and Courtelle underwear was warm and soon dried out. Dan had a wet cotton vest which remained damp. We made thin soup and tea but there was nothing to eat. Fortunately I slept reasonably well, periodically sliding off the ledge to hang from my peg. The mist cleared and it started to freeze. Once or twice we made hot tea, particularly for Dan who was feeling the cold more.

In the morning we should have reversed a few yards to look for another way, but with the remark "I've nearly cracked it," Dan started up the gully, ignoring my suggestion about crampons. Even with a top rope from his peg, the climbing was hard, and soon he realised the need for crampons, yet dare not retreat again down the now iced up gully under the protection of a doubtful peg. By the time he reached a stance at the top of the steep section, three hours had passed, most of which had been taken up in scraping away snow and ice in search of pegging cracks. Bridging up in crampons I was able to make quicker progress, but above Dan a groove steepened giving some delicate work for a hundred feet, however the crampons took care of the icy holds and pegging cracks offered occasional security. Only one peg went in well but one could not be fussy now. A diagonal move from the top of the groove onto a pegged stance at the foot of a steep gully brought us back on route. Above and to the right was a pulpit rock from which we should have abseiled to my present stance. Dan now put on his crampons with great difficulty, and came up to continue up the frozen gully, arriving after about 120 feet at a sunny stance on a ridge. Here we ate for the first and only time that day, two lumps of sugar each.

The continuation is up downward stratified loose rock, where the sun had fortunately melted the snow. Soon we were cramponing up steep ice to the Mittellegi Ridge and on to the summit, in mist once again, but not seriously so, for the Eiger relented this time. It was 5.00 p.m.

Without an ice axe my companion preferred to play safe with a slow descent. So it was dark before we reached safety, and eventually the Kleine Scheidegg for a hot shower and much needed sleep."

Ray Colledge has over the years established himself as a leading British alpinist with particular competence on ice faces. It is reasonable to speculate that Ray is the oldest Englishman to have climbed the North Wall of the Eiger — but then none of his friends have ever succeeded in establishing his age!

Also in 1969 Ray Handley and Derrick Burgess climbed the North Face of the Petit Dru and, to quote Ray's subsequent account, the ascent realised one of his climbing ambitions. After a precarious bivouac high on the face the pair successfully completed the ascent and commenced to rappel down. Just above the Mer



da Glace they stopped for a brew and by now they were evidently heady with their achievement, first kicking over a brew of tea and following up by treating the soup in the same way. Somehow they became separated on the glacier, resulting in Ray being forced into another bivouac whilst Derrick completed the descent.

Meanwhile, far away in the Himalaya, Chris Radcliffe had joined up with the Scottish Himalayan Expedition. The crowning achievement was his participation in the first ascent of Ali Ratni Tibba, a peak previously looked at by members of the 1961 Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition and circumnavigated in 1965 by Bob Pettigrew. Chris's own account described his experiences.

The First Ascent of Ali Ratni Tibba

Chris Radcliffe

“In the distance two tiny orange tents stood out against the snow, dwarfed by a superb ice-encrusted aiguille. This was Ali Ratni Tibba, my goal after weeks of preparations and 6,000 mile journey half way across the world. As our companions came down from base camp to meet Dave and myself the events that had led to this moment flashed through my mind. It had all begun with a surprise 'phone call from Scotland early in February; Ian Clough had had to drop out of the Scottish Himalayan Expedition — could I make myself available? The Himalayas! I was elated, but a little bewildered as to how it could be arranged. Fortunately my company took a favourable view of the project and gave me a flexible six week's leave of absence.

Preparation for the expedition had begun months before, but a lot remained to be done and I enthusiastically threw myself into the task of helping organise our food and equipment. Funds had come from the Mount Everest Foundation, the Gannochy Trust and our own pockets, but as with all expeditions run on a 'shoe string', we still depended on the generosity of many firms to help us with supplies. I had a special problem in arranging my own journey to India as I could not be away from work long enough to join the overland party. Fortunately the R.A.F. agreed to fly me out to Bahrein and back. On May 5th I set out on what must be one of the most rapid journeys to a Himalayan base camp on record!

An eight-hour flight in a Transport Command VC10 took me from our lingering spring weather to the tepid heat of the Persian Gulf. Two hours later I was off again on a commercial flight to Bombay and Delhi. Then an overnight train across the vast plains of northern India to Chandigarh, followed by a tedious twelve hour journey in a ramshackle and crowded bus to the village of Raison in Kulu Valley. I found my way to Jimmy Johnson's prolific orchard which, as with many earlier expeditions, was our valley base. Waiting for me was Dave Nicol, a friend from my University climbing days and a member of the party which successfully climbed The Fortress in Patagonia in 1968. We snatched four hours sleep and then set out on the three day journey to base camp to join the other members of the expedition — leader Fred Harper, a climbing instructor from Stranraer and member of the Edinburgh 'Squirrels', his wife, Marjorie-Anne, and Jim McArtney a printer from Aberdeen with an impressive list of the hardest Scottish ice routes behind him. Although they had left Britain a month ahead of me, they had set out for base camp only the previous day, accom-

panied by our two high altitude Ladakhi porters — Wangyal and Zangbo, both veterans of the 1961 Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition — and 25 local porters recruited after three days haggling over wages.

From Bhuntar a few miles south of Raison we had a riotous jeep journey up the Parbati Valley which after two successive punctures left us three miles short of our destination, Jari. Completing the distance with monstrous packs weighing nearly 100 lbs. flattened us, so we recruited a couple of porters to ease the burden. The approach march lay up the Malana Nullah, a long and incredibly beautiful valley rising steeply at first from the Parbati and then twisting among the outlying peaks to the foot of the glacier that reached up towards our peak. The first day's march was up a magnificent gorge and the path zig-zagged relentlessly 5,000' up to the remote hill village of Malana at 10,000'. It was this village community that had provided the porters who had carried the expedition's food and equipment to base camp. The older men and womenfolk who remained gathered curiously as Dave and I walked wearily towards the village. We remembered that Bob Pettigrew had been 'fined' for walking through the village in leather boots which broke the religious customs, so cautiously we walked round the perimeter. Nevertheless we received a very friendly welcome and were given pride-of-place in the headman's house which we shared with mice and sundry biting insects.

During the second day we climbed higher up the valley through pine forests, across 'alpine' pastures, frequently finding patches of winter snow that was lying late this year. We camped that night and next day climbed above the tree line and on to snow. Finally we saw base camp, perfectly sited for our attack on the mountain.

The camp was situated further east and at a lower level than the site chosen by earlier expeditions, directly beneath the west glacier of Ali Ratni Tibba. The Malana river lay about 200' below and then there was a steep rise of 500' to the more level part of the glacier which reached up for over two miles to a 1,200' ice fall. Above this was the col from which we expected to make our attempt to climb Ali Ratni Tibba.

I had arrived at base camp only 5 days after leaving Britain, but a reverse in the weather frustrated further activity. A continuous series of blizzards for the next four days kept us confined to our tents for most of the time, although in a lull on 13th May we laboriously ploughed a trail as far as the level section of the glacier where we pitched a tent and established a dump of gear. On the 15th we were able to start load carrying in earnest. The snow lay deeper than ever and of course a fresh trail had to be made. With 801b. packs and frequently sinking to our thighs in the snow, it was difficult to absorb the grandeur of our surroundings, when putting one foot in front of the other was a painful exercise. We spent the first day taking successive loads to the dump camp and on the two following we ferried all the loads to a camp established below the ice fall. The weather, however, remained unsettled with brief storms in the afternoon and on the 18th blizzard conditions returned for a further two days. Base camp routine was by now well established; conditions were cold enough to keep us in our sleeping bags most of the time playing chess, scrabble or just yarning. Days usually began with a

grinning Zangbo, querying “Tea, Sahib?” followed a few minutes later with chapattis and dahl — a lentil curry. Several times during the day we would clear the snow from the tents and finally in the evening trek across to the mess tent for Wangyal’s further contribution of dahl, this time made with rice. The poor weather was frustrating, but we were in good spirits as enforced inactivity had its compensations.

May 20th dawned brilliantly clear and we were anxious to take advantage of the fine weather to press ahead with the pack carrying. The recent snow was avalanching off the peaks on either side of the glacier but our line seemed safe enough. Once again we had to force a fresh trail through the snow, although by now we were quite fit. Jim was fittest of all and he forged ahead while the rest of us rested at dump camp. Suddenly a freak avalanche slid silently across Jim’s tracks a few yards behind him and only 20 yards in front of us. It was a wet snow avalanche and would have offered little chance of survival had we been caught. It was a salutary experience.

The weather held fine and we were in a position the next day to press ahead from Glacier Camp up the ice fall to the col. Here we planned to establish an elaborate camp with an extensive snow cave which would offer us a retreat in case of fresh storms and a change from the confined space of the tents. From this advanced base we had planned to tackle Manikaran Spires and also the peaks around the head of Ali Ratni Tibba East Glacier as training routes before our attempt on Ali Ratni Tibba itself, either by the South Face or by the South Face to the West ridge. The true bank of the ice fall was so heavily banked up with snow that it presented only a simple snow slope and we encountered no problems. A short distance below the col we began work with a variety of shovels and an ice-saw to construct our ice cave. In a few hours a fair sized cave had been constructed and we dumped the loads we had carried up and then returned to Glacier Camp. We were extremely optimistic that we could now make rapid progress after the initial set back of poor weather. The following day, May 22nd, was however to prove a fateful day for the expedition.

Jim, Dave and I set out from Glacier Camp at 5.00 a.m. The intense overnight frost had stilled the avalanches and made the going on the glacier quite straightforward. In spite of 60lb. loads we made excellent progress, although at 14,000’ we were feeling the effect of lack of oxygen. Dave was making the tracks, Jim and I brought up the rear. Suddenly Jim broke through a crevasse and fell from sight. The crevasse was vast, 10 or 15 feet wide in parts. Jim had fallen 80’ on to a snow bridge. Below him the crevasse reached unseen depths. The others following behind reached us in a short while and we set about bringing Jim out of the crevasse. He was in some pain and struggled to prevent himself blacking out. Nevertheless, he spurned the use of prusickers and chose to climb out using his gully axe. The final few feet were overhanging so he simply pulled himself up the rope. Marjorie-Anne administered pain killing drugs and the T adakhis escorted Jim back to camp, while Dave and I retrieved his pack.

Jim had been relatively lucky, but he had nevertheless fractured ribs close to the lung which caused him considerable pain. He spent a day in camp but it was clear that it would be necessary to evacuate him down to Kulu Valley as he would

soon suffer from the rigours of camp life and, he could take no further part in the expedition. We contemplated a stretcher carry without enthusiasm. However, Jim insisted that he could walk out with just the two Ladakhis to help him. Fred decided that he and Marjorie-Anne should also accompany him. This left only Dave and myself high on the mountain and in a position to go for the summit. Morale was low. Where a few hours previously we had been confident of success, now a successful ascent seemed unlikely. We discussed the situation at length and finally decided that it was feasible for the two of us. Nevertheless, when Jim went down on May 24th accompanied by the other four members of the expedition, Dave and I were more than a little apprehensive.

During the day we collected all our gear together with food for three days. As the col camp had not been established we prepared different plans for the ascent. Running diagonally across the east face was a vast icy ramp that led to the point where the West Ridge steepened to a vertical wall over 1,000' high. It was an obvious line but we had previously rejected it because it appeared threatened by avalanches. Now it was our only hope of reaching the summit.

Late in the evening we saw two figures returning up the glacier to our camp. We were surprised but pleased to find that these were Fred and Marjorie-Anne. They had accompanied Jim to base camp where he had insisted on continuing without their assistance. As the arduous part of the descent was behind him they had let him have his own way and returned to join Dave and myself.

At 4.00 a.m. on May 25th we set out across the hard frozen glacier. Soon we reached the foot of the ice ramp. We moved in ropes of two and steadily, pitch after pitch, we climbed the ramp 4,000' to the point where it joined the west ridge. Below us vertical granite walls dropped to the glacier; above us ice-plastered walls. We crossed frequent avalanche runnels and had no doubt about the consequences if an ice-field should break loose from the walls above. Dawn arrived and revealed a new panorama of peaks, but we pressed on and encountered no problems so that by 10.00 a.m. we had reached the notch on the west ridge. Here we rested and enjoyed the view. A fantastic sight greeted us. These rock and ice aiguilles seemed to belong more to Patagonia than to the Himalayas. Facing the east ridge of Ali Ratni Tibba across the Pass of Obelisks, one aiguille presented a face as big as the west face of the Dru. All seemed more serious than the training peaks we had expected of them.

Above us 4,000' of climbing separated us from the summit. A series of granite buttresses were separated by snow fields. The climbing was superb; Chamonix type granite gave us the familiar strenuous type of crack climbing, Grade of D-Sup. but now we also had the insidious effect of altitude to contend with. Every move demanded a special effort; we gasped breathlessly over even the easiest moves. We had only one thought in our minds — to reach the summit. But as the shadows lengthened it was clear that we were not to reach the top that day.

Now we started looking for a bivouac site, but on this mountain they were hard to find. Pitch followed pitch and still no ledge appeared big enough to accommodate us all. Eventually we found a site. It was well enclosed on three sides and would afford us some protection in the event of a storm, but the main disadvantage was that we had to sit on snow. We donned all our down gear and



The final ice cliffs on the old Brenva route (south face Mont Blanc 4807m).

Photo Ray Handley



Three Monarchs of the Chamonix Valley.

Left to Right - Aiguille du Chardonnet 3824m, Aiguille Verte 4122m, and Mont Blanc 4807m taken from a lesser peak Aiguille du Tour 3544m.

after an unsatisfactory meal settled down to bivvy at 17,500'. So far we had been lucky with the weather; there had been no afternoon storm, but now thin wisps of cloud were sweeping round our bivouac place and we were apprehensive about how the weather would turn out for the following day.

We were very fatigued but we slept little as the cold penetrated our clothing. However it remained fine and as soon as the sun reached us the next day we hastily prepared for the final ascent. Five hundred feet to the summit and no great difficulties in our way. Two hours later only a thin blade of rock remained to be climbed — a fine summit to a fine mountain. There was not room for all of us, so one at a time we climbed to the highest point to be photographed in turn. The time was 10.00 a.m., the date May 26th. Ali Ratni Tibba had finally been climbed.

There was no great feeling of achievement. The views were breathtaking, yet not perhaps so fine as lower on the mountain where there is nearby perspective. There was no time to relax as the storm clouds were building up and we had no wish to be trapped on the mountain. The descent began uneventfully as we descended by an interminable series of abseils. We followed the ridge as far as the notch, but we had no intention of reversing the ramp because of the objective dangers. Instead we descended the south face by yet more abseils. As we feared a storm broke over us, but we reached the site of our half-finished col camp safely. After collecting the gear we had left there several days before, we descended the ice fall. The surface of the glacier was in a terrible state after the effect of the sun and it was wearying work crossing it. We finally stumbled into camp at 8.00 p.m. Our ropes and gear were carelessly dumped and we collapsed into the tents totally fatigued.

At 18,031' Ali Ratni Tibba is no Himalayan giant, but we had nevertheless succeeded in our aim of climbing it in Alpine style without the build up of supplies on the peak itself. Other unclimbed peaks were waiting to be climbed, but with the expedition three men short and with the anti-climax after our ascent, we had little choice but to return. Eight days later we arrived in Kulu having evacuated our camps and then walked out over the Chandra Khani Pass, leaving Wangyal to organise porters to bring back our gear. Chores remained — collecting the gear, paying off the porters, reorganising the van for the return journey. But for me the expedition was soon over. I motored to Delhi with the others and then after a few days enjoying some of the night spots and tourist attractions, I returned to Britain by plane via Bombay and Bahrein."

The Photographic competition in 1969 was judged once again by that familiar figure C.D. Milner and was won by Geoff Hayes with Chris Radcliffe and Dave Williams in second and third places respectively.

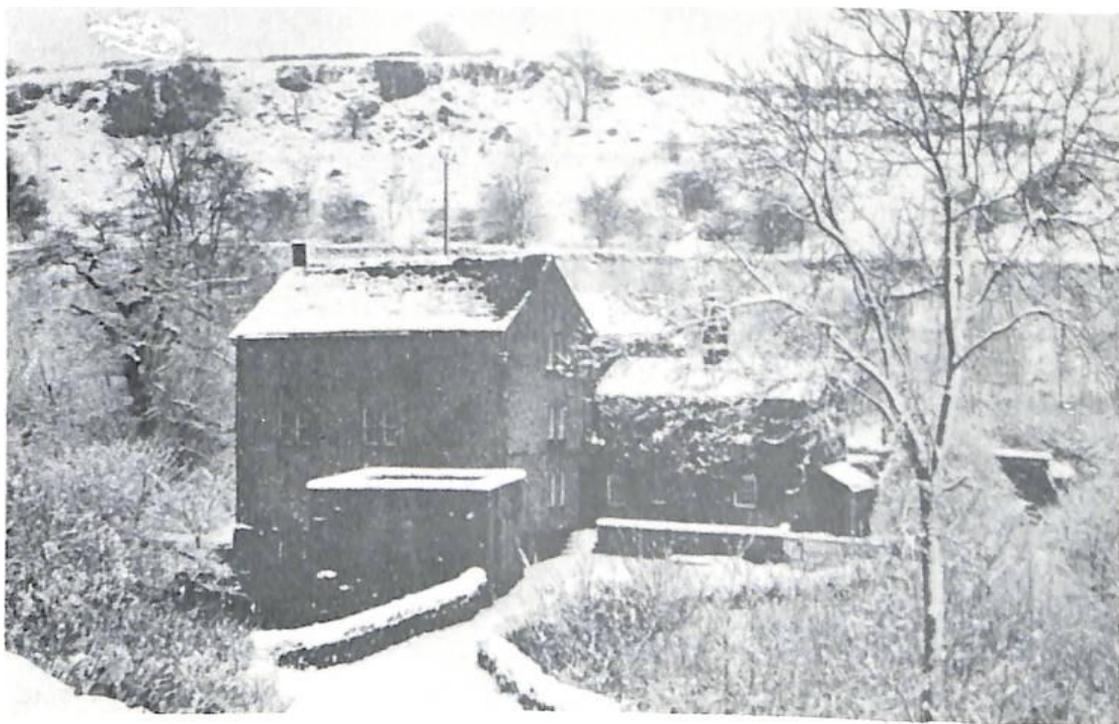
At the Annual Dinner at the 'Green Man' the chief guests were Don Whillans and Tom Patey and this was sadly, the last time most Oreads were to see Tom who was killed a short time later in a climbing accident.

Work on the Derbyshire Hut, Heathy Lea, proceeded apace throughout the year and at Christmas Harry Pretty was fortunate enough to obtain sufficient poly-foam to cover the whole of the matratzen.



Opening of Eric Byne Memorial Cottage (Heathy Lea) Oct 1970. In the centre the Derrick Byne president for 1970. To the right Mrs. Ivy Byne.

Photo • Harry Pretty



Eric Byne Cottage, Chatsworth Park, Derbys.

Christmas saw groups at Rhyd-ddu and in the Lake District.

New Year 1970 got off with a bang at an informal social in Bakewell organised by Geoff Hayes. By this time Geoff had been editing the Oread newsletter single handed for seven years and had been associated with its production for nine. He therefore decided to take a well earned rest and the editorship passed into the hands of Pete Scott and Chris Radcliffe supported by the sometime infamous, sometimes witty columnist "Tricouni".

The Annual General Meeting saw the 21st Anniversary of the Club's foundation with membership standing at 125.

Several good meets were held in Wales during the year, outstanding amongst them being the one at Caderanda Welsh walk from Plynlimon to Cader through some delightful country.

The activities of working parties at Heathy Lea hotted up with the formal opening of the cottage planned for later in the year.

Chamonix was chosen as the venue for the summer Alpine Meet and amongst the achievements were an ascent of the Forbes Arete on the Chardonnet by no less than nine members and a mass assault on Mont Blanc by a party which included Ashcroft, Burns, Dench, Reeve, Sawyer and Williams. Digger's subsequent account is as full of digressions as his walking meets are full of diversions. Gordon and Margaret Gadsby spent their holiday exploring the mountains of Corsica, and reached seven summits including the second highest, Mount Rotondo 8750'.

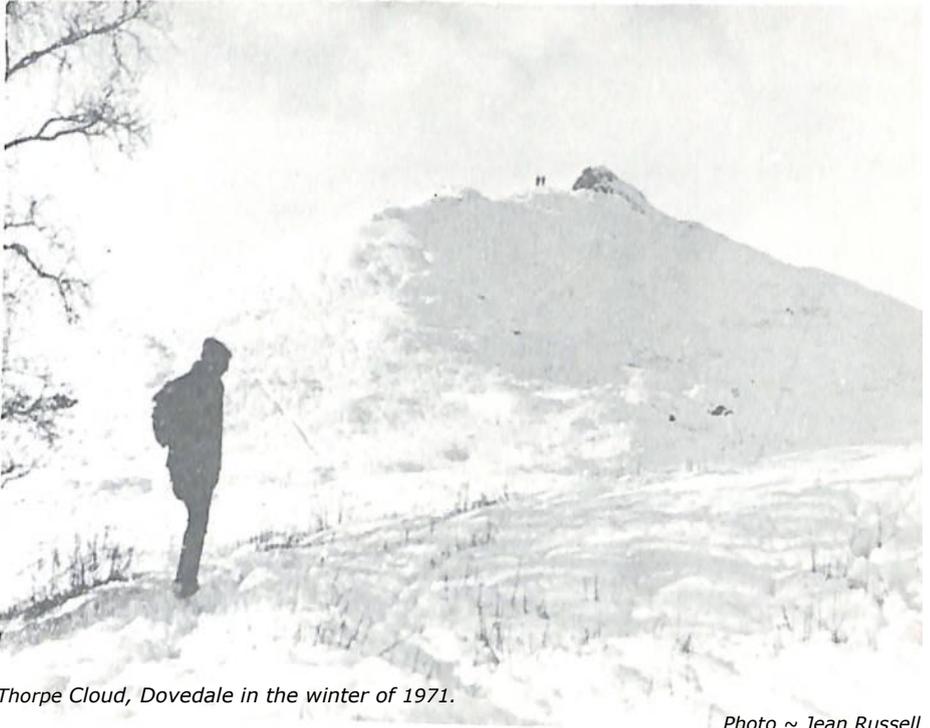
In October one of the most successful Oread events took place when Heathy Lea was officially opened one afternoon and followed by the Annual Photographic Competition in the evening. The log at Heathy Lea records that the occasion was attended by more than one hundred people who gathered to see Ivy Byne open the Eric Byne Memorial Cottage.

Ivy was introduced by Derrick Burgess and Alf Bridge was present to speak of Eric's achievements and comment on the Club's efforts in providing such a fitting memorial. There followed some hours of reminiscing, bdozing and jollification which continued throughout the evening when colour slides were again judged by Douglas Milner who had frequently to wake the joint lanternists, Appleby and Gardiner, who by this time were falling asleep over their beer.

The 21 st Annual Dinner was a sell out and the principal guests were Alf Bridge and Allan Hargreaves. To mark the Anniversary a fish course was included on the menu!

Without doubt the year of 1971 was one of mixed pleasure and pain for the Oread.

The first pain was that inflicted on the participants in an attempt on the Peak Horseshoe Walk which was led by Geoff Hayes. Following splendid progress, as far as Kinder Plateau, the weather turned sour and the walk dissolved into something of a shambles by the time the Snake Summit was reached. Several members dropped out at this point (grateful for the sight of a small motorised support party) leaving only three to scratch their way in dark and rain to Lower



Thorpe Cloud, Dovedale in the winter of 1971.

Photo ~ Jean Russell



Opening of the Barn at Heathy Lea in Chatsworth by Mr. Walter and Anne in memory of Geoff.

Small Clough cabins. Hayes, Bridges and Radcliffe completed the walk to Heathy Lea on the following day.

Derrick Burgess completed his term of Presidency and the reins were taken up by Paul Gardiner.

Laurie Bums, who had recently had a spell in hospital, reappeared and at the Annual General Meeting was unanimously elected to Honorary Membership of the club in recognition of fourteen years service in the office of Treasurer.

During the year visits were made to Glencoe at Easter and Cornwall and Arran for the Spring Bank Holiday.

The outstanding achievement of the year, however, was the ascent of the Eiger Nordwand by Pete Scott and Chris Radcliffe. Pete writes, "Every day for nearly two years now the Eiger had presented itself to my mind, a question mark forming the centre of my ambitions as a mountaineer."

The subsequent account, involving only two bivouacs on the face, must have resulted in the final removal of the question mark and left the pair with a fine sense of achievement at the culmination of years of climbing together.

The performance of others in the Alps this year should not however be forgotten. The Summer Meet was held in Zermatt and the report shows that well over twenty peaks were done by the various members who attended, including the North Face of the Dent D'Herens by Ray Colledge with Dennis Davies, and one of the finest of alpine expeditions — the Taschhorn-Dom Ridge by Derrick * Burgess and Don Cowan. To these was added some scratching about in the Belgian Ardennes by a small group whilst on the way back home.

Committee changes during the year included the appointment of Pete Scott as Honorary Secretary and Ron Chambers as Hut Warden at Heathy Lea in succession to Harry Pretty who retired having seen the cottage work through to completion and official opening.

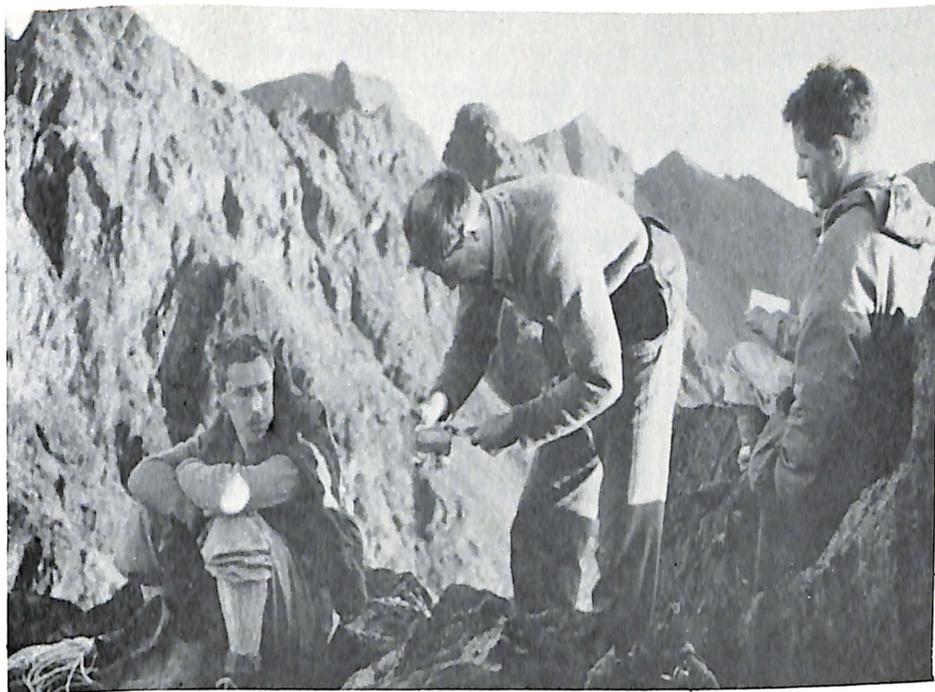
The Annual Dinner was the usual success and was attended by Dave Gregory and Dennis Gray as chief guests. The Club theatrical group was at its best in the presentation of a "This is your Life" with Ray Handley as the 'victim'. <

The ill fated meet to Dow Crag, Coniston on the weekend of 11th/12th September, with the tragic loss of Geoff Hayes and injury to Lloyd Caris was, without doubt, the most painful occurrence in the history of the Oread. Much has been written about Geoff and his climbing. The only intention here is to set the tragedy in context with the Oread story.

Moving into 1972, the President's Meet was followed by a weekend in Patterdale and the hardy annuals Ogwen and Langdale. The Easter Meet was held on the Canadian campsite at Linn of Dee near Braemar, a superb spot giving access to the south side of the Cairngorms and handy for Lochnagar and the Glenshee ski slopes. Unfortunately the weather was none too good but the thirty or so who attended made the most of it.

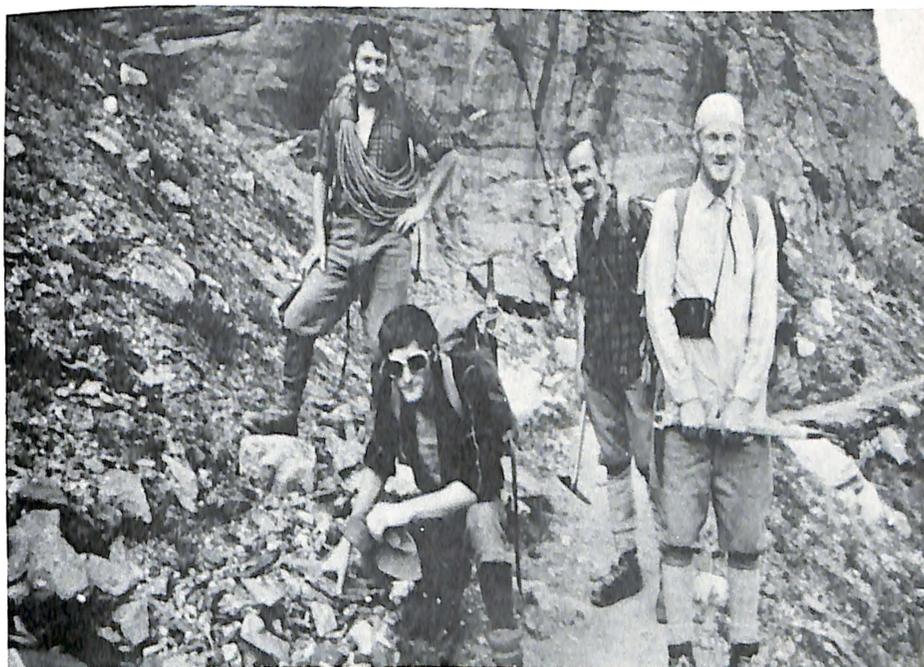
At the Annual General Meeting John Welbourn was elected Hut warden for Rhyd-ddu and it was decided to appoint a booking secretary to assist him; this position was filled by Colin Hobday.

On Friday, 9th June, the Oread again faced up to the Welsh 14-3,000' Peaks.



***Cullin Breakfast – Skye Ridge 1964. On summit of Sgurr Dubh Na Da Bheinn 3069'.
From Left – Dave Penlington, Jim Kershaw and Wally Richardson.***

Photo – Jack Ashcroft



“The Brigands”

From left – Chris Radcliffe, Pete Scott, Dennis Davis and Ray Colledge en route for the Schonbuhl Hutte to attempt the North Face of the Dent D’Herens (during Oread Club Meet at Zermatt 1971.)

Photo – Gordon Gadsby

Discussion in the 'Wilmot' the previous Tuesday had been energetic, nay, heated, on whether to start from North or South. The result was that the meet leader started from the Snowdon end with one team and the dissenters camped at the North end. The teams met in a disorganised sort of way at Ogwen Cottage for food and foot plasters, before departing in opposite directions. A 'Running team' of four (one Oread) also appeared briefly but what advantage they had in speed and fitness was quickly outweighed by their lack of navigational competence and they disappeared into the mist towards Craig-Yr-Ysfa, which is not on the normal route!

The Alpine Meet was centred on Vicosoprano for climbing in the Bernina and Bregaglia and unfortunately it got off to a bad start when some members of the party were involved in a stone fall on the East Ridge of the North Face of the Piz Palu. Of the Oread, Derek Carnell and Trevor Bridges had minor injuries but two friends, Peter and Karl were seriously hurt and had to be evacuated by helicopter.

The weather was indifferent but a number of ascents were completed. During the summer there were also parties in Grindelwald, the Dolomites, Chamonix and Arctic Norway. Local meets included a well attended one at Edale and a return, after a lapse of some years, to Agden. Jack Ashcroft led a Welsh Walk in the Plynlimon area and in October a small group had a good lung opener on the Rhinogs. This was followed by a visit to Sutton-under-Whitestone Cliff for a weekend of climbing on Yorkshire Limestone. The weather was excellent, the campsite well equipped and those who attended enjoyed the experience of exploring this area which was a new one to most.

The 1972 Photo Meet was attended by over ninety members and friends. Ned Kelly performed the judging with the result — 1st Pete Scott; 2nd — Chris Radcliffe; 3rd — Reg Squires.

At the 'Green Man', Ashbourne, the Dinner speakers were David Cox, President of the Alpine Club, and Tony Moulam; the latter celebrating his 21st Anniversary of dining with the club. On the following day the usual mass march from Dovedale to the 'George' at Alstonfield took place.

A glance through the meets lists for 1973 reveals a remarkable balanced programme. Approximately one quarter of the climbing meets were on gritstone, one quarter on Welsh and Lakeland Craggs and a quarter on limestone. The remainder are essentially walking and social meets, such as the Welsh Walk, Bullstones, Dovedale Dash, Dinner and Photographic meets.

The Walking meets began the year with a February weekend on Blencathra and Skiddaw led by Clive Russell. There was a phenomenal turnout for this meet when 49 adults were present and Clive's Newsletter comment was that such an attendance, 160 miles from home for a winter meet, indicated that the Club was "an uncommonly healthy corpse." (The self analysis carries on throughout the years!). In April John Welbourn led a highly enjoyable walk in good weather across the Berwyns. Then in June Jack Ashcroft led the Marsden/ Heathy Lea Walk. It was the 21st anniversary meet of the first Marsden/Rowsley Walk. If numbers have anything to do with success, 10 people walked the whole distance



Harry Pretty. Founder Member.

Photo — Jack Ashcroft



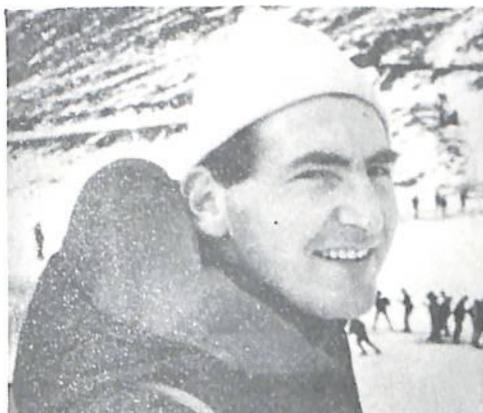
Molly Pretty. Founder Member.

Photo - Harry Pretty



George Sutton. Founder Member.

Photo — Gordon Gadsby



Paul Gardiner. Founder Member.

Photo - Gordon Gadsby



Dave Penlington. Founder Member.

Photo — Gordon Gadsby

in 1973 in contrast to the 4 who completed the distance on the first walk in 1952. Phil Falkner was the only member to have been on both meets. In September Dave Williams led the Welsh Walk in the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons. The veteran team of many Welsh Walks was present — Harry Pretty, Pete Janes and Fred Allen, nicely balanced by the younger element, such as Paul Bingham, Chris Radcliffe and Pete Kenyon. The weather for the whole weekend was perfect.

To add a marathon touch to the walking, at the end of May Dave Penlington, Jim Winfield, Roy Darnell and Jack Ashcroft walked the Pennine Way in 8½ days. It was an attempt to fit the distance in a week's holiday which only just made it. They carried "essentially bivvy gear and just kept walking." Another small team effort was by Gordon Wright, his wife Pauline, and Mike Key who did the 14 Welsh Peaks on a mid-summers weekend. Naturally there were many other walking meets throughout the year with once again the Bullstones Meet organised by Don Cowan in December, a hardy perennial which will surely never die though maybe change in character with the years. Twenty-one turned out for the Friday night walk over Kinder from Edale to Lockerbrook Farm, followed by a Saturday walk up the Alport to Bleaklow Head and round to Barrow Stones. The weather conditions were ominous on the Friday night but the rest of the weekend was superb — snow on the tops with sun and hard frost.

The official Alpine Meet was led in the Zillertal of Austria by Gordon Gadsby. Some 18 people attended including Gordon and Margaret Gadsby, Albert and Madge Hankin (ageing but active relatives of Gordon), Charlie and Mary Cullum, Gordon and Pauline Wright, Bev' and Cathy Abley, Stuart and Kath Bramwell and Frank and Shirley Goldsmith. It was obviously very much a family meet, but this did not prevent a good record of peaks attained not only in the Zillertal but also in the Karwendal, Silveretta, Stubai and Otztal. A total of 14 peaks were ascended including the Muttenock, the Grosser Moseler and the Furtschagl Spitze. The traverse of the Wildspitze 3772m was also accomplished by a party of six, including Charlie Cullum's son, Michael, achieving his first alpine peak.^w

Also on the continent were Nat Allen, Derek Carnell and Les Peel who climbed on great slabs and ridges of sun-baked rock in the Eastern Pyrenees. They did routes on Pic D'Estremere, Petit Picdu Midi d'Ossau, the Grand Picdu Midi d'Ossau and the Palas. They then took a quick dip in the Mediterranean before 'setting course' for the Dauphine where they were greeted with inclement weather. Is this a good or bad omen for the future? Undoubtedly the highest standard route of the season was accomplished by Chris Radcliffe and Pete Holden who ascended the Central Pillar of Freney on the Mont Blanc Massif.

The climbing meets on British rock were many from the granite of Cornwall cliffs, the limestone of the Wye Valley and Yorkshire to the dolerite and sandstone of Northumberland and the several meets in the Lakes and Wales. Details of the meets would be too numerous to relate but there appears to be no tail off in the enthusiasm of cragsmen like Nat Allen, Derek Carnell and Brian Cooke and the younger members such as Dave Guyler, Andy Dunham, Tom Green. Ron



Eviction from Bryn-Y-Wern on October 26th 1958. (From Left) Pete Janes, Jack Ashcroft, Margaret Hooley, Jim Kershaw, Margaret Smith, Janet Ashcroft, A.N. Other, Mike Moore, Tony Smith, Molly Pretty, Bob Pettigrew, Cecil Speed, Jack Leeson, Geoff Hayes, Fred Allen. Children - Richard Allen, Wendy Allen and Laura Pretty.

Photo - Harry Pretty



Club Hut at Rhyd-ddu in North Wales. Working Party in Progress.

Photo - Anne Hayes

Sant, Richard Green, Mike Wren, Roland Anthony and Steve Vince, show the true Oread spirit is still alive.

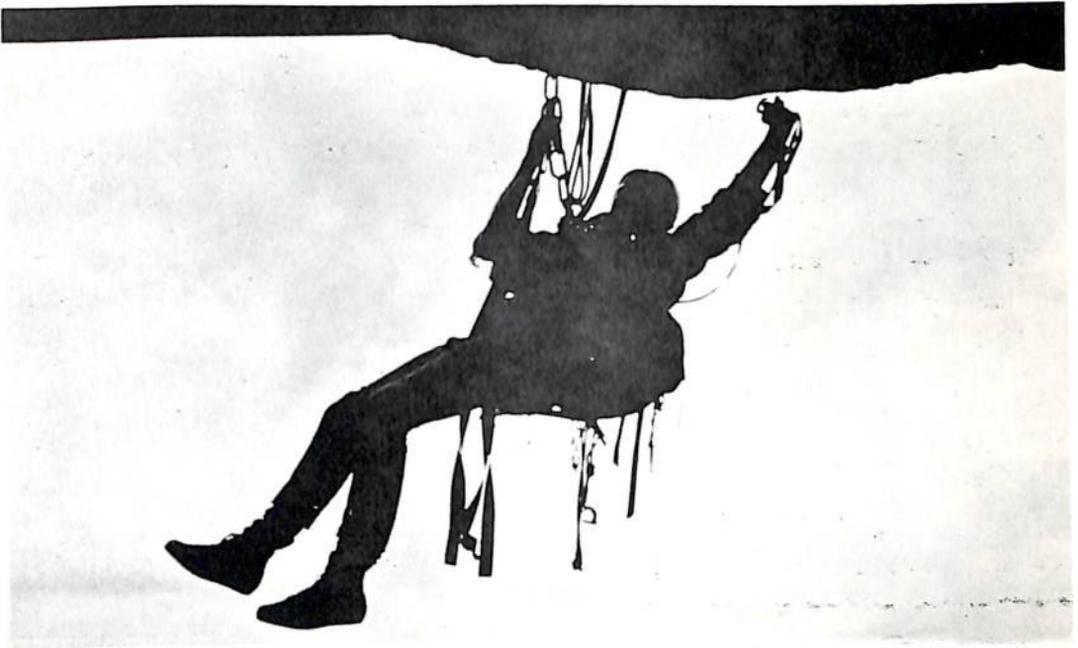
The Autumn social programme with the Photographic Meet, Dovedale Dash and Dinner were all well attended and were their usual successes. Douglas Milner judged the *photographic competition* and placed Chris Radcliffe 1st, Les Peel 2nd and Laurie Bums 3rd. The Dovedale Dash had no fewer than 200 entries this year and was the 21st anniversary of the event. There was a team of about 15 Oreads with Clive Russell coming well up the field as first Oread home.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Green Man in Ashbourne. Sir Jack Longland and Doug Scott were the principal guests — two eminent men of Everest — Longland 1933 — Scott 1972 (twice). Replies to the toasts were made by Paul Bingham and Graham Foster. Entertainment halfway through the proceedings was compered by Dave Appleby in the form of a parody on the Miss World Contest — ‘Miss Oread 1973’ and Janet Reynolds was crowned accordingly. The dinner speeches finished with Oliver Jones delivering his usual witty discourse — but with a difference this year. His speech is usually directed at those who have recently married and, being an accomplished performer on the bagpipes, he then pipes the newlyweds around the room to be presented by the President with commemorative pint tankards. This year for the first time in the Club’s history there were no recently married couples and so Oliver addressed his remarks to three couples who had recently celebrated their silver weddings. The presentation from the President was a box of chocolates! A true sign of club maturity! For the inquiring reader, Oliver based his remarks on the following texts — Exodus Ch.4 v.25, Proverbs Ch.12 v.4, Titus Ch.2 v.4.

This then ends a survey of the first 25 years of the Oread Mountaineering Club. It is far from comprehensive but we hope of interest. There is no ^doubt the Club will continue to thrive into the future with equal vigour. There is in the Club a wealth of mountaineering experience producing a bond of friendship difficult to define but nonetheless significant. Throughout the years there has been a balanced membership in mountaineering ability and age. The meets list has always been varied catering for all interests and never forgetting the social side. A regular programme of indoor evening lectures has always been arranged and the Newsletter editors and meets secretaries have helped to keep the Club alive and active by ensuring detailed and early notice of meets. Given these ingredients and an acceptance that “mountaineering in every aspect” is good for the spirit of man a club, cannot fail to succeed. With the present rate of development of our sport what the next 25 years will bring remains to be seen. One thing can be certain, the Oread has a good foundation on which to build. George Sutton’s original concept will still be very much at the heart of the Club though inevitably more difficult to attain with the Club’s growth in membership and maturity. To conclude, the words of Don Whillans in his book, “Portrait of a Mountaineer” seem appropriate. “The mountains can give — the mountains can take.” We hope these pages lend a perspective of their own to these few words. Au revoir and good climbing.



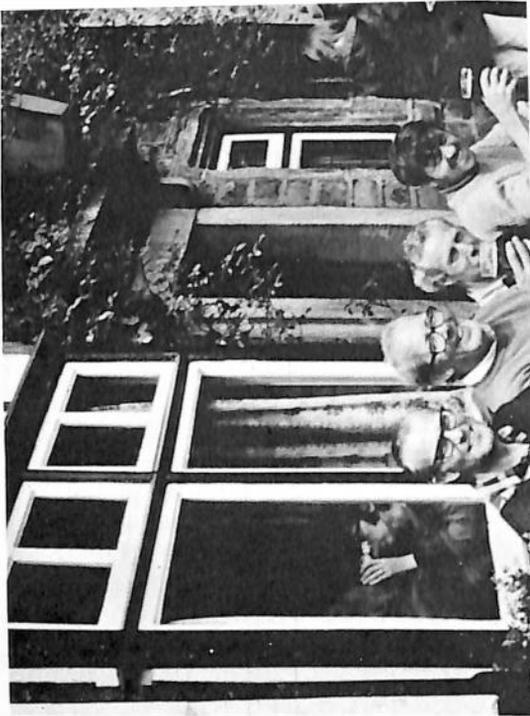




"noina in". Pete Scott on the main overhang Mai ham Cove Yorkshire. .
Photo - Chris Radcliffe



"Sloth". Hard very severe. Pete Scott climbing. First ascended by Don I/Vhi/lans in early



The Nags Head at Edale after the 250 mile Permit Way 26th May to 3rd June 1973. (From Left) Jack Ashcroft, Jim Winfield, Dave Penlington id Roy Darnell.

Photo - Janet Ashcroft



Nat Allen - Oread President 1973/74