

Oread Mountaineering Club

Periodic Newsletter

Spring 1960

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1960?

Editorial



We are all members of a mountaineering club, a highly individualistic one as opposed to the "Section Timbucktoo" of the foreign or national clubs. In this new year following the 10th anniversary of our club it is interesting to pause and consider the nature of our club, or of any other mountaineering club.

To many the word "club" conjures up an instrument of defence or aggression or the only place from which wives are excluded. Even in the slowly disintegrating golf club world, sweethearts and mistresses are now welcomed. In this respect we may claim to be catholic in taste for our welcome is extended to all species of the female world.

What causes us to form or join clubs, is it the herd instinct, for really there is less need of a club in mountaineering than in most other sports. Equipment is cheap, competition is abhorrent except as a spur, the bare essentials are the "you and me" club and a rope.

In the case of joining an existing club are we not attracted to join a group of people who are mountaineers just as we are attracted impulsively to mountains themselves. Is not the atmosphere of the freedom of the hills present in the smoky Tuesday night at the Bell. There's Old Pettigrew he's been to the Himalaya's there's Our new honorary life member HP he's been to and has recently been writing out South Georgia, thoughts of Lyngen, Alps, etc in other familiar faces.

There are obvious advantages of a club, interchange of ideas, experience, information but these are poor substitutes for actual experience in the field.

There are the disadvantages of the club system as of course there are in any human ordered system. The meet which is a social outing - all standing around at the foot of the rocks urging on some poor unfortunate who is entangled in "thick" and "Thin" ropes. The incentive that is behind a rope of two attempting a new route is not to be found on a club meet - "There's always another day and the pub's open now chaps".

To some the club system is a means of obtaining for a moderate fee, the services of a few suckers to organise their enjoyment and provide the necessary facilities. Still we can't all be running around helping each other all the time.

Then there is the type who feels the call of the mountains but is apprehensive of the outward appearance of danger and hostility - for him the club system offers the ideal introduction an aura of familiarity. It's up to us all to help in this introductory phase.

But the formation of a mountaineering club, of our club, is inevitably due to the natural development of the "You and me" club, due to the propoganda of a small nucleus - arising out of a commendable desire to share the new found joys, and excitement of the club with other people. "Come and see what it's like, we are going to..... next week-end".

To our small pioneer nucleus we are grateful for starting our club years ago. Pro's and con's of the club system cannot be weighed in cold blood but presumably the 'Ayes' have it for the club has flourished well. Let us work to maintain the status quo.

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PHOTO MEET COMPETITION

The Editor

Oct 24/25 1959.

The photo meet was again held at Baslow with Douglas Milner as the judge and Chuck Hooley as the patient and willing projectionist. The outright winner was J. Hebog-Gable Ashcroft with D. Burgess and E. Phillips as 2nd and 3rd. The corresponding points awarded are shewn below:-

Name	Points Awarded		Final Position
	Colour	Monochrome	
J. Ashcroft	12	22	1 (34 points)
D. Burgess	10	16	2 (26 points)
E. Phillips	20	-	3 (20 points)

The winners in the various classes were as follows:-

a. COLOUR

Abroad

Zillertaler Ferner. By Colin Hobday.

Photo Meet(continued).

British Hills

A Derbyshire Scene. By Ernie Phillips.

Action

Isolée. By Derek Burgess.

Miscellaneous

River in winter. By Laurie Burns.

b. MCNOCHROME

Abroad

From Spannagel Hut. By Ruth Welbourne.

British Hills

Wasdale. By Jack Ashcroft.

Action

Valkyri 9. By Derek Burgess.

I think everybody would agree that this year's Photo Meet was a great success, a big and lively audience (some unfamiliar faces but balanced by the happy appearance of Big Jim Kershaw) who heckled the Judge, the Projectionist, the slides and Pettigrew impartially. A Judge, who in between speaking severely to one over-boisterous wife and disclaiming responsibility for cracked slides, regarded each slide as a challenge - "Where is this now? (in the French or Swiss Alps I hope)". Suggestions here for a bright new panel game. "Guess the place".

He gave us, who are aspiring clickers, some interesting advice - danger of cutting out too much shadow, inadvisability of cutting climbers off above the vitals, flowers showing up best in dull conditions, best time and place for photographing 'Cloggy' etc.

Humour there was too - a slide of R.G.P gazing forth from a glacier at his beloved Himalaya (invisible) with a worn out wife slumped over an ice axe glad for a change of the Sahib's desire (for contemplation); in a slide of Penlington troughing, sitting on his haunches with his knees above his ears, cloaked in an anorak his nose inside the plate looking for all like a P.F. grasshopper; indeed the talent displayed in this sphere suggest a new section for next year's competition.

Memorable serious slides, a blood red sunset by the Welbournes (united as every married couple should be) in Norway, the colour authenticity of which the Judge had the audacity to query, Laurie

Photo Meet (continued)

Burn's scenes of the countryside and a beautiful evening shot of the Zillertal.

The evening was finished off by some cine' films by Ray Handley - Some interesting work taken by Ray actually ski-ing, the ascent of the Upper Slab, Cwm Silin, by Derek Burgess in 1 minute dead, the antics of whom hanging first on this side then on the other, had us all in fits. Not to forget either, long drawn out views of Pete Jane's bottom with occasionally a cheeky grin to relieve the monotony.

Our thanks are due to Douglas Milner for so ably judging the contest, to those who supplied the slides and to our projectionist, Chuck, who bore well under the tirade of those whose favourite shot was being shown upside down and wrong way round.

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Overheard on Lliwedd, Beryl to Roger Turner - "Darling, can you remember that time I went too far!"

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THE SIXTEEN BULL STONES

DECEMBER 1959

HARRY PRETTY

"The fact is"---(slight pause) "I've never been to Bullstones". The words, dropping across the quiet of our corner table, had the same effect as a sharp blow in the solar plexus. There was a nasty smell of nausea in the air, so I got up and walked a little way down the bar where I could think without having to look into guilty eyes. As I turned I saw Tony Smith and Hebog Jack sitting still and ashen faced (they couldn't get out from behind the table) - trying not to look at the pitiful figure before them; trying not to feel the shame of Pettigrew who sat slumped head on chest. Only his hands, nervously picking at a pickled onion stick showed that he was still conscious.

An Extraordinary A.G.M. seemed to be the only way out. How was it possible, we asked ourselves that a man who had never been to Bullstones had been elected President of the Oread? It was a ghastly situation that required strong nerves and deep human understanding. The evil spirit of a vast deception had to be exorcised. The greatest confidence trick in the history of the Oread had to be atoned for and Ashcroft, wiping off his steamed up spectacles, was man enough to suggest the only possible way out.

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The Sixteen Bull Stones (Continued)

"This time Pettigrew - you've simply got to turn up - otherwise, it will be a Select Commission!". Nothing more was said, but the implications were clear.

With subtle wisdom I made it known that the official Meet would start from Poltergeist Barn above Edale. This would, I thought, give Bob a relatively easy run-in over Kinder as a preparation for the more arbitrary rigours of Bleaklow. It was also convenient for me personally since we should be following much the same route as the Mountain Club who were, during the same week-end, intent on the full "Sixteen Stones" treatment. Such reserves of manpower would provide more latitude in organising any necessary support parties for the less endowed members of my own group.

At the last minute there was just the suggestion of a crisis. Bob, for obscure reasons, had to change his plans. He couldn't leave before 10.p.m., - so I caught a train. Dearden and Ashcroft however waited to be picked up, and I understand that as the hours and minutes ticked by a tense and brooding silence descended upon the Ashcroft household. Dearden, a battered and blood relic of many campaigns across the squelchy bogs of Margery Hill, was convinced that no man with roots as long and hairy as Bobs could refuse the challenge. Ashcroft was less certain, and simply sat fully dressed in full battle order of four sweaters and two anoracks staring yopically into an empty fire grate.

For myself, I spent a delightful Friday night quietly sipping ale in the "Nags Head" with a dozen of the Mountain Club and Clive Webb, who could not resist the ancient lure of Poltergeist Barn.

When the Mountain Club went to their tents, Webb and myself forced a route through steepening fields to the near vertical of that thick dark wood in which I still hear the Bawdy shouts of Tony Hyde, Phil Falkner, Dick Brown, John Clegg, Wilkinson and Chalky White.

The President's entourage, comprising Dearden, Ashcroft and one by the name of Frank, arrived in the way that most people arrive at Poltergeist Barn - in a state of incoherent collapse. So we arranged their bags for them upon the conglomerate of pressed dung and sharp rocks, thinking it hardly worth the mention that there was room for only two sleeping bags out of the wind. With a hint of starlight above the edge of Grindsow Knoll we passed a quiet night, only disturbed by Pettigrew's sudden realisation that he had forgotten anorack and rug. He eventually fell into a restless slumber from which he stirred occasionally to mutter "From Grains in the Water go West - go West!"

The Sixteen Bull Stones (Continued)

I could see that he'd been swotting or else it was one of those ancient cries that lie deeply buried in the Oread sub-conscious relics of the Great Gibsonian Time.

We got away shortly after 9.a.m. and plodded in mist over Grindslow Knoll to the upper sandy reaches of Grindsbrook. The West side of Fairbrook Naze was reached without incident, although I did think it advisable to test the alertness of the party by appearing to recognise the Kinder River when it was in fact the infant Fairbrook. The party reacted quite well and I felt reassured that should I decide to try on my own a somewhat wider circuit than that planned, they would be reasonably capable of finding Bullstones unaided. My confidence turned out to be ill-founded, and perhaps I should have known better.

After a short halt at the cabin in Ashop Clough we moved on north over the sponge and tussock of Featherbed Moss. My rucksack frame bindings had virtually fallen apart during the descent into Ashop Clough and I had grave doubts of the thing staying in one piece for much longer. But, as Bob pointed out with that nice mixture of esteem and gratitude of which he is so sickeningly capable at times, - the sack was old when he had followed it up his first serious snow slope. I appreciated the implication, but disliked the sneering corner of the mouth way in which the remark was made. As a result of this I went ahead and walked over Featherbed on my own, consoled by the realisation that my smart ploy with the Kinder River had got slightly under the President's pachydermous hide.

Arriving at Doctor's Gate in thin misty drizzle I found Ashcroft brewing tea for a Miss Sylvia Wallwork. He'd run over Featherbed, trying to catch me up, and had contrived to pass me in the mist. Sylvia is the holder of a unique office. She is the Mountain Club President's Secretary and, as such, was on official business. I has asked her to patrol the Snake road on her official scooter for I was very aware that as President of the "Mountain Club" I had, under my care and guidance, the President of the "Oread". This was a considerable responsibility and it seemed the merest courtesy that one of my staff should be ready to transport the Oread President by an easier route should he reach breaking point. However, my rucksack broke first, and it was deemed advisable that it be lashed into the pillion, thus leaving me free to assist others.

At approximately 1.30.p.m. we moved onto Bleaklow from the roadman's old hut - leaving Sylvia to meet us somewhere near the north end of the Howden Reservoir.

The Sixteen Bull Stones (Continued)

The Mist had evaporated and we trudged over the rise towards Grains-in-the-water with the sun behind us. Six isolated figures and six long dark shadows moving slowly across rich golden colours of sedge and tussock beneath a sky - the palest wash of blue imaginable. This was Bleaklow as it is rarely seen - bleak and austere as ever, but in every detail from massive moulding of its broad ridges to the aimless and intricate patterning of its groughs. So we sat down with the sun still on our backs and the great western saucer of Bleaklow before us. I have always thought Grains-in-the-Water the focal point of Bleaklow. Within one square mile hereabouts are born the Alport and Westend Rivers. It is a place of great atmosphere and more than anywhere else on Bleaklow it is here that I always feel isolation to be complete - Nowhere on Kinder counts by comparison.

"It's absolutely superb", said Bob and no-one felt that the remark required addition or qualification for this was truly one of those rather rare moments when we could sit and grasp the scale and splendour of something that is more often only completely admired in retrospect. Enjoyed, not so much for what it is, but by reason of satisfaction obtained in having found the way through heavy cloud or blinding rain. But this was different. The physical pain for some of us was still to come, so that for the moment we could all relax in the rich glow of a Winter afternoon and feel that to be in the right place at the right time with old friends was perhaps the real justification.

In a pleasant social fashion we crossed the Alport stream, ascended the opposite slope and swung westward in a great arc across Westend Head to Grinah Stones. In every direction we saw white hares - lying doggo close at hand, or conspicuously flashing across the dark vegetation.

Bob's friend, who had only recently twisted an ankle, was clearly feeling the strain so we held brief council whilst sitting on rocky heaps above Grinah Grain. By now the sun was disappearing and, like a great blood orange, it sank abruptly behind southernisty hills.

I decided to head due west for the road terminus south of Slippery Stones in search of my rucksack. The others would drop into the upper Derwent Valley and then to Bullstones Cabins which we suspected as being already full of Mountain Club.

As far as I am concerned the next one and a half hours were straight forward and simple. Ronksley Moor was crossed and I came down to Slippery Stones just as the moon rode clear of Margery Hill.

The Sixteen Bull Stones (Continued)

Half an hour later I'd found Sylvia with rucksack and it was not long before we walked into the steaming squalor of the wooden cabin.

Only Ashcroft of our party was there to greet us; together with Laurie Burns who had arrived independently. For the next three hours we became increasingly concerned as to the fate of Webb, Dearden, Pettigrew and protege'. Hebog Jack had left them above the Derwent after ensuring that they knew exactly where they were. Outside there was a brilliant moon, and it seemed unthinkable that a party of such individual and cumulative experience could have got lost - it was almost too much to hope for.

It was nearly 9.p.m. when they arrived. "Well - er, no - I wouldn't say we were actually lost", said Bob. "Perhaps a little unfamiliar with the ground". Dearden had no such illusions about the matter. In fact he was in no condition to have any illusions about anything, and was dreadfully scathing about Ashcroft's utter lack of family responsibility. "Whatever Pettigrew thought he was doing", said Ron, "I was bloody well lost, and so was Webb - and poor bloody Frank was hardly conscious at all!". Having said this he sat down and didn't speak again for twelve hours.

It eventually transpired, after the usual period of bitter recrimination, that they had tried just about every clough to the north and east of the upper Derwent and were only prevented from laying off a course across the Langsett Moors (which would probably have taken them to Penistone - or even Barnsley) by coming across a tent occupied by two of my Mountain Club men. Once again, forethought and the taking of proper precautions by the Meet Leader saved what might have been a sordid situation. As it was, our "wandering boys" were pointed in the right direction and the last chapter in this peculiar story of how the sixth Oread President came to Bullstones can be considered closed. In fact any more would be to risk an anti-climax for the Sunday turned out to be fairly ordinary by comparison.

The semi cripples of the party were gently escorted down the valley, and pints of ale and vast sandwiches of beef and pickles were consumed before the "Ladybower" closed. Laurie took Bob round to Edale by car to recover several items of surplus gear cached in Poltergeist Barn - only to discover that the sack and contents had disappeared. Bob is at long last becoming a bit cynical about Poltergeists. He reckons it might have been stolen.

But, regardless of all this extenuated humiliation, his weekend closed in a blaze of exceeding glory. He heard from the lips

The Sixteen Bull Stones (Continued)

of Fred Heardman himself that, only an hour before, John Hunt had arrived from Kinder with a group of Wayfarers and in the presence of reliable witnesses, had said with due seriousness - "I understand that Bob Pettigrew, --- the man who founded the Oread, is on Kinder this week-end". My only regret is that I missed hearing him say it.

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT - being a garbled message from
the committee represented by
D. BURGESS.

The case has arisen at committee meetings recently of prospective members (P.M's) coming up for election who are not generally known to the committee or, in fact, the club as a whole. As the committee is responsible for the election of new members they are often in a quandry as to who they are voting for and it is usually the verbosity of the odd person who knows the P.M. that is responsible for his getting in at all.

If you are proposing someone for membership therefore would you please send the necessary letter with the proposal form (as required in the club rules) giving an account of the P.M's mountaineering background to date. The club does not stipulate attendance at a definite number of meets as a condition for membership, but it is hoped that the proposer will have satisfied himself that the P.M. has in fact been out on many meets and is an enthusiast of "the life". The proposer should also take matters a little further and make a point of introducing the P.M. to as many of the Oread as possible, especially to members of the committee. Of course it can be argued that a personal introduction is not necessarily a good thing, especially, should we say, first thing in the morning which is the obvious time to find people. Imagine a timid P.M. a fair maiden maybe, being introduced to say Pettigrew, Phillips or Pretty as they gaze out of their sleeping bags at first light, what a dissipated crowd, and the language ugh! Still it would certainly be a good test of enthusiasm; and are there not cries in background---"let's have the committee out on meets.

Another point that has arisen at committee meetings and one that has been mentioned in the Newsletter is that the sociability of the club is being questioned; people arriving on meets are being "frozen out" by the cliques and left with no one to climb with. This I feel is so much poppycock and the fault lies with the Meet Leaders who generally take their duties too lightly. For too often the rendezvous for the week end is just covered by, for instance,

Something to think about (Continued)

the name of an Edge; this in fact covers several square miles and members often fail even to contact each other, let alone newcomers to the club. The Meet Leaders should make a point of fixing a more definite rendezvous for their meets and let Geoff have this in plenty of time for the inclusion in the Club Circular. Also when on the meet they should contact all who are in attendance and see that no one is left without a climbing companion.

Rock climbing is of course different to walking or British mountaineering in general. The maximum enjoyment is definitely experienced when climbing near to ones physical limit, when one has to give full concentration to overcoming the difficulties, and this means complete trust in ones companions. This applies irrespective of the standard of the climb, it is purely a matter of comparative standards, and can fluctuate with the weather conditions or ones fitness. So that to climb for pleasure which is of course what we all do, means climbing with regular companions, companions whose temperament and mannerisms are familiar and understood. To some extent therefore a degree of 'cliqueness' can be understood, the 'tigers' wish to stick together as do other groups who climb every week end; and there is bound to be some reluctance to bother with someone who isn't enthusiastic enough to get out regularly. However there are members of the club who can't get out so often, there are P.M.s who may be the 'tigers' of the future, so it is up to ALL of us to do our bit on meets, to climb with others for a change and to be willing to throw the rope down for someone else.

Well I was asked to clarify the position as regards joining the club and to newcomers on meets, but I appear to have digressed somewhat. I can hear cries of "----- too much regimentation", but I do feel that a 'shake up' of some kind is necessary if we are to continue as the Oread M.C. and not just as an Association of Mountaineers.

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DEO TIBBA AND INDRASAN, 1958.

by BOB PETTIGREW

The idea of an attempt to climb Indrasan, 20,410 ft., which lies about two miles to the north-east of Deo Tibba, was born on April 10, 1958, in the lounge of Major Henry Banon's guest-house at Manali at the head of the Kulu valley.

Gathered there was a party of climbers to whom the Himalaya represented a desirable, but not essential stage on a trans-world journey either to or from home according to their point of origin.

Pat Morrison and Ron Mowll, who had been working in Canada and sight-seeing in New Zealand, had reached the Himalaya stage; moreover, they had persuaded Basil Poff, a professional Alpine guide in New Zealand, to accompany them en route for the United Kingdom.

My own presence in Kulu was due to fortunate travel circumstances. I was returning to the U.K. via India from Malaya where I had been working for the Outward Bound Trust. Further, I had been advised by Major Jeff Douglas, leader of a Yeti-hunting expedition to Kulu in the winter of 1957/58, that the area was accessible and attractive even to lightly-equipped parties. Whilst in Malaya, I had discussed tentatively plans based on Jeff's letter with Michael Thompson, a subaltern in the King's Dragoon Guards. He subsequently joined the party eight days after the original meeting.

On arriving in Manali on March 22, I set about acquiring information regarding Deo Tibba and Indrasan from the 'Himalayan Journal', especially Vol. XVII, 1952, and 'The Mountain World', 1954, which contain comprehensive accounts of attempts on the two peaks up to that time. Since then, Deo Tibba has been climbed a second time by Miss Eileen Gregory, with two Ladakhi porters in 1956.

From March 22 until May 6, the party was assembling in John Banon's bungalow and making reconnaissance sorties into the nullas radiating from the valley of the River Beas. These were the Duhangan and Hampta nullas to the east, and the Manalsu nulla to the west, of Manali. From the heights to the north of this last-named, excellent views of the two peaks were obtained.

Finally we made a memorable journey to Kyelang, the capital of Lahul beyond the Rohtang Pass, 13,050 ft. For allegedly crossing the Inner Line at Sissu we were arrested in Kyeland by the Punjab Armed Police. We were, and still are, under the impression that this barrier is not encountered until Jispa beyond Kyeland, but our 'error' was courteously corrected and we were urged to return to Manali. The attractive, variegated ice-sheathed peaks which lie to the south of the Chandra river commanded our admiring gaze throughout the marches along the failing shale track, the 'route one' of Lahul.

Casual Himalayan travel is the pleasantest way of passing time I know, but economic circumstances now decreed that we should commence our attempt on Indrasan.

Sent out from London, Mike's equipment was held up by the Bombay Customs, and it was obvious that it would not be released in time. He devised a pair of overboots, soled in vibram, to envelop his light kletterschuhe and prevent frostbite. One of the Manali cobblers created the boots from Mike's design. We possessed three tents, the best was an American Army mountain tent in oiled fabric. The other two were light two-man tents which we adapted by sewing in groundsheets and snow flaps. Two of the party had double sleeping bags and I had the unique honour of an air-mattress which, however, refused to stay inflated. Our climbing equipment was suitable for British winter ascents, with the addition of crampons and a few pitons.

Despite our minimum equipment, seven Kulu porters assembled on the evening of May 6 to receive loads and instructions for the following day. We had food and fuel sufficient for eighteen days away from Manali. That night Pat accidentally set fire to one of the adapted tents and averted its complete destruction by beating out the flames with his bare hands, which were badly blistered. But the main caravan was not delayed and it departed from Manali early on May 7, leaving Pat and Mike to follow on. Though back-packing equivalent loads the climbers, perhaps on account of fitness, found the porters aggravatingly slow and reluctant to increase speed. Consequently Pat, to his astonishment, overtook the caravan as it was turning east from the main valley of the Beas into Duhangan nulla on the spur high above the slated roofs of Jagatsukh village. Progress was slow and the first night was spent near a huge overhanging rock used as a cattle-shelter on Khanuri Thach

The next day saw a great improvement, for the distance and height achieved was twice that of the initial march. Two hundred feet above the river and two miles up the valley from Dudu, Base Camp was sited in a dry and homely cave, its entrance carpeted with wild rhubarb at the foot of a cliff in the north wall of the nulla. Late that evening a wild shout from the depths of the nulla announced Mike's arrival; though heavily laden he had covered 12 miles and 6,000 ft. of ascent in the excellent time of 12 hours.

On the morning of May 9, the Kulu men were paid off and commenced the descent to Manali. Simultaneously Basil, Mike and I began the first ferry journey of ~~lightly~~ to lift our stores towards the mountain. Shortly before the head of the nulla at Seri we walked through an idyllic glade carpeted with spring flowers of brilliant hues, which was used as a base camp site by Charles Evans in 1952. The head of the nulla was a semi-circular line of cliffs seamed by cascading glacier torrents and marked on the map as 'moraine'. We cast around for a route up to the higher continuation shelf which eventually abuts against the final containing wall of the Watershed ridge of Deo Tibba. The south side offered a long and laborious snow plod, which later became the normal descent route. The north side was shorter but steeper and eventually yielded a route up the centre by way of a difficult crack and steep slab. This was abandoned in all subsequent ascents in favour of an easy snow tongue.

The top of the cliff led easily into the snow-covered upper valley which carries the outflow from the Chandra Tal. To the north, the satellites of Deo Tibba presented a fantasia of aiguilles from the roots of which two colossal green-blue glacier snouts hung poised above us. Under the stark south face of Deo Tibba, the source of regular avalanches, protected

by a deep transverse trench, we established Camp I at 3.30 p.m. on May 9. From this site, about half-a-mile from the cliffs supporting the Chandra Tal, we identified the 17,155 ft. summit climbed by Mr. and Mrs. Peck in 1950, and we traced a possible route for climbing the west side of the Watershed ridge bounding the large plateau of the Malana neves. We intended to place Camp II somewhere near Piton ridge and supplement our light tents with ice-caves, if conditions were suitable. The second day of ferrying was marked by a fierce snowstorm and stores were hurriedly dumped at Camp I by snow-plastered figures anxious to regain the sanctuary of a substantial cave.

Camp I was occupied on May 11 without Ron Mowll, who was forced to descend to Manali with a catarrhal infection. The last stage of the climb from Camp I to the plateau of the Malana glacier lay across the steep 1,000 ft. side of the Watershed ridge. A minor bergschrund lay at the foot of the slope which could be climbed by burdened men in one-and-a-half hours. On May 12 it was ascended by the party, and a hasty cache of food and equipment was deposited on a windswept col at 16,500 ft. The inclement weather forced a hasty retreat from the sobering vista of the Deo Tibba massif in the north round to Ali Ratni Tibba in the south.

The following day of sunshine was spend resting and repairing equipment, but far from heralding a period of fine weather it was the calm before the storm. This broke on May 12, and gave the tents such a severe battering that we lost confidence in the plan of placing them high. The crisis of the storm occurred in the early morning of May 15, when the front poles of the Army tent snapped. The party extricated itself and abandoned the camp for the relative security of the cave 3,000 ft. below.

At the end of four days the storm abated sufficiently to encourage a return to Camp I. Ron had returned in better health, but Basil became sick and descended to Manali. Mike and Ron re-opened the route to Camp I and occupied the tents on May 20. Pat and I joined them later in the day and we were relieved to find a sturdy shelter.

The delay caused by the storm meant that Mike needed additional leave, and he planned to descend to Manali and send a cable. In the end, he could not resume the climb and returned to Malaya having worked hard for little reward. Resuming our plan on May 21, Ron and I plodded up to the foot of the Watershed ridge slope through a myriad of tiny dead flies which, presumably, had perished trying to attain the col. Three hours later, Camp II was established at 16,500 ft. Three days of storm followed that event and effectively interned us at Camp I where the time was spent repairing Basil's tent and Ron's face, both storm-ravaged.

On the eighteenth day out from Manali, May 24, Pat, Ron and I occupied Camp II which comprised two tents on the windswept Malana plateau. The snow condition was not conducive to digging caves. The array of peaks to the east was a breath-taking spectacle but our immediate need was to uncover the cache of food. This proved to be a herculean task since 3 feet of snow had fallen in 14 days and our original sightings were faulty. Storm was the rule and a fine day was a rarity. For a further three days we endured continuous snowfall whilst Pat and Ron grew steadily weaker from throat infection. On May 28, Pat and I climbed part-way up Piton ridge and cached a small supply of food in preparation for establishing Camp III on the 18,000 ft. plateau between Deo Tibba and Indrasan.

Pat's throat grew worse on the descent and he decided to return to Camp I the following day. Meanwhile Ron had taken to his sleeping bag with chest pains, and it became obvious that the weather's siege had defeated us. It was decided to quit the plateau on the 30th after two more days of storm. However, soft snow and violent gusts made progress very slow and the first man down the side of Watershed ridge avalanched the entire wall! He was unceremoniously hauled back and we retreated to dwell another night in what had become canvas-lined ice-holes. The 31st dawned clear and we descended past Camp I, buried to the apex in snow, to the first cave-bivouac below the snowline.

On June 1, we re-entered Manali and refreshed ourselves on the abundant cherries. Eight days later, Basil and I set out again for the mountain, leaving Pat and Ron to convalesce and recover from their throat infection. We reached the cave in one day, Camp I the second day, and on the third consecutive fine day we reached Camp II. It was completely wrecked with a foot of water lying in the American tent. An hour's exposure to the sun sufficed to dry out the contents and the tent was re-pitched. Our plan to attempt Indrasan was modified to seeking a way up the Watershed ridge of Deo Tibba with the secondary aim of reconnoitring an approach to Indrasan.

The weather held fine, and on June 11 at dawn Basil and I commenced to climb the Watershed ridge of Deo Tibba. The welcome sun cast a rosy glow over our objective and we cramponed hurriedly across the bergschrund on a substantial bridge. From this rift the ridge leaped steeply upwards bordering a narrow couloir. We gain the crest of this magnificent snow arete and climbed it for about 500 ft. Re-entering the couloir, and keeping a wary eye on the ice-cliffs which threatened it, we zigzagged impatiently until we reached a rock outcrop marking the end of another arete on the Punta San Marco side of the couloir. Basil escaped on the right by a steep snow bank and regained the foot of the arete by traversing over putrefying ice. I joined him and we arrived at the base of the final dome. Together we ascended the staircase kicked by Basil in firm compact snow.

At 10.15 a.m. we arrived at the crest of the dome to be confronted by Indrasan which appeared in splendid isolation. We both felt certain of the summit and, like Charles Evans, had reason to regret our confidence. After a photographic session and a short meal we turned towards the glacier col and the final summit dome. The weather had deteriorated and heavy cumulo-nimbus clouds were building up around Ali Ratno Tibba and the peaks of the Tos Nulla. At the glacier col perhaps 1,000 ft. below the summit of Deo Tibba the snow consistency changed and we began to flounder to the knees whilst the storm clouds hovered ominously. It was nearly 1 o'clock. At that point, we stopped and debated the issue. The odds were against our going on. Our tent was 2,000 ft. below and we could not have reached it before nightfall. Reluctantly we decided against going for the summit and, with one accord, we turned to descend. Since this was our last opportunity to examine the 18,000 ft. plateau we traversed eastwards over the Punta San Marco at the top of Piton ridge and descended the couloir used by Graaff during the first ascent of Deo Tibba in 1952. Recrossing Piton ridge near its foot we recovered our cache deposited exactly a fortnight earlier and reached our tent at 7 p.m. as a cold blanket of darkness enveloped us.

Basil spent a bad night but we were determined to seek consolation for our defeat on Deo Tibba, so we set out for a sprightly little peak about 17,500 ft. high on the south-east edge of the Malana neve directly south of Peak 17,155 ft. - which we thought would make a good observation point. This offered a sporting climb along a snow ridge rising to a rock summit from which I photographed the panorama here reproduced.

Long ago, General Bruce wrote that it was unwise to arouse the wrath of the Kulu gods. We now know what he meant, for was it not an outraged Indra - the Thunder God - who subjected to fierce storms the mortals who had contemplated ascending his throne?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

The account of the Bullstones meet came by chance into my hands, shown to me by a friend who was shocked at the way the group I represent had been maligned. Having read this admirable piece of fiction, we send our comments and a few of the real facts; please print them, as some of the new members - not knowing Pretty for the arch-calumniator he is - might believe what he has written.

The paragraph "forced a route thro^u steepening fields ----" refers, no doubt, to the harrowing experience suffered by Clive Webb in getting the inebriate Mountain Club President from the Nag's Head to the Poltergeist Barn, hampered by Harry's contention that the ground was coming up to meet him and that he could hear voices all around. As to our "state of collapse incoherent collapse" when we arrived at the barn - a person on his knees, vomiting in a corner can scarcely make impartial, accurate observations on the condition of persons arriving through the door behind him. And incoherent collapse is not the same thing as "shocked silence". The reasons for our choosing to sleep on "rocks and cow dung" instead of near Harry are obvious. Bob did not actually say ..

"From Grains-in-the-Water go West".

What Harry misheard was part of a remark made about the smell in his corner

"From drains. We ought to protest ..." but naturally, in his state one would expect Harry to be confused. Later he did recover a little and spent a few happy minutes taking wrongly exposed flash photographs and throwing the hot flash bulbs into Ashcroft's sleeping bag. Eventually, Webb put him to bed. (If you wish for proof of Harry's state that night ask him to show you the photographs he took - with his natural guile he will, he will no doubt have a plausible reason for not producing them).

The following morning nothing much happened until Harry "tested our alertness" and for a person testing our alertness he took some convincing - what a marvellous actor! About this time, too, he introduced the tale of the ageing rucsack. At first we thought this was mountaineersmanship to impress Frank (who was on his first meet). The-mountaineer-who-had-been-at-the-job-so-long-that-his-trusty-equipment-was-falling-to-pieces- ploy. Older Oreads will know that Harry learned his techniques not on the mountain but from his Uncle Stephen at Yeovil. The real reason for this pattern of behaviour was to become most apparent in the near future. When we reached the Snake there was awaiting a fair young lady on a motor-scooter and Pretty, feigning surprise, suggested that perhaps she might carry him on her pillion for the rest of the way (because of his broken rucsack of course - what brilliant planning!)

At first we were paralysed by this audacity - here was the meet leader calmly prepared to scoot off and leave us, despite the fact that Frank had injured his ankle and that Dearden's rucsack was in a far worse state than Pretty's - but just as the scooter was about to leave we rallied and refused to let Pretty go. On account of his age, however, we allowed the lady to take his rucsack.

So we set off once more and despite the fact that he had no rucsack Pretty was soon exhausted and at Grains-in-the-Water pretended to be taken by the panoramic splendour in order to give himself a long rest. Soon after this Frank fell over a tussock and collapsed in agony having twisted his already injured ankle. Sending Ashcroft to look for Pretty we three stayed with our injured comrade.

DEARDEN CONTINUED.

By now it was dark and with Frank scarcely able to walk the journey became a nightmare. Hoping that Jack had found Harry we decided to leave them to fend for themselves and concentrate on helping the unfortunate Frank. The pace was unbearably slow; in the dark it was difficult to put a foot down flat and each false step caused Frank increasing pain. With amazing fortitude and with the three of us helping where possible Frank eventually made it to the Bullstones Cabins.

Ashcroft must have found Pretty and helped him down, as they were both at Bullstones when we eventually got Frank there.

As to "seeing two of my Mountain Club men" we did indeed help two of the Mounting Club off Bleaklow but this was just the fellowship of the hills - we do not wish to brag about it.

Such was the state of the Mountain Club President that the following day there was nothing to be done but to help him down to the nearest road.

As we assisted him into the "Lady Bower" the landlady remarked on the strained, sick appearance of :

"The elderly gentleman with the beard"

After a couple of pints of beer and a beef sandwich Harry revived but was not strong enough to take a celophane wrapping off a cigar he wished to smoke. This had to be done for him by his "fan", or as he put it:

"The personal, presidential secretary."

As to what John Hunt actually said in Edale, we will say nothing except that it was not quite as our green-eyed Harry put it.

Given under our hands this day,

R.V. DEARDEN

E. CLIVE WEBB

BOB PETTIGREW.