

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
NEWSLETTER

JANUARY
1968

I suppose this should be called a Foot and Mouth edition of the Oread News. Quite naturally reports of outdoor activities are a bit thin. Little did I realise that when I typed the last Newsletter, way back last year, that there would be no more outdoor meets until February! At last it looks as though the end of the epidemic is not too distant and the meets programme can be resumed. November December and January have been the longest quarter of a year ever for mountaineers, with only the lucky few who were able to get North to Scotland getting a look at a peak. But it looks as though almost everyone has played the game and kept off farm and moorland. Let's hope that this will improve our relations with the 'wild farmers' of Rhyd-ddu and elsewhere.

There has however been still some rock climbing and walking accomplished. A certain quarry in the middle of a Leicestershire town has been seized by a number of Oreads and all the routes have been climbed to death. Two members were observed walking between Nottingham and Loughborough - by road, and two others were seen on an expedition to Derby and spent an exciting Sunday walking the streets! Also the cliffs in the Matlock area have been swarming with climbers Oreads included and the "Sinning Kettle" Cafe has become a second home for many on Sundays. Here's hoping that the next Newsletter will carry more welcome news.

gh.

PLAYBOY OF THE ALPINE WORLD - PROFILE OF A MAN IN OFFICE

The title is enough. Hardly need to mention those illustrious initials which, in themselves, have given rise to a strange mystique. R.H., the man who has established himself in all our hearts as the arbiter of mountaineering manners and good taste, the end product of long years of apprenticeship to the high priesthood of the senior club regime.

There are persons who say it is the result of his venerable association with R.L. College, but others see a more profound explanation of that unmistakable panache which a succession of vicissitudes has not diminished. He has become since his elevation to the Presidency, every inch a R.U.R.P; the very personification of the twentieth century realised ultimate reality person.

But, to see him at his best you must observe him moving with a kind of furtive over confidence across the exotically furnished arena of an Alpine Club Winter Dinner.

I still get sublimated anxiety symptoms when I remember the now notorious A.C. Centenary Dinner.

As Pettigrew said, making his usual play, "..... only the top people you understand". We were therefore a little surprised that R.H. was of the party since this was before he had achieved real distinction as the only hard man not mentioned by name in Mr. Joe Brown's biography of N. Allen.

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Playboy of the Alpine World continued.....

Todhunter was openly dubious as to whether the R.H. brand of savoir faire, a monument to the scholarship of his friends, would stand up to the worldliness in depth of such an occasion. "After all", said Todhunter "... ..in the company of Pretty Pettigrew and myself, masters of the sport you might say, he could crack". And Todhunter mused in a fragmentary way on a previous Alpine Club occasion when our man, not appreciating the modernising effect of A.C. members from Mallory to Hunt, had appeared in a hired set that started with button-up boots and ended with that type frock coat favoured by professional gentlemen in mid western cow towns towards the end of the last century. The bit in between had been a trifle indeterminate.

Nevertheless, on the night, our fears were allayed. Admittedly his set was a little on the sharp side. The coat had a bit of the Joe Loss hang out, otherwise, he was impeccable and we entered the room with easy confidence.

Gone was the twitching ill - at - ease manner that we had assumed on previous occasions. At last, we thought, we are reaping the dividend of careful indoctrination.

We watched him circulating among the Lords and Bishops, nodding familiarly to Italian Counts and sundry belted knights. We listened to him speak with authority to Tilman and Francis Chichester on some of the obscure problems of navigation small boats across Weymouth Bay. We noted his comments to Shipton on the logistics of small parties in the Himalaya, and we were silenced by the ease and familiarity with which he dispensed advice on gamekeepers to his landowner friends. We tried hard to overhear his remarks to one of several Bishops, but the thread of his erudite exposition on things ecumenical was lost in the hub-hub that greeted a special announcement.

Whymper's original tent, as used on the first ascent of the Matterhorn was about to be unveiled. It had been preserved (something of an overstatement) by the Italian A.C. whose representative, in this Centenary Year, had now returned the remains to the proper heirs. It was indeed re-interrment on consecrated ground.

It stood there, droopily supported by tatty guys tied to several chairs. The ancient stained canvas seemed to have received a heavy charge of grape shot, and the whole contrivance looked as though it might crumble to dust at a touch. As a precaution, all electric fans were switched off. The encircling press moved back as though their very breathing might invite catastrophe. Men, nearly as ancient as the object before them, moved uneasily on their sticks, and wiped away small tears with large silk squares.

The Italian representative, a Count of distinguished lineage, moved forward. The murmur of appreciation fell away, a great silence was about to engulf us all as we stared transfixed at the holy relic.

But, seemingly, we were not all transfixed. R. H., cock-a-hoop at his success as an entrepreneur in ecclesiastical politics, was apparently oblivious to other matters in hand. That a large plate of salted peanuts on a far table should take his fancy, thus causing him to interrupt his exposition of the similarities between the Synod of Whitby 664 A.D., and the current antics of the Papal Curia; that he should fall over a chair reaching for the plate; that the chair was holding up one end of Whymper's tent; and that all these things accompanied by a crash of breaking timber and a dreadful oath, should happen at the same moment as the Italian Representative was about to speak - was an appalling coincidence.

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Playboy of the Alpine World..... continued.....

They took him out of the wreckage of broken guys, chair legs, the bits of string and fragments of ancient cloth and eventually, when the dust had settled, they started again with the remains of a tent which had now assumed more of a lean-to shape.

As for R.H., he was taken away in a plain sealed van and, at the moment of truth, I am ashamed to say we denied him and gave it as our opinion that he was a waiter who had "taken a drop" or, even worse, perhaps a journalist.

H. Pretty.

THE ANSWER TO F.& M.

With the issue of the edict that our kind of sport must cease to prevent the further spreading of the foot and mouth disease it seemed as though the Oreads were set for hibernation if drastic steps weren't taken to relieve the situation. Indoor meets just once a month and Tuesday at the boozier and helping wife to clean the house and otherwise amuse her didn't fill the aching void that threatened to engulf the club; So praise for idle chatter in the Playhouse Theatre p.b. Two hirsute hydrophobiacs from L.A. Mountaineers listened to our imprecations and with supercilious sneers spoke loosely in their cups (for which they 're well and truly sorry) and quoted O.S. Reference for a certain rocky Quarry. Like silent ghosts through frosty mists we gathered from afar-rabid clawing Oreads were packed in every car. Startled watchers in the quarry saw they'd lost their isolation as serried ranks dropped from above in multiplied invasion. Culley; Gadsby; Heason; Hodge; Allen; Hayes and Welbourne, Hadlum, Turner (locked up shop) and Wallis with their firstborn. Pent-up stores of blunted boots and miles of rope all twisted through too long storage and disuse were heaven-bound assisted.

Eric was off up a classified 'Diff' and I know one or two of us trembled not so much at the ice that was coating each hold as the Cemetery Gates it resembled. The T.T.L Nikon with Gordon astride it shot wide angle views of the scene and Hadlum bombarded all climbers in sight with snowballs which seemed a bit mean until he explained it was only to help and they'd bless him when frozen in ice on the wall of the Eiger and had the know-how to save their lives in a trice. Alan and Ken had been clawing up 'Mangle' for two solid Sundays before they finally pegged up the thin exit crack and knocked half the climb to the floor. The Sickle, The Hook, Up and Over (Oh, Merle!) - there isn't a climb in the guide that Margaret and Bernice and Doreen and all haven't conquered - or failing that, tried.

It won't be long, we're hoping, before the F.& M. has run its course and we are free to visit Wales again. But just till then I've took my pen to say we're not too sorry because we've got our weekends planned - we're off to Whitwick Quarry.

Alan P. Heason Jan. 1968.

Eric Byne was not a founder member of the Oread. He became a member in 1950, largely due to his previous association with George Sutton and Cyril Machin and the club's acceptance of his invitation to work on the Baslow Edge's Section of the Sheffield Area (Vol.2, Climbs on Gritstone), which was published in 1951 under his editorship, and during his term (1951-1953) as President of the Club. He was elected an Honorary Member in 1953.

Up to 1960 he was an extremely active member of the Oread and exerted great influence during those years that the Oread developed from a small group of friends into a well organised club, equally noted for its association with gritstone and its pioneering of small but uniquely ambitious expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic.

His sudden death on the 2nd January, ¹⁹⁶⁸ at the age of 56, when many of his friends had not realised that he was so seriously ill, has left a space that nobody will ever quite fill.

Eric Byne was born and raised in Sheffield, and came of age at the height of the thirties depression. From the hopeless situation of industrial Sheffield, with a small group of friends, he set in motion a social revolution in the climbing world.

Eric was a founder member of the Sheffield Climbing Club which consisted principally of young men like himself, without work, without money, who walked their native moors and climbed on the Edges in workman's overalls or cast-off plus fours purchased for a song in the city's rag market. They were the real prophets of the egalitarian principles which have become the tradition of present day climbing society.

He was a fine rock climber and many of his first ascents are still classic gritstone routes. But Eric had a quality which translated him from the good climber of the thirties to a man of real stature in the post-war years. He was a man of incredible determination, with the perception to realise that what was happening on the moors and outcrops of the High Peak was more than casual recreation. He recognised the real value of this wild country wedged between the massive conurbations of Sheffield and Manchester and, while many of his contemporaries were making reputations in more exotic mountain areas, Eric Byne devoted all of his energy to fostering the interests of those who lived and took their recreation in the Peak.

Throughout his life he displayed intense feeling towards freedom of access to open country and took part in both individual and mass invasions of Kinder Scout during the years of prohibition, police protection, and frequent physical violence.

The most assiduous and authoritative chronicler of Peak District affairs he was the first editor of the first serious volumes to describe and classify the gritstone outcrops. It was entirely typical that he was still improving the early excellence of the 1950's as editor of the new "Rock Climbs in the Peak" series right to his death.

It is difficult to describe how great was our delight when "High Peak" was published in 1966. Many of us witnessed Eric struggling with the M.S. of this book for nearly twenty years, and it is a further tribute to his fantastic determination that, at long last, he found a solution in association with Geoffrey Sutton. But, for me it will always be Eric's book - not so much as a record of physical activity but, more significantly, as a carefully observed record of social change.

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In the post-war years Eric climbed in the Alps and frequently in North Wales and the Lakes. He discovered a number of new routes on Tryfan all of which exemplify his early flare for picking a splendid line of great character between established trade routes. But it is his association with Derbyshire that was at the core of his life.

He was deeply moved by the number of people who went up to Moorside Farm and Birchens to see his July 1967 Anniversary Meet. Perhaps as many as 200 old friends, with their numerous progeny, came from far and wide to talk and climb, to drink gallons of tea and a fair amount of Ale, and those, who recognised the seriousness of his malady, wondered at his energy and his ability to still lead an awkward severe. Maybe he recognised it as possibly his last big gritstone occasion for ~~it~~ certainly was. But he gave no hint of it and, his new beard lending substance to his features, I could still think of him as indestructible.

Older members of the Oread will remember Eric's obsession at every A.G.M. concerning the acquisition by the Club of a hut in the Peak. He considered a hut in Wales ~~to~~ be of secondary importance. It is ironic that he should die in the year that we ^{are} on the verge of attaining this objective.

I can think of nothing more proper than the commemorating the name of Eric Byne in the cottage that the Oread will eventually acquire in the area that he loved more than any other.

Harry Pretty.

OREADS IN SHORTS

NEW MEMBER

Miss Honor Sheldon of 23 Beech Avenue, Nuthall, Notts. Was elected a full member at a recent Committee Meeting.

Proposed . R. Handley. Seconded. P. Janes

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

Miss Rosemary Grayson. 15, Vale Close, Newthorpe, Notts.

Proposed. G. Hayes. Seconded. G. Gadsby.

Any member wishing to comment on the above persons suitability for membership to the Oread should write to the Hon. Sec., without delay.

NEW ADDRESS.

Mr. and Mrs. George Reynolds have now moved to 203 Main Street, Newthorpe, Nottingham.

The Club Hut in Wales is closed until further notice because of foot and mouth in Derbyshire. It was decided at the Feb. Committee meeting to review the situation at the next meeting on Tuesday 12 March. If you wish to use the Hut after that date please contact the Hut Warden for further information.

AS SOON as the restrictions are lifted it is hoped that members will use the hut as much as possible to try and make up some of the financial loss caused by the closure since November.

SOME RECENT AND FUTURE CLUB MEETS

The Dinner held way back in November was a success both financially (for a change) and socially as usual. A record number of Members and friends gathered at the Green Man Ashbourne on a foggy evening. Because of F and M everyone returned home or managed to find a room in the town. It must have been the first time in the Club's history that no one camped at the dinner! Club speakers this year were Nat Allen who proposed the toast to the Guests and John Cordon who replied to the Oread Toast. Handley as President almost kept events under some control and managed a speech. A Pettigrew Tape from Far off India was first used to liven up the proceedings after an excellent meal. Guest speakers were Dennis Gray and Ned Kelly. Both made the most of a great chance to get at most of the prominent members of the Club. The 18th Annual Dinner was well up to the other 17!

The Social and Dance held just before Xmas went with quite a swing despite the late attendance of the organiser. There was plenty of food for all and hot music provided by the President.

The first official club meet of the year was held at Langdale. The highlights were Burgess being walked to the ground by a prospective member (female). The fantastic clear weather on the Saturday. The Heavy snow on Sunday which forced all to get out of the valley by mid day. And finally the departure of Gordon Gadsby and Van from the camp site in the snow storm when he drove into a ditch and as soon as he was extracted had to help pull out six other cars that followed his tracks!

Three Northern Oread's spent a very good long week end up in Glencoe in early January. They were Brian Cooke, Clive Russell and Lloyd Caris. The snow was not good but they managed the Aonach Bagach and climbs on the Bidian side of the valley.

A very interesting Evening of slides was given by Jim Bury, who must be one of the most widely travelled of Aline Mountaineers. His lecture consisted of slides of Scotland, Norway, most of the Alps and Corsica. Of particular interest to members were his fine slides of the Oberland. This is Jim's favourite area and he took us with the aid of slides both the length and breadth of the range. Those members hoping to visit the Oberland this year should have good a good idea of the possibilities for climbing.

The new meets card must be issued soon after the A.G.M. and it would help the meets Sec., Dave Weston, if any member wishes to lead a meet or even suggest a venue, to contact him within the next week or two.

THE DERBYSHIRE CLUB HUT - BASLOW

Because of F. And M. all negotiations with the Chatsworth Estate had to wait. On Feb 14th 6 members of the Sub Committee met at Chatsworth to discuss the position. It now looks quite likely that the Oread will move into the Hut in the near future for a trial first year to be followed by a 15 year lease if everyone is happy on both sides. Until the Sub Committee have had a chance to give a full report to the main Committee of the club, no more details can be given. Members should try and attend the A.G.M. for the latest news.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Don't forget the date - 23 March. Have you nominated a committee member? Have you a new Club Rule in view? Send your ideas to the Hon. Sec., as soon as possible.

EASTER MEET. - Advance warning - Book the date and remember the place! Glencoe (Wotagain!). From Friday 12 April to Tuesday 16th. The snow should be there in plenty for climber and ski-er. Full details in the next meets circular. Meet leader Geoff Hayes. If you do not fancy camping in Glencoe there is a very good bunclose quite close to the Clackaig Hotel. For bookings contact - Mr. H. MacColl. Lecantua, Glencoe, Argyle.

New Address

Lloyd Caris, (now minus beard) now lives at 19, Howard Road, Brampton, Carlisle.

ALPINE MEET 1968 Venue Grindelwald (for climbing in the Bernese Oberland)

Date. - July 27th to August 10th. Ray Handley is meet leader, so for further information contact him. If everyone who attended the get together to discuss this meet actually turn up then Grindelwald will be a very busy town this year! The camp site has not been fixed and it is suggested that the first there should look out the best place. One camp site that has been recommended by a member is called Gletscherdorf! There are still a few people requiring lifts so see Ray.

NEW MEMBER. Chris Culley was re elected a full member at a recent Committee Meeting. His address is Oak Beams, Castleway Lane, Willington, Derbys.

Since the last Newsletter the following have become members of the Oread.
 Chris Taylor 45 Farway Cres. Allestree, Derby.
 Reg Squires (Hon Auditor) 47, Brentford Drive, Mackworth, Derby. BE3 4BP.
 Tom Green. 69 Shaw Street, Derby.
 Ron. Chambers. 22, Carrington St., Derby.
 Roy Sawyer. 21 Rigga Lane, Duffield, Derbys.

Quote. -"It's not true that Welbourne has got Foot and Mouth, just Mouth"

Birth News. To Mick and Celia Berry a daughter Margaret Anne.
 To Dave and Pam Weston a Son Graham.
 To Geoff and Anne Hayes a son Peter.

WELCOME HOME to Bob Pettigrew and family. It was good to see Bob in the Willmot last Tuesday - just like Old Times. Bob is looking fit and well and his Hip is progressing well. He gave a lecture in Derby and also Nottingham. Let's hope he will soon find time to talk to the club and show some of his terrific slides. He is to take up a teaching post in Tunbridge Wells soon, but I'm sure we will see quite a lot of him in the hills.

Fred Allen sustained a broken pelvis whilst skiing in the Zermat Area. After spending a week in the Krankenhaus in the town he was flown home via Zurich and London. He is now progressing well and should soon be up and about quite soon. Everyone sends their best wishes, Fred.

THE WILD CLIMBER (SUNG TO THE TUNE OF THE WILD ROVER)

by John Dench

I've been a rock climber for many's the year,
and I've spent all my week ends in terror and fear
but now I'm retiring, I'll hang up my rope,
since some silly bugger, he smeared it with soap!

Chorus.

And its no, na, never; no, nay, never no more,
Will I be a rock climber, no never no more.

I was climbing quite steadily, about forty feet high,
When the roof of my mouth went suddenly dry,
I knew I was falling, of that theres no doubt,
I hope that my runner nut does'nt come out!

If you know Gerard Hofnung, you'll know of my plight,
For I was quite heavy, my second quite light;
As I was decending, my second she rose,
The end of her boot hit me right on the nose!

When I hit terra-firma I let out a moan,
My second above had grabbed hold of a stone!
The stone came away and she started back down,
I was pulled to my feet and yanked clean off the ground!

As I shot past my partner, my waist she did clutch,
The stone she was holding hit me in the(stomach!)
My scream it disturbed her, she let go the stone,
We we were left there suspended, together, alone.

My hair it was silver and hers it was gold,
The days they were long, and the nights they were cold!
I asked her for lovin'; she answered ne "Nay!"
"I'ts old men like you I can have any day!"

Three days and three nights, we hung side by side,
our prussicks were loose, the knots badly tied.
At the critical moment, the loops they broke free,
We parted in space, and shot down to the scree!

The tree it was strong, and it's boughs they were stout,
From a cleft in the rock it grew twenty feet out.
Directly beneath me, the tree broke my fall,
In true western fashion, I stopped.... A cheval!

I've been a rock climber for many's the year,
Now I spend all my weekends trying not to go queer!
So give up your climbing, all virils young men,
The things that I've told you could happen again!