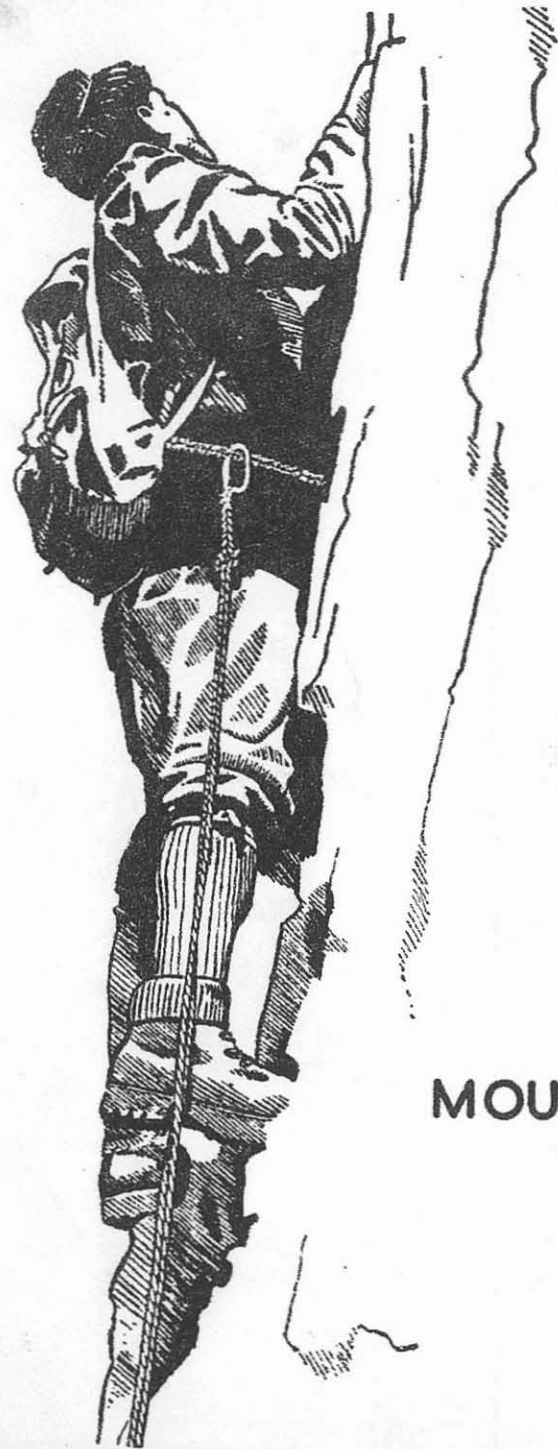


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JOURNAL
OF THE
OREAD
MOUNTAINEERING
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JOURNAL
OF THE
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MOUNTAINING
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NOVEMBER 1960

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EDITORIAL

I'm sure many of you find it difficult to write up a meet or a holiday for the newsletter. I know I find it difficult enough to write something worthwhile for an editorial. In the end I am usually goaded on by the thought of the good material lying waiting around for a respectable front.

Basically an account can draw on four distinct aspects of a climb, a meet or a holiday depending on the wealth and depth of one's experiences. Three of these, the purely factual or descriptive, the humorous, and one's conscious reactions to the climb, scenery and situation are fairly straightforward and understandable. The fourth which I would like to call the "mysterious" requires some amplification later on. The supreme account is a dash of all four of these basic aspects but rarely does a climb provide the stimulant for this.

Pure factual accounting is at once the easiest to write, but may be, if it should dwell too much on the hour of arousal, breakfast (first and second), summit and hut return, very boring. It is best used to describe in detail one particular climb, or in synopsis form the general doings and impressions of a holiday or meet. So often it can be a type of writing which convinces the reader that the writer's climbing companions are mere automaton rope handlers who never say anything or do anything silly.

English mountaineering must be unique among recreational activities for its wealth of vivid and exciting literature. From the early writings of Stephens, down through Whumser, Mummery, Young and Smythe, to the present day Styles and Noyce, a wonderful heritage has been built up. It is perhaps unique, apart from its powerful descriptive characteristic, for its incorporation of the latter two aspects I mentioned earlier.

True the setting is perfect, but the literature has undergone considerable evolution from the days when the strivings of the early pioneers were hidden behind a quasi-scientific cloak (Tyndale for instance) to the romantic era of Winthrop Young, and Smythe. For instance in "The Spirit of the Hills", Smythe explored all aspects of man's relationship with the mountains.

And humour too is ever present in a quiet human sort of way in Mummery's writings with his popping bottles of Bouriere to the outright ridiculous, represented if you like by Mark Twain's account of the ascent of the Riffleberg, in Zermatt, with 205 assorted persons and animals all on one rope, complete with umbrellas ("The Tramp Abroad").

But it is in the account of how people react to the mountains in their inner souls that mountaineering literature is supreme. One has only to read Winthrop Young, Smythe or Noyce to understand a little of the intangible question "why". They lay bare their souls in a manner quite out of place with our present day materialism. To this aspect of accounting I have given the word "mysterious". For it is intended to embrace not only the above, but the "invisible companion", experienced by both Smythe and Buhl in the Himalayas and ".....those rare moments of intellectual ecstasy which occur perhaps on a mountain summit, or in a lonely moonlit bivouacand which appear to be a happy coincidence in the rhythm of mind and scene....." (Shipton - Upon that mountain).

I have tried to give you some idea of the wealth of our mountaineering literature, that which is continually being evolved and strengthened in all our club journals and newsletters. May the quires of the past inspire you all to express yourselves more eloquently and freely.

CHAMONIX - ZERMATT 1960 D. Burgess.

The sense of excitement one usually experiences when approaching Chamonix by train from Geneva, was shattered this year by the ominous thunder clouds which shrouded the valley. The lovely views of the Aguille Bionessy were lost and when at last we did see the summits and the rocky Aguilles we were almost at Chamonix; and what a sight they were, everything plastered to an unbelievably low level with snow. We looked at each other and all thought the same thing. Gone were all the ambitious routes of which we had dreamed and all the endless hours spent pouring over guide books and maps wasted! Someone made the comment. "the snow's low this year".

Esconced in the Chalet Biolley, the home of British Mountaineering in Chamonix, and with the weather brightening, our spirits began to revive. If the snow was low we would go lower was the attitude, and

with that in mind we packed and set off to Montanvers to try for some low rock routes on the Aguille de L'Moine. As part of our training we carried all the gear up to Montanvers, and what a flog it was. Whether or not it was worthwhile I don't know, but we certainly appreciated the drink we had on arrival.

We were away for 6.0.a.m. the next day, an almost civilized hour in the Alps, and by 8 - 0.a.m. were at the foot of the climb. The route we had chosen for our 'muscle-opener' was the West Face of the Point Albert on the Ag. de L'Moine, graded ED? in the guide book with the note "the easiest climb of its class". We hoped it was.

We roped up as two ropes, Don Chapman and myself on one and Doug Cook and Ray Handley on the other. Being purists we used the direct start and were confronted immediately with pitches of V on cold and loose rock. Don and myself pressed on but the others suffered from a lack of enthusiasm - no doubt brought on by the waiting and a few stones falling perilously close, and eventually retired from the fray and moved across to the N.N.E. Ridge. The route continued with very mixed climbing, strenuous artificial pitches, strenuous grooves, strenuous cracks, in fact, the whole route was b----- strenuous and 5½ hours later when we crawled over the top we were about worn out.

Whilst these battles with the rock had been going on, the weather had been very good, so good in fact that with the promise of frost at night we began to entertain hopes of a decent snow route for the next day. With this in mind we moved our base from Montanvers to the Couvercle Hut and waited. And wait we did, for it clouded over during the night and there was no frost whatsoever. The order of the day seemed therefore to join the Guardian's sons at boulder problems and smashing bottles. I sallied forth at midday with 'Beardie', the Yorkshire rock-'n-roll king, for an attack on the Eveque. An attack it was, and one from which we were repulsed only a short distance from the summit. The normal route was plastered with snow and ice so we were forced out leftwards on to slabs which became steeper and more difficult and eventually holdless. The retreat was an epic - we were very pleased when the glacier was reached.

There was no frost again the next night, so we 'scrubbed' the snow plod over Les Courtes that we had in mind and instead decided to have a full scale attack on the Moine. Don and Doug climbed it by the S.W. Ridge and, as Ray and I had climbed this a previous year, we tackled

the East Face. This started with some of the hardest pitches of V I had encountered in the Alps, desperate in fact, and the route was really excellent, a first class rock climb with some snow about to let you know you were on a mountain and marvellous views of the Droites - Courtes - Triolet Amphitheatre. The last 500 feet were climbed in rain and sleet and it was two very cold and wet climbers that eventually reached the top. We were late back, so stayed another night at the hut and re-joined Don and Doug in the valley the next day.

The result of a big pow-wow in the Biolley was that conditions were awful and that a move would be a good idea. We decided therefore to move further up the valley to the Albert Premier and the Trient Huts; Ray and myself going to the latter as we had climbed from the Albert I'er before. We therefore caught the train to Le Chatalard in Switzerland, and started walking. Two hours later we were still walking and couldn't even see a mountain! After a lift for a few miles and another five hours walk we eventually reached the hut and were thankful indeed that at Swiss huts your food was cooked for you. We were about shattered. Needless to say it snowed during the night. It also froze and when we set out at 9.a.m. the next morning (it was snowing when we had our early call) it was into the most severe cold I had experienced in the Alps. We walked over the Trient Plateau and over the Col de Tour to the Albert I'er hut where we left a note for the others, and descended to Le Tour and back to Chamonix. Our minds were made up, we were off to Zermatt the next day.

It was fine when we arrived in Zermatt, but the weather there had been no better. However, after the noise and bustle of Chamonix it was as if the holiday was only just commencing. The Bernhof is the usual headquarters in Zermatt, and we accordingly made it ours: and it was from there the next day that we set off for the Gandegg hut with designs on the Breithorn - a snow peak, so conditions might not be too bad. Bernard Biner, the ex-guide that manages the Bernhof, and the Gugreisan of the hut, both warned us that the snow was not good, and that the route we projected, the Young-grat, had not been climbed previously this year. We were not deterred and left the hut at 2.a.m. on a beautiful morning with a keen nip of frost in the air. Conditions did deteriorate as we got higher, but the snow was not too bad and we were able to move fairly rapidly, although as we moved higher up the ridge we were forced to start moving separately. The route gave some marvellous snow arêtes and the views down either side were magnificent, for the weather was glorious and we were able to sunbathe on the summit when we arrived there at 12.30. The descent and return over the Breithorn

Plateau is best forgotten, suffice to say it was long, hot and tedious. The hut was reached at 4 - o.p.m. and we returned that evening to the valley. Don and Doug passed us as we descended. They had stayed on at the Albert Her and had had a marvellous day on the Forbes Ridge of the Chardonnet. The intentions now were to ascend the Breithorn via the Triftjigrat (N. Face). This they did the next day and then moved over to the Betamps hut from which they ascended the Dufourspitze of Monte Rosa, having a gripping descent down an ice slope which necessitated rappels from Beresfords ice pegs, kindly donated for the occasion.

Ray and myself meanwhile were settled in the valley and looked like staying settled. However, we managed to shake off the valley lethargy and walked up to the Tasch hut from which we hoped to traverse the Rimfischorn, a route recommended to us by B. Biner as being reasonable in the prevailing conditions. The route was very straightforward despite a gripping rappel off the first gendarme, and was a magnificent high ridge traverse over a succession of gendarmes, very airy in places, and very, very photogenic. Ray thought so, he used about three cine films during the day.

The descent was interesting at first but soon degenerated into a plod until we reached the Flou-Alp Hotel. The heat was fantastic, so we rapidly imbibed the usual "lemonada" and then strolled down through beautiful green alps to the valley with the Matterhorn ever dominating the view. Throughout the day the views had been superb, with all the Valais peaks standing out in bold relief, and the peaks of the Oberland and Mont Blanc chain clearly visible. A blanket of cloud covered Italy with the occasional peak breaking through. It was this cloud that finished the holiday, for the next day it covered the Zermatt valley and was raining heavily so that we had no regrets about leaving for home.

In our search for fine weather we had covered more ground and visited more huts than I think any of us had done before, so that what was from the weather point of view a rather poor fortnight, had offered us a marvellous holiday and one rich with memories.

A nice Spring day in May lured me out into Derbyshire despite my protestations to the contrary made all the previous week, (I firmly believe that two weekends should be spent at home each year). I took an oversize Corgi with me, and called at the Hooley's who were gardening, and sowed the seeds of discontent, and then on to the Peak. There were comedians out in their thousands, so I found a secluded spot and read in the sun, (occasionally making a forage to retrieve a wandering-Corgi) until opening time.

At the 'George' at Alstonfield I was joined by Margaret and Chuck-Hooley who had succumbed to the lure, and after several pints and a few cornish pasties we discussed suitable kipping sites, eventually deciding on Weag's Bridge on the Manifold.

It was a perfect evening - warm and with a full moon, and we settled down under the stars feeling self-congratulatory. Sleep for about one hour, then I became conscious of a familiar whirr of engines, then a blaze of light, and a discussion in Army vernacular. A thin silence resumed and uneasily I settled to sleep again. Ten minutes later headlights swept over the valley from descending vehicles and then came a sequence of events that was to be a pattern to be repeated at short intervals practically all night. First the sweep of headlights then a great rattling sound as they crossed the cattle grid, another blaze of light as they swung over the bridge and stopped by the finger post. A small silence as they stayed uncertain, then the driver descended from the vehicle and inspected the legend on the signpost. A loud shout invited the co-driver to do the same. The word "Grindon" seemed to a disproportionate effect, dissention even altercation, its simple unambiguity seemed to cause some deviation from the intended pattern, and a great deal of increase in the noise level. As whereas some went on to Grindon, which is the only through road, some turned left to Beeston Tor (these we expected back). One particular driver turned down the old railway tracks for Thor's Cave and during the two hundred yards or so to the first gate achieved quite a creditable speed. The Ig required to arrest its progress in order to prevent impact with the gate evoked from the passengers in the back a miscellany of Anglo Saxon that is usually not included in the repertoire of even an Oread lady.

Even ignoring the actionable doubts cast on the drivers legitimacy, and it appeared that the driver's star of popularity had waned.

The passing and repassing went on and then some larger vehicles arrived introducing a new note to the commotion as about one in four came into violent contact with the bridge, and apart from the crash of impact the collateral of events was a hurried dismounting of all persons, an examination of the damage (to the vehicle of course, no one was interested in the fate of the lovely old bridge), and a chorus of relief or apprehension strictly regulated by the degree of damage. One could almost assess the cost by the reaction alone. The resultant discussion was well punctuated by the familiar Anglo Saxon, and continued until they were confronted with the magic symbol "Grindon". Here the recent events must have confused them somewhat because an even greater number took the by lanes. Occasionally an exceptionally long interval would falsely lull us into an attempt to sleep but finally all hope was abandoned and we awaited daybreak which was a little later than usual.

During breakfast a large convoy of Army vehicles came to a halt by the bridge, and although we were now inured to living amongst a full scale military operation, even our recently augmented vocabulary was not equal to the occasion when an officer alighted and asked us:-

"HAVE ANY OF OUR VEHICLES PASSED THIS WAY

OBITUARY

The following is taken from the last entry of a diary which was found on Rhinog Fawr by a Shepherd. It is believed to be the last recorded feelings of an Oread on that ill fated Welsh Walk of 1960. I would be grateful for any further information regarding the experiences of the rest of the party, particularly, the President.

May 14, 1960. I suppose everyone will write their personal experiences of the Welsh Walk ad nauseum, but here dear wife are mine:-

Chuck and Margaret Hooley transported me to the Mawddack Estuary Friday night and together with the Gardeners & Birds we toured up and down finding the correct lane, each time disturbing for the N'th time a pair of copulating locals. Eventually we found by pure accident the field containing the first contingent of Oreads. Here my travelling

hosts left me for Tan-y-Wyddfa. It was cold and beginning to rain, so I made my way over to a fly sheet doing service as a tent to some eight recumbent males. I diffidently asked if there was any room for another and could I please come in. The reply left me in no doubt that I was unwelcome so I squeezed in using Pretty's rucksack as a pillow. He bitterly complained about being deprived of this - why I cannot imagine as it was stuffed full of tins with the corners upwards.

All night it rained. Tom Frost lying in the doorway obviously got wet and was quite pleased to get up in the morning. It was still quite early in the morning when it stopped raining and we were away quite early, so we did not rush as we had till.....?

WANTED

1. Any unutilated envelopes or Postcards bearing clear Great Britain slogans referring to Centenaries, Eisteddfods, Music & Drama, and Anniversaries. Also any slogans of Great Britain before 1936. Will pay 6d each for any of the above.

Also wanted any nice clear pictorial Mountain Postmarks of Switzerland, Austria, etc., on envelope or postcard, and from anywhere in the world. Also cards and envelopes from Greenland, Iceland, Yukon, Alaska, Spitzbergen, Canadian North West Territory, Falklands & Dependencies, - and anything to do with Mountain Expeditions in the postalline.

State what you have and how much you want for it. This applies for items of past, present or future, Contact please:-

Eric Byne, 210 Licky Road, Rednal, Birmingham.

2. Volume II (French Edition) of S.A.C. Guide Book, to Valais Alps, contact:-

Don Chapman, 58 New Street, Uttoxeter.

"Hafod Uchaf"

1. Situated on the Capel Gock road 20 minutes walk from the centre of Llanberis.
2. Accommodation for 20 at 5/- & 6/- per day for full/affiliated members and non-members respectively.
3. Apply to M.A. Office, 102A Westbourne Grove, London W.2. for bookings and key.
4. Sheet sleeping bag, knife, fork and spoon required.

OREAD IN SHORTS

It is reported that:-

Deanna Pettigrew was making reports in bed when the rest of us arrived at the President's top storey flat for a committee meeting during the early summer.

More friends than members helped clear up the garbage from Birchens and Gardom's Edge in May. It is therefore perhaps a little invidious to report that the Peak Park Planning Board have expressed appreciation of our efforts in a letter to the Club.

The following remarks were heard on the Marsden-Bowsley walk:-

1. "Only a year of freedom with D³"
2. "That would be a good 10/- drop."
3. "We might as well go on to Matlock, I've nothing to go home for".

Some members of the Oread have lately displayed an interest in fishing. Perhaps the disparity of excitement may be reduced if the piscatorial programme included angling for the dreaded "Afranco". This fearsome aquatic monster is only found in certain remote mountain llynnaur.

Few have been caught in recent years but as the only efficacious bait is a young virgin on a chain perhaps it is a scarcity of bait rather than that of fish. A few very young females could be inducted into the Club - and perhaps certain male members induced to go on an expedition to Outer Viet Nam.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (EXTRACTS ONLY)
NEWSLETTER, NOVEMBER '60

Dear Sir,

I read with some impatience the reproduction of Brian Richards letter of resignation.

The hoary spectre of extra-climbing activities is produced as a sign of human decadence, ~~which is a sign of human decadence.~~

This criticism always stems from those who least participate in the Clubs organisation and activities. Naturally people who can only seldom enjoy visits to mountain country have little time for administration or working parties. I do not think that anyone has expressed an opinion that they should so waste their time, nor has the use of facilities available been in anyway begrudged by members whose labour has made them possible.

The matter is fairly clear. There is the individual and the Club. The Club augments and supports the individual but you can climb without being a club member - many do - but if you enter into association with an organisation of this character you find many additional facets of enjoyable companionship and enterprise. To the many who make the Oread M.C. a part of their leisure life, there is much to give and much to take and most find it gives life an additional flavour. But above all they find no attenuation of activity. The reverse is true, the most active members are also the working members.

It is my opinion that the people engaged in administering the Club, also those of character and influence outside of the committee

who have the interest of the club in esteem; should endeavour to maintain and improve its character, tradition and facilities, so giving it permanence and stability whereby the loss of leading dominant personalities, or even groups will not effect its future, as is the case of small unorganised groups who appear and disappear regularly. This established, and the individual will not find his activities curtailed, but considerably widened.

Regarding cliques. It is a logical corollary of numbers. When Homo Sapiens are gathered in number, they nucleate, and smaller intimate groups form, but the wider activities and interest overlap and integrate the individual to the whole. Above all they are essentially nice people and although they have much in common with intimates, will not rebuff a stranger or little known member. We are constantly adjured to make entry into Oread circles easier, but something more than a purely negative approach by the novitiate is required. Otherwise only time will bring confidence which is probably the best way.

Laurie Burns.

Sir,

I expect that there were a few tongues in cheeks when it was decided to seek the approval of Brian Richards to publish his letter. There is hardly any need to invite discussion, indeed very much of the same things have always been discussed within the Club as long as I have known it, and I remember very recently swooping a few ideas on the subject with our beloved President.

It is always regrettable to receive a resignation and it is always regrettable to tender one. How many such letters begin: Dear Sir, I regret?

It is a pity that Brian's criticisms, which he himself declared to be well meaning and (he hoped) constructive, were not more energetically and practically applied by him at least for some of the time since 1955 when he became a member.

The Oread is its members and its members are the Club, we have a perfectly democratic constitution. We share one object - mountaineering in every aspect (originally it used to be "regardless"). Few of us wish to justify our indulgences, even if we could, but each has his own "because" manifest in our love of one or more aspect of the sport as is our whim. We are the Oread.

I suggest that Brian might learn a little wisdom from the mountains: If one particular route does not yield, there is usually at least one other route to the summit, and you can very often "mould" the mountain by step-cutting on the way to the top. With the freedom of the hills, any peak may be your choice, but quite obviously even an easy route on the Matterhorn does not lead directly to the summit of Mont Blanc!

The Club (or clique if you like - we are a private Club) is a good "shower" and we like mountaineering. - If you like us and climbing then you are welcome to become a member I am sure. If, as a member you like this - or that, or don't like this - or that; then for Pete's sake do something about it - the Club is yours!

I remember in the distant, but not dim past, of a much loved Secretary of the Club (whos existence some may regard as a myth) led a climb on the Roaches and was seconded by every member on the meet! This is not a usual sort of occurrence you will admit. It is of course more usual to climb in two's or three's (a clique if you like). The very nature of the sport encourages the formation of small closely knit teams or ropes when it comes to the actual climb.

The Roaches incident does serve to illustrate something of the thought behind some advice once given by a past President of the Oread: Eric Byne - a great climber and a great Club-man. He said that the Oread should keep climbing frequently in the hills of its spiritual home - the Peak. No doubt he was thinking of the good times to be had on Club meets at places like the friendly Birchens and Gardoms' edges where we climb or linger at the bottom to encourage or jeer, where we camp together as a club and yarn away into the night.....forty brew-ups in one night - was that the record? - fell off the Prom - a "toff in morning suit with swallow-tailed jacket, on Trafalgar Wall! Yes all these things happened and more besides, they always do on this sort of meet! Lets go to Lyngen, the Alps, Wales, Scotland or where we will. Oreads can and do climb anywhere. But

come back "home" when you can, and remember what Uncle Eric said.

"Clique-ness" - horrible word! But what it describes is not in my opinion at all horrible, and it is not a characteristic peculiar to the Oread alone - you'll find it in all sorts of Clubs. What we must do in a Club of this size is quite simple. We must recognise the fact that we have little groups and make sure that they are all catered for. Each clique must see that it is represented.

I am not advocating any sort of rules or legislation or that we should encourage a split. We have always had our membership spread out over the Midlands, Derby, Burton, Birmingham, Nottingham, Chesterfield and elsewhere. Some of us meet at the "Bell", some at the "Dutchman", it has been thus for many years.

The emphasis is always changing, so does the committee, everyone can be represented - the committee, always welcomes ideas. Use your vote and your voice, its your Club!

Our "Posh Club Hut" I am sure that Brian must have been aware that at no time has there ever been a rule in the Club stating: "Six days shalt thou labour in the Hut, and on the seventh only recoup on the hills" or words to that effect.

Some of us have done very little work in the present Hut. Some of us did a great deal of work in the old hut. Most of us have taken to take, or will take a share in being secretary, treasurer, hut warden, navvy, typist, scavenge hunter or what ever is going. If a member sees a job, he shouldn't gribe, he should either do it himself or ask for help in the right sort of way. You know that there are plenty of willing hands if you go the right way about it!

If you have got a gribe at the moment, just snap out of it for a second and let your imagination wander at the thought of all 98 Oread, crammed into the Hut and all working furiously, and all wanting a bed for the night! One last word about the hut - we did vote for it.

Regarding this "Pretend Climbing", or lack of climbing activity. You know this just is not damn well true, and I'm not going to say any more than that!

Mike Moore, Fred, Brenda, Ernie, Ronnie, Laurie, Ray, Nobby, Jim, John - they are all still in the Club. Why did Brian forsake his friends? Incidentally, I like to count them as friends of mine, they are all Oreads.

Damn it! Who was this bloke Richards?

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

An Oread.

J. Roger Turner.

EXAMPLES OF INDOOR MEETS 1960

DERBYSHIRE HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION 1961

The members of this expedition, the majority of whom are Oread members are arranging the following series of lectures in the Art Gallery, The Wardwick, Derby:-

Lecture Number 1. Wednesday January 4th 1961

"The Mustagh Tower" by I. G. McNaught Davis the ascent of which was described before the attempt as the most unclimbable mountain in the Himalaya.

Lecture Number 2. Wednesday February 1st 1961

"The Anglo-American Karakoram Expedition 1960" by C. Mortlock, an account of a successful expedition to a previously unattempted 25,000 feet peak in the Karakorum Himalaya.

Lecture Number 3. Wednesday March 1st 1961

"The Western Alps" by R. L. S. Colledge, an account of several ascents in various alpine centres by a well known alpinist.

Lecture Number 4. Wednesday March 29th 1961

"Mountaineering at home and abroad" by members ^{of the Expedition.} ~~of the Expedition.~~
Descriptions of typical mountain holidays, rock climbs and some unusual illustrations of wild life in the Antarctic.

The Lectures start at 7.30. p.m. price for admission being 3/-, all proceeds going to the expedition funds. As a special incentive all the Lectures will be illustrated by those new fangled colour slides.
