

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

The Nepalese Government's decision to impose charges for the ascent of high peaks will no doubt make the running of Himalayan expeditions more difficult. It would be interesting to know how they decided on the actual figures - £225 for 26,000-footers and over, £150 for 25,000 - 26,000-footers and £75 for titches of less than 25,000 ft. And do these figures apply only to successful ascents, or to all attempts? One cannot see why it should be three times as expensive to reach, say, 15,000 ft on Everest as to reach the same height at the summit of a village dung-hill. And what if more than one party from the same expedition succeed in climbing a peak? Do they pay twice? And if so, would each member of an unroped party have to pay? In any case, how would the Government know? Do Nepalese pot-holes come into the scheme - that is, will the Government pay you £225 for descending 26,000 ft into the ground? Why not? One foresees a rapid growth of interest in prospecting for Nepalese minerals. Will Nepalese miners receive £75 each time they go to work (it may be assumed that they do not go below 25,000 ft)? Friends, we got worries!

And let us not forget the danger to mountaineering in Europe, or indeed in Britain. Suppose that the Government does knock off that bob on petrol - where will they find the revenue to replace it? Mountains! But how will they charge for our smaller domestic hills? Will it be simply in proportion to height (over 2600 ft £22.10.0., 2500-2600 ft £15, below 2500 ft £7.10.0.), or will it be in proportion to bulk, assuming a standard shape for mountains (over 2600 ft 4s.6d., 2500-2600 3s.0d., below 2500 ft 1s.6d.)? And how low will a col have to be in order to divide one ridge into two separate peaks? But we've already had enough trouble with that one. And either way, it makes the Welsh 3000's an expensive day's outing. It's bad enough dodging game-keepers without having to cope with tax collectors as well. But perhaps we should have high railings round all our mountains, with turnstiles at approved points of entry. And perhaps commissionaires ("Queuing at one-and-six and three shillings, plenty of room at four-and-six!"). And where does Entertainment Tax come into the scheme?

The outlook is indeed black. But if, by Government edict, it becomes intolerably expensive to climb other people's mountains, there is a way out for the enterprising. Build your own!

D.C.C.

LLANBERIS PASS - FEBRUARY 15th-17th..... by M.J.MOORE

The giant-sized weather of recent years gave hope for similar conditions and ice-axes were quite obtrusive in ill-concealed anticipation as, after a slight wait for the Nottingham contingent, 26 members and friends boarded Jack Ives' "Eskimo Special" heading for the Pass.

At Shrewsbury we fell willing victims to the Mermaid's siren-call, and found cap'n Arthur Marriott and others of the "Polaris" already in her clutches. At Llangollen the usual fish and chip supper was consumed, and here the "Summit" coach brought us the brief company of Colin and Jean Morris.

The gates of Ynys Ettws were reached without Fisher actually being sick and Brian Cooke became his Good Samaritan, offering him shelter. Walter Richardson also graced the Secretarial abode the first night, but where did he spend Saturday night, and why did he leave in his empty bed-space a pair of snow-soaked trousers? A sad comment on the inconstancy of human nature.

Mr. Ruth Welbourn was allowed to share his wife's tent - a large sign outside reading "UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT" - Patrons may bring their own food and cook INSIDE!!"

The Elders, led by P.R.F., trooped off to the circumspect celibacy of the C.C. Hut; the younger and less rheumy eased themselves under stones, and the Pass returned to slumber under its blanket of wet, new snow.

Saturday the Meet Leader rose late, and with one eye on the weather gathering over the Snowdon group chose to take his party up the Glyder slopes (making, though deviously, for the Gwryd).

The weather worsened, and those attempting the Snowdon Horseshoe were well-advised to call it a day, some going down from the Crib y Ddysgl col, others only after a visit to the summit hotel, where Burgess left his new full-weight - an excuse to bag the peak again next day with Jim Winfield, who had trouble all weekend with a lack of grease in his back axle.

Parsley Fern Gully was ascended but the snow condition disappointed. Jim Bury and Laurie Burns nonchalantly searched for photographs on some "overhanging snow" on the flanks of Crib Goch. Brian Richards and Wilf White, an especially welcome guest, camped near Llydau, made an abortive attempt on Central Gully on Snowdon and a successful traverse of Crib Goch.

On Saturday night, after the evening meal and during a lull in the almost continuous snowfall, there was a sudden vivid lightning flash, followed by a long drawn out peal of thunder which roamed among the mountain-tops,

sullen and threatening. Some thought that an earthquake had followed us from the Midlands, but it was only Panther growling in his sleep. (He was encamped near the shelter-stone with 8 acolytes from the South.)

Sunday was a gloomy day, with more snow and heavy cloud. Social calls were made, constitutionals were taken, and the Elders visited the Gwryd.

The journey back home was unusual in that Burgess was psycho-analysed on the back seat by a trio of "head-shrinkers" - Ashcroft, Winfield and Richardson. From Capel to Derby he recounted, at full volume, with actions, all the seamier experiences of his "Far Eastern phase". Happily all of his "exhibitions" and inhibitions were aired, and he had the benefit of 25 psychiatric interviews (typically one-sided) at one sitting.

He is now fully rehabilitated, back at Tech., and hard at work. At the "Bell" the other night he introduced me to an imaginary Geisha girl called Ping Pong who will insist on following him about. Rather nice, I thought her

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NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - BASLOW, MARCH 23rd.

This was the best-attended (51 members present) and most orderly A.G.M. in the Club's history. As so few members were absent, this report is as short as it decently can be, and if any of those quoted below feel that they have been misrepresented, I assure them that there is no intent to deceive but merely a desire for brevity. Marion Cooke, Len Hatchett and Charlie Cullum possess full and detailed reports which are available for inspection.

The Minutes of the previous A.G.M. having been disposed of, Harry Pretty spoke about Bryn-y-Wern. Mrs. Hall had wanted to sell the estate but had changed her mind. She was unwilling to sign a ten-year lease in case her son wanted to live there. The Club had been given first option on the purchase, but the Committee had decided there was no chance of raising the £5,000 demanded. The present position was that we had paid the rent up to the end of 1956 and Mrs. Hall had now promised to sign a three-year lease.

Harry then spoke about the two Presidential candidates, mentioning Mike's service on the Hut Committee, Phil's as Meets Secretary, and both men's Committee work. He thanked the Officers of the Club for their hard work, and all members for their help and support.

Officers' Reports.

Brian Cooke presented his Secretary's report. Membership was now 89, including nine new members. Of these, about 70 were active. Brian

appealed to members to make newcomers feel welcome. He thanked those who had helped to prepare circulars. Marion Cooke was to carry on with the Log Book and Library, yet to be instituted at the "Bell". He concluded by offering his successor all the help he needed.

Mike Gadd presented his brief Meets Secretary's report. All meets but one had been very well attended and the indoor meets had been a great success. He hoped that the coming year would be as good as the last.

Laurie Burns presented his Treasurer's report, which will be circulated later as a balance sheet. Let it suffice here to report an overall credit balance of £93.9.11d. Pete Cole wanted to reduce subs. for members not able to attend meets, but was told he should have given 28 days' notice for any action to be possible.

Election of Officers and Committee.

Phil Falkner was elected President by 31 votes to 18. His opponent, Mike Moore, was the first to congratulate him.

As there was only one candidate for each of the vacant offices, Charlie Cullum proposed an en bloc approval of the entire list. This was carried nem con. The officers are :-

Vice-President, Harry Pretty; Secretary, Len Hatchett; Assistant Secretary, Bob Parslow; Meets Secretary, Jim Bury, Treasurer, Laurie Burns; Hut Warden, Dave Penlington.

The five committee members elected were: Ernie and Ronni Phillips, Nobby Millward, Mike Moore and Paul Gardiner. The last of these at first tied with Fred Allen, and had a narrow majority in a second vote.

Any Other Business.

This part of the meeting was devoted entirely to a discussion of ByW which is highly condensed here.

Mick Harby opened by suggesting we have a professional valuation, as it might be possible to buy the estate and resell all but ByW, or perhaps to buy ByW alone for about £1,000. It might be necessary to form a private limited company. At the present rent we should pay £1,000 in 20 years.

Phil Falkner said the Club's views must be ascertained, and Laurie Burns opposed Mick's suggestions. George Sutton proposed the formation of a sub-committee to go into the matter more fully.

Marion Cooke was opposed to buying, in view of the hut's position, and advised waiting for a year. Brian Cooke said we should ask Mrs. Hall for

first option if the estate again came up for sale. Our refusal of her first offer had probably been advantageous.

Dave Penlington said that the first two years' takings on the hut had been £90 and £150, and this year's looked like reaching £250. Profits were handsome and the hut would be a sound investment.

Phil Falkner asked for guidance on the Committee's future actions and asked which of three courses should be pursued: (1) buy the whole estate, (2) buy ByW alone if possible, or (3) take a three-year lease and consider purchase later. Voting was (1) 0, (2) 26, (3) 22. Phil emphasised that the Club would be consulted before any action was taken.

There was some intricate counterpoint involving Gerry Britton, Marion Cooke, Joe Johnson, Mick Harby, Bob Pettigrew and George Sutton, mainly about the desirability of the hut's location. Tony Smith pointed out that the heavy bookings proved its popularity, and we also had reciprocal rights with many clubs. This provoked loud applause.

After a rather repetitious passage, Mike Moore proposed that the Committee consider the purchase of ByW but not the whole estate. At the same time they should look for another hut in a better location, either instead of ByW or as an addition. Before committing the Club financially, the Committee would circulate a referendum. Charlie Cullum seconded this.

Phil Falkner said that people should not vote in favour of this unless they were prepared to make a long-term loan to the Club of at least £5.

Gerry Britton and Mick Harby were insistent about an immediate valuation. This suggestion was added to Mike Moore's proposal, which was carried nem con. In the meantime, the Committee will proceed with the three year lease.

The only Other Business was a tankard of rum and orange.

D.C.C.

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c/o 4295 Dorchester St. West,
Westmount, Montreal,
P.Q., Canada.

To the Oread M.C.

Dear All,

Having been here for almost five months now, I have more or less settled down to my new way of life, although there is still something new to learn each day. Montreal itself is not a very large city, but if you include all its suburbs, it is vast, covering almost entirely the Isle of Montreal.

The city is not very old and it seems to reflect upon the people too who are extremely young at heart and very elementary in their knowledge of the ways of the world in general. Nevertheless, they are a warm-hearted people and when once you know them are very easy to get along with.

Montreal being in the province of Quebec, the populace is 75% French, the other 25% consisting of all nations, making it a very cosmopolitan place.

The first thing I found out to my delight on arriving in Canada was that Montreal is almost on the doorstep to the biggest winter sports ground in the whole of America, namely the Laurentians mountains. These mountains are akin to the South Downs, only a little higher and very thickly wooded, making a veritable winter playground. The main pastime, of course, is ski-ing. Anyone who does not do so is just a nobody. It was this that prompted me to acquire a pair of boards in the first two weeks of my being here.

Thus equipped, I headed north the very next weekend to St. Adele. On reaching my destination, the sight took my breath away. St. Adele has everything a ski centre should have. To give you some idea of the size of the resort, it will suffice to say that there are no less than eleven ski towns in operation, with ski runs ranging from the easiest of nursery slopes to top class slalom. In this fantastic place I took my first lesson in ski-ing. Incidentally, this is only one of many such places in the Laurentians, in fact the total is something like 36, large and small, the most famous of all being "Mont Tremblant" with one of the hardest downhill runs in the world. In addition to this, there is ski-ing on "Mount Royal" in the centre of the city, a matter of 15 minutes walk away from my place of habitation. This also boasts a ski tow and there is some fine ski-ing to be done there.

You might be pleased to hear I am now a member of the Canadian Alpine Club (Montreal section) and we hope to make our first contact with rock this year on Sunday. This will be my debut so I will do my best not to let the good name of the Oread down, although I feel a little rusty after six months of idleness.

There are four ranges of mountains within 100 miles of Montreal where you can find climbing, namely the Laurentians, White mountains, Green mountains and the Adirondachs. The latter is very much like Wales in appearance, also the last three are in the States, but there is no difficulty in getting to them as the customs are very lax.

On my summer vacation, I am making a trip to Texas in order to see my sister, Gwen, in El Paso. It will give me an opportunity to see something of America as I will pass through five of its States. I suppose most of you people have already made plans to go on the Continent, I would like to be with you.

I will bid my farewell to you all for the present. Maybe next year I may climb with you again, who knows? Some of the happiest days of my life were spent with the Oread, and I will never forget you, such characters as Moore, the Turners, Cookes, Frettys, Phillips, Welbourn, etc., etc. I could write another page.

May I wish good climbing to you all and many pleasant hours in the hills.

14, Queen's Drive,
Beeston, Notts.

Sir,

Being in entire agreement with your hypothesis that the snowman is actually a whale, I feel that the following additional evidence of flights of whales in mountainous country may be of interest.

John Leo, the old Barbary Traveller, describes a Temple of Whales, constructed largely of whale bones, and continues "On either side of the temple, there are rocks that shoot two miles into the sea, and wound the Whales when they light upon them". Quite obviously, the whales referred to were flying too low and crashed into the rocks. Then the great Herman Melville in chapter 57 of "Moby Dick" writes "again in mountainous countries from some lucky viewpoint you will catch passing glimpses of the profiles of whales."

It is also worthy of note that one commonly finds reference to whales in the names of places far from the sea. Surely the name "Whaley Bridge" indicates that at one time whales used to pass that way on their flights from the Atlantic to the Peak, probably during an era when the Pennines were still glaciated.

Finally, in case there are people still unconvinced, we have scriptural authority for whales in the mountains. Jonah (Ch.2,v.6), describing his experience whilst inside the whale, writes "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains." Surely, this can only mean that at some stage of its flight, Jonah's whale had visited the upper regions of the mountains.

Yours etc.,

Philip R. Falkner.

(Other references of interest are the climbing song about the "old man who was weeping and whaling" and the "Whaling Wall" of Biblical times - believed to be a precipice above the Dead Sea. There can now be little doubt that the curious objects sighted by Frank Smythe over Everest in 1933, which he described as resembling kite-balloons, were in fact whales. The mechanism of flight seems to be thus: the whale flies upside down, supporting itself by a jet of air from its spout-hole after the manner of a flying bedstead, and propelling itself by oscillations of its flukes. - Ed.)

Arthur's Pass,
Southern Alps,
New Zealand.

Dear Creads,

I hope all is well with the Club. I'm writing this card in a hut at Arthur's Pass which is the climbing centre for Christchurch. There are seven peaks above 7000 ft and many lower ones within a weekend's access. Some of the peaks carry permanent snow. Mount Rolleston is the highest "local" peak. There are ridges approaching from E and W which make good climbing. The North Otira face is the real attraction. This can be V.S. in winter. Yesterday a Kiwi and I climbed a 6700 ft peak called Mt.Phipps. A traverse round a rock tower on the ascending ridge was interesting. I should appreciate a Club magazine. My address for six months is 47 Hackthorne Road, Cashmere, Christchurch, N.Z. God bless,

Yours,
Jack Leeson.

Sir,

I have just received the Oread Newsletter for February and thought Brian Richards might like to know that Peter Harding and I did five or six routes, mainly S and VS standard, at Dawson's Rocks between 1945 and 1949. One, I remember vividly, we called the Swashbuckle. It went over a rotten overhang near the middle of the cliff. Other climbs we named Oak Tree Crack, Stonnis Slab, Ash Tree Groove, Gorse Groove and Beech Corner. I doubt if I could identify these - at least without a visit!

Yours,
Tony Moulam.

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OREADS IN SHORTS

Elaine Collins, nee Tye, flies to Lagos in early May, to join her husband, and she wishes to dispose of the following climbing gear:- 1 Ice-axe, 1 rucksack (framed), 1 sleeping bag, 1 pair of boots (Vibrams, size 6). Enquiries to the Hon. Ed.

Phil Falkner, Ken Griffiths and Jack Ashcroft are in the latest batch of Club engagements. John Bridges and Bob Pettigrew have already married (though not each other, of course). Congratulations to all of you and any others.

Comment made to Stewart Clunie, Phil's "P.G.": "I do think it inconsiderate of Phil to have lived with you for four years and then marry another woman."

This undernourished Newsletter contains all the contributions submitted during the last two months. Apparently 89 members have done nothing to speak of since the February issue came out. We don't have to have a Newsletter, of course, but it would be nice if you'd write something, if only "Goodbye". Hon. Ed. is D.C.Cullum, 11 Corkland Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester 21.

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