

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER
1967

THE DERBYSHIRE HUT - GEDD HAYES - NOVEMBER 1967

Due ~~to~~ to the efforts of Harry Pretty, who has spent considerable time and corresponded with many people, the Oread were within an ace of obtaining a Derbyshire Hut. After meeting the agent of the Chatsworth Estate, Harry was offered a small cottage close to Chatsworth Edge and just off the Baslow - Chesterfield Road. The property, which includes two good barns, was offered to the Club at a most reasonable rent and with quite a long lease. The building is in a good state of repair and would sleep approx. 12 people. Close by there is a large water pumping station. After discussing the find with members of the Hut Sub Committee, Harry and others called an extraordinary General Meeting of the Oread in September. The club were shown plans of the property, and had all the advantages and disadvantages pointed out. The meeting overwhelmingly gave it's approval and told Harry and the Committee to continue negotiations for a long lease. All seemed well.

On almost the same day that Harry contacted the Chatsworth Estate, soon after the meeting, the Water Board let it be known that they wished to do one of three things. Either to extend the pump house into the cottage, or to extend the pump house across the stream away from the cottage or finally to remove the pump and build on another place. It would of course be ideal if they decided on the latter course. All that we can do now is wait and see and hope.

If the deal falls through it will be a blow to many members who were prepared to do their bit, but I'm sure that Harry and the others on the Committee of the Derbyshire hut will not despair and that the search will go on.

As we know - the deal was successfully completed Ed.

We are now well into the 'Social Season' of the Oread. Already the Photo meet has passed and then of course the excellent 'Ilam dash' week end. A short report of these two events is contained in this Newsletter. Since I last put Typewriter to paper the Summer Holidays have been and gone. As usual all my resolutions for more frequent Oread News letters have on to pot, but 1968 is just around the corner..... During the next month or so the Club have, for your entertainment and at considerable expence, arranged many fine meets both climbing and social. Your support is required for two of the most important - the Annual Dinner and then later in December the Social and Dance. Tickets are now on sale for both these events, don't delay in obtaining yours.

As this will be the last edition until the New Year the Editor takes has chance to wish you all the best for the coming season and looks forward to seeing you all out climbing in 1968. How about an article or letter from all of those who have not appeared in print in this Newsletter during this year? Some hoped but at least it gives me more time for the crag!

G.H.

Brian Cooke, Simon- my son and self left camp in the heat of day with food and gear for two nights in the mountains. Our aim was to reach the Brenva hut at the head of the Brenva Glacier the same day and the following day climb the Aiguille de la Brenva a 3281 meter peak, and return to the hut for the night and the next day climb the Tour de Ronde then return to base camp. Rather ambitious we thought - later.

From camp our route took us through a thickly wooded hillside and loose rocks and maraine. We then crossed a dry glacier which at times needed very careful negotiating due to thin layers of maraine covering solid ice at a steep angle and the occasional crevasse - chasms deep enough to lose a house never mind three mountaineers.

After crossing the glacier we were at the foot of our next difficulty - some 1000 ft of rock climbing. We had to decide whether to keep to the left of the glacier stream which now ran underground or climb to the right and cross the stream at the top of the rock wall which appeared from below to be a raging torrent cascading over the mountainside. We decided to climb to the left and avoid crossing the stream. At this point we roped up and commenced our climb with Brian leading, Simon second man, and myself in the rear. This climb had it's moments with some difficult pitched.

We reached the top and had a drink and food and a well needed rest. To our astonishment the time was almost 6pm and already we had been 4 hours en route. Our route which was now an easy grassy slope lay between the glacier on our left and the glacial stream to our right. A steady plod up hill to loose rocks and boulders brought us to the foot of the snow slope and glacier proper. It was now 8pm and we thought it better to bivouac under a very large boulder rather than try to make the hut under what may have been poor conditions and rapidly failing light.

"Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink". This was our plight. I searched for well over an hour- making for every shining piece of distant rock hoping for water, but only a trickle each time and not sufficient to fill the containers. Eventually I managed to fill a water bottle with what appeared to be clear water but on returning to the bivvy discovered the water to have a whitish colour and obviously of glacial origin. After straining through hankies and adding dried soup and minced beef it was like food of the gods. We all three slept oblivious to the rest of the world, although I do recollect after just settling down some mutterings from Brian and seeing a hooded half reclining figure between myself and Simon murmuring about rocks penetrating his backside and then signs of excavation with rocks being flung far and wide.

We awoke about 5.30 am and after a somewhat casual breakfast of glacial tea, bread, cherry jam and chocolate started off just before 7.am.

The next three hours were without incident with a steady plod over rocks and snow. We discovered some pure mountain water much to our relief and filled all available containers. The Brenva glacier was now on our immediate left with huge crevasses and seracs in a contorted and collapsed condition. Occasionally we saw and heard the crushing roar of ice avalanches. The seracs were often blue with touches of white and grey moraine - a sight I doubt I will ever forget.

By now we were at the foot of our first intended peak - the Aiguille de Brenva. We brewed up using some of our precious water and had a bite to eat.

Denver Glacier continued.....

We decided to tackle the peak at this stage rather than make for the hut and then return back to the peak. We took only one sack containing extra clothing, first aid and food and one ice axe, plus all our ropes slings etc., leaving the balance of our gear at the foot of the Aiguille. What at first sight from far below was only a speck in the distance was now a reality and can only be described as a triangular massif with its peak occasionally hidden by cloud.

It was now 11am. We roped up with Brian leading again. Our objective was to reach two very prominent gendarmes and then traverse right across the whole of the massif, get onto the lower ridge and traverse back along the ridge to the summit. We made for a distant snow gully believing we hoped the left hand side was the easiest way to the gendarmes but first we had some awkward rock climbing to overcome. We reached the gully kicking and cutting steps in the snow and then onto dry rock again. With three on a rope our progress was slow and only on a very few occasions we were able to move together. We reached the gendarmes and were now one third of the way to our objective. From this point we could see very clearly the famous Brenva face of Mont Blanc. Out came the cameras to capture a never forgotten scene. It was now mid-day and the sun beating down as we started the traverse across the massif still making very slow progress. At 4pm we were only two thirds of the way across the face and the climbing was becoming more difficult, thus reducing our speed even more.

We had now been on the Aiguille 5 hours and only just over half way to the summit. With great reluctance we felt we ought to retreat and regretted not leaving all our gear with us, otherwise we would have kept on towards the summit and if necessary bivied on the Aiguille. Feeling rather depressed at not making the top we began our descent - possibly all now suffering from a mild form of Alpine depression.

Brian was leading the way down, Simon still in the middle and myself in the rear. We reached the snow gully. Brian and Simon were belayed half way down on dry rocks and I started the descent. At a point half way between the top of the gully and Brian's belay an existing snow step I was standing on collapsed. Within seconds I was some thirty to forty feet below Brian and Simon gasping for breath with the rope cutting my body almost in half. I had fallen approximately 70 feet coming down the snow onto the rocks below losing my ice axe on the way down. My saviours quickly reached me and tended my bleeding hands. This mishap had lost us over half an hour and we were only two thirds of the way down. Brian decided it maybe quicker if we took an alternative route descending into the couloir at the foot of the Aiguille. This we did, but first changing our positions on the rope, needless to say I was put in the middle, Simon leading and Brian in the rear. We reached our sacks without further mishap, but in very poor light. It was obvious we could not go on and reach the hut which was still a long way off. I was now in some pain. We planned to make our way back to base camp, after some two hours treck over snow and ice we bivouacked on a very uneven rock which lay between a glacial stream on one side and snow and ice on the other. We brewed up and spent a very uncomfortable night. I woke about midnight with severe pains in my chest and after 3 attempts managed to get some medicine from my sac which I was using as a bivvy sheet. We were up at 5 am and had brewed up and ate some of the little food we had left. We were anxious to get back to camp and made for the glacial stream cascading over the mountainside to the dry glacier. We thought we would cross over the stream at this point and keep to an easier route down to the dry glacier rather than keep to our original route up, which involved some difficult climbing.

Brenver Glacier continued.....

Crossing the stream was an epic all three of us will not forget. The icy glacial water cascaded down from the glacier and snow fields with such force and magnitude that it was not possible to get across without being swept away - even whilst crossing roped up. Brian showed tremendous courage in getting across first, held by Simon and myself belayed onto a rock. Brian staggered to the other side completely wet through from feet to head. His task now was to get us and the sacks onto the other side. After considerable difficulty Brian hammered in a number of pitons and secured a good belay. Our sacks were hauled across by a karabiner pully system. Simon was next across and was swept off his feet and completely submerged, Brian dragged him over by brute force I too was dragged over, losing my footholds, but finishing up on my knees. The three of us were thoroughly soaked and shaking with cold. We quickly moved onto high rocks into the midday sun, stripped off, and lay in the hot sun. Soon our bodies thawed out and Simon brewed up. We lay there for almost 2 hours.

The last part of our journey was now only a scramble down a steep hillside and over the dry glacier. Brian and myself thoroughly exhausted took our time, whilst Simon sped on ahead eager for hot sweet tea, which Maria had ready for us. I've never enjoyed tea so much before, or drunk such large quantities. Thus ended for Simon and myself our first Alpine epic, but for Brian it was just another adventure.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 1967

Dave Williams was in charge of the evening and in true 'Digger' manner it was a mixture of chaos and fun, in fact a very good 'do'. John Cleare was this years judge and President Handley somehow managed to give his judgement of the Club interest slides. Club Interest is of course the laugh of the night. John Cleare gave a very detailed comment of most of the slides in the four mountaineering sections and he awarded points from one to twelve (twelve for first place in the section). Once again Great (grate) Gadsby will have his name printed on the winners cup. Gor on had entered some fine slides that impressed the judge. Bill Kirk, (who was last years winner) came second and Merle Wallis was third. Book token Prizes were presented to all three. A huge tray of eats was brought into the room by the landlady and a hungry mob descended up on it and it vanished, crumbs and all. Too late the Committee realised no one had paid for it and a whip round was called for. This year must have been a record for the number of friends and members who attended - almost 100! Later many returned home but a few went back to the camp sites at Froggatt's Farm and Calver. The rocks were crowded the following day, but not only by the Oread.

AN ILLUSTRATED LECTURE BY DENNIS GRAY

D. Burgess has once again arranged a lecture by Dennis Gray for the Oread. Illustrated by colour slides it will be on Rock Climbing in Britain. And will show shots of climbing from Cornwall to Scotland including many first ascents. The Date is Wednesday January 10th 1968 at 7.30pm at the Art Gallery Derby. Tickets now on sale are 3/6d. Get yours from any committee member it will be an enjoyable evening. Pass the word around to climbing friends.

SATURDAY A fine warm day, a total absence of wind and firm friendly rock, all combined to give 40 odd "mountain nymphs" a chance to exploit their talents (climbing wise!). The old firm Burgess and Handley were particularly active doing Murray's Abrahams and Eliminate A in very quick succession.

Prospective member John Watson was also very active, climbing with Fred Allen and Howard Johnston, he led Abrahams, Murray's and Eliminate C, then finished the day by taking his wife Audrey up C Buttress Ordinary.

Wataboutawaterbottle biddle Hayes dashed up and down the crag picking out the pioneer's plums. He climbed in boots as usual, his third pair this month! His brand new, untouched by English Hand bright red P A's are still awaiting their first skirmish.

An anonymous observer reported seeing John ("Somethings come up") Dench, Reginald (killer) Squires and prospective member Tony Berryman on their fourth ascent of the top pitch of the ordinary route on C Buttress. This was later confirmed by Peter Allen.

There were so many Oreads climbing it's impossible to mention them all here, but I hope they enjoyed it.

SUNDAY Rain spreading from the West!! was the early call from the Hayes' mobile, this produced a bustle of activity from the occupants of Tranarth as thirty one Oread's prepared for the crag. A few were deterred by the forecast and decided to stay close to the Hut, But the majority including 20 under canvas or in tin tents hastened to the crag. The Hayes radio warning proved false as instead of rain the weather slowly improved into a sunny afternoon.

A late arriver at the crag was the President Gringo Handley who had spent most of the morning cooking Burgess 's breakfast. However he proceeded to impress the onlookers by bombing up C Buttress carrying a large sack bulging with gear and trailing Antarctic Harry along on the end of his 200 ft rope. He was eventually overtaken by Burgess and Mark Hayhurst, the former resorting to the rather dubious practice of fouling Rar's rope (what a mess!) Another less polished but suprisingly competant performer on this crag was 9 years old Peter Allen, who climbing with the meet leader and prospective member Bernice Heason accomplished the ascent of this 400 ft route in 1;1/4 hours.

Other popular climbs were Hawks route, Murrays, Southern Slabs, Abrahams, Central Chimney, Hopkinsons Crack, Lazzarus, North Wall and Gordon and Craig's. Out of 51 members on the meet at least 40 climbed on Dow and most of them managed 4 or 5 routes over the weekend. A grand total of 200 climbs, not bad for a sometimes called Rambling Club!

Others on the meet were. Members - George Reynolds, Janet Reynolds, Molly Pretty Harry Pretty, Doreen Gadsby, Sue and Tom Frost Lloyd and Mary Caris, Clive (Rusty) Russell, Anne Hayes, Brian and Marion Cooke, Dave and Pam Weston, Ken and Margaret Hodge, Chris and Halina Martin, Paul Craddock and Christine Brady.

Prospective members - Chris Taylor, Chris Culley, Rosie Graysone, Wendy Bottomoly Audrey and John Watson Allan and Bernice Heason, Tony Berryman, David Brady, Mark Hayhurst, Bill Cooper, Rick Morrell, Charlie Drake, Laura Pretty, Simon Pretty, Jean and Margaret Cooke, Clare Weston, Michael Hayes, Hump and Sally Frost and Stanley Caris. Phew!!

Dowe Crag Continued.....

P.S. I would like to thank prospective member David Brady for helping the meet leader out and taking some of the less experienced rock climbers up the routes, also well done to young Simon Pretty who did some climbs with his father on Saturday. Thank you all for coming and I hope you'll accept my apologies for being late getting to the hut on Friday Night.

Guido Gadsby meet leader.

OREADS IN SHORTS

Birth Congratulations to Bob and Dina Pettigrew on the Birth of their first Son Alasdair Gavin in September

Applications For Membership

Christopher R. Taylor, 45 Farway Crescent, Allestree,
Proposed. Geoff Hayes. Seconded. D. Weston.

Members wishing to comment on the above prospective members suitability for membership to the club should write to the Hon. Sec.

New Member. Reginald Squires

Bob Pettigrew now convalescing, is out of plaster and rushing around on crutches with a charming female physiotherapist in attendance!

FOR SALE - Ski gear. Pete Janes offers for sale the following items from his vast slightly used collection:

Koflach clip boots size 7 1/2 . Childs French Ski Boots size 12
Price 120/- price 30/-

Fischer' Quick Skis with Binding, size 195cm price including sticks 100/-
If you are interested in any of the above please contact Pete.

British Mountaineering Council Peak Committee news. - Two minor differences of opinion with the National Trust have been settled amicably. Small parties of campers from clubs affiliated to the B.M.C. are to be allowed to use the Trust's property on Bleaklow, as was laid down by a previous agreement between the Trust and the B.M.C. The Trust also wished to prevent climbing on the Winnats and Mam Tor but it is hoped that a winter agreement would come about.

The B.M.C. representative on the East Midlands Sports Council had requested that climbing walls should be built on any large buildings which the Council may succeed in getting built. (If Foot and Mouth spreads any further they will be the only places left to climb on -(Ed!))

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP - NOVEMBER 1967

TOM GREEN!

~~29 Shaw Street, Derby~~

Proposed J. Welbourne.
Seconded G. Hayes.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Ronald George Chambers.

~~23 Carrington Street, Derby~~

Proposed J. Corden
Seconded D. Williams

Roy Sawyers.

~~XXXXXX Lane, Derby~~

Proposed D. Williams
Seconded P. Janes.

→ INSERT AFTER Chambers & Sawyers

~~The above have all applied for full membership to the Oread. Any person wishing to comment on their suitability for membership should write to the Hon. Secretary immediately.~~

In those days plumbers always came in pairs, complete with the apprentice Ed.

OREADS IN SHORTS

The Pen -y- Pass Hotel has been purchased by the Y. H. A. If it keeps it's licence there is bound to be a number of Oreads dashing to become Youth hostellers!

Robin Hodgkin who has moved from the Derby area has now resigned from the club

SUBSCRIPTIONS! There are still a number of members who have not paid their subscriptions for this year. Under club rules those persons who have not paid subscriptions are liable to be struck off the list of members - pay up!

CHANGE OF MEETS. Advance notice of two meets which have changed dates - please alter your meets cards and note in your diary. Ogwen Meet new date 9/10th Feb. Leader John Corden. Snake Meet. 23/24 February.

Quote from Pete Janes to Les Langworthy - "When are we getting these bloody side boards off, I'll be glad when the Panto' season is over."

SOCIAL AND DANCE This highlight of the Clubs year will occur on Friday 15th December at the Sherwood Hotel Derby from 8pm to 1am. Tickets costing 7/6 are now on sale from most Committie members. The price includes a Buffet, late licence, and Spot Prizes. Get your tickets now and make sure of an enjoyable swining evening just before Xmas.

Xmas at the Hut in Wales The hut is now full!

New address. As from December 10th the Welbourne's new address will be Plot 29c Laurels Estate, Bangor - is y- coed, Flints.

CLUB HUT IMPROVEMENTS

There has been a further working party at the hut in Wales since the last Newsletter. Attended by a small but keen party, a number of important jobs were carried out. All the bedrooms are now re-decorated throughout and have been named. Further gass rings have been added to the kitchen and all the rings cleaned. The hut had a spring clean by the girls of the team.

Last year a water heater was fitted to the tank to enable hot water to be obtained for baths Etc. without the need to light the boiler. Not much later the heater burnt out and the cause was most likely someone switching the thing on before the tank had filled up. A new element has been put in place. Will members please ensure that when getting to the hut and finding the water system drained that they ensure that the big tank in the drying room is full before switching on. The stop tap at the base of the tank is sometimes the culprit. Look to see if this is closed when switching on the water. If it is open water will just flow straight through and out the drain!

Finally the builder has fitted a new window in the lounge. This replaces a badly rotted frame and should provide more light. Eventually it is planned to fit new frames all over the building as necessary.

Pantomime Bonfire/Meet - Ilam - 1967

The weather did it's best to stop this meet. The few hardy Oreads who camped almost drowned in the mud on the field. No one managed to get to the bonfire in the Hall grounds on the Saturday night, all were trying to keep warm and dry inside.

For once one did not have to fight the queue to get into the Pantomime. Tinsel Allen and her magnificent cast did their best to warm ^{up} people ~~up~~ with a fantastically well costumed and performed 'panto. ~~What were the Oread to know then along. Most of the hall was full of strange Youth Hostellers and most of the gags fell on deaf ears!~~ The club were well represented in the cast with ~~Bob Barker~~ Wes as 'Blames Jond' in the lead. President Handley seemed quite at home playing the part of the villain. Burgess played alongside a slick blond that turned out to be his wife Janet! Pretty was made for the part of the big fat Sheik. He was well attended by Digger Williams who was the only Welshman of coloured extraction in the cast. Big John Cordon took the part of the big beefy henchman. Tinsel took the part of Harry's first and favourite wife - ~~and~~ ^{who} treated all the lads to a fantastic belly dance. The ladys of the **chorus** have never looked more lovely - or more naked! All were introduced by 'Uncle Nat' complete of course with topper which becomes more battered ~~year after~~ ^{each} year. **Keep** it up team it was a terrific evening.

Sunday morning saw one of the wettest Cross county runs yet. The stepping stones were well under water and saw quite a few swallow dives into the Dove! There were a good number of Oread's in the run and not all ended up at the rear! Most of the runners and spectators managed to get to the pub for dinner.