

C. RUSSELL



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Contents

Editorial	Ed
Chamonix 1962	D. Burgess
The Lost Valley	G. Gadsby
Christmas 1962	C. Hobday
The Winter of 1963	Anon
RGP & JHA in Memoriam	Autobiography
Routes	S. Frost.
Mont Cervin	G. Gadsby
Ogwen Meet 1963	Ed
Marsden - Rowsley - Brief Anthology	(P.R. Faulkener J. Ashcroft
Notes	
Supplement :-	
" The Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition 1963 by R. Pettigrew and J. Ashcroft .	

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EDITORIAL

On New Year's Day 1962 two mountaineers left their camp at 1-00 am to walk 12 miles up Glen Strath Farr to reach a bothy, which was due to be provisioned near Lock Moran. They had no food nor tent and had been forced to leave their car 6 miles short of the road head due to snow conditions. At 6-00 pm. they were still only half way there in a windless arctic night at 0°F. Luckily they were able to shelter in a ruined bothy, in their sleeping bags and eventually to reach their destination and the other members of their climb late that afternoon none the worse for their hungry march.

Last winter before Christmas a school party of over 60 from Manchester, crossed Kinder from Hayfield to Edale by night under the guidance of only one master, safely.....

Usually one uses tragic accidents to ram home the objective dangers of mountaineering- accidents in which the party may have in all awareness been prepared for the worst but have, once a decision taken, been unlucky. The above incidents are, if anything, more frightening by virtue of blind reliance on luck and on the hope that all would turn out right. Only when all precautions have been taken may a mountaineer trust to "luck" and put himself at the mercy of the elements. The choice of alternative action, or in-action, should conditions become adverse, is complementary to his preparations and comforting to his conscience.

(2)

CHAMONIX - 1962

D.Burgess

The journey over to Chamonix seemed very easy last year and to me it appeared we had the ideal travel arrangement; car to Dover, boat and train to Paris and then a couchette on the night train to Chamonix. Anyway, we arrived feeling fresh for once.

Unfortunately the weather was also 'fresh' and we gave it a day to settle before moving up to the Montenvers (on the train of course), and then walking up the Mer de Glace to the Envers des Aiguilles hut. This hut is sensationally situated beneath the E. face of the Aiguilles and is a convenient base for a large number of good routes.

Nat and I had designs on the E. Ridge of the Crocodile. We were away by 3.30 am. the next morning and were pleasantly surprised to find the snow firm and cramponable, and the notorious Rimaye at the foot of the Pain de Sucre couloir easy to cross. Good time was made up the early section of the route, despite a pause whilst Nat recovered from heading the only stone we saw fall all morning, and by 8.00 am we were breakfasting at the foot of the ridge itself. A series of strenuous chimneys soon had us sack-hauling, but once clear of them, we were able to progress more rapidly up to the "crux" of the climb. As is often the case this provided little difficulty, it was an Al pitch that necessitated a traverse on etriers (pegs in place) across a wall, into a pleasant groove. Higher on the route several pitches, including a sensational hand traverse, appeared much harder, but by then we were possibly more tired. The route continued up more grooves and chimneys, usually strenuous, until Nat was stanced on a sloping slab behind a huge mushroom of precariously perched snow. At this point we almost lost the route.

(3)

The only way was a traverse leftwards across the steep wall of the ridge, this was the correct line and for a few moves was a gripping hand traverse and indeed must have been very impressive judging from the "Ooh la las" from a group of climbers on the Plan. A snow slope was traversed to another chimney, this led up to the final tower on the ridge itself. A 30' vee groove, with nothing but finger jams in the back, led to a sloping slab and an uncomfortable stance anchored to a piton. We were nearly there now, a short steep wall, and then a desperate struggle with etriers, knees, elbows, the lot, to force the last bulge and then up to the summit. We were amazed to see in the guide nothing harder than a IV in the last 300 ft. every pitch seemed the limit!

It was 1.0 and we decided to traverse across to the Plan before resting. This gave a sensational rappel onto an ice slope where it was difficult to effect lodgement; steps had to be cut across the first slope of bare ice, but conditions improved and we were able to crampon to the final tower of the Plan. The descent was very straight forward and we virtually ran all the way down to the Requin hut; the drag back to the Envers hut seemed interminable and we were pleased to be **greeted** on arrival with a "cuppa" from Tinsel.

Aching muscles the next morning had us wondering whether we had not been too ambitious for our first route, but an easy walk to the Requin and an afternoon in the sun loosened us up. We were off again at 4 am the next day and raced up the Mayer-Dibona route on the Requin in deteriorating weather, there was a bitterly cold wind on the summit, so no time was wasted on the **descent** and we were back in the hut for 1 pm. just as the storm broke. We descended to Chamonix.

(4)

The weather seemed very variable but on a short holiday you have got to be in position just in case there is an improvement, consequently the next afternoon we 'telephriquet' up to the Midi and walked 'downhill' across the Vallee Blanche towards the Col de Fourche bivouac hut. It was a terrible pull up to the hut in waist deep saturated snow, the conditions didn't improve, a howling blizzard lasted all night and turned into a heavy snow fall and we anxiously awaited the dawn and a chance for a descent. The hut book made good reading, there were entries by Bonatti, Buhl and remarks such as "marooned for four days" - we wondered.

The steep snow up to the hut had changed overnight, we found loose snow over ice and had to use the odd ice peg to facilitate the descent, until we could leap the Rimaye and reach the level snowfield. Lower down the mist and snow cleared and we were able to progress down through the Geant icefall and down to Chamonix once again.

Two days later the weather appeared to have settled and I set off once again with Hank (a Summit member), Nat on this occasion staying down to show Tinsel a few of the sights.

We were bound for the ruined Leschaux hut and the West face of the Petites Jorasses. This was one of the more recent Alpine routes and had only had two British ascents, those by Bonnington and Wathen, and Brown, Whillans and 'Morty' Smith, both in 1958. The route was all rock so we dispensed with crampons but took one hammer axe to help the descent, our other equipment included a polythene bivouac sheet, a small solid fuel stove, (absolutely useless in any breeze), two etriers and a number of slings, pegs, crabs etc.

(5)

The ruined hut provided us with shelter for the night, shared with two young Swiss bound for the Walker. At 2 a.m. the Walker team departed and we wished them good luck and settled down for another hours sleep. After breakfast we set off on the glacier, frozen hard after a good night's frost, to reach the foot of the climb at 6 am. It was still bitterly cold, and with Hank stanced in the rimaye I led off up the first pitch. Difficulties confronted us immediately and the initial diedre, 600 ft. long, was one series of strenuous jamming and layback cracks. The muscular effort soon warmed us up and we were able to enjoy the climbing. From the top of the diedre, beneath the huge capping overhang, we moved rightwards; one rope length saw me at a stance below the first pitch of VI. Hank led this with little trouble, a piton assistance at the crucial bulge and in fact this piton was the first sign of any previous passage. We were now right underneath the large overlap that cut across the face and were faced with another pitch of VI to cut through this to an arete on the right. A brief struggle followed by a layback on an insignificant wrinkle and we were on the arete and able to progress more rapidly. We were climbing on a 300 ft. rope doubled and by alternate leads, using a full rope length, where possible, were able to move fairly fast; this rope length was very useful and on several occasions the full 150 ft. was run out to reach a satisfactory stance.

The route now led into a gulley where we were confronted by a wet and verglaced pitch. Hank led whis with difficulty and I was hardput to follow. A rope length to the left and we were in the sun at last. We took note of our position. The traverse had brought us to an exposed stance at the brink of the big overhang, beneath our feet the glacier 1000 ft. below.

(6)

Upwards a series of overhangs again crossed the face and the situation seemed not at all promising. A chimney led upwards and petered out, this was the route. Farther afield the view was magnificent, the crest of the Walker Spur, bathed in sunlight looked deceptively close and easy angled; we tried in vain to pick out the Swiss lads. The Periwades, so impressive from the Requin, looked insignificant above the Leschaux Glacier, serving only to frame the bulk of Mont Blanc beyond. The Chamonix Aguilles pierced the sky and nearer still, beneath our feet, we could discern the ruined hut where we had spent the previous night; right again, the Leschaux itself, a magnificent face bathed in sunshine.

Little time however could be wasted gazing at the view, it was all too precious. We climbed upwards, straight towards the overhang that formed the crux of the climb. Two rope lengths further our chimney narrowed and we hauled the sacks up a sinuous pitch. It narrowed still further and continued as a crack for another 150' to the big overhang. It was here that Bonnington went straight up, a variation on the correct line which, according to the guidebook, 'exited left, on to a line of pegs'. I exited and found several widely spaced pegs in a steep corner. This commenced the difficulties that did not relent for several hundred feet or more. A move over an overlap above the pegs landed me on a small stance on the edge of all things. Hank arrived gasping but had to 'lead through' as the stance was so small, (one foot and one peg). He followed the line of a similar corner groove which leant over to form an overhang. It was desperate and it was only by lassoing a spike and pulling upon an etrier that the pitch was eventually mastered, only to lead to even worse stance. Hank, when I arrived, was sitting on the top of a blunt spike which served as the belay, and above him was the crucial overhang.

(7)

We were at the left hand end of the overhang where it was at its smallest, a few feet to the right it was cut out by a groove, the route continued up this groove. I could see 4 pegs above me and there was one peg directly beneath the groove; Bonnington had reached a hold to the right of the groove and climbed in direct, however, no amount of struggling brought the crucial hold any nearer. The only line was the pegs and this created a problem. The pitch was graded A3 and needed etriers, we had only brought two with us and I had dropped one on the previous pitch. It had to go. Above Hank was the first peg, I clipped in and moved up, a fight with stubborn ropes and I reached the top peg, a sudden tinkling and one of the pegs fell out, oh well! I was off that one. The groove was blank, the pegs led nowhere. I sweated in the sun, still in anorak and sweaters despite the noon heat, we were too involved to be really aware of the heat. A move rightwards in opposition and I reached the hold on the right of the groove, aa heave, a frantic mantleshelf and I was over. The groove didn't relent for another 50 ft. and the rope drag was awful, however, we were over.

We moved left and lost the route. The conspicuous snow patch we had to reach was nowhere to be seen and teapens frayed. Things eventually improved and the snow, when we reached, it, provided a thirst quencher. It was now 5.0 pm, the last 500 ft. must have taken hours. A long traverse right led into a chimney where we found an excellent bivouac site and indeed it was the one used on the first ascent and also by Bonnington.

We pressed on in a frantic effort to reach the top before nightfall, each of us well aware of the passage of time. Pitch followed pitch; another big traverse right, a terrifyingly thin slab, a steep groove and ahead - the summit. Once more we lost the way.

(8)

The groove should only be a III and we were fighting it, there was nothing to do but retreat and try the next groove, and success! By this time lights were twinkling in the valley, the horizon was black and only minutes of daylight remained. We climbed down to a ledge we had seen, threw stones off to level a platform and prepared for the night. Anchored to pegs and with our backs to a small stone wall for a wind break, covered by a polythene sheet, we sat and ate, sipped hot tea and watched the stars appear. By the time we were settled it was dark and then the long wait for dawn. Much has been written about bivouacs, usually enraptured accounts of starlight skies, and moonlight peaks, but to us, on a perfect night, nothing awakened any poetic streak and we just shivered the night away and awaited the dawn. It looked cold on the Walker with the snow patches showing white in the moonlight, but no light marked the Swiss lads bivouac.

With the dawn we raced for the top. It was only three rope lengths before we reached the knife edge summit ridge and the sun, and we lay and relaxed in its warming rays. The descent to the Val Ferret was not without incident; the steep snow slope proved troublesome with only one axe and so Hank had to slide down for 150 ft. whilst I followed with the axe. Once the level snow basin was reached the descent became straight forward, we pressed on down to the tree line and on an idyllic alp we lit a small fire, brewed, and snoozed in the sun. All too soon we were on our feet again, faced with a long dusty road towards Courmeyer and it was two very tired climbers who, after the telephrique to the Torino and the long flog through the Geant Icefall and down the Mer de Glace, eventually reached Chamonix.

(9)

The 'plage' provided a pleasant rest the next day, and the sun and water soothed aching muscles. The weather still seemed variable but had been good for three days, and on the Friday we decided on another route. Nat and I were both of the opinion it was time we ascended the Grepon. Consequently we once again ascended to the Envers Hut, buffeted by a severe hail storm en route. Like most British parties we made a mistake in the route on the E. Face, there are so many lines, but once on course we revelled in the climbing, and pressed on for the summit. The clouds descended as we reached the Knobel crack, and it was eerie to see the statue of the Madonna through the mist on the summit block. A party of French shared their abseil rope with us and we were soon down at the Col de Nantillons, the crevasses were immense on the Glacier, but it is easy to jump downhill. Once through them the descent was straight forward and we were back at the camp site by 5 pm. in time for our final meal in Chamonix and a good nights "thrash" in the National Bar.

THE LOST VALLEY

G. Gadsby

Winding,
 Winding, Winding
 Upwards to Shangri la
 Shake off the Bindings
 Follow your Star
 Ever Ascending,
 Winding,
 Winding,

Past Trees
 Bushes, Rocky Eaves
 Feel the Breeze Through
 Leaves Golden Brown
 In The
 Sun,
 Touch,
 Touch, Touch
 The Leaves, Have
 Fun, While Glen Coe's
 Sisters Brooding Spell
 Is Spun
 Spun
 Spun.
 Spun By
 Cateracts From Forgotten Streams.
 Scotland's Magic Moments
 Bidean's Unknown Dreams.
 High Above
 Rising,
 Rising,
 Falling, Circling,
 A Golden Eagle
 Stalling Against Smooth Rock
 Soars In The
 Azure World
 Circling,
 Regal
 Wings Unfurled
 Giant Boulders Pass
 Whilst Stones and Debris Mass
 To Bar Your
 Way, But
 Pass,
 Pass.

Pass Over
The Massed Mound
To an Enchanted World
Lush Meadows, Round
Which are
Mountains
Mountains,
Mountains Curled
In Awesome Splendour
A Lonely Paradise Unfurled.
Mundane World Afar
We've Found
Shangri la!

CHRISTMAS 1962

C. Hobday

A total number of 18 people were at the hut at Christmas, most of them travelling down on the Friday night an exception being Jim Kershaw who spent the night on New Street Station after arranging with Clive Webb to meet him at the main line station in Birmingham the only trouble being that Clive went to Snow Hill.

The Gadsby's, Wally and myself left on Saturday to go to Brian and Peggy's Wedding at Huddersfield, only to be brought to a halt by fog in Nottingham and in Huddersfield arriving there an hour after the Wedding had taken place, finding that the happy couple had to get lost in the fog on their way from the Church to the reception. Leaving Huddersfield about 6 00 pm. with Wally leaning out of the left window trying to see the kerb and also giving steering instructions at the same time, eventually being escorted by a policeman who put us on the correct road for Stockport.

(12)

Over Holmes Moss we ran out the fog only to descend into it again at Stockport, a trip down the pavement and more by luck than judgement saw us on the correct road for Chester. Chips in Chester and on to Corwen leaving the fog behind only to be faced with a new hazard, frost which turned the roads white, arriving at the hut at 1.00 am. Sunday to hear stories of the wonderful weather that they had been enjoying.

Sunday was frosty and sunny as we set off equipped with ice skates over Cnicht in search of ice only to find that it was not yet strong enough for skating. The weather was superb as we sat on the summit of Cnicht eating our dinner, but it was soon to turn cold as the sun set over the Portmadoc estuary.

Christmas Eve (Monday) saw all of us motoring down to the coast, to walk along the sands to the Tye Cock Inn, soon saw Ernie with glass in hand sitting in front of the fire. Some left before closing time others preferred to wait and be thrown out, but we all met up again at the foot of a 25 ft. high sea cliff where every one exercised their talents on rock, below a notice which declared the cliff as being dangerous. A walk along the cliffs brought us to a sea cave which comes out on the top of the cliffs. The aid of matches and paper torches soon saw us at the edge of the sea, Burns suggested paddling out till he was informed that it was about 6 ft. deep. The rest of the afternoon was spent throwing stones at tins placed on the top of an old buoy (not Kershaw) before returning to the hut to find that Geoff had arrived.

(13)

The weather had turned colder on Christmas Day, some people even gave thought to the hardy three (Doreen, Gordon, Barry) who had bivvied on the summit on Snowdon. A strong force of skaters set off for a frozen pool on the Molwyns. An inspection showed the lake to be shallow so Geoff was sent onto the ice to test it, finding it to be quite safe. Every-one had a fine time skating, with the Moe wyls and Cnicht filling in the background scenery.

We were joined by the nocturnal section plus Chuck and Margaret, Chuck living up to his name and becoming anhuman chuck when demonstrating how to make a slide across the lake.

Most people were back at the hut early to get ponced up for the evening in Caernarvon, one member was seen to use Max Factor for men, it was suggested that his best friend had told him at last.

By 7 00 pm. all were assembled in the bar of the Prince of Wales and were soon to sit down to a choice of Chicken, Turkey, or Duck plus all the trimmings, and it was agreed by all to be excellent value at 12/6, finally leaving at 10-30 to find it had started snowing.

Arriving back at the hut the 'FISHER' twist club was in full swing with the Dorothy Provine of the Oread, Ronnie Phillips giving a great display in evening dress (pyjama's). Barry Williams declared that he could drink three pints of Chuck's Vintage cider, he made a gallant effort only to rush outside after 2¼ pints.

Next morning saw 3" of snow and still raining as it only can in Wales. The rest of the morning was spent restoring the hut to its original state before returning home after an excellent Christmas.

THE WINTER OF 1963

The Silvery enchantment, that this land
Seldom enjoys does by winter command
Transfigure the landscape, by magic wand.

Awakened to unnatural, hushed morning sound
Arisen, questing, hopeful, delighted to have found
Snow's thick white carpet on the ground.

The friendly hills, white, now edged with blue,
Of cloudless sky - sun warmed - entrancing view
Ephermal joy for the active few.

The hiss of ski, the wind's keen feel,
The silence broken by the vibram heel,
The music of the ice from axes steel.

Above the steep iced gully, a cornice gleams,
A scene, conjured from a climber's dream,
As crampon shod, he climbs the frozen streams.

The sombre pines now smile with coat of white
The setting sun paints them with a russet light,
Long shadows pointing to the night.

Nights deep black curtain so rudely torn
By the east wind, brilliant stars adorn
Embedded deep, revealed from dust till dawn.

Annon

RGP AND JHA IN MEMORIAM

Since these two have recently fled from our presence, the first as a fitting climax to his Presidency, the second in spite of his "Figure-head" Presidency, it might not be inappropriate to recall some of their public utterances, actions and correspondence, that distance may not promote an illusion of graduer.

.....Course the truth is that no bugger in the Oread thinks I can take photographs but Milner knew he'd got a good man.....

.....All one can say of Pete Janes is that he is just a pawn yo-yoing back and forth across a chess board dominated by Ashcroft and Handley.... In view of the already serious question of overcrowding in our British Hills what outlet can be found for redundant hut labour?..... His most recent exhibition in the Bell when he started chanting "I'm going to camp with the Countess Gravina" has disturbed us for his tendencies in the past has been of the proletariat and we must now ask ourselves, has this man got social ambition?....

Chronologically you will have read that tissue of lies from Pretty's pen of how the Vith Oread President came to Bullstones. Superficially Dearden resigned because of deadwoods disease, I can divulge that it was in protest against Pretty's misrepresentation of the President..... He will tackle anything from the installation of traffic crippling sewage schemes to the administration of June Teifer's (that was Ed) love life. Oreads would do well to realise that behind that myopic gaze lies real power..... Is it possible to construct an anti-Hayes device for protecting tents from boiling fat, feet from scalding water etc, as he blunders his way about well ordered camp sites leaving a trail of havox behind his size thirteen boots.....

(16)

FROM ASHCROFT TO JANES

Dear Peter,

Glad you called me in to help you out of this mess. I do realise as you say that Handley is not really on the ball, but it is a pity that you didn't ask me to help earlier before Pettigrew had cocked everything up even more.

Incidentally about that letter, I will write to the Pinnacle Club and say that we've never heard of you, and can only assume that some person has been fooling about with a sheet of stolen note-paper. I don't know whether you will want your name expurged from the hand book for a few years - it might be as well to lie low for a bit. Never mind Rolls-Royce is a big place to find a little nut like you - Ha Ha - excuse the joke!

By the way I'm glad you helped us vote down Pettigrew's proposal at the last committee meeting. I think it's a bit much wanting a 4 ft. square photo of himself hung on the wall behind his chair at the Dinner. Apparently he'd already asked Pretty to enlarge it - and I understand from Burgess, who was there at the time, that Pretty said "You can't enlarge a head like that".

See you on Tuesday, yours,

Jack

(17)

At 3-30 am fully laden with 7 bodies, 7 pairs of ski's, and 16 pairs of assorted boots from Geoff's pranged car, the Cook's tour reached the Valhalla of climbing huts - Helyg. Inside as we thought lay respectable members of the C.C. barely holding their own, in front of Pretty's mob. Since Laurie spurned the offer of a lilo-less tent, Cooke offered to install me in the hut, with trembling torch we surveyed the bunk room. At last Cooke found Jack's boots.

Just as first light was breaking on the snows surrounding we gently drew back the bug-bag cover. Terror reigned! had we drifted back into the archives and uncovered J.M.E. Apologetically we enquired of that haggard face of the whereabouts of Ashcroft. Far off from those ancient times when men wore crampons came that well know cry "I am Jack Ashcroft", shattered Cooke departed to organise his tin-tent and I sought comfort in an egg covered bug-bag.

A few hours later revealed the true composition of the hut. 5 Oread, 2 of Jack's ski instructors and 5 boys and Master from Denstone College. Even Pretty got a little tired of being sired every 5 minutes, while Fisher resplendent in his army outfit and braces nearly took over the J.T.C.

Saturday saw an assault on the gullies of the Carneddau. Fisher swam up Avalanche Gully followed by Burgess and Pretty to such effect that Pretty's Long John's stank out the hut for the rest of the week-end.

Ashcroft, faced with the drear reality of the morning after, realising that desperate deeds were needed to create a virile Presidency, is reported to have erected traffic lights at the bottom of at least 3 gullies with a round about and cul-de-sac half-way up each one. The old men ascended a gully on Pen-Y-Rowen with the help of ironmongery and slid back into the valley whooping on their bottoms.

Sunday was a perfect winter's day sunny with a few clouds drifting over the snow covered hills. Wales at it's best, to the ski-ing group up on Pen-Y-Helyg, out of the wind, Ashcroft and friends, Turner and myself played happily and fell graciously to a background of the clickity clack of camera among the ski sticks.

As the afternoon wore on the lighting became more beautiful and recollections of Pete Janes enthusing over a former winter Ogwen meet sprung to mind. Eventually with regret we left our grandstand view of the Glyders and Carnedd's for the Sunset promised to be worthwhile watching. However no sooner had we left than the clouds rolled up from the east and Ashcroft slid down the last gully on his bottom.

On return to the valley Wally Smith had arrived and had done two gullies on Y Garn in the meantime. However, no Cook to cook, for he had gone off on the boil with Beryl on to the West face of Pen-Y-Rowen in search of warm rock. He was so tired on his return that I had to drive his dormobile most of the way back home.

P.R. Faulkener

J. Ashcroft

Introduction

There are few Oreads who are not familiar with the Marsden-Rowsley walk. Some only by the fireside but most have 'done' the walk in part or entirety (Jack himself is supposed to have done it in more parts than anybody else Ed), This brief anthology is worthwhile if only for the series of Oread characters we find mentioned.

The meet is absent from the 1963 meets list but such a traditional walk will undoubtedly appear in future years. We hope these words will encourage the defaulter to experience the joys of this bog-trot in fine weather let us hope.

Memories of the early Oreads Marsden-Rowsley walks

I was prompted to write these reminiscences by the fact that this year's Marsden-Rowsley (1962) meet took place on the 10th Anniversary, almost to the day, at the Oread's first venture on this classic walk - on Oct. 24/26th 1952. The party then consisted of Geoff Gibson, Mike Moore, Dave Penlington and myself, (Ron Dearden and Ken Wright were also with us as far as the George and Dragon). This was the now almost legendary occasion when the party slept at Marsden gas-works on the Friday, and in the back parlour of the Nag's head, Edale, on the Saturday. Originally Edale had been our ultimate objective but we managed to limp down the edges to Baslow on the Sunday.

In May 1953, nineteen Oreads took part, the gas works had closed and the party bivvied in a field on Friday, whilst on Saturday the Penlington Plantation was used for the first time. The weather was generally good; one or two people were actually trying out colour film - a new and not quite respectable idea at that time - and all nineteen starters completed the course.

May 1954 saw R.G. Pettigrew, as meetleader, perform a high speed solo dash to reach Rowsley on Saturday night. That year also, four people, Ron Dearden, Glen Gundry, Clive Webb and I started from Colne. After various vicissitudes and separations, all joined the main party at Yorkshire Bridge on the Saturday morning. Glenn Gundry disclaimed any pretence of being a hill walker; he had only come to see what it was like, and in fact ran much of the way (tragically, a few years later Glenn was killed in an accident at his work).

1955 was the year when several small groups and odd individuals, starting from different points, Marsden, Littleborough, Colne, at different times, signally failed to coalesce. Dave Penlington and I missed each other by ten minutes at Yorkshire Bridge and never met.

After this near fiasco, the meet was omitted from the 1956 programme. This, though sad in a way had one fortunate consequence; Dave Penlington in-augurated the first Welsh Walk and a new Oread saga began.

P.R.F.

THE RECENT YEARS

J. Ashcroft

I'm fairly certain that there was no Marsden-Rowsley in 1957 but a meet that both Phil and myself attended was Penlingtons 2nd Welsh Training Walk - Pennaenawrto the Pennant Valley. Phil and I were getting married (not to each other) a few weeks after and we walked most of the distance together intermittently discussing the error of our ways.

1953 found Marsden-Rowsley back on the meets list. It was a wet Friday night so rather than an outside bivvy we hoped to use the out buildings of the Isle of Skye Inn or even the public bar. In 1954 a number of us had joined the landlord and some friends in a late night party and finished up sleeping the night in the bar. I well remember Mary and Charlie Cullum and Brian Cooke and Jack Wolfe missed the invite and spent a rainy night behind a wall. That was 1954. In 1959 we learned that the Isle of Skye had been demolished the previous summer and so after the midnight 5 mile jaunt up the Marsden Reservoirs it was a wet bivvy for more Oreads. The Saturday afternoon found a be-draggled set of Oreads taking refuge at the Barnsley Club hut - not another wet bivvy that night. The comforts of a hut and the Skye Inn were ours with fine weather on the Sunday to walk over Win Hill and down the edges. The meet was memorable on several counts. Jim Kershaw lit a roaring fire in the beer cellars of the Isle of Skye adding colour and warmth to an otherwise damp dreary morning scene of a moorland ruin. Harry, Pretty and Dave Widdows had brought an office colleague who doubted the challenge offered of pleasure to be gained from moorland walking. He reached Win Hill but took 2 hours to get down to the road followed by a week off work.

(24)

In fairness a torn ligament was the cause - but he did realise that moorland walking had something and that Bleaklow wasn't as smooth as a rugger pitch. George Sutton had brought a certain Gillian out on the walk who persisted in making the male members of the party look silly with her walking pace and knowledge of the Bleaklow "It's that way" she pointed as Kershaw and myself stood in the mist panting and fumbling with map and compass at the Bleaklow Head.

1959 Marsden Rowsley was gifted with fine weather save for an almighty thunderstorm 6 - 8 pm. on Saturday. Geoff Hayes and myself were safely installed in the Yorkshire Bridge just before the cloud burst. The next couple of hours we witnessed various Oreads appearing somewhat bedraggled on the Hostelry steps with Mike and Meg Moore putting on the best performance - They stripped - Meg more than Mike and then had an argument with the Landlord about diminishing hospitality in the Peak Inns.

The Friday night bivvy adjacent to a now completely levelled Isle of Skye site was perfect. I have a photograph of that bivvy taken soon after sun-rise - Phil Faulkner poised over stone preparing the very adequate breakfast he always has on such meets. Tony Smith and Bob Pettigrew still bag-bound and Colin Hobday standing guard outside the Welbourne Company flysheet quarters.

The weekend finished with Geoff and myself extending our walk to Matlock via White Edge and Bealey Moor.

May 1960 found once again damp conditions for the Friday night bivvy. Added interest that year was a strong wind. In the morning it was obvious that some people hadn't enjoyed the experience. However the prospect of hot mugs of tea at the George and Dragon after the traverse of Black Hill aroused early activity.

(25)

Finding our way to the summit of Black Hill, gave amusement. Yours truly doubted Tony Smiths compass. I was still muttering about being off course when the trig point loomed up. Several of the party bathed in the Alport but your Editor spent his time more profitably photographing Geoff Hayes in the nude. The results of these are beyond expectations. They have been jealously garded to await the 10th Anniversary. No other Oread has ever seen them. It is rumoured that they will be shown at the Photo Meet on Oct. 26th and it is confidently expected that Milner will seek membership on seeing the cream of the Oread disporting himself.

The weather improved for the rest of the week-end and a convivial meet resulted with Derek Burgess, Wes Haydn, Tony Frost and Geoff Hayes showing particular enthusiasm to the walk, a series of climbs and boulder problems. Chinese Wall, Flying Buttress, Allens Slab, Slab Route (Curbar) Eagle Stone and Och Aye Wall, etc. Geoff Hayes and Tom Frost struggled onto Matlock and ran full out for the last mile down the steep road into the centre of Matlock.

May 1961 - the weekend the D.H.E. sailed for India. There was a good turn out for the walk from reports I've heard. The trek was extended to Matlock again with types like Hayes and Walter Smith finishing up with tea and sympathy with the girls of Matlock Training College.

So we come to October 1962. The same number of people attended the meet as 10 years ago but only Faulkner was on both meets. The five others in 1962 were Laurie Burns, Derrick Burgess, Geoff Hayes, Lloyd Coris and myself. Burns excelled himself by taking the wrong gruff from Bleaklow Head and landing in Chinley. A novel variation but hardly permissible - he took the train through Kinder. (26)

With the value of the British Railways system in mind for fell walkers, mountaineering etc, this brief anthology would not be complete without mention of the Manchester - Marsden line. (May Jack Leeson continue to meet potential Marsden - Rowsley walkers at Marsden Station). Lets hope this line isn't a Beeching cut because it provides a very useful service to our section of the community. Judging by last year I hardly think the line is for closure since the train is now diesel-electric - modern buffet/bar coaches and titled "Trans-Pennine". (In 1960 the inspector on Victoria Station, Manchester was faced by an angry and determined group of Oreads demanding that the traditional train should make an unscheduled stop at Marsden - which it did much to the relief of some locals who had spent the evening in Manchester, Ed). Let us hope the line continues to serve successive parties of Oreads bound for the traditional Marsden-Rowsley week-end.

NOTES

Next Issue

Closing Date for the next Issue is Oct.15th 1963.

Would all contributors please supply copy of a standard which can be typed out direct by a non-mountaineer - all place names in CAPITALS for instance.

FOR HIRE

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