

SUMMER 61



JOURNAL  
OF THE  
OREAD  
MOUNTAINEERING  
CLUB

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Oread Mountaineering Club

Summer 1961

Contents

Editorial	Ed. Ashcroft
The Bernina. July 1960	J. Ashcroft.
Notes from Committee	
Twenty Two Hours on Snowdon's Summit - Christmas 1960	G. Gadsby.
Oread Quotes	
A Week-end with Todhunter	H. Pretty.
Welbourn's Wanderings	R. Welbourne.
Oread in Shorts	
Crossword	C. Hobday.
Hut Working Party	Ed.

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NEWSLETTER - EDITORIAL - SUMMER 1961 - EXTRACT

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

On arriving at the inn at about 10.00 a.m. the inmates refused to serve us, a party of 12, with tea or anything hot. On leaving, a little dejected and rebuffed we passed a front window of the pub containing a single worded placard "LUNCHEONS".

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

Do they inspect every motorist to ensure he conforms to their idea of a mountain top? Do they suddenly erect a notice "No old Fords - Saturday night."

Service for those who are dry outwardly provided they are wetted inwardly, for those who deface the countryside with ribbons of tarmac instead of cairns of stones. This is not an isolated incident but merely one of a number of cases of prejudice against the mountaineer on the part of the pseudo "Mein Host".

Let there be no truck with these elevated valley dwellers until the wind moans through another Isle of Skey. Let us free our land of snobbishness and cant, of prejudice and languor.

I must apologise for the delay in producing this edition. As well as my own slothfulness, illness and the loss of our efficient typist are contributory causes.

THE BERNINA - JULY 1960

J. Ashcroft

Some visit the Alps and return with first British assents to their credit. The Oread party in the Bernina last year can't claim such distinction, but first British bednights - yes. The south side of the Bernina massif is rarely visited by the British which was obvious by inspection of hut books, by sign language with hut wardens and by the curiosity with which we were viewed by the Italian valley inhabitants. This naturally leads on to the constitution of the party.

Eleven in all, ten of whom are seasoned Oreads arrived in PONTRESINA at various times and by varying modes of transport. Five of us, John Fisher on leave from Germany, Colin Hobday, June Telfer, Janet and myself met on the first Saturday and over a huge evening meal sorted out our plans for the following two weeks. After those two weeks had passed we sat down in the same room served with a similar meal and found our general well being had affected our appetites to such an extent that 2½ hours steady 'troughing' didn't strike us as being a huge meal. Our planning had been successful.

Chuck and Margaret Hooley, Paul and Betty Gardiner, Laurie Burns and Frank Dobson travelled by car and therefore didn't arrive in Pontresina until Tuesday.

Our rendezvous in the mountains was the Italian A.C. hut Marinelli. I'll leave others to recount the glories of Bernina hut grinds! The Marinelli is a large hut accommodating approximately 180 people situated on an

outcrop of rock between the Caspazzio and Upper Scerscen Glaciers at the head of the valley immediately south of the Piz Bernina (13,300 ft). The hut lies at an altitude of about 9,000 ft. From it the routes to peaks and passes of magnificent variety are to be found.

During our first week various glaciers and nevé tours were made, one most delightful day being spent west of the Marinelli over the Upper Scerscen Glacier over the Sella Pass (10,804 ft) and onto La Sella and Dschimels. Another short but pleasant day was spent off the snow and onto the rock peak of Piz Caspazzio.

Our most stimulating experiences of the holiday occurred during our ascent of the Bernina. Five of us did it by easy stages. That is we ascended from the Marinelli to the CAI hut Marco-Rosa which is poised in a most spectacular situation on the south col  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours below the Bernina summit. After a very active morning ascending the rock face to the hut we lazed the afternoon sun bathing. The adjacent peaks of Scerscen and Roseg constantly avalanched surplus snow - and there was plenty of surplus. I feel we were wise leaving the Bernina summit for the next morning.

The evening was most magnificent with peaks above the sea of cloud as far as the eye could see - the isolated Disgrazia, the Badile and other granite bastions of the Bregaglia and in the hazy distance the Monte Rosa peaks - a fact which the hut guardian showed great enthusiasm about. The pink touched the peaks. Soon after, an international gathering of climbers quickly moved into the warmth of the little hut perched on a snowy col at 12,000 ft. Germans, French, Italian English - 24 in all crowded into a single room hut with a corner partitioned off as guardians kitchen. An international exchange of songs and stories lubricated by Italian vino drew the day to a close.

Before sun rise we were on the snow slope leading to the Bernina summit ridge. The south approach boasts a fine knife edge snow ridge interspersed with a few

gendarmes offering some exhilarating situations. The weather conditions were unbelievably fine - barely a breath of wind - cloudless sky as the sun steadily rose above the horizon. We were on the summit for 7.30 a.m. and back down to the Marco Rosa by 9 o'clock.

We had a final brew with the hut guardian - a great personality with whom we got on well - and then instead of reversing our climb of the previous day from the Upper Scerscen Glacier we took the longer route of the Bellavista neve to the Lella Bellavista and down the Upper Fellarier Glacier to the Marinelli - a scorching glacier descent.

It was a joyous gathering at the Marinelli - plenty of good food and wine in the evening.

The day following John, Frank and myself ascended the Upper Fellarier Glacier and spent the night in the Sasso Rosso Bivouac (11,500 ft). This was a small hut similar in size and appearance to an Anderson air raid shelter. Blankets and four bunks were provided. The bivouac hut we contended would give us 3 hours start in the morning for traversing the Piz Palu and avoiding scorching descents of glaciers mid afternoon. Unfortunately a storm raged throughout the night so next morning called for a change of plans. The hut book for that date a year back showed that three climbers had been marooned for 3 days! The snow outside the hut was only about 4 inches deep but it was still snowing. After some thought and inspite of the complete 'white out' visibility we felt confident of retracing our steps down the glacier - we had after all been up and down it once. Soon after 9 o'clock we were in the hospitable Marinelli breakfasting with the rest of of Oreads.

It wasn't a three day storm. In the afternoon the sun shone brightly affording some of the finest views of the holiday - but the peaks roared constantly with avalanche.

Tuesday of the second week the motorised section of the party had to make their way to the valley. We all descended to the Italian town of Chiesa where John, Colin, June, Janet and myself found the only available accommodation for the night in the attic of a hotel crammed with a centuries collection of junk! Our alpine mountaineering had come to an end for that year. We five did ascend to the Lovgoni hut with intentions of climbing Piz Tremoggia and completing our holiday by passing over the Tremoggia pass and so back to Pontresina via St Moritz. However, this was not to be so. The weather turned foul and in descending to the village of Chiareggio to commence our public transport journey back to Partresina we got a real 'Welsh soaking'.

It was a grand holiday - far too much to relate adequately here. If anyone is thinking of visiting the Bernina, don't hesitate. The south side abounds with beautiful mountain scenery and climbing to suit all tastes. Of the Swiss side I can say little, except it is far more visited by the English.

For the record.

Meet Five Inns Walk. November 26th 1960

Weather Misty, drizzle brrrr.....

Place Roches Barn.

Ashcroft: 'What time is it'

Frost: '5.30' (a.m.)

Ashcroft: 'Time to get up'

everyone did - fools.

(Except Jack Ashcroft, who had brought his double sleeping bag).

Notes from Committee

It was agreed that Ray Handley should be sent to the Pinnacle club dinner together with a covering letter.

The committee would like to draw the attention of meet leaders to their responsibility for generally looking after new and prospective members on meets, particularly in winter.

Twenty Two Hours on Snowdon's Summit - Gordon Gadsby  
Christmas 1960

As we walked down the Llanberis Pass in a steady downpour, the mist enshrouded hillsides seemed to echo the last words of our friends sitting by a roaring fire in Nant Peris - "You must be mad!" But then "Nothing ventured, Nothing gained" was in our minds and Eric, Doreen, Alma and I were determined to spend Christmas Eve on Snowdon's summit come what may!

I had first thought of doing this after reading of W.H. Murray's exploits described in his fascinating book "Mountaineering in Scotland" in which he tells of his high winter camps on Aonach Eagach and Nevis and the immense satisfaction to be gained thereon.

Thus, determined to try and follow in his footsteps, I had a chat with Eric Wallis who, to my surprise, was not only interested but equally as keen as myself.

Snowdon was eventually decided on and during the few weeks prior to Christmas we had been praying for snow and a fine clear night.

It was close on 1.10 p.m. when we turned left at Llanberis and started up the Snowdon path. Our dreams of snow were already shattered as the weather seemed very mild and the rain was coming down in sheets. This did not deter us, however, and we slowly plotted on until, at about 2,500 feet, the rain began to turn to sleet and eventually to snow, so thick in places, that the railway line was blocked by drifts of five feet or more

A strong westerly wind helped us up the last 500 feet or so and then the Hotel buildings loomed up out of the mist. It was bitterly cold and we quickly made our way over the summit cairn and down on to a broad ledge on the East face overlooking Glaslyn and fairly well sheltered. Two climbers from Bristol had just beaten us to the most level site and so, somewhat to their disappointment, (they had hoped we would go lower down) we promptly pitched our Arctic Guinea on the sloping part of the ledge about three feet above them, at a roughly estimated height of 3,540 feet.

Under a thin layer of snow was solid ice in which our tent pegs were useless. We therefore had to utilise a number of boulders from the summit cairn and the tent was finally erected to our satisfaction. We then had to pile a semi-circle of stones around the entrance thus preventing the tendency of food etc. had in sliding towards Glaslyn, due to the slope on the ledge. This slope came in very useful for although on several occasions liquid on the stove boiled over, the groundsheet remained remarkably clean.

The wind by now had dropped to a mere whisper and an eerie silence prevailed. Although we didn't realize it at the time this was the lull before the storm, and in fact at Nant Peris our friends had just been listening to a gale warning, after which John Wellbourne suggested a minute's silence for absent friends.

After dining well on the usual Christmas fare we turned in at around 9 p.m. and conducted a carol, service from our pits occasionally swelled by the lusty voices of the two Bristol mountaineers.

Suddenly our voices were drowned by a blast of wind and hail of such intensity that we all thought our time had come. This blizzard ranged for 6 hrs. and was like all hell let loose. Sleep was an impossibility due to the lashing of the hail against the straining ventile walls and the whole tent was like a living thing surging and flapping under the punishment being inflicted upon it. Miraculously, it seemed, the tent held firm and around 3 a.m. the gale subsided to a whisper and we dozed off thankfully into a sound sleep.

When next we awoke we peered eagerly from the tent but were disappointed to find a thick veil of mist enshrouding the neighboring peaks, thus robbing us of the view we had hoped to see this Christmas morning.

After exchanging the complements of the season and sherry for coffee (we had left our coffee in Nant Peris) with the two lads from Bristol we settled down once more into the comforts of our sleeping-bags and talked of that strange elation and inner satisfaction gained from the success of our first high camp.

Between noon and 12.45 p.m. we had our rendezvous on the summit with fellow Oreads from Rhydd Ddu and Nant Peris, finally leaving Wyddfa at 1.15 p.m. and trudging back down the Llanberis track to a most welcome Christmas dinner at our friendly farmhouse.

OREADS IN SHORTS ~~NEWS NOTES~~ NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 1961

At Bullstones Cabin:-

Doreen Gadsby - "John do put your trousers on please."  
John Wellbourne - "As you can see I am well equipped."

The Place - London M.C. Hut in Nant Peris.

The Time - Llanberis Meet January 27/28 on the Sunday morning after a night of severe gales and rain.

The Drama - The splinter group scorning the hut have camped near Llyn Lyddaw, have accordingly suffered and have retreated in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The Man - John Welbourne (One of the splinters).

The Scene - The 'man' opens the front door, surveys the haven of peace and says:-

"WHAT A BLOODY AWFUL FIRE"

Parking the Dormobile near the sound of running water said Hatchett to Cook:-

"This is fine, it sounds as though we are camping again".

ORRONS IN SHORTS - NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 1961

"I'm not fighting you again Geoff - it's time I matured". (Margaret Lowe)

A tent in Ogwen; a peanut appears (Margaret Lowe) and says. "And here is me a picture of respectability going to the bogs."

Prologue....."A week-end with Todhunter"

is essentially an introduction to the 1961 Welsh Walk. This latter occasion followed

very closely on the week-end of which I write and, under the leadership of Peter

Janes, it almost became a Prairie Epic.

Perhaps you have never seen Janes confronting the wilderness - well read on .....

A Week-end with Todhunter

Harry Pretty

"He's probably stuck - you never know with Janes". My companion, Fred Stafford-Williams got up and muttering something about it "being favourite", moved down broken rocks and grass ledges to the top of the crag on which we had last seen our third man.

He was there all right - fifty feet up, teetering about in a shallow corner below a heathery cornice. He seemed none too confident about the immediate future. So we gave him "the hard word" and from a shower of small stones and veritable cloud of vegetation he emerged at our feet. The muscles in that unique face, more like granular rubber as the years progress, were hard pressed indeed and his language was vile.

We were on the north east shoulder of Hebog, not far above the tree line. That we were there at all was a miracle of compromise. It has been one of these arbitrary Janes decisions arising from some inner perceptive process which, though familiar, is impossible to define. It has been described as a combination of Whymper and Rawhide, which seems fair comment. The situation had really developed after breakfast when, in the promise of a warm sunny day, we had stepped outside to determine our objective. Stafford-Williams strongly favoured Cwm Silin. He thought we might have a look at Kirkus' route. I had been talking persuasively about Lliwedd during the journey up, but no-one took the slightest notice. "Let us discard the mystical evocations of Menlove Edwards" I said, ".... and return to the evergreen charm of Archer-Thompson. We will have a literary day and Janes shall read aloud with proper dignity at the foot of every pitch. Let it be Avalanche ....", I said ".... it just so happens that I have with me ...." But my pleas for a day of cultured climbing, some quite scrambling among the spirits of an earlier age, fell upon sterile ground. So I gave up and left all to this inner perceptiveness of which I spoke earlier.

"The east face of Hebog - that's the thing". The Janes perception was at work. Stafford-Williams was not impressed and said so. His manner of speech, as usual, was unfortunate. Stark, is about the only way to describe it. The sheer importunacy of the fellow astounded Janes for a moment. The celebrated lips were pursed and puckered like twelve inches of creased sorbo. He was very angry. Nevertheless he "played it cool", as they say in Shelton Lock, and addressed himself to the original hypothesis with that sang-froid which is the legacy of a lifetime of dubious experience. He looked terribly English as he stood looking at the south, eyes screwed up against the sun.

"It's a slice of country you know, - all that forest, pretty near a trackless wilderness between here and Hebog. Do us good, just what we need for the Welsh Walk". This was pure Rawhide stuff - illusions of grandeur in the square screen idiom.

Perhaps I should have done something about it there and then, but I stayed quiet and hoped that Rawhide would shortly give way to Whymper. There is an ease and familiarity about the latter with which I can cope.

Further conversation led me to believe that not only were we preparing ourselves but, having gained the summit of Hebog, we were literally going to plan the Welsh Walk. I was therefore surprised when, instead of laying off a direct course across this "slice of country", we were invited to climb into the Anglia which according to Janes "cut out all the uninteresting approach".

The remainder was just one of those things. Janes, once committed to the forest, relapsed into a guise which to me was quite new. He quote suddenly went off about Todhunter and it was at this point that I really had to take over. Not that Stafford-Williams is particularly dim, but he simply could not adapt to all this rapid change of character. With more experience under the belt I could assess each situation as it arose. Todhunter, in person, was an unknown quantity but I could visualise the general drift and make my play accordingly.

A WEEK END WITH TODHUNTER - NEWSLETTER - SUMMER '61 - 4. PRETTY (EXTRACT)

Stafford-Williams is of the opinion that all this "slice of country" jazz really finished when, in trying to lead us through "the trackless wilderness" to Hebog, Rawhide had to accept our topographical advice in order to prevent the party from inadvertently taking in Mynydd Drws-y-Coed. and Moel Lefn en route. I am inclined to agree but, as I started to say earlier, ~~it was for~~ it was for all practical purposes R. Todhunter who some time later emerged at our feet upon the north east shoulder of Hebog.

I suppose that by this time the situation was a bit out of control. Stafford-Williams and myself simply accepted the fact that we were climbing with Todhunter and the whole set-up ~~eventually~~ <sup>eventually</sup> began to feel quite normal.

There was one small incident which was slightly unnerving to ~~one~~ one having some affinity with early days. We were climbing a particularly disreputable series of pitches; all vertical heather loosely connected by minute areas of clean rock which has, I believe, been included in the guide-book as a rock climb. Todhunter said it was called "Caterpillar". I was tied on in the middle of the rope but, at the time, was in the lead - a situation not uncommon when climbing with Stafford-Williams and the ghost of Todhunter. It was noticeable that Williams had not quite assimilated the circumstances although those ancient tweed breeches were providing plenty of atmosphere. He never ~~looked~~ looked Todhunter straight in the eye - always the nervous sideways glance. Williams was definitely jumpy and when, during his negotiation of a particularly nasty stretch of heather, Todhunter addressed him quite clearly and firmly as "George" - he fell off, to be pulled up short by an adeptly applied shoulder belay and the cry of "jolly hard luck George, old chap!". There was something very odd about it, and it wasn't until sometime later that I remembered the name of the man with whom Todhunter had made the first ascent of Yellow Buttress on Craig y Cwm Du. It was, as I say, very odd indeed.

With reasonable expectation I thought that a night in the streaming fleshpots of the Port Madoe British Legion Hall, a few hours stomping with the cats, would remove all trace of Todhunter. It might well have worked but for the fact that every time he showed real promise of getting real "way out" - his partners would insist on enquiring after the health and strength of "the tall dark 'andsome man - surely now you remember .....!". Janes said they were talking about Welbourne - anyway it didn't do his condition any good at all, and <sup>he</sup> had a relapse.

Not until we scrambled up to the small ledge at the foot of Curving Crack, at some hour of the following morning, did I see the change. Todhunter quite suddenly was no longer ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> us.

But even at the end you can't win - not with Janes. He stared at the long slit of a first pitch and, jumping up and down in a curious ~~excited~~ way he began to claw at the ~~excited~~ <sup>excited</sup>

rock in the manner of a hard man. "Come on Pretty", he boomed --- "get on my shoulders, I can easily throw you up".

I turned sadly to Williams. "If he calls you Maurice or Colin, just take no notice".

DERBYSHIRE WALK  
OR WELBOURN'S WANDERINGS

January 14th 1961.

This meet proved to be as popular as ever and organised with John's usual skill. A good crowd joined the bus in Derby to start the weekend by walking from Rushton. John had obtained the use of a Scout Hut in Wild Boar Clough, but not the key. We were to be met by the warden. After waiting for him in the gathering dusk and freezing temperature for 1½ hours we had just "effected entry" via the kitchen window when he arrived. I think however a large number of Oreads swarming over the property upset him and he soon departed again. The majority spent the evening consuming rum grogs in the village inn, but a few hardy types (from Nottingham to be sure) went up Shuttlings Low.

Around 2 a.m. we were all awakened by a party of scouts returning from a "Night Hike". At 4 a.m. they were discovered playing cards underneath the hunks by candle light. Pandemonium reigned up to 10 a.m. when we departed.

After one abortive attempt to gain the top of Shuttlings Low, all members of the Oread Team spread over the slopes of the peak for a second attempt. Despite the furious pursuit of an irate farmer the majority reached the summit, but poor Fred Allen was last seen returning with the farmer to mend a broken fence. After this the walk was very tame and we reached Buxton in good order.

Thanks to all who joined in this meet! We had a wonderful time.

J.W. is reported to be buying a car after it took him 14 hours to reach Coniston from Derby at Easter by B.R. Of this time 8 hours were spend in assorted waiting rooms.

OREAD IN SHORTS

Geoff Hayes has already fouled his new mountain tent.

For rescue work apply Jack Ashcroft, world wide service, using his old four legged mate from the Pen-y-Pass.

It is reported that the Gadsby-Turner marriage bureau are turning their attention to Dez 'H' and their first action will be to cut off his secret supply of bromide pills.

OREADS IN SHORTS - NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 1961

RGP. our new Vice President, recently gave two lectures with slides in one evening at two Hucknall Churches. There was no audience for his first attempt. No wonder he didn't find Elsan the Throne of the Gods.

On the winter Ogwen meet a watch was found by an Oread at the foot of Amphitheatre Rib. It was found to belong to a Dr. Houghton who was tragically killed when he fell from the rib two years ago. The watch is to be returned to his relatives.

Crossword Solution

Here it is the solution to last edition's crossword, with which I hear many people had trouble. Not suprising as the compiler informs me that there were some mistakes in the numbering of the clues.

1	K	A	R	A	2	B	3	I	4	N	5	E	R
6	N	E	V	E	U	C	/	/	/	I	U		
7	O	A	V	S	H	E	/	/	/	G	S		
8	T	I	E	S	L	I	R	E	T				
9	S	M	A	C	U	R	R	Y					
10	E	R	L	A	D	D	O	W					
11	R	A	P	P	L	E	E	R	A				
12	A	T	/	22	A	I	24	25	E	E	L		
13	C	S	/	26	S	N	O	27	A	L			
14	/	28	F	29	U	S	E	30	W	E	D	/	/

Hut Working Party June 1961

(Leader Paul Gardiner)

No. of workers - 19 approx.

Work completed:-

1. Slate fireplace in Lounge.
2. Back kitchen partitioned off to form drying room.
3. Eating room and corridor painted.
4. Two unused chimneys capped off.
5. Walls under Lounge and Eating room re-rendered.

Incidents of Note.

No.6. Those two bright sparks Hooley and Phillips managed to cross their wires so that the operation of one innocent looking switch in the hall resulted in a blaze of light from all rooms. It is reported that Ernie nearly got out of bed at 6.30 on Sunday morning on hearing of this.

No.2 Les and Ronnie Langworthy completed this mammoth task by dint of much unpaid overtime on Saturday night while nearly everyone else was down at the Goat, occupying all the room and not drinking anything according to the manager. The former two were moved to protest mildly when a rather exuberant plasterer attacked the rotten plaster round the back door producing such a cloud of dust that Welbourne found himself making violent advances on his wife in mistake. (To some effect evidently).

No.3. Many people learnt the folly of using door posts as leaning posts.

Weather was foul all Saturday but fine weather on Sunday afternoon led some of the work weary off to Craig y Cwn Ddn where Adam Rib was climbed by 3 parties some returning over the tops to the hut.

So ended a very enjoyable and back breaking weekend led by that slave driver of the hut subcommittee supported by the willing hands of a good section of the club.

The front piece is published by kind permission of British Ropes Limited, Doncaster. It has been taken from an advertisement for 'Viking' nylon rope and adapted to our purpose by one of our members.