

Surely such an occasion cannot pass by without a mention in the Newsletter. For the first time in many months a bus was being run and furthermore filled to capacity. All credit to the Meet Leader Pete Gwyer and the many prominent and distinguished motorists who were to be seen mixing with their more pedestrian fellowmembers. No Bishop crossed a stream with less condensation. No election candidate handled a referendum great with as brave a smile.

OREAD

A bus passenger. It could hardly be otherwise when this party of passengers are confined together in a steel wheelbarrow for several hours in acute physical discomfort. There is a feeling of uttering nobly borne for the good of others, of a brotherhood among a common disaster. For a brief time Oread is fettered to Oread as inescapably as fate to fate in a Georgia churning. The hour of liberty and release is the same logging.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

One of the highlights of the outward journey was the distribution of railway travel literature by Moore at Infield. Most of it was converted into three foot long paper strips which sped about the bus to the danger of the passengers. It brought to mind those travel analogies which are used to explain relativity to the layman.

Boles of lightning. Points of lightning track simultaneously in front and behind a moving train. Observer A on the embankment with a set of mirrors, and Observer B proceeding along the track on top of it.

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falling. Newton's law of gravitation. There is a degree of gravitation. Physicists being used for the problem.

I admit the scientific detachment which they display in these alarming circumstances. They are holding their objects from their pockets, and watch their coins and keys and ground weightless in the air.

It is perhaps going a little far to transport them (still in the lift) into outer space, and wind them on a cable by some supernatural force, or attach the lift to the rim of a huge

LLANBERIS MEET January 25th - 26th

A Bus passenger

Surely such an occasion cannot pass by without a mention in the Newsletter. For the first time in many months a bus was being run and furthermore filled to capacity. All credit to the Meet Leader Pete Gayfer and the many prominent and distinguished motorists who were to be seen mixing with their more pedestrian fellowmembers. No Bishop graced a tramcar with less condescension. No election candidate handled a noisome brat with as brave a smile.

A bus certainly fosters a sense of unity amongst its passengers. It could hardly be otherwise when thirtyodd individuals are confined together in a steel box on wheels for several hours in acute physical discomfort. There is a feeling of suffering nobly borne for the good of others, of a brotherhood sharing a common disaster. For a brief time Oread is fettered to Oread as inescapably as felon to felon in a Georgia chaingang. The hour of liberty and release is awaited with the same longing. Was America hailed by Columbus with any more joy than The Mermaid on a Friday night by the Oread?

One of the highlights of the outward journey was the distribution of railway travel literature by Moore at Lichfield. Most of it was converted into three foot long paper darts, which sped about the bus to the danger of the passengers. It brought to mind those travel analogies which are used to explain relativity to the layman.

Bolts of lightning striking a railway track simultaneously in front and behind a moving train. Observer A on the embankment with a set of mirrors, and Observer B precariously balanced on top of the train with a similar apparatus. When A is opposite B will the lightning flashes appear simultaneous to both of them? Knowing British Railways it all seems highly irregular, especially when the train is speeded up to 136, 284 miles a second to simplify the problem.

What about the poor devil on the roof? Will not A be somewhat startled at the sudden speedup of the 8.10 to Dragthorpe?

I always like the one about the physicists in the lift falling freely down an immensely high building in accordance with Newton's Law of Gravitation. There is a degree of justice in physicists being used for the problem.

I admire the scientific detachment which they display in these alarming circumstances. They experiment with small objects from their pockets, and watch their coins and keys float around weightless in the air.

It is perhaps going a little too far to transport them (still in the lift) into outer space, and wind them on a cable by some supernatural force, or attach the lift to the rim of a huge

merrygoround. Deluded by the restoration of gravity they think all is well again, and eagerly await release on the ground floor of Steins Superstores. Even a physicist deserves some consideration.

To get back to the Llanberis Meet. The more affluent members of the party alighted at Pen-y-Gwryd, and those with historical interests at Pen-y-Pas. A considerable number of people also attempted to camp in this area including Betty and Paul Gardiner and Pete Gayfer. Phil Falkner stayed at Ynys Ettws, and Moore, Hatchett, Pretty and myself near Cwm Glas Mawr. John and Ruth Welbourn, John Bridges and several others went in search of the Chester Club Hut. L.K. White and Kim Rumford stayed in Nant Peris.

The erection of tents in pitch darkness and heavy rain, on a foundation of thawing snow was most unpleasant. I hadn't got a torch and spent a considerable time feeling around for aluminium tentpegs in the snow. When I had got the flysheet on I crept inside to find that the Lilo plugs were missing, and spent some time tying pieces of torn handkerchief around the nozzles. I was fortunately spared the necessity of making fire having remembered to bring matches. The primus stove was soon going full blast and drying out the tent. Before long I was warm inside a sleeping bag and eating chicken soup.

Saturday was fine with a glimmer of sunshine breaking through the clouds although the bulk of the snow had disappeared from the low lying ground. Hatchett, Moore and Pretty and myself made our way up Cwm Glas and Parsley Fern Gully in soft snow. Frequent stops were made for the photographers in the party. (What happens to these photographs? only a small percentage of them find their way onto a screen. I suppose it is a modern twist to the time honoured "lock at the view" method of regaining one's breath) At the top of the gully we met John and Janet Ashcroft and David Wilcocks who had finished a day on Snowdon and were descending. We followed their example but by a different route, and after reaching camp and cooking a meal were transported to Pen-y-Pas by Eric Phillips. Here we found the carpets from the Pen-y-Pas area which had been washed out, and Geoff Thompson and party. (I have described the occurrences on Saturday night and Sunday in last month's newsletter)

The return journey of the coach was rather uneventful. We learned that conditions in the Chester Club Hut were not quite so up to Bryn-y-Wern standard, and that the one leak in the roof was over John Welbourn's bed. There was the usual stop at Shrewsbury for food and drink. The familiar few hundred yards of street which is all one ever seems to see of Shrewsbury. Wilfred Thomas Pinches was incredibly enough the new landlord at one of the public houses. The portcullis was lowered over the Gents in the square. The Bass house next to Gullet Passage had been modernised inside but spared the accompanying juke box. The one armed man was no longer behind the bar. The funereal white wash of an empty shop-

window underlined the ironic epitaph, "Dulleys Successful Seeds". Perhaps he has moved to less stony ground.

There is something about busmeets. When they are a thing of the past, which need not be for some time yet, the memory of them will linger on.

Some Flying Dutchman Tahsinia will flicker along A.5 on a Friday night with Jack Ives at the helm and a crew of damned souls in the seats eternally searching for the pure maiden who alone can bring them redemption.

A phrase drifts on the air for a moment as they pass, ".....mysisterscats.....", a familiar haggard face with blood-shot eyes looks out of the rear window

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OGWEN MEET 22nd - 23rd February John Ashcroft

Intent on making it a good weekend come what may, a coach containing 25 Oreads and appendages left the Midlands on the Friday night. In spite of rash promises made by the Meet Leader accommodation for most of the party was the camping and barn facilities offered by Mr. Williams Isaf. A few of the party partook of the luxuries offered by such places as Helyg, Glan Dena and Ogwen Cottage "One more" took luxury into Cwm Idwal and wasn't seen from coach arrival until coach departure (Permissible this year. He wasn't the Meet Leader)

Saturday morning we awoke to find it snowing with low cloud. As 11 o'clock approached things looked brighter with the tops looking inviting and pure after their fresh fall of snow. Spirits rose and parties set off in various directions. Early afternoon, when all were set on their ways, down came the cloud again with rain this time. In spite of this, an inquest later in the day revealed that Tryfan, The Glyders and the major summits of the Carneddau had all been attained by various parties. A Burgess party had managed Snowdon (By Handley carriage to Pen-y-Pas)

In order to refresh the entire party after the rigours of the day, the coach was organised in the evening. Certain people boarded the coach in bare feet, footwear in hand, in order to ensure comfort during their refreshment period. The coach driver noticing this was heard to remark "Now I know you're mad" So the mad bus load moved off to Capel where an enjoyable evening was spent in the cosiness of the back room of the "Tyn-y-Coed". The only shadow of the evening was the knowledge that two young Manchester University climbers who had been staying at Helyg had been seriously injured whilst attempting the Girdle Traverse of the East Face of Tryfan (Not the Idwal Slabs as announced in the press). On hearing the details we realised that a party of us had been on South Rib when the accident occurred. We knew nothing

of the happening until arrival back at camp out of the mist and rain of Tryfan.

The rain which had started to fall on the Saturday afternoon continued through Saturday night. Sunday morning once again the rain stopped about 11 o'clock. It was to stay this time and so those parties who ventured forth returned mid-afternoon quite dry. Some had walked. Others had climbed on the Slabs or the Milestones.

Weather conditions were looking rosier as the coach left Ogwen. It seems Wales just gets wetter for Oread meets. I say Oread meet with some reservation. Of the 25 who travelled on the Friday night only 7 were Oread members although it must be mentioned that Beryl and Roger Turner and one prospective member, gallantly hitch-hiked up for the meet.

The journey home was mainly uneventful. It was apparent that many felt healthily tired after an active weekend. Burgess was lamenting the loss of a few square inches of canvas from his new Guinea Minor tent (Yes he now owns a tent except for the above mentioned few square inches) One of the many hungry dogs which prowl Williams farm was responsible for the Burgess lament.

The greatest trouble of the weekend was Pete Gayfer. He's a devil to get back on a coach once he's off.

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INDOOR MEET 25th February Janet Ashcroft

There was a large gathering of Oreads at the St. James Hotel to hear Sir John Hunt's lecture. All were agreed afterwards that it was indeed a memorable Meet - an excellent lecture with many and varied slides and last but by no means least the pleasure of meeting Sir John Hunt.

The main theme of the lecture was the contrast in mountains. Many black and white slides depicted mountain scenes in various parts of the world. The first shots were of the Karakoram in the vicinity of Peak 76. As a contrast to this we were shown the steep slopes and deep valleys of the S.E. Himalaya. Here also was pointed out the contrast of the strong N.W. winds experienced on the mountain tops with the stillness in the valleys.

Sir John then talked about various mountains in the Middle East. We saw shots of climbing on the limestone crags of Olympus, of Athos and climbing in the Trudos of Cyprus. The mountain scenery of the Sinai peninsula was very different from any other. The whole area is arid, with the dry rock rising steeply from sand filled wadis. Very little climbing has been done in this area because of the great water problem.

There were to be kept separate. There was little money left in the general fund and subscriptions were now needed.

At this point in the lecture we came to somewhat more familiar ground. We were shown many excellent colour slides of the Alps, Scotland and Wales. Here the emphasis was on contrasting scenes in the same mountains. We saw shots taken in the evening contrasted with shots of the same scene taken in daylight. In the same way any area takes on a completely different appearance as the seasons vary.

The whole essence of the talk was a general love of mountains in all their aspects. Despite the contrasts pointed out there is yet a "sameness" in mountains everywhere at all times, a sense of peace and quiet, and for those who wish it "aloneness".

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**TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 22nd March, 1958** Charlie Cullum

This meeting was held as usual at the Prince of Wales, Baslow. 49 of our present membership of 92 attended, so this report is as concise as it decently can be. I offer my apologies to anyone who feels misrepresented or inadequately reported, and for any errors and omissions. I'm doing my best.

Len Hatchett read the minutes of the last A.G.M. and the S.G.M. about the hut. No matters arose.

**Reports.**

Phil Falkner presented his President's Report. The Club continued to flourish and was healthy and virile. He welcomed the new members, whose continued arrival was essential to the Club's well-being. It had been a complicated year and he paid tribute to the Committee for their unremitting effort. He thanked those who had contributed to the hut fund and those who had helped to find the new hut, especially Ernie Phillips and Ronni Phillips, Dave Penlington and Laurie Burns; also Geoff Thompson and Mick Harby for financial and legal advice. Finally he said that at the last Committee the contract to buy the new hut had been signed in the absence of a quorum, and asked the Club to approve this action - which it did, nem-con.

Len Hatchett presented his Secretary's Report. Bryn-y-Wern was still available for use, and should be used as much as possible before we quit. Membership was now 92, against 89 a year ago. Robin Hodgkin was among the new members. We now had reciprocal rights with the Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club and Sheffield University Mountaineering Club.

Jim Bury was absent, so there was no Meets Secretary's Report. Laurie Burns congratulated Jim on the year's programme of indoor meets which had been the best ever. The Club endorsed this.

Laurie Burns presented his Treasurer's Report. We had had a successful year but funds would be depleted by the purchase of the new hut. More money was necessary if the funds for Bryn-y-Wern and the new hut were to be kept separate. There was little money left in the general fund and subscriptions were now needed.

The following questions and comment ensued:-

- Harry Pretty:** How many subscriptions are outstanding?  
 About 50
- Phil Falkner:** This money will be required for running the Club.
- Fred Allen:** What is the deadline for quitting Bryn-y-Wern?  
 No date has yet been fixed.
- Roger Turner:** NUMJ would like a week-end at Bryn-y-Wern before we quit.
- Geoff Thompson:** Some money will be required for repairs and decorations at the new hut.
- Dave Penlington:** The new hut needs a hot water supply and a new floor in one of the rooms. Working parties could make the hut perfect in a year. Bookings at Bryn-y-Wern had fallen off since the news got about that we were leaving; he estimated we had lost 250.
- Pete Janes:** Mrs. Hall had acted in bad faith over Bryn-y-Wern. Could we not refuse to pay the last year's rent? The legal aspects were discussed and although it was agreed that Mrs. Hall's action amounted to sharp practice, we were legally bound to pay.

**Election of Officers and Committee**

There were five officers eligible for re-election. They were:- President, Phil Falkner; Vice-President, Harry Pretty; Secretary, Len Hatchett; Treasurer, Laurie Burns; Hut Warden, Dave Penlington. These five were elected on bloc, nem con. Jack Ashcroft was the only candidate for the office of Assistant Secretary, and was elected nem con. Ernie Phillips was the only candidate for the office of Meets Secretary and was elected nem con. Nominations for the Committee were: Paul Gardiner, Pete Gayfer, Tony Smith, Fred Allen, John Melbourne, Ray Handley and Tom Frost, of whom the first five were elected.

**Alterations to Rules.**

Charlie Cullum withdrew his proposed alteration to Rule 5 but warned that he might try again next year. Both of Ernie Phillips proposals were carried with huge majorities. The Supplementary Rules relating to the purchase of the new hut were extensively discussed but eventually all except No. 4 (f) were passed nem con. Charlie Cullum proposed the deletion of the words "on application" and the interchange of "by" and "to" in the second sentence of the latter, and this amended version was passed by 26 votes to 7.

The bar having closed, so was the meeting. The only alarming feature was the Communist-type election of officers. Watch it.

THROUGH YORKSHIRE DALES

Geoff Hayes

I was able to get a few hours off from the Army one week-end recently and not having enough time to get home decided on a walk through some of the lesser Dales near to Catterick.

Leaving camp mid-afternoon Saturday I hitched to Richmond in Swale Dale and a further lift took me up the Dale to Reeth where I crossed the Moors to Aysgarth arriving there in the dark after miles of tough walking without the sign of any kind of track.

I spent the night at the Youth Hostel at Aysgarth. The Warden provided the entertainment with his views on Communism. Any Oread out for a good argument should stay the night at this particular Youth Hostel.

Sunday was bright and cold, so after a quick look at the Falls I set off at a fast pace up Walden Dale to Buckden Pike at 2,300 ft. The views here were the best of the day, but I did not linger long on the summit; the biting wind did not allow delay.

Fleemis Gill provided a good way down into Cover Dale, and I followed the River Cover down-Dale to Middleham. The rest of Sunday was spent walking back by road to Catterick as lifts were not forthcoming.

Taking a short cut over the moors behind Catterick proved to be quite dangerous. I walked into an Assault Course with its many man traps and water jumps. It was dark as I wound my way through a maze of disused Army huts, which would make a squatters' paradise.

I'm hoping to get a week-end in the Lakes soon, but I can always manage to get into the Dales on any odd days off. They provide many miles of good walking which although not mountainous is enjoyable just the same.

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Considerable interest has been aroused in the club by article 4 in the Pubaiyat of George Sutton, "Some ladies sent me £5 for my fund for taking boys into the country!" Many members wish to know whether similar financial aid is available for taking out young women.

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To Elizabeth Brown, wife of Richard 'A', on March 27th, a daughter - Georgina, for reasons not difficult to imagine,

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

"My dear Charles,

I suppose you could call this a "news-flash" regarding Oread in the Himalaya. I am very glad to tell you that Michael Thompson (Kings Dragoon Guards ex Ipoh) and I are planning to visit the Tos valley and attempt a mountain called Andrassu about which little is known. In fact survey work done in the 1920's has never been completed. According to the A.C. Andrasau is a high mountain (22,000 ft.) and a difficult one that is unclimbed and not properly surveyed. Furthermore it appears that if this were our main objective and we succeeded we would have pulled off a harder thing than Deo Tibba (of which I have never heard) and done a useful piece of work withal.

From India I shall be returning gladly to the haunts of the Oread via Marseilles and Paris. Where, if Deana is as cute as I take her to be, I shall be met. She will then claim the honeymoon for which I substituted a climbing version in North West Scotland last year.

If I remain with the Trust it seems they might send me to Africa.

Thine ever, Bob Pettigrew.

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GLENCOE, Easter 1958

H. Pretty

....."The Frost was white, but not at night"

Of course, I should have known better than to let myself in for the job. The Meet Leader had the right ideas but by now he had completely gone to ground somewhere in the lower bowel of Worcestershire. Contact was a bit remote, and nobody seemed quite sure how many cars were going and who was prepared to fill them. On the Tuesday it looked as if there might be chaos. By Wednesday there was, and only the value of a serious night's drinking spent in phone calls, and the fact that Renault Beakbane (plus Sunbeam Talbot) came out of retirement saved the day.

"Six inches of snow in Durham and black ice on Beattock" was the news on Thursday morning. Expressed in the best modulated traditions of the B.B.C. it sounded almost poetic. Ah - "black ice on Beattock", a stimulating opening to the holiday, bit of a challenge what! - Excellent stuff! So the day passed in a kind of watered down Welter Mitty atmosphere with some gentle patronising of various acquaintances who were motoring off to Droitwich and Chauncey St. Leonards before it grew dark. After all, this trip to Glencoe with Britton co-driving was a bit routine by now - A goodish car the A.90, - not much point in arriving before breakfast, might as well have supper before leaving.

- plenty of time to get a good gully in on the Friday.

- Ah well, I suppose one has to suffer indignities occasionally, but twenty hours to Glencoe is a long time, and affords much opportunity for what has been called the agonising re-appraisal.

When I bounced the car off a kerb that some fool had left lying about I heard a noise that left me with a strong impression that Gerry had gone through the roof. However, the roof was all right, but one of the rear tyres looked very unhealthy. I began to think that perhaps this wasn't one of my nights. By the time Gerry was driving more or less on instruments in moderate blizzard conditions, and we had begun to drift round bends even on the straight stretches, we had reached the point when it seemed best not to think at all. That wet, sleet sodden dawn, the spirit corroding hours of waiting in Stirling while a new tyre was procured - ugh!

The agony was by now well established. As we observed the raw youth of modern soldiery falling in three deep against the walls of Stirling Castle ancient, austere and angular, blooded by more than half of Scotland's past, there was a strong sense of contrast, even of significance - but seemingly no logic. Watching them as they stood motionless in the driving sleet I felt that at least they had real reason to consider the day malevolent. Anyway what did it matter, the journey was nearly over, in two hours we would be in Glencoe. Even in this era of declining standards it has never been possible to imagine Gerry Britton owning a piece of machinery that was anything less than perfect. As you will probably know he has "a thing" about it and his views on such matters are on a rarefied plane compared with the normal man's idea of smoothness and efficiency. Therefore, when the engine stopped several miles short of Lochearnhead there was a moment of silence and a sense of shock in no way comparable with the ordinary emotions that you and I would feel if, for example, we suddenly noticed that the earth had ceased to revolve around the sun.

Being towed in to Lochearnhead Garage by a Morris Minor van was probably Gerry's most humiliating experience - his face was dark, and his language terrible. The Garage proprietor, finely chiselled slender jaw, longish silvery hair escaping from beneath rakish beret, was a character and something of an "artiste" - "why the heill d'ya buy a car wi'an impossible petrol pump?" I think Gerry found this a bit tough, but he had regained his dignity and merely muttered selfconsolingly - "first time in 23 years, don't understand it, 23 years, I don't know ...."

It was 6.p.m. on Friday when we turned off L down Glen Etive to find the others encamped and full of lively conjecture as to our fate. It seemed almost a triumph to have arrived - perhaps rally drivers have more in common with mountaineers than I have previously realised.

The turn-out was quite good - the Harbies, the President with Mike Turner and Lord Jim (Kershaw), Tom Frost and lady, Nigel Booth and Kim Rumford (who had already fallen off something and was limping sadly), and two young potential members, Phil Wilkinson and John Whybrow who had travelled up with a vintage Oread who I hadn't seen for five years - Renault Beakbane. Jim Bury's caravanerai was said to have established camp 1 in the Lost Valley.

On Saturday morning the weather was clearly improving but still in doubt - a good day for "loosening up". One of the profoundly fallacious terms much used by older persons - generally means that you have great difficulty in walking for the first two hours and by the end of the day you can't walk at all.

The Harby entourage went over towards Mheal a Bhuiridh and the ski-ing grounds, doing a gully en route.

Falkner, Turner and Kershaw decided on a bash round the ridges of Ben Vair behind Ballachulish. We (Beakbane, Britten, Wilkinson, Whybrow and myself) decided to do likewise though we left at different times and followed slightly different routes.

Ben Vair is a surprisingly large mountain with two tops over 3,000 ft. and a ridge system pleasantly arranged for access from Ballachulish. Should you approach from directly behind the Ballachulish Hotel however, there are fences and steepish gullies full of young plantation trees to negotiate - a wearing business on a warm day. A young deer had entangled a leg in one of the fences, but on our approach succeeded in freeing himself after thrashing about. It was a good day with fine northward views over the Mamore Forest towards Nevis and the Anachs. The Mamore tops were magnificently dappled in sun and cloud shadow all day long - they carried more snow than Ben Vair which rarely seems to bear the same amount of snow as Eidean or the Mamores to the east and north. We encountered Phil and party on the col between Dearg and Dhonnall. They were moving faster than we and were already on their way down. We also encountered a man in wellington boots accompanied by a dog. Wellington boots are bad enough on snow overlying grass - but wellington boots! - perhaps the dog had been leading.

Spurr Dhonnall has a fine rocky top from the north but, except for one place, the ridge is rather disappointing. At the point in question there is a remarkable little "rue des bicyclettes", not two feet wide, with verticality and space to the right, "... a bit bloody exposed I thought", said Beaky "... five years suddenly seems a long time to have walked only on pavements".

In brilliant late afternoon sunshine we lounged on summit rocks furry and jewel-like under a plating of hoar frost. Twenty hours of miserable travelling were already unreal and unimportant.

Impelled by a proper sense of how good days should end we reserved our collective thirst and strode into the Ballachulish bar a few minutes after 6.p.m.

Sunday came in dull and rather uninspiring but with a promise of better things to come. Everyone decided that this was the day for Bidean. At least we should prove whether or not Jim Bury was pressing on with the attack or steaming in the flesh-pots of Ft. William.

Mike Harby and party elected to go down to Clahaig and approach via the Coire nan Beith - from where they did a gully up to the ridge between Bidean and Stob Coire nan Lochan. Phil, Mike and Jim did the round of the Lost Valley summits from nan Lochan to Phada, much as Chunky, Phil, George Sutton and I did four years ago. In the conditions that developed during the day anything on Bidean was sure to be as fine a day as you wish for. Snow and more particularly ice conditions were excellent and the evening turned out to be one of the finest that I have personally experienced in Scottish mountaineering.

Five of us trekked up through the boulder fall into the Lost Valley during which time we witnessed an attempted sheep rescue which ended in the normal way. After the rescuers had climbed and abseiled to a point above the sheep the wretched animal panicked and half fell and half leaped over the edge whereupon it promptly ran down thirty feet of vertical rock, bounced off successive ledges and landed feet first on the scree below - completely unhurt.

At the very head of the Lost Valley is a broad snow couloir dropping from the lowest point in the ridge - the recognised easy fast way up or down. To the right there are good gullies on both sides of the largest rock buttress visible - it is impressive and steep hereabouts and although the gullies are less known than Twisting and S.C. gullies above Coire nan Lochan they can give almost equal sport in good ice conditions.

By 12 noon we were kicking up hard snow on or around the 2,000 ft. line and half-an-hour later were moving up the approach couloir to our gully. The couloir steepens and narrows to a mere forty feet wide where it runs out against enclosing rock walls - still 300 - 350 feet below the ridge. From below we had thought the back wall to be ice, but we were not over-surprised to find that in fact it was rock, massively encrusted with frost crystals. Hardly any naked rock was visible on the walls that converged upon us as we kicked our way up the steepening bed. Everything was coated in the most beautiful fern like growth of ice crystals. When the angle increased to about 45° it became impossible to kick and we started serious cutting of steps. It was still snow-ice but only the pick head would make any impression on it. The entire width of the couloir at its head was not yet visible and unless something other than walls of frost flowered rock was to be found around the corner I thought we should have to retreat. Two of the party had never been "on snow" before and Beaky hadn't climbed for five years.

However, our luck was in. From the top left-hand corner a ribbon of ice, not more than three feet wide, ran down at the angle where side and rear wall met. By now the couloir was a good 60° and hard as iron. The ice was considerably steeper and fifty feet up appeared to be more or less vertical. Above this point it was of course invisible. There could not be more than 300 feet of it, and in any case cutting was going to be a one-man job so it was really a matter of whether the remainder of the party were prepared to spend several hours standing in steps under continuous fire. By now the sun was a yellow glare beyond the shadow, and the rearing walls above our heads were translucent feathery shapes against a deep blue sky. As I cut a narrow verandah stance below the smooth ribbon that would shortly be a staircase I felt more exhilarated than I have felt in years - the situation was magnificent.

Wearing claws for additional protection I cut fairly large steps and handholds were essential after the first twenty feet since the rock walls on either side were quite useless, even if cleared of the thick layer of feathered frost. The ice having been laid down by successive thawing and freezing was laminated and tough - and occasionally it broke out in unpredictable ways. On the vertical section it was only four inches thick in places, but it was possible at one point to get the axe vertically down between ice and rock which gave a somewhat better belay than is usual in these conditions.

The first hundred feet took just over two hours of almost continuous cutting - it would have been faster with a short gully axe. Above the crux the angle eased slightly and blue ice gave way to iron hard neve. By 4.15 p.m. I was only forty feet below the mildly corniced edge. I doubt whether there is a more wonderful position in all mountaineering. To stand in deep shadow, poised on a steep and spacious slope, the sun transforming the overcurling edge of snow into a line of glowing light across deep blue sky, is to be at the heart of the most pure, the most simple, and to me the most beautiful of all mountain forms.

As we approached the top a large party of Mountain Club persons stopped to watch - our young lads came out of their first gully to a fortissimo chorus of camera shutters. We thought it rather amusing and, as we unroped, spoke of our little scramble in deprecating terms - the Lifemen are ever with us.

It was a wonderful night for ridge walking - rank upon rank of snowy summits from Nevis to Schichallion flooded in yellow light - the neve underfoot frozen hard. Upon the summit we came upon the elusive Bury seated proudly beside a royal blue terylene tent which had that smooth glossy boudoir look about it - rather like expensive ladies underwear. Anyway, there was Jim waiting patiently for his visitors to depart so that he could get a brew on. We were late enough on the summit, but we were not the last. Brasher, Mike Harris and Blackshaw suddenly appeared - the former attired in a habit of casual elegance, perceptibly on

the flamboyant side, but entirely suited to the person of the "Observer" Sports Editor. They said that others of this year's Caucasus party were still chopping steps in one of the Coire nan Lochan gullies.

It was twilight as we came down the boulder fall out of the Lost Valley, virtually dark when we crossed the River Coe, and 9.p.m. when we reached camp.

On Easter Monday practically everyone went down Glen Etive to the head of the Loch. From there, Phil, Jim and Mike walked to the Glen Ure watershed. But mostly we took photographs of Alison posed against a group of shaggy Highland cattle "...but I daren't,....I'm wearing red trousers!" "Don't worry about that darling....they are not even wearing trousers! ..." and so on.

On Monday night, the last night, we had quite a party with the Mountain Club in the "KingsHouse". It became a noisy and hilarious evening and I distinctly remember that a brawling set of layabouts actually attempted to carry me out when Kendall and Williams (Mountain Club) and myself had just decided that the signs were propitious for a really good night of argument.

Apparently the Mountain Club, despite what Eric Byne tells me, are all secretly Oreads.

Whilst Renault Beakbane and I were trying to find the right ends of our respective sleeping bags, sometime after midnight, we somehow started talking of our early climbing years (Beaky was a year ahead of Dolphin at Leeds) and Renault suddenly said. "A young chap who came to teach at school really started me - he'd just lost his fingers and toes on that mountain in the Karakorum - whatsitsname? ---- helluva good chap he was too, used to talk about climbing - can't remember his name now".

"Well", I said, "...his name's Robin Hodgkin, and he's a member of the Oread".

"Good lord!....."

EDALE March 8th/9th

R. Wabourn

As the weather was too unsettled for camping, we changed the Meet to the Snake and spent Saturday night at the Barnsley Hut. Almost all of the 17 members and guests walked from Ladybower via Winhill, getting caught in a snow-storm on the way. The Meet Leader however, disgraced himself by arriving on the bus.

Everybody spent a convivial and warm evening and we awoke on Sunday to find a fair amount of snow and intermittent sunshine. The party split up, as G. Hayes and J. Russell had to be back in camp at night, but 9 of us set off to walk in the direction of Sheffield. The original plan of walking to Lower Bradfield was abandoned when we had to contend with alternately very soft and very hard snow. We finally reached the moors by way of Alport Towers and crossed over to the reservoirs. After partaking of tea at a farm (only recently opened for this purpose), we crossed to the opposite side to climb up and visit Wheelstones etc. on the way to Ladybower Inn. We discovered a very fine slope of hard snow and spent 1/2 hour making a slide. John fell into soft snow at the bottom and got snow into everything, including his pipe.

It proved a very good Meet for all of us and, I say it without boasting, a well-attended one.

Oread in the Himalaya

Bob Pettigrew

I have been installed at Manali in the Kulu Valley since March 22nd, gladly witnessing the seasons again for it is a great place for orchards which are now ablaze with blossom. The lack of seasonal rhythm in Malaya had a depressing effect on me which came to a head at the time of the Oread Dinner!

Mike Thompson, King's Dragoon Guards, and ex Secretary of the Saraburgh M.C., who will be joining me for eight weeks mountaineering in the Pir Panjal range of the Kugra Himalaya does not arrive until the 13th April and so far I have made two sorties, one solo and one with a Ladakhi porter named Wangel.

The first excursion, on the 24th March, took me Northwards from Manali towards the head of the valley and the awesome snow-plastered mountain wall of the Gundla which masses there forming the water-shed between Kulu and Lahaul. The clearly visible dip of the strata at 50° is emphasised by the adherence of winter snow and bestows a cold geological atmosphere on the beholder. My objective was the classic Rohtang La, 13,400 ft., the pass into Lahaul and an old trade route to Tibet. Though still closed to trade owing to heavy snow, many parties of the hardy Lahauli and Ladakhi people had already crossed back and



Forth between the stone-breaking labour for "jeepable" road construction in the Kulu Valley, and the spring tilling and planting in the gaunt, treeless valley of Chandra. At first glance these nomadically inclined folk could be mistaken for Tibetans because of their physical appearance and characteristic wearing apparel. The "flower pot" hats with the enormous fluffy black ear muffs, the scarlet habit and the tough felt "flying" boots, and the plaited hair common to both sexes.

Eight miles and 4,000ft. higher up the valley I arrived at the Khoti Dak bungalow where I had arranged to spend the night. During the night the wind reached screaming pitch and the mere sound forced me ever nearer a great log fire which I kept well replenished until dawn. An Indian couple staying at Khoti had contemplated ascending the Pass, but only the better half, Harish, a Commander in the Indian Navy eventually set out with me at 09.30 hrs. For two hours the going was excellent over a snaking mule road which rose inevitably, tier on tier, towards the glittering white V of the pass. The steep snow banks gradually encroaching over the trade route ultimately defeated Harish, who was shod in leather shoes. He commenced the descent at 11.30 hrs., and, armed with a metal-tipped staff and feeling like a pilgrim I began to kick steps in a traversing line across the snow banks. My ice-axe had not yet arrived in Manali.

Snow slopes mounted on one another in unending succession, though in one or two places remnants of the track made brief appearances. Now I was in the narrow defile of the pass, several hundred feet above the floor of the valley, level with the crest and still kicking steps in a traversing line. Barely visible were the tracks of the Nomads, now and again I would come across miserable straw pads, scant protection for bare feet and kicked off altogether when the retaining string at the rear broke. At 15.00 hrs. I was level with the crest of the pass but prevented from attaining it by a deep lateral nullah on the West side. Time was short and the clouds were massing so I turned about and descended over my disintegrating steps to Khoti. Hour cups of Cha and half-an-hour were consumed before I resumed the "jeepable" road to Manali. I arrived at 20.00 hrs loose of limb and very impressed with everything that I had seen.

Then following a week of indifferent, rainy weather which boded ill for the state of the snow, ever reluctant to disappear before the onslaught of Spring. However I decided to explore the approaches to Indrasau and Deo Tibba by way of the Jakatsukh Nullah third down on the left from Manali. Everyone advised that I take a Ladakhi porter and thinking: "Harry Pretty will love this!", I engaged a likely looking chap named Wangel who had had experience with the R.A.F. Himalayan expedition. He also accompanied Mrs. Dunsheath's party, of which Eileen Gregory of the Polaris M.C. was a prominent member. See "Mountains and MemSahibs" Originally he only wanted to carry 20 seers (40 lbs) - this included 30 lbs. of his own bedding and food! However when informed that Sahib, who tends towards the left, intended

to carry an equal amount, he grinned acquiescence. We both staggered away from Manali bearing 70 lbs. apiece and Lyngen days were only too vividly before my eyes. There followed four very interesting days of valley trekking in stages. The last stage in knee-deep snow from a fine cave bivouac, giving me one of the most strenuous days I have ever known and confirming my worst fears about Spring mountaineering in the Himalaya. Many Yeti-like tracks were seen, obviously made by the ubiquitous brown bear. To cap it all, during the return to Manali by a very high level Ibex high wire walk contouring across apparently vertical grass of the worst order known to Vibrams, I was nearly erased by a well-aimed rock avalanche from a tottering face 600 feet above us. "Sahib, Sahib", shrieked Wangel through the dust cloud from a quickly attained vantage point. "Om mani padme hum" said Sahib emerging.

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#### Easter in the Cairngorms

R. Welbourn

John and I joined D. Godlington and other members of the Derby Mercury R.C. to camp and ski in Corrie Gorm at Easter. We reached Aviemore on Friday morning after the usual scramble and rush at Crewe. We had a good breakfast while waiting for a van, to give us a lift along the 12 mile march to Glen Einich. Soon after leaving Aviemore it started to snow and at 800 ft. it was 1 ft. deep. Corrie Gorm lies at 3,000 ft. but long before we reached it a blizzard started, cutting the visibility to nil and we had to retreat. We finally found a fairly sheltered side and pitched the tent. It cleared up about 10.a.m. Saturday and we had a good days ski-ing with even some sunshine. The snow was in good condition and stayed so for the whole time.

On Sunday John and I walked to the head of the valley in an attempt to reach the top of Braeriach (4,160 ft.) The ridge sported a magnificent cornice, but without an axe we were unable to tackle it. Over boulders and by a devious route we got up to 4,000 ft. where verglas and ice slopes turned us back.

On Monday we again skied in lovely sunshine before packing up and walking back to Aviemore. We finished the holiday in style by staying in a guesthouse before catching the train back on Tuesday morning.

I think the Cairngorms and Grampians would be well worth a visit in the summer. The area is a nature reserve and camping is restricted, but the paths through Rothiemurchus Forest are wonderful and there are crags with some good climbs on them.

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COMMENT

THE FUTURE OF THE NEWSLETTER . If my arithmetic is correct this is the fiftieth issue of the Newsletter. This seems, therefore, as good an opportunity as any to consider very seriously where we should go from here. And I must emphasise that what I am about to say is not just another editorial stunt for raising contributions, but is in dead earnest.

According to Ernie Phillips, the Newsletter costs about 12/- per member per year out of a total subscription of 21/-. For the last three years we have averaged nine issues per year. What do we get for our money? News? No. I have often said that I am the last member to hear of any Club news, and this has always been taken as one of Charlie's little jokes, but it is in fact a simple statement of the truth. What happens all the time is that weeks after some event has happened, a member will say to me, "I suppose you know that so-and-so's married", or "I suppose you know we've got a new hut". And his supposition is always wrong. How can I know if no-one tells me? The fact is that having a news editor who lives sixty miles from the Club's centre of gravity just doesn't work.

Mountaineering? Rarely, if ever. Does anyone in the Club still climb - apart from scrambles on Birchen's following A.G.M.s and the like? I don't know. I presume some members do, but they never write about it, not even a couple of lines on a post card.

Something specifically Oread? The original intention of the Newsletter was to try to preserve the feeling of community which is the best thing that clubmanship offers and which seems to be inevitably lost as a club grows. But the Average Member's interest, if any, in his club's publication, has always been passive rather than active. He likes reading but he won't write. Yet participation is the essential feature. Perhaps this is my fault, perhaps it is the Average Member's, perhaps it's just human nature. But the fact remains that the Newsletter is failing, and has always failed, in its purpose.

No; for your one-and-odd a copy you get ten or a dozen pages of light-hearted nonsense which sometimes has something to do with mountaineering or with the Club, and sometimes not. Most members seem to like their periodic issue of light entertainment, but are we justified in spending over half our total income on it? My own answer is no. If we were rolling in money it would be an extravagance; at a time when we are scraping the bottom of the barrel to buy a new hut it is an appalling waste.

What, then, are we to do? There seems to be four possibilities: (i) continue without change, (ii) produce a Newsletter like the present one, but less frequently, e.g. quarterly (iii) abandon the Newsletter and have a yearly Journal instead, or (iv) abandon Club publication altogether.

I am against continuing without change because, to summarise, we can't afford it, we can't support it, and it's not worth having. You may, of course, disagree. Very well, but don't ask me to continue as Editor. A quarterly Newsletter seems the best bet. It would have to be supported of course, the nature of its contents would have to be decided by discussion, and an editor living in Nottingham or Derby would be essential. But its cost would be less than half that of the present publication.

A Journal has a lot to commend it, but to judge from earlier experience I don't think it would receive nearly enough support. It would cost at least as much as the Newsletter, but on the other hand if it could be produced it might turn out to be a much better money's worth. The fourth choice seems to me intolerable. If a club is too apathetic to produce any kind of publication then it's dead on its feet.

The Committee is already aware of these views, and the question would have been discussed at the A.G.M. if there had been time. Discuss it among yourselves, write to me or the Committee about it, and consider taking on the Editorship. Don't let £50 a year of our income of less than £100 be frittered away on an ephemeral amusement. And finally, forgive me for going on so long, but if it only happens once every fifty issues you can't really grumble.

D.C.C.

OREADS IN SHORTS

Eric Byne is attempting to compile a Postal History of Mountaineering. His aim is to collect letters, aerogrammes, envelopes and post cards relating to mountaineering expeditions in all parts of the world. If you have any material which you think might be of use, please write to Eric at 210 Lickey Road, Rednal, Birmingham. Mail connected with both Oread and non-Oread parties will be gratefully accepted.

Deana Pettigrew recently played Joan D'Arc in a naughty French Play called "The Lark" by Jean Anouilh (at Leeds)

Bob Pettigrew has been joined at Manali by Basil Poff (New Zealand A.C.) Ron Mowl and Pat Morrison (Canadian A.C.) Latter spent a happy afternoon with cloth-capped Ken Wright in Laurentian Mountains, March, 1957.

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J. and R. Welbourn would like to hear from anyone who would like to join them on their holiday in Bavaria, July 19th - August 2nd. Please contact at 142, Allestree Lane, Allestree, Derby.