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EDITORIAL

I have solved (almost, at any rate) the mystery of the Abominable Snowman. After prolonged researches, I have reached the astounding but unavoidable conclusion that he is what we have hitherto regarded as a sea-creature, namely, a whale.

This may strike you as improbable, yet there is ample evidence that the whale is, or was until comparatively recent times, amphibious. Whales have been found far inland - in Limbardy, Paris, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and most significantly, at the base of the Alps and among the peaks of Scotland. Herman Melville, a renowned cetologist, is my authority. Furthermore, Eckermann, in his "Conversations with Goethe", says, "..... we saw in the 'Berlin Gazette' that whales had been introduced on the stage there." (This may have been in connection with an operatic version, now lost, of "Moby Dick", by Richard Wagner) There can therefore be no doubt that whales have frequently ventured far from the sea. Biologically there can be no objection, for the whale is a warm-blooded creature taking its breath by means of a pair of lungs. Even in its usual habitat it has to surface hourly for air. But there remains one important question: how does the whale travel over land? And the simple answer is: it flies.

I must admit that I haven't quite figured out how it does this, but there is ample evidence for the fact itself. In "The Faerie Queen" we find the line: "Like as the wounded whale to shore flies thro' the maine". This shows not only that the whale can fly, but that when in difficulty it makes for dry land. Cowper too had seen whales flying, for in his verses "On the Queen's Visit to London" he writes: "Upspouted by a whale in air" And in "Miriam Coffin, or the Whale Fisherman" there is a clear description of a take-off: "Suddenly a mighty mass emerged from the water, and shot up perpendicularly into the air. It was the whale." Even Hamlet described what he took to be a cloud as "very like a whale". Brother, that was no cloud, that was a genuine whale: Maybe flying saucers

Now if the whale is an amphibious flying animal, what could be more natural for it than to migrate to mountainous regions? There the air is clean and pure, as at sea, there too are cool lakes in which the whale may find refreshment, and which contain abundant fish on which it may feed. That it does so is amply borne out. In "A Voyage to Greenland" (1671) it is written, "One of our harpooners told me that he had once caught a whale in Spitzbergen" (It is a pity George Sutton saw no whales actually on the island during his more recent visit.) Again, Obed Macy, in his "History of Nantucket", describes how "In the year 1690 some persons were on a high hill observing the whales spouting

and sporting with each other." - And as trustworthy a witness as the Rev. Henry T. Cheever, in "The Whale and his Captors", described an accident which befell one of this companions: "The whale fell directly over him, and probably killed him in a moment." Obviously a mountaineering tragedy of unusual character. Does it not even seem likely that the word "Wales" is itself a corruption of "whales"? Land of whales, land of wales, Wales. H'mm. Hackluyt supports this etymological connection: "While you take in hand to school others, and to teach them by what name a whale-fish is to be called in our tongue, leaving out, through ignorance, the letter H you deliver that which is not true." This seems to deny the actual presence of whales in Wales, but had he ever been there? I doubt it.

Well, I've proved that whales can and do fly to the mountains, but so far I've not shown the connection with the Snowman. Admittedly, it's difficult to see how a whale could make those tracks. But is it stretching credulity too far to suggest that "yeti" is derived from the Latin "ceti", whales? It is? Too bad. But just you try to disprove it.

D.C.C.

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BULLSTONES - January 12/13th. by LEN HATCHETT

Two eyes, a beard and a great deal of South Georgian English rolled in the mud from beneath a heap of rucksack and green anorak The President was leading the first meet of 1957. Owing to trains, buses and drinking hours proving unco-operative, the intentions of Harry, Laurie Burns, Jim Kershaw and myself to arrive at Bullstones in daylight went astray, and it was three o'clock before we left Ladybower Inn. The collapse of the first stile beneath Harry was too much; our joy was unconfined.

It took a long time to walk along the Edges and it was soon dark, but the night was perfect. Moonlight lit the wide sweep of moorland, the ground crackled with frost beneath our feet and the wind was keen.

Ruth and John were at the cabin early, and Dave Penlington and Janet arrived with the tail end of the Ladybower group. Eleven bodies plus gear - and lilos for the softies - made for warm and cosy sleeping Saturday night. It is well known the President suffers from irritable parts, and the application of talc to these was a revealing feature of the weekend. After considerable thrutching about, he subsided in his sleeping bag, hirsute and fragrant, with an expression of a cat having just enjoyed cream

Geoff Hayes, Roger Turner and wife arrived about 1.30 a.m. The joy of arriving being dampened by the sleepy grunts of welcome, they went off to the second cabin which is now sans sheep carcass.

The choas of breakfast Sunday morning was not improved when Harry, who was again suffering, after much delving about his person produced a primus

pricker. From the expression of wonder on his face, one gathered he might have laid the thing.

A late start ruled out a route over Bleaklow, but the weather was ideal for a walk over the tops. The return to Ladybower was made through the woods to West End and then upwards by the footpath to Alport Caskes. Views of Alport dale, Edale valley, Kinder and Lose Hill on one hand and the backward sweep of the reservoirs on the other were delightful. Out of the wind, the sun was warming and gave excuse for frequent stops to admire the sky and valleys, even the play of sunlight on the smoke from that chimney. The road was reached finally through Crookhill farm in time to catch the three o'clock bus to Sheffield. Everyone agreed the meet was a good start to the year.

Of course, Harry should have written this account, but, owing to his mind still dwelling on the delights B.A. has to offer a virile youth, he asked me to deputise.

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BETTER THAN NOTHING by BRIAN RICHARDS

There comes a time during every climber's life when during an enforced absence from Wasdale, Llanberis and even Baslow, he feels a yen to climb anything at all remotely resembling a rock face. It is then that first ascents are made on garden walls, canal bridges, tall trees and public buildings.

I have been unable to get out climbing since last October, and feeling in a desperate frame of mind, set out one recent Saturday afternoon with Wilf White of the Peak Climbing Club, bound for Anchor Church. The climbing here is even more rubbishy than Trevor Panther's opinion of that at Bryn-y-Wern, but it is at least near at hand, and is to my mind, climbing apart, a very interesting spot to visit.

Anchor Church is a "hermit's dwelling" by the banks of the Trent between Repton and Ingleby. It is marked "Anchor Church" on the 1" O.S. map of Derby and Burton-on-Trent about 1/2 mile N. of Foremark Hall. A sandstone cliff facing the Trent floodland falls a sheer 40 feet, and two large caves, complete with doors and windows, have been carved out of the face of the cliff.

The best climb on this crag is started immediately below the window of the extreme left-hand cave. I think Green Arete would be an appropriate name for it, about Difficult in standard.

After a very delicate climb into the cave window from ground level, we gained the arete above, again via the window, and continued to the top of the exposed arete on smooth rounded holds. I had a nasty moment while leading this pitch, when an embedded pebble came out in my hand a split second before I put my full weight on it. There was a good tree-stump belay at the tope of the arete.

The next climb to tackle seemed to be the long steep crack in the corner adjacent to the arete. Wilf led off but was stopped about 12 feet up by rotten rock and a forbidding overhang. Despite all manner of acrobatic and determined efforts, he had to come down at last, declaring that it should go with the help of an inserted chockstone and a runner. Any triers?

Our next attempt was on a groove leading leftwards to the top, which was started up the right-hand lintel of the door to the right of the crack. Again we were baffled. We each managed to gain the sloping ledge above the door but couldn't reverse the move back on to the windowledge, and had to have a top rope to get down.

By now darkness was approaching, so we walked back towards the road. On the way past the crag, we noticed a chimney which may yield a route if the climber isn't too choosy about the exact nature of his climbs.

About $\frac{1}{2}$ mile W. of the Hartshorne - Ticknall road, also marked on the 1" O.S. map of the district, be Dawson's Rocks. Although again sandstone, the rock here is more reliable than that at Anchor Church, and is worth a visit provided that a suitable state of desperation is first attained. I first climbed here about $2\frac{1}{2}$ years ago, when bursting with enthusiasm for my new-found sport. It was here that I peeled off for the first time. I was attempting the steep wall at the extreme left-hand end of the face when my footholds snapped off and I dropped, but was well held on the doubled clothes-line by my younger brother, belayed round a tree at the top of the wall. I've never yet climbed this wall, and a more experienced eye now tells me that the finish is very delicate and probably rotten.

However, I have done a couple of dirty gullies about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way along the crag. At the right-hand end there is a vertical smooth wall with some initials carved on it by, I suspect, an abseiler or a rope dangler. At the left-hand edge of this wall is a route. One laybacks up a crack and on to a ledge below a silver birch tree with very strong roots. When standing on this ledge, one can either continue up the crack from which the birch tree grows, or stride across to another ledge on the left and up a short arete. Me? I've done neither. I felt so unsafe on the ledge that I retreated to terra firma. One day perhaps, when I'm fit

Wilf White has visited this old quarry and done all "my" routes. He tells me he's done another crack at the right-hand side of the initialed wall. I can't remember noticing this, but it brings the total of routes up to four. In time perhaps someone will write a guide to the place and post a copy to the stalwarts of Tunbridge Wells.

IS YOUR TENT WATER-PROOF? by C. HOOLEY

If your tent is not waterproof, try this tip which I picked up during my travels.

To carry out this process, one needs for a normal-size tent and fly sheet 1½ oz of isinglass, 1 oz of commercial alum (not chrome), ¼ oz of soft soap, and four pints of soft water - preferably rain water. Two pans, one to hold at least four pints, and the other to hold two pints, will also be required.

First mix the isinglass in the small pan with one pint of the water and bring carefully to the boil, stirring well until the isinglass is dissolved. Then strain the liquid through a piece of clean muslin into the larger pan. Next pour a further pint of the soft water into the smaller pan and this time dissolve in it the soap, once again boiling, stirring and finally straining the liquid into the larger pan. The process is once more repeated, this time with the alum and the two remaining pints of water. It will be found that, of all three ingredients used, the alum will be the most reluctant to dissolve.

The large pan will now contain four pints of honey-coloured liquid, which should next be heated slowly and brought to the boil, care being taken to keep it stirred all the while. When this has been done, the mixture is ready for applying to the tent. This part of the process is carried out with a clean paint brush while the tent is erected - preferably in the open air. Special care should be paid to seams in the tent material, and to the places subjected to the most strain and stretching by the guy lines. One application will be sufficient to make the tent completely waterproof, but there will probably be enough liquid left to give it a second coating. Do not fold the tent or pack away until completely dry.

It will be found that there are several advantages in this method of re-proofing. The texture of the tent material remains unaffected, and there is practically no increase in weight. Also, although waterproof, the material is not made air-proof, and there is, therefore, no troublesome condensation inside the tent in damp or cold weather.

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CHRISTMAS JOTTINGS by PAUL GARDINER

Being occupied with the production of a well-known brew on the Saturday morning prior to Christmas prevented me from giving Penlington a month's salary for a seat on the coach to Bryn-y-Wern, and so casting aside all care and reason, I blued the better part of a month's basic petrol allowance, and with Dave Welbourn for ballast set off for Wales about 2 p.m. on the Saturday.

We made reasonable time to Llangollen in spite of continuous rain, and after a short break we pressed on via Bala and Ffestiniog to arrive at the hut about 6.15 p.m. One must mention the major catastrophe which was upon us by

Sunday evening, a disaster of such magnitude as to fill even Fisher's heart with great dread - the cask was empty! A committee met immediately to discuss the situation and the outcome was a relief party consisting of "Bocklwyd" Bird, Chuck Hooley and the writer dispatched to Portmadoc early (12 noon) the following morning with orders to return with nothing less than a crate of good wholesome beer.

Shopping for some 23 people occupied the three of us for the better part of three hours, and by that time the Triumph was stern heavy under a crate of ale, 7 lbs of sprouts, twelve loaves, umpteen bottles of wine, four bottles of milk, enough nuts for a colony of monkeys, "Babycham" for Margaret Hooley and a patent bog de-odoriser, this last item representing by far the best I'd invested in for many a day. Chuck also obtained a tube of plastic wood which he told me he intended to employ in the soldering together of two wires (it's surprising what one can buy nowadays!)

We say the Birmingham Cave & Crag in town and I pass on a tip from Digger Williams which may be of use to certain Oread. If your digestion is not what it might be, try Stergene (Welbourn reports excellent results).

Boxing Day dawned bright and clear, little did we know that most of the roads in North Wales were blocked by snow, and therefore it came as quite a shock when we heard the news over the radio. Bird and I set off on the homeward journey about 2.30 p.m. with Janet perched in the back for the short run to Tremadoc. However, we had only progressed about fifty yards when we became bogged down in the snow, wheels spinning madly. Ice-axes and six man-power soon dislodged us from this first drift, but this state of affairs was repeated several times before we eventually fought our way to the main road near Dolbenmaer.

The Tremadoc - Caernarvan road was found to be very "dicey" and we slithered from rut to rut into Portmadoc with hard packed snow grating on the sump and beating against the underside of the wings in a terrifying manner.

Janet was deposited at Portmadoc station and Bird and I, little realising how soon we should be seeing that outpost of British Railways again, pushed off once more for Maentwrog. The causeway was crossed, we paid our 6d. at the toll and from then on things began to go wrong. The snow became deeper and more compact so that we soon found that a number plate is an inefficient snow plough. At one point we found ourselves out of control and heading for the port wall at far too great a velocity and it was then that we decided it was time to pack in we turned round and ploughed back into Portmadoc. The rest of the journey home is a tale of looking for a garage on Boxing Day in Wales, of cold railway compartments and even colder waiting rooms, of six hours in a sleeping bag on No. 4 platform, of Crewe station, of continually swigging rum to keep out the cold, and of other little odds and ends like getting engaged, arriving at work late and then falling asleep over the desk. Anyone got a set of tyre chains to flog?

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The Editor, O.M.C. Newsletter.

Sir,

Once again the fear is being expressed that the Oread is becoming soft and degenerate. It is said that members do not turn out on meets with the same enthusiasm as of old, and that when they do turn out, they do very little climbing, etc., etc. Now I think that certain points need clarifying.

First, people come on climbing meets because they want to, and because they enjoy climbing. If they do not want to come, I doubt very much whether well-meaning appeals from the President, the Hon.Ed. or anyone else will make them do so. Any anyway, is there really any point in trying to drag unwilling people out on meets?

Second, it is unreasonable to expect the same people to remain quite as keen as ever year after year. The little band of youthful enthusiasts who built up the Oread in its early years are no longer quite so youthful and most of them have acquired ties and responsibilities of some kind. Also some of the novelty is bound to wear off. I still enjoy climbing on Tryfan and Stanage, and I hope that I shall go on doing so for a long time yet, but I will freely admit that I cannot get as excited over the prospect of a visit to either of these now familiar crags as I did twelve years ago when they were a new and enchanting prospect for me.

The third point follows from this. The future vitality of the club does depend very much on attracting keen young members who are coming to the hills for the first time; and I sometimes wonder if we are going the right way about this. These cosy family parties at Bryn-y-Wern are all very nice (I enjoy them immensely myself) but are they really what the younger people want? Trevor Panther's particular brand of fanaticism does not greatly appeal to me at the moment, but ten years ago I think it probably would have done, and I have a definite feeling that the injection of a bit of neo-Pantherism into the policy of the Oread might be all to the good.

Yours faithfully,

P.R.Falkner.

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Members who may visit Bryn-y-Wern in the future and are confronted by the magnificent new log burning fireplace in the lounge, may find the following useful.

AN ODE TO BRYN-Y-WERN by AN ODD ODER.

Poplar gives a bitter smoke
And fills one's eyes and makes one choke.
Elm wood burns like church yard mould,
Even the very flames are cold.

Ash wet or ash dry
 A queen should warm her slippers by.
 Oak logs will warm you well
 If they're old and dry.
 Larch logs of pinewood smell
 But the sparks will fly.
 Beech logs for Christmas time,
 Yew logs heat well.
 Scotch logs it is a crime
 For anyone to sell.
 Birch logs will burn too fast,
 Chestnut scarce at all,
 Hawthorn logs are good to last
 If cut in the Fall.
 Holly logs will burn like wax;
 You should burn them green.
 Elm logs like smouldering flax
 No flame to be seen.
 Pear logs and apple logs
 They will scent your room.
 Cherry logs across the dogs
 Smell like flowers in bloom.
 But ashlogs all smooth and grey
 Burn them green or old,
 Buy up all that come your way
 They're worth their weight in gold.

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TO JACK AND TAHSINIA by C. HOOLEY.

I wonder how many of the club, who spent Christmas at Bryn-y-Wern have cast their minds back to the trip home that nearly wasn't.

All the Oreads dutifully arrived at the rendezvous at 3pm to find the bus absent; were they worried? Not a bit. All that happened was an immediate discussion on how to persuade various employers that, due to snow and ice, all roads, lanes, footpaths and air routes were impassable. This was due, I think, to it snowing the day before we were due to return home, and no one, I'm sure, would have minded staying on over the weekend.

This was not to be, for as several of us were making our way down the lane towards Dolbenmaen, Dave Penlington cried, "Look, the bus!", and sure enough, being familiar with the lines of Jack Ives diesel coach, I could see it approaching us along the road from Tremadoc to Caernarvon. Jack, it appeared, had quite a sticky time trying to reach us from Shrewsbury: any other driver I'm sure, would have not even attempted to fetch us, conditions being as they were. But he won through, after skidding at Corwen by the turning to Bala, and having to dig his bus out at Llangollen. In fact, it was the local snow plough

that caught up with Jack and gave him some gravel which he stored in the luggage compartment for use en route. Actually what Jack had done was to analyse in his mind all the various routes and pick the one which he thought most likely to be open, and I could see from the return journey that, even though he chose the A5, he still had to use the bus as a snow plough on various sections.

Jack asked me to keep him company in the cab for the return trip, and I was very impressed with the way that he drove up the Nant Gwynant, that long arduous climb up to the Pen-y-Gwrhyd Hotel, the way he fought the wheel each time the deep rutted frozen snow tried to take command, as railway lines take trains on predetermined routes.

At last the Pen-y-Gwrhyd was reached and a drink plus sandwiches were in order all round, onward then to Corwen with a "Bon Voyage" from Jack Longland who was staying at the Pen-y-Gwrhyd over Christmas. Corwen was not as we know it - an alpine village would be a better description, into which the Oreads had suddenly been transplanted plus bus, with Jack fighting the wheel as we strove to steer a straight course along the main street. Suddenly I spotted a figure dressed in mountaineering clothes, looking intently at the bus as it clawed its way towards him. "Stop!", I cried to Jack, "It's an Oread." It was indeed. Geoff Hayes, whom we had been expecting at B-y-W on Christmas Day when the blizzard first struck, had managed, with great difficulty, to reach Corwen on his B.S.A. Bantam, and had at last been beaten by the extremely bad conditions of the roads. Geoff was staying in Corwen that night, then going on to B-y-W next day, so with an exchange of farewells and best wishes we pressed on for home.

Soon was my undoing, for I had promised myself that I would be Jack's second pair of eyes, ready to alert him should he doze off and warn him of danger on the near side of the cab. It was I who slept, and the next thing I remember was Jack pulling the bus to a stop in Whittington. "O.K. for a drink?" said Jack. "Right", I replied, and into the pub by which we had stopped went Jack and I, the rest of the Oreads pouring forth from the bowels of the bus and following suit. A warm by the fire and a warm drink inside, and we were ready for the road once more.

Then our next enemy struck - thick, impenetrable fog. "What do you think, Jack?" I asked. "Well now," he said, "you watch that side and I'll look after this side." Then with a calm, steady composure which he must have known many a time at sea and must have been with him when he was torpedoed and spent weeks adrift on a raft in mid-ocean with meagre rations, he proceeded to drive us, a bus load of sleepy Oreads, safely to Derby and home.

The only stretch of road free from snow, ice and fog was from Muckley Corner to Derby, the distance travelled being 140 miles in something like 10 hours. We arrived in Derby around 2.45am, the average speed being 15mph en route.

I think you will all agree with me that Jack deserves a pat on the back for that trip. It was one of many I have been on with Jack, and by far the worst. Yes, he has certainly earned his name as the mountaineers' aide-de-camp to the mountains.

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OREADS IN SHORTS

George Sutton is now working in Liverpool, and letters to him should be addressed to The Domestic Mission, Mill Street, Liverpool 8.

George has also been asked to be President of the Derbyshire Adventure Club, whose first meet was scheduled for February 16th at Baslow. Eric Byne is to be on the committee.

The Hon.Ed. had his appendix removed on January 29th. Mother and child are both doing well.

The Oread Expedition to Austria departs on March 2nd and are now wondering whether to take climbing gear instead of skis, owing to the reported absence of snow from the Tyrol.

Mrs. Hall, the owner of Bryn-y-Wern, is in the process of selling the estate. Her price (£5,000) is hopelessly beyond our means, and at present our only hope appears to be to negotiate a new lease with the purchaser, if any.

It's nice to see some new names at the top of this month's articles, but over 70 of you didn't contribute to this issue. But there's another due in a month's time, and the Hon.Ed. is D.C.Cullum, 11 Corkland Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester 21.

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