

A History of Weekend Curry Meets – Tony Howard

Introduction

As part of the celebrations to mark its 75th anniversary, the Oread Club has decided to produce an almanac of events that have occurred since its 50th Anniversary Journal was published in 1999.

Because I have been running curry meets and other self-catering ones since the turn of the millennium, I have been invited to provide a history of these events.

My sources of information were my meet planning and costing spreadsheets, descriptions in the Newsletters and my own personal diaries and photo collection, plus photos from others. Inevitably this has produced a personal slant to the stories.

I have also provided some reference points of events to enable the reader to place these climbs, walks and meets into context with their lives more generally. These contexts are firstly in Oread terms and secondly referencing key events from UK or world history that many of us will remember and help us to understand our timeline.

Origins

To paraphrase Blackadder, there are two things you should know about weekend curry meets; 1) they were at weekends and 2) we ate curries. Except the latter was not always true. We didn't *always* eat curry. Critically though we always ate together in a communal meal with a party atmosphere, and I think this has been the key to their success and longevity. Communal eating was not new to the Oread. Multi-family gatherings had been held for years over the Christmas period as their children grew up. Each family would provide food coordinated and balanced by informal arrangement. The Curry Meets were on a different basis though. Because some of the attendees were young and had little interest in cooking, a flat fee was charged, and the money used to buy food and pay volunteer cooks for their ingredients.

To depart from the Blackadder analogy, there is a third thing you should know; our eating meets were born from a contentious and inauspicious beginning.

In 1997 the small group of Oreads I usually climbed with decided to sign up for the Annual Dinner. Unfortunately, the venue chosen was small and there were no places left for us. So, I suggested we hold our own celebration based at the Church Hall in Coniston and a table for all of us was booked at the Yewdale Hotel for Saturday 22nd November. This was enjoyed by all, and I was asked to book a similar informal meet the following year. I got word later that this "supplementary dinner" was frowned upon by the Committee, but as I recall nothing was said to us about it at the time, presumably because there were no places left for us to have attended the official dinner.

In 1998 I booked a table at the Black Bull in Coniston for Saturday 12th December and booked the Church Hall for the weekend. Afterwards I was told that I had upset the committee. Sure enough I was soon dealt my punishment; I was asked to join the committee! At my first meeting I was taken to one side by our lovable iconic & formidable President. Harry told me that running such an unofficial meet so close to the Annual Dinner could damage club unity. I had sympathy with his argument and offered to run communal dinners at Tan yr Wyddfa instead. He readily agreed and the Curry Meets were born.

Autumn seemed to me the most promising time to start such meets, because the days are shorter & there is less time for the hill and more time to socialise.

The idea was shelved in 1999 perhaps because of our 50th Anniversary Annual Dinner. In the autumn of 2000, I trekked in Nepal and then worked in Indonesia.

The Noughties

2001

So, the first curry meet took place on 10th - 11th November 2001. Twenty-four people attended, many of them younger members and guests. They were Graham Weston, Sharon Fletcher, Mike Hayes, Nick Evans, Pam Storer, Kev Allsobrook, Jane, Derek Pike, Joan Pike, John Salmon, Shelly, James Tubby, Ellie Roddick, Simon Read, Simon's girl, Phil Canning, Chris Seaman, Paul Allsop, Graham Cooper, Beth Beare, David Hunt, Dave Jones, Andy Clayton and Tony Howard.

Nick made a large number of vegetable and meat samosas. Curries were provided by Joan Pike, Graham Cooper, Kev Allsobrook and me.

Parties climbed Dream of White Horses and Gogarth, on Anglesey, Christmas Curry and Oberon at Tremadog, and Outside Edge at Cwm Silyn. Others went walking, running or mountain biking. A great time was had by all despite dull and damp weather on both days; a promising start for Oread curry/eating meets.

The context for 2001 was very interesting, in terms of mountain access and from a World perspective. Mike Hayes was Oread President, having taken over from Harry Pretty in 2000. The Club's summer meet was in the Lofoten Islands. An outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease began in February, and in the North of England, lasted till January 2022. On the world stage it was an historic year; George W Bush became US President. The World Trade Centre in New York was destroyed in September and Afghanistan was invaded in October.

2002

Because of the success of the first meet, a second curry meet was held on 9th – 10th March 2002. Twenty-four people came along; 8 full members, 7 provisional ones and 9 guests including many young people. Fifteen of those present were not on the previous meet and

for this reason, it's also worth naming the attendees again. They were Sharon Fletcher, Mike Hayes, Nick Evans, Pam Storer, Derek Pike, Joan Pike, Melanie Pike, James Tubby, Ellie Roddick, Neil Weatherstone, Tracey Weatherstone, Chris Seaman, Heather, Graham Cooper, Angela Pingram, Roland Smith, Paul Howe, John Dobson, Tim Cairns, Tiffany Clark, Chiz Barker, Reuben Dakin, Colin Barnard and Tony Howard. Some of the newcomers went on to play an active role in the club.

Saturday evening was filled with party games. Derek & Joan embarrassed their daughter Melanie while trying to stand together close and intimately on an upturned pan. Another challenge involving contortions around a chair produced good efforts from John Dobson, Chris Seaman and Chiz, but Ellie Roddick had no serious competitor. Curries were provided by Nick, Joan, Graham Cooper and me.

The weather was very poor on both days. Most went walking on Saturday and climbed at the Beacon on Sunday. Graham Cooper and Tim Cairns climbed on the Llyn peninsular on Saturday and Dovedale Derbyshire on Sunday!

After this meet, in order to provide a lively social scene for our members and to draw in new ones, my plan was to hold three social meets per year, summer, October, and November/December. The October meet would be a curry meet or similar and based at Tan yr Wyddfa. The one in November or December would be similar and based at the Church Hall in Coniston. The summer meet would be a BBQ, also based at Tan yr Wyddfa.

Our first meet in *Coniston* took place in December 2002. Twenty-two people attended, including 9 who had not been before; Chris & Gill Radcliffe, Simon & Maggie Pape, Chris Jonson, John Gresty, Rock, Keith Gregson and Tony Raphael.

Saturday morning brought a dull aspect and snow on higher ground. Most people went walking over Wetherlam and Coniston Old Man etc. followed by drinks in the warmth of the Black Bull.

A convivial atmosphere developed in the Church Hall. Music was played. Curries and other delicacies were provided including Gluwein and beer. The highlight was chocolate-stuffed baked bananas. Thanks to cooks Maggie, Angela, Gill and Sharon.

The context for 2002: Daryk Kirk was elected Oread President. The Queen's Jubilee celebration took place across the UK.

2003

The first BBQ took place in June 2003 at Tan yr Wyddfa with 25 people in attendance. Newcomers included Tom and Emma Hayes, Richard and Dawn Hopkinson, Steve Christian, and Steve Bennett. The weather was good and the weekend saw some good routes climbed. On Saturday these included The Grooves, Sickle, Spectre, Brant Direct, Kaisergebirge Wall in the pass and Great Slab and Curving Crack on Cloggy. Curving crack was climbed by Steve Christian and me. A rock fall from The Boulder and the helicopter rescue of the guy who was

hit just ahead of us on Eastern Terrace took the edge off the day for those of us who witnessed it.

Using some cash left over from previous meets I provided free drinks to accompany our BBQ in the evening. Gin and tonic and Pimm's were distributed, but being the man with his hand on the gin bottle I was suffering by late evening. By the time I remembered the lamb chops I had put on the BBQ some hours earlier, they were just cinders!

On Sunday many of us climbed on Dinas Mot. Gill led West Rib. Steve and I did Loraine & Western Slabs as did Simon. Roland and Ellie did Slape Direct, Wind and Brant Direct.

All this was a good start to a series of Tan yr Wyddfa BBQs that followed.

The October and November meets of 2003 followed a similar pattern to before. Eighteen people came to Tan yr Wyddfa in October, the newcomers being Nigel Briggs, Simon Wren and Graham Bowers. The weather was poor on Saturday and Radders led us round the 'Five Cols Walk', a new one on me but an Oread tradition. We had a lovely spread in the evening provided by Simon, Gill, Joan, Nick, Tracey and Reu. This included chicken, beef, seafood, and a vegetarian option plus a chilli, nasi goreng, naans, and cheese & biscuits.

Better weather on Sunday saw most of us climbing at Tremadog.

The weather forecast was very bad for the end of November this year and only ten of us elected to go to Coniston. There were no newcomers. The cooking theme was 'oriental'. Graham Bowers produced a nice Thai red curry, Reu did a meat curry and Simon did a lovely veggie one. Saturday's walking was submarine and on Sunday morning we all abandoned ship!

In 2003 the US-led coalition invaded Iraq and England won the Rugby World Cup.

2004

In 2004 we had just two of these communal eating meets: a BBQ in July and a curry in October.

The July BBQ at Tan yr Wyddfa had 26 people attending: 19 members and 7 guests. Newcomers included Dave Roscoe, Roger Gibbs, Pam and Nodge, Pete and Ali Kennington and Mike Wren. Although people still brought their own meat etc for cooking, some food was provided and paid for communally. That is salads and puds. G&Ts and Pimm's were also included in the costings. This gave a very convivial evening.

The weather was good on both days. Many went to Gogarth on Saturday. Nick, Pam and Derek did Dream, Wen and Concrete Chimney, Roger and Sharon did something hard on Wen Slab. Richard & Simon did Gogarth, Nigel and Steve climbed on Castel Helen. Dave & I did the old classic Angel Pavement on Craig y Bera, which was particularly memorable for me.

On Sunday Chris & Gill went to Ogwen and the rest of us went to Tremadog, resulting in a very satisfactory weekend for all.

October brought a change in clientele. There were no youngsters or potential new members and for the first time the average age probably exceeded my own. We were delighted to be joined by senior Oreads Colin & Uschi Hobday and Mick and Gill Keeling. Merle and Bob Gartside joined us for dinner. It was also Richard Hardwick's first time with us. In all 16 people attended including Merle and Bob. Uschi provided a goulash and a pasta bake to add to Joan's and Nick's curries. Mick Keeling contributed a crumble for pud. We also had nasi goreng, poppadoms, salad, fruit, and cheese with biscuits. A very enjoyable evening was had by everyone, albeit after a delayed start caused by me.

On Saturday Chris, Gill, Richard Hardwick and I climbed Charity on the Idwal Slabs and continued in steady rain over Glyder Fawr and down the Devil's Kitchen. We didn't get back to the car till well after dark and to the hut until 8:20. By this time people were getting concerned about our safety and their meal, though all went well in the end.

On Sunday we, the Idwal four, were joined by Chiz and Reu in a plod under Castell Cidwm to the summit of Mynydd Mawr.

In 2004 Tony Howard became Oread President. The Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami killed over 250,000 people in December. Facebook was formed.

2005

I have very limited information on the meets in 2005. Our October meet at Tan yr Wyddfa took on an alpine theme. Seventeen people came along including newcomers John Green, James Pike, and my brother Paul. We dined on goulash, dauphinois potatoes, frankfurters sauerkraut, cheese, apple strudel and Gluwein.

On Saturday Dave Roscoe, Paul and I climbed Rowan Route on the Milestone Butress. On Sunday with information from Nick Evans we explored a slate mine at Blaenau Ffestiniog.

In November, Pam Norris very generously took over the Coniston meet from me, as my work took me to Canada.

In 2005 a terrorist attack in London on 7th July killed 52 people and injured 700. Liverpool won the UEFA Champions league final on penalties. Led by Steven Gerrard, 'The Miracle of Istanbul', is said to be one of the greatest finals of all time.

2006

In 2006 a curry meet was scheduled for October, but I was ill and could not go and have no information on how it went.

In 2006 Rob Tresidder was elected Oread President. The summer meet was in the Austrian Alps.

2007

The Curry Meet in October 2007 was the only eating meet of the year. Twenty-one people took part, including two guests. Saturday's weather was damp. Nine of us ascended the North Ridge of Tryfan and onto the Glyders. By mid-morning it was raining heavily and those who had chosen to climb gave up.

The evening's proceedings started with G&Ts followed by a range of curries and salads, Indian sweets, cheese, and olives.

Sunday was still damp and saw small groups walking, running, or bolt-clipping in the quarries. Despite the weather people seemed to enjoy the weekend.

In 2007 Gordon Brown became Prime Minister. The first iPhone was launched.

2008

In 2008 we saw a very welcome boost in the clientele for the eating meets. I had camped next to Pete and Sue Lancaster in the Alps in the summer and persuaded them to come along on my next eating meet. They in turn brought along Chris and Jan Wilson. (This changed the pattern of future eating meets.) Annegret Siebert came for the first time as did Peter Briggs and Graham Weston. John Salmon came for the first time in years. In total there were 25 of us including Graham's mate. The food theme was Eastern. Pete did a Thai beef curry, Nick & Pam a Thai fish one. Angela did a Vietnamese beef dish, and Sharon a Thai chicken. Tim provided a lovely veggie dish. These were preceded by gin and tonics and the wine and beer that accompanied the food made for a jolly and inebriating evening.

We were experiencing an Indian summer and the weather prospect for the weekend had been good. However, this changed with rain by mid-morning. Most walked down to Beddgelert through the woods. Roger and Sharon went mountain biking at Coed-y-Brenin. On Sunday Angela and Roland looked for excitement scrambling above the swollen river in the Aberglaslyn. Others climbed in the Moelwyns or at Tremadog. We were still a hardy lot in those days. Thanks to Roger and Angela for writing this meet up in the Newsletter.



Before the walk 25/10/08: Pete, Chris, Jan, Simon, Annegret, Sue and Richard.



Tan yr Wyddfa 25/10/08 Nigel, Nick, Roger, Peter, AN Other, Graham, Sharon and John.



Tan yr Wyddfa 25/10/08 Tim, James, Annegret, Simon



Tan yr Wyddfa 25/10/08 Richard and Chris



Tan yr Wyddfa 25/10/08 Tony and Angela

At the end of November, we stayed in the Church Hall in Coniston. It was to be our last. The hall was to be converted into housing. Another change also took place. We chose not to cook for ourselves, but to eat in the Black Bull – although we did eat together on one table. It would be 2019 before we would have another self-catering meet in the Lake District. Until then we would eat in local pubs when in the Lakes. We moved to the George Starkey hut in Patterdale for some years until I found it impossible get a booking there at this time. Later we moved to Low House, the MAM hut in Coniston, where I ran meets jointly with Steve Bennett. In Patterdale we normally ate in the White Lion, although we had one memorable musical experience in the Patterdale Hotel in 2012. In Coniston we generally ate in the Black Bull.

Returning to our chronology for November 2008, we slept in the Church Hall but ate in the Black Bull. Seventeen people turned up, including newcomers Brian West, Freda Raphael, Pete Wragg, Laura Booth, and Chris Bryan.

On Saturday we followed a plan hatched by Nick and Tim and this would turn out to be one of my most memorable days out with the Oread. We scrambled from the Coppermines Valley via Long Crag Butress to reach the snow-covered plateau at about 400m altitude. The mist enveloped Coniston, but left the white fells bathed in the pale autumn sunlight. As the clouds rose the scene was like that from an aircraft window; mists obscuring one feature, then another. We walked on to Wetherlam and on towards Swirl How, but before getting there, Roger Gibbs and I descended into a corrie to the north of the ridge, before climbing a gentle gully to emerge on the ridge leading to Great Carrs. Dave Roscoe joined us there. The others were now well on their way to the Old Man and subsequently Dow Crag.



*Tim Cairns on Long Crag Buttress
29/11/08*



Oreads on top of Long Crag Buttress 29/11/08



Dave & Roger on Swirl Howe 29/11/08

The light was fading by the time Roger, Dave and I reached the Old Man. We descended to the Coppermines Valley via Low Water. It was pitch black by the time we reached the track in the valley, but this led conveniently to the Sun Inn. We sat down next to the fire with our beers. It was only about 5:30 pm. We had had a full winter's day on the hill and a long social evening was still ahead of us. Soon afterwards we were joined by Simon Pape, Nick Evans, Derek Pike and Richard Hardwick. Later still Brian West and Chris Bryan arrived. We drank more beers and whiled the hours away. Bliss! Eventually we had to return to the Church Hall and clean ourselves up before going to the Black Bull for dinner and more beers; what a wonderful day!



*Simon and Nick in
The Sun Inn
29/11/08*



*Chris Bryan and
Derek in The Sun
Inn 29/11/08*

In 2008 Simon Pape was elected Oread President. Dry rot was discovered in the front (east) end of the hut, resulting a major work program. A global financial crisis plunged the UK into recession. Spain won the UEFA European Championship, their first of three major successes.

Over the next three years, the only eating meets were in October and were all at Tan yr Wyddfa.

2009

In 2009 20 people attended, including newcomers, Snod, and Michael Bate with wife and child. Merle and Bob Gartside also came along for dinner again. Pete Lancaster did us proud with a lamb curry, a dal and a veg curry. Pam Storer did a fish curry, Reu did a chicken one, Tim provided a veg curry and lots of samosas. This was a great spread.

On Saturday Jan Wilson and Sue Lancaster made a proposal which resulted in six of us traversing the Nantlle ridge; Jan, Sue, Annegret, Reu, Chiz and me. Chris and Pam Storer drove us to Cwm Silyn to start the walk. This is of course a superb ridge and provided a truly memorable day for me, involving good views at times and slippery rock on descents. Most others climbed at Holyhead Mountain. The weather on Sunday was very poor and nothing of note was done.



Nantlle Ridge 10/10/09; Reuben, Chiz, Annegret, Sue, Jan.



Nantlle Ridge 10/10/09; Chiz, Annegret, Sue, Jan.

In 2009 The Alpine meet was in Argentiere-la-Bessee. Barack Obama became the first African-American President of the US.

The Teens

2010

In 2010 we had a near-full hut with 21 people arriving. Newcomers included Gil Male, Roy Eyre, James Pike's whole family plus my daughter Vicky and her future husband Martin Ford. Martin did a lamb curry, Pete did a fish curry, dal and veggie curries, while Simon also did a veg curry and Angela a chicken curry. Another great and varied spread. I am so proud and pleased with the efforts people put in to provide a great social evening.

On Saturday it rained again. The A team: Chris, Pete, Snod, Gil and Simon went to Castle Inn quarry near Old Colwyn & got some bolted routes in, while Jan and Sue walked round the Great Orme. Angela and Roland went to Tremadog. Roy, Annegret, Vicky, Martin, and I walked up Cnicht returning via Cwm Croesor. This team walked up Yr Aran on Sunday, while others climbed at Tremadog.



Vicky Howard, Annegret Siebert, Roy Eyre, and Martin Ford on Cnicht 30/10/2010

In 2010 Chris Wilson became Oread President. It was the start of the Arab Spring. Thirty-three men were rescued from a mine in Chile. David Cameron formed a coalition government. Spain won the FIFA World Cup.

2011

The curry meet in October 2011 attracted a group of very long-standing Oread members. The only exceptions being my guests Vicky and Martin. We were 23 in total the Wilsons using their camper van. I feel compelled to list them all: Derek, Joan and James Pike, Angela and Roland Smith, Pete and Sue Lancaster, Chris and Jan Wilson, Richard Hopkinson, Snod, Dave Roscoe, Simon Pape, Tim Cairns, Annegret Siebert, Nick Evans, Pam Storer, Steve Bennett, Chris Jonson, John Gresty, Vicky Howard, Martin Ford and me.

The weather was a re-run of last year, very wet and fairly cold. On Saturday most would-be climbers gave up and went to a pub or the Wilson's campervan in Ogwen. Annegret, Vicky, Martin and I squelched around Cwm Bychan and the Aberglaslyn pass. Nick and Pam went 'caving'.

In the evening Martin provided a lamb curry, Pete did a tandoori chicken and dal. Simon and Tim produced vegetable curries. We also had fresh fruit salad, Indian sweets and cheese and biscuits. Chris demonstrated his superior skill at cutting up a mango. In place of raucous behaviour there was sober debate about future meets, the hut, and other constructive or cerebral topics, I think. Well, I never!



Cwm Bychan, 29/10/11 Martin Ford, Vicky Howard, Tony Howard



Tan yr Wyddfa 29/10/11: Jan Wilson, Chris Jonson, Richard Hopkinson, Snod, Pete Lancaster, Chris Wilson, Joan Pike, Sue Lancaster, Steve Bennett.



Tan yr Wyddfa 29/10/11: Angela Smith, Annegret Siebert, Steve Bennett, Vicky Howard, Nick Evans, Martin Ford, Pete Lancaster, Simon Pape, John Gresty, Roland Smith, Dave Roscoe, Chris Jonson.

On Sunday it rained less, but everywhere was very wet. Climbers went to Tremadog after being repulsed from Canyon Rib. Walkers walked from the hut. Some went home early.

In 2011, Osama Bib Laden was killed, and the Syrian war began.

2012

We had a full complement and two on the waiting list for the BBQ in June 2012. Then came a particularly bad weather forecast, after which many dropped out. Nonetheless 13 souls did turn up.

On Saturday prospective members Tom and Jacqui Knox climbed Slanting Buttress on Lliwedd, a good effort in wet and slippery conditions. Nine of us chose a low-level walk from Beddgelert. We went north to Llyn Dinas then east past a lonely white cottage, Hafod Owen, where Chris thought he might have stayed as a schoolboy. Continuing eastwards we reached the road in the Nanmore valley. We followed the road southward to a bridge where we had lunch before continuing through intermittent showers and sunshine on a path running eventually west into Nantmor village. After crossing the Welsh Highland Railway track, we

came to the south end of the Aberglaslyn pass and the Fisherman's Path which we took back to Beddgelert. A visit to the ice cream shop was inevitable.

Back at the hut G&Ts were consumed by many before the BBQ was established on the leeward side of the hut. After the meal, Mick and Helen drove home to Leicestershire.

On Sunday the weather was no better. Angus, Annegret and Paolo headed for the Glyders, Chris and Gill chose Mynydd Mawr. The rest of us departed.

In October we chose to go to Kalymnos, so the curry meet was abandoned.

In 2012 Pete Lancaster was elected Oread President. The summer meet was in Val Feret. In August another infestation of dry rot was identified this time in the west end of the building. The Olympic games took place in London. The body of Richard III was unearthed in Leicester. Spain won the UEFA European Championship for the second time in succession.

2013

The October curry meet in 2013 took place with only 9 people. My daughter Emma and I travelled up from London, where I had helped her move house. Steve Bennett, Richard Hardwick, Annegret, Pam, and Nick were already there. Angela and Roland arrived just after us. The weather was damp again!

On Saturday Angela, Roland and Richard took a high-level walk down the valley to Beddgelert. Steve ran over Snowdon, Pam and Nick went underground again! Annegret, Emma, and I walked the usual Cwm Bychan circuit.

We were back at the hut early and the drinks were started early. Roland produced a lamb curry, Pam did a chicken one with roasted cashew nuts, and Annegret cooked two veggie curries. These were accompanied by Indian sundries and followed by fresh fruit salad, cheese, and biscuits.

In the morning Emma ran up the Snowdon path as far as the upper quarries. Steve and Richard went for a gentle walk. We all left before lunchtime.

In 2013 the Alpine summer meet was in Val di Mello. Andy Murray won the men's singles final at Wimbledon.

2014 - 2017

There was no curry meet in 2014 because we went to Kalymnos again in October. In October 2015 some of us we went to Nepal. So the habit was subsequently forgotten for 2016 and 2017.

Context: in 2014 Pam Storer was elected Oread President and in 2016 Derek Pike was.

2018

We started again with a curry meet in the November 2018 at Tan yr Wyddfa. There was a record turnout of 30 people, including 6 guests and 9 people sleeping in their campervans. The first timers included Ruth Gordon, Stuart Firth and Sue Todd, Spenser Gray, Charlie Taylor, Kasia, Jurek and their 4 guests. Pam Storer did a vegetable curry, Nick provided samosas, Ruth did an aubergine and egg curry. Chris Jonson and Stuart did different chicken curries, Jan Wilson did a dal and salads and Neil Weatherstone provided a Punjabi cauliflower side dish. Spenser Gray and Gill Radcliffe cooked different beef curries while Roland Smith did a particularly memorable goat curry. This was an enormous range of food which made this meet particularly special.

The weather was not so special, and I have only limited information on what people did with their days. I do know that on Saturday five of us walked round the Cwm Bychan circuit: Ruth, Steve Bennett, Richard Hardwick, Chris Jonson and me. Richard Hardwick and I climbed Bramble Buttress at Tremadog on Sunday.



Aberglaslyn Pass 24/11/18: Richard Hardwick, Steve Bennett, Ruth Gordon, Chris Jonson.

In 2018 Dave (Snod) Helliwell was elected Oread President. 'The Beast from the East' storm killed 17 people in February. Novichok poisonings were carried out in Salisbury.

2019

In November 2019 we had curry with crumbles but no grumbles. Sixteen of us turned up at High House Borrowdale. The weather was dull with some rain. Newcomers included Janet Briggs, Louise Pimm, Pippa Leach, Peter Amour and Bott.

Simon provided two veggie curries, Pippa did a mushroom one. I provided chicken, fish and keema curries and a plum crumble, plus the usual cheese and biscuits etc. Snod produced an apple crumble.

On Saturday most people walked. Summits taken in included Scafell Pike, Glaramara, Green Gable. On Sunday Snod and Bott climbed on Sheperds Crag. The rest of us walked. The weather was dull with some rain on both days but that didn't stop us enjoying ourselves and getting plenty of exercise.

In 2019 Theresa May resigned as UK PM and was replaced by Boris Johnson in June. In December Johnson achieved a landslide victory.

The Twenties

There were no weekend eating meets in 2020 or 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

In 2020 Nigel Briggs became Oread President. The UK left the EU in January. The first death in the UK from Covid-19 was in March. Our first lockdown began. Joe Biden was elected US President in November.

In 2021 Covid lockdown restrictions continued. Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol building. Liverpool won the Premier League and celebrated in an empty stadium. England lost to Italy on penalties in the UEFA cup final.

2022

Eating meets recommenced with our BBQ at Tan Yr Wyddfa in July 2022. Twelve people attended. Ruth, Snod, Roy Eyre, Pete and Ali Kennington had stayed on from the working party. Simon Pape, Mike Moss, Richard Hardwick and I, arrived on Friday as did Andrew, Emily and Scott. Sunday turned out to be the hottest day on record and Saturday was only a tad cooler.

On Saturday Snod, Simon and Mike went to Carreg Alltrem and climbed Lavaredo and Lightning Visit. Richard and Roy did Bramble Buttress on Craig y Gesail, while I hid from the heat! Andrew, Emily and Scott climbed Snowdon, Pete and Ali walked up Y Garn. Ruth went sketching.

In the evening, we christened the new BBQ, and ate and drank while enjoying the warm sunshine, good food and good company.



*Oreads around the BBQ, Tan yr Wyddfa 16/07/22: Mike Moss, Simon Pape, Roy Eyre, Ali Kennington, Ruth Gordon, Snod Helliwell, Richard Hardwick, Andrew, Emily, and Scott.
Photo Pete Kennington*

On Sunday Emily and Scott set off up Y Garn early, but by lunchtime everyone except Mike, Richard and I had gone home due to the heat. I did a few chores in the hut while Mike and Richard climbed Eastern Arete on Y Garn. Despite the heat it was still a very enjoyable weekend, to be repeated in future years.

Our autumn curry meet took place on the weekend of 1st and 2nd of October at High House, the K-Fellfarers hut in Borrowdale, as it had in 2019.

It rained heavily on the Friday morning and by the afternoon the road was flooded between Seatoller and Seathwaite and also at Rosthwaite. Three Oreads; Nigel Briggs, John Dobson and Pete Amour had arrived on Thursday and due to badly swollen streams had experienced some excitement getting back to the hut after a tour of Sty Head, Angle Tarn and Langstrath Dale. Meanwhile those who had set out from home were exchanging information en-route and in Booth's supermarket car park in Keswick. We spoke in the afternoon by phone to the farmer at Seathwaite who told us that water levels were dropping and the road near Seathwaite was now passable by Land Rover. We chose to get there via the Newlands valley and the Honister pass. Three cars arrived by this route on Friday evening and later another two via Rosthwaite. By Saturday morning 18 of us had made it.

Nigel experienced the 'Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner' with a traverse of Sty Head, Great Gable and Brandreth, returning via Rosthwaite! Gill, Pippa and Peter Masters walked round Sty Head and Sprinkling Tarns, Allen Crag and Glaramara. Richard Hardwick walked to Sprinkling Tarn via Seathwaite Fell with a local mate. They returned via Glaramara and Rosthwaite. Others set off in groups of two or three, walking around the Borrowdale valley at a lower level, sometimes in heavy rain.



High House Borrowdale 1/10/22. We toast Radders' 80th Birthday. Stuart Firth, Tony Howard, Richard Hardwick, Chris Radcliffe, Peter Amour.



High House Borrowdale 1/10/22. Clockwise by seating position: Jan Wilson, Peter Amour, Chris Wilson, Roger Larkam, Helen Hayes, Peter Masters, Pippa Leach, Gill Radcliffe, Mike Hayes, Tony Howard, Mike Wren, Roy Eyre, Richard Hardwick.

The evening began with cake and bubbly to celebrate Chris Radcliffe's 80th birthday. This was followed by enough 'Bombay' mix to sink a ship. Seven curries were presented and consumed. Nigel produced a paneer curry, Pippa gave us a squash, coconut, and chickpea one. Gill cooked a minced beef and a vegetable curry. Jan did a fish tandoori while Stuart provided a mild Persian chicken curry. I did a beef Mussaman. These were accompanied by yogurt, rice, naans, pickles and chutney. This main course was followed by a tropical fruit salad.



High House Borrowdale 1/10/22. Clockwise by seating position Tony Howard, Mike Hayes, Mike Wren, Roy Eyre, Richard Hardwick, Nigel Briggs, Stuart Firth, Sue Todd, John Dobson, Jan Wilson, Peter Amour, Chris Wilson, Roger Larkham, Helen Hayes, Peter Masters, Pippa Leach, Gill Radcliffe. All photos; Chris Radcliffe collection.

On Sunday, Roger Larkam ran around the tarns. Others went walking at various altitudes. Despite the weather, those who got to Borrowdale appeared to enjoy the weekend of exercise, food and good company.

Context for 2022: Russia invaded Ukraine in February. Liz Truss became UK PM for just 45 days. Queen Elisabeth II died on 8th September.

2023

In June 2023 seven hardy souls braved the poor weather forecast for our summer BBQ at Tan yr Wyddfa: Mick and Helen Hayes, Radders, Kasia, Michael Percival, Richard Hardwick and me.

Saturday's weather was wet and uninviting. Lethargy developed but was broken when we decided to walk through the forest to the ice cream shop in Beddgelert, and hopefully return on the Welsh Highland Railway. Part one went well, but all seats were taken for the Railway return leg. So Chris and I got the bus back. The others walked and took in an extra loop via Ffridd Uchaf Farm and the Snowdon path. The evening was dry and we all enjoyed our BBQ; outdoors dining, no burnt offerings, no major spillages and no drunkenness or incapacity – as far as I can remember?

Sunday was no drier or sunnier. Chris walked round Llyn y Gader and returned via Ffridd Uchaf and the Snowdon path. Richard walked up Y Garn then south into the forest before returning. Kasia and Michael P walked up Yr Aran. The rest of us did some hut duties before we all went home, a very pleasant weekend with friends, as usual.



Beddgelert Forest 24/6/23. Richard Hardwick, Mike and Helen Hayes, Michael Percival, Kasia Sajdok, Tony Howard. Photo Chris Radcliffe.

Fourteen Oreads gathered at Tan yr Wyddfa for another Curry Meet in October 2023. We were joined by Robert Fay from the Mountaineering Club of Ireland who by chance was using the hut at the same time and was happy to join in with the curry.

On Saturday Robert walked up Snowdon. Nick Evans, Steve Booth, John Gwyther and Pete Amour took the bus round to Nantgwynant and beginning with the Watkin Path walked to Bwlch Cwm Llan, just north of Yr Aran. Nick ascended Yr Aran on his way back to the hut. The others took the direct path back. Roland, Angela and John Dobson climbed Creagh Ddu wall at Tremadog and enjoyed an interesting descent. Stuart & Sue walked up to the col between Snowdon and yr Aran and then along the west shore of Llyn- y-Gader towards the road and back. Gill and Chris took a circular route starting up the Llechog track, then descended the bridleway to Ffridd Uchaf, and returned via past Llyn- y-Gader.

Richard Hardwick, Mike Wren and I repeated a favourite trip of mine. From Beddgelert we walked to Llyn Dinas before turning a hairpin right and ascending to Bwlch-y-Sygyn. We descended through Cwm Bychan and returned via the Fisherman's path. The 6 o'clock bus brought us back to the hut just in time to join in the food preparations.

Nick did a Goan pork curry, Angela cooked a Goan egg and fish one right under our noses, Stuart provided a Kashmiri butter chicken, I did a keema and Mike brought a dal. These were enthusiastically devoured: a fitting end to a day thoroughly enjoyed by all I believe.

Sunday started out dry, but most of us experienced some rain later on. Nick and Steve climbed Hebog then traversed its northern ridge over Moel yr Ogof and Moel Lefn before returning to the hut through the forest. John Gwyther and Pete walked from Beddgelert, through the Aberglaslyn Gorge then over open moorland to Llyn Dinas and eventually to Beddgelert. Angela and Roland walked up Mynydd Drws-y-coed / Y Garn in dry weather before descending in rain through the woods. John Dobson walked up Cnicht and through the slate mines before descending to Croesor. Stuart & Sue went to Bodnant gardens, where there were terrific autumn colours.

Chris & Gill drove round to Crafnant so that Gill could engage in dry tooling with other Oreads in a quarry above Maes Mawr. Chris walked over Crimpiau before traversing the hillside above the quarries and descending to and walking round Lynn Crafnant. Richard Hardwick, Mike Wren, and I drove to Capel Curig and walked the upgraded path to the head of the Crafnant valley, traversing under Crimpiau as we went. The tiny figure traversing the ridge above could well have been the aforementioned Oread? We returned to Capel by the same path before setting off home.

Meanwhile back at Tan Yr Wyddfa Oreads were drying themselves off. Steve Booth was interrupted in the shower by a failure in the building's water supply and was, I believe, running around naked! Everyone made good use of the decent weather and were active on both days. Some stayed on for more!

In 2023 Jan Wilson was elected Oread President, Nigel having served an extra year due to Covid restrictions during his term of office.

My Personal Highlights and Strongest Memories

- Climbing Dream of White Horses at Gogarth in November 2001 with Graham Weston, Mike Hayes, and Sharon Fletcher (now Gibbs), It was my seventh and probably my last ascent of the route.
- Climbing Curving Crack on Cloggy with Steve Christian on a beautiful summer's day in June 2003. Unfortunately, we witnessed a man just in front of us being struck by a falling rock as we all crossed Eastern Terrace. We gave assistance to him until a helicopter came to take him off. He made a good recovery over the following months, we were told.
- Climbing Angel Pavement with Dave Roscoe in July 2004. For the grade of Hard Severe, this is a serious route with some poorly protected sections and a fair bit of loose rock. The situations higher up reminded me of Cloggy.
- In October 2004, Chris and Gill Radcliffe, Richard Hardwick and I climbed Charity on the Idwal Slabs, continuing over Glyder Fawr and down the devil's kitchen in steady rain, returning to the hut very late. This sort of experience invokes in me and many of us feelings of satisfaction in being in the heart of the mountains and at one with them.
- In November 2008, a walk in the snow and above the clouds over Wetherlam, Great Carrs and Coniston Old Man with Roger Gibbs and Dave Roscoe and others initially. After descending the Coppermines Valley in the dark, we drank local beers at the fireside in the Sun Inn where other Oreads soon joined us in this warm comfortable and convivial environment. Afterwards we returned to the Church Hall for a shower before eating and drinking more beers at the Black Bull. Apart from type 2 excitement this day had everything and what it didn't have didn't matter. Smile!
- Walking the Nantlle Ridge in October 2009 with Jan, Sue, Annegret, Chiz, and Reu. A great day on a superb ridge with excellent company.
- And finally, the fun and enjoyment on the mountain, in the pubs and in the dining rooms and kitchens of the huts we have used over these years.

So ends a twenty-two-year tale of communal eating meets by the Oread Club. They began with groups that were mainly young people in their twenties and thirties. Many of these have drifted away from Derby and/or the Oread. However, some have stood the test of time and are still with us, though they are now in their fifties. A few were older at the start and are now in their seventies or eighties. They have been joined on these meets along the way by more established Oreads to make a wide age range of keen, lively and active woodland fairies. Long may it continue.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those who came along to make these events so enjoyable and memorable. Additional thanks go to all the cooks who have worked so hard and been so inspiring to me over the years.

Tony Howard

March 2024