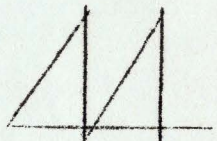


Venture



SEPTEMBER 1978

NUMBER 29



VENTURE 44. A sort of magazine, by, for, and about, the
44th Gloucester (Sir Thomas Rich's) Venture
Scout Unit.

NUMBER TWENTY NINE

SEPTEMBER 1978

EDITOR Rob Dalton

CONTENTS

Notes and News	Rob Dalton	1
Manors maketh Man	Steve Ball	3
Bodesi revisited	Mark Simmons	5
Black Mountains 1978	Phil Champion	8
Impressions from the New World	Kevin Neely	10
From All Points	V.S.L.	11

NOTES AND NEWS

With this and all subsequent issues of Venture 44, the previous 'Editorial' and 'Notes & News' sections are now combined into one feature with the latter heading. This reorganisation now leaves more space for the pieces which I hope members will continue to write.

Following on from the summer exams, the Unit has had to alter its membership lists. On the debit side we have to say goodbye to; first, Mark Bennett and Dick Chappell who are rumoured to have gone into local employment; and Chris Dee who is attending Oxford Poly., doing Business Studies. We also bid farewell to Simon Weston, Phil (Wally) Champion, and Chris Pashley - three Unit stalwarts.

Simon has started work at Prinknash Abbey, having contributed much to the Unit, especially in the Cotswold and Black Mountains Hikes - and the study of Moths!

Wally is working in local industry for a year before moving on to do a horticultural course at college. He too was a long hike specialist as well as an intrepid canoe builder and canoeist, not forgetting his valuable work when Unit Secretary. We also congratulate him on recently gaining his Queen's Scout Award.

Chris Pashley has been one of our longest serving members. He served on the executive for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years and he has been a most efficient Treasurer during a period when the Unit's financial affairs have been complex, to say the least! Recently he has been our chairman, and he has seemed to have taken part in every activity possible! We thank him for all his very hard work and leadership of the past four years. He is at present taking a course in Geology and Geography at St. Paul's, Cheltenham.

On the credit side, we welcome new members Iain Weir, Steve Grail, Paul Venn, and Mark Simmons (brother of ex member Ian). We thank all the leavers for their service to the Unit, and in wishing them all the best for the future, I would point out to the newcomers that they have much to live up to.

Finally, I have to report that the wood chopping season is in full swing, and large masses of kindling wood are being processed for local senior citizens.

R.D.

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THE ICELAND FILE

The next VENTURE 44 production will be a very special issue containing a detailed account of our recent major expedition to Southern Iceland. It will be much longer than usual, well illustrated, and printed by a different and superior process. Now the bad news! Due to the cost of the production it will be necessary to charge 25p per copy. We regret that our regular readers will NOT be sent a copy UNLESS they fill in the enclosed slip, to be returned, together with 25p - or 27p in stamps - before October the 24th. Please send your order as soon as possible so that we can print sufficient copies F.H.

MANORS MAKE TH MAN

A view of a County Council course in Personal Relationships for teenagers.

The four day course at Cowley Manor was meant to be strictly educational- well that's what they said! Myself and another boy were chosen to attend from this school. I'll try anything once!

We arrived at the Manor house at about 10.30 am, and having put our bags down we waited for someone to appear. This eventually happened. An adult wandered out of their staff room, greetings were exchanged, and she told us to have a look around the grounds and to make friends with the other people on the course.

By 11.00am everyone had arrived and people were, with reluctance, talking to each other. Then one of the canteen staff wheeled in a trolley loaded with coffee cups. After coffee we were directed to the Lecture Room and we sat down on some padded seats. Some tutors entered, and they sat down in front of us and introduced themselves. At about mid day we were split up into four groups. Each group had their own room, and ours was the Lecture Room. After meeting our own group and tutor, we all reassembled in the Lecture Room.

We were told all about the "Does" and "Don'ts". There weren't many rules, basically no smoking upstairs and no going off to the pub, and finally no visiting the girls' rooms - SHAME! Referring to the last rule, apparently one boy had once visited a girl's room and the girl suffered the consequences...

Lunch was at 1.00 pm, and in general the meals were quite nice. After lunch we went back to the Lecture Room and we were given a list of activities to participate in that evening - Yoga, Video-taping, Fencing, Candle making, Enamelling and Drama. I chose fencing, which turned out to be very tiring on my legs and back. Coffee was served at 10.30 pm, and we were in bed by 11.00 pm.

Next day we got up at 8.00am and breakfast was eaten

45 minutes later. Afterwards we went to our group rooms and did some projects, which consisted of thinking up some questions based on a set topic. The idea was for us to go round asking the other people on the course our questions so we could both build up our confidence, and get to know each other better.

Anyway, after dinner we went on some outdoor events, which were canoeing, tennis and archery. Up to that day, I had never done any canoeing so I decided to have a go. I got into one of the canoes and started to paddle round one of the freezing cold lakes that they have at Cowley. After about 15 minutes I thought I had got the hang of it. That's when I decided to have a chat with the fish! One minute I was sitting in the canoe minding my own business, then the next I was splashing my way round the capsized canoe. I was freezing and soaked from head to foot. Back on dry land eventually, I washed and changed, and prepared for the evening meal.

After the meal, we had a choice of activities again. I decided to do Video-taping, which turned out to be great fun.

The next day we worked on the projects again and on some more activities, but the highlight of the day took place in the evening. This was called the Social Evening where everybody plays stupid games and usually makes a complete fool of themselves - a fate which very nearly happened to me....

There was a game called "The Barber Shop". Six boys, all seated on chairs, had large blankets tied round their necks, covering up all of their bodies. Then one of the women leaders said to us that before leaving the 'shop' there was something we were wearing that we didn't need. So we took our shoes off, but that didn't satisfy her. Therefore we removed our socks....no, that wasn't enough either. Then shirts, jumpers and belts. However, it was then that I started to get a bit worried..she wanted our Trousers!! And if you want to know what happened in the end, you will have to go on a similar course and find out for yourself! However, I managed to avoid any embarrassment myself! After that we went to bed.

The next morning we packed, said goodbye and departed, having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. I would advise anyone to go if they get the chance.

Steve Ball

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BODESI REVISITED

For the third successive summer, a group from the Unit were up in North Wales doing conservation work. The party this year consisted of myself, Pete Green, Tony Jones, Mark Simmons, Paul Venn, Iain Wier, Jan Daines and the V.S.L. Our thanks go to Simon Lapington for inviting us to Bodesi for what proved to be a very interesting and enjoyable week.

R.D.

The first stop on the journey was at Chirk, where we expected to buy our tea. However, the only shop open in the village was a newsagent's so we carried on along the A5 to Corwen, where we ate our long-awaited fish'n chips before pressing on to Bodesi. Arriving just after 8.15pm we moved our gear into the cottage and settled in. Next door, the local Mountain Rescue Team were in residence.

On Sunday, the V.S.L. planned a brisk walk up the mountains directly behind our home, and the weather was quite good as we set off up the side of Craig Llugwy. We were soon finding bits of the aircraft wreckage that littered the peaks in the valley, and before long we stood on the top of Carnedd Llewelyn - third highest in Wales (3,484ft). We set off down the ridge, passing the arête leading to Pen-yr-Helgi du.

It was while on this part of the walk that we came into contact with several members of the crow family. As a follow-up to this meeting, the V.S.L. related the tale of how ravens fly upside down just before mating. A few members of our group then joined in with a whole string of 'Raven' film titles, proverbs etc. You could say that they were Raven mad...

The next summit was Carnedd Dafydd (3,427ft), and we then decided to take in Pen-yr-Oleu wen (3,210ft) before



A Flamingo

starting on the steady descent back across the hillside to the cottage. The threatened rain started to fall, and continued for the rest of the day. We decided to visit Llanberis, where we viewed the mountain railway before returning for tea.

Monday was the first work day and of course it just had to rain again. Some of us dug drainage ditches while the rest brought down fencing from the mountainside. The rain was so heavy that Simon abandoned work at midday. So once again we set out in the van, this time to Portmadoc. Many of the roads were flooded, the fields were lakes, and the rivers had become raging torrents! At Portmadoc we saw the Ffestiniog Railway and wandered around the town. Then we were fortunate to witness the Final of the North Wales Crazy Golf Championship - between Rob, Jan & the V.S.L. The course was so difficult that nobody could finish the last hole *

On Tuesday it rained again so we visited the Llechwedd Slate Mines and after queuing for 1 hour we got on a mini-train and enjoyed an interesting trip through an old mine working. Afterwards we ventured on foot to the Ffestiniog Power Station. A long, steep, hairpin bending road led up to the higher of the two dams but on arrival at the top, our expected view was totally obscured by a mass of low cloud. Our meal that evening partly consisted of a V.S.L. jelly - which unfortunately had not set.

Wednesday, and back to work. One group continued with the ditches whilst the other mended part of the path to Llyn Idwal. That night Chris Pashley and Ian Fletcher arrived from Gloucester just in time to see Simon's very

interesting slide show of the nearby mountains in winter

On Thursday, we made the steep ascent up Tryfan. At the top, the more foolish amongst us jumped (or fell and scrambled - Pete!) from Adam to Eve. From Tryfan (3010ft) we climbed Glyder Fach (3262ft). The summit is strewn with huge grey slabs and blocks. Traversing them is more like rock climbing. Our third peak for the day was Glyder Fawr (3279ft) and we descended off the Glyders past the Devil's Kitchen and Idwal Slabs and along "our path".

It was on Thursday night that we discovered the solution to the world energy problem - Scout gravy. Fletch had fried some beefburgers in margerine and someone had added some stock to the 'juice'. On cooling it solidified and as no-one wanted gray lumps it was thrown onto the fire - it burned rather well, to say the least!

Chris and Ian left early Friday, and after a morning working on the path, we packed and left for home. Corwen again provided our meal, and we were back in Gloucester in time for tea despite alternator trouble with the van at Church Stretton.

Mark Simmons.

* Result; Gold - Rob, Silver - Jan.

BEST OF THE RAVENS 1978

Films; The man with the Golden Raven; Ravens are forever.
The Pink Raven; Planet of the Ravens; Saturday
Night Raven; The Maltese Raven.

Records; 24-Carat Raven; Blue Suede Ravens;
Never Mind the Ravens, Here's....

Proverbs; Never look a gift Raven in the Beak
A Raven in time saves nine
Too many Ravens Spoil the Broth
A Raven in the hand is worth two in the
deep freeze.

Quotes; You can have any Raven you like as long as it's
black

A Raven! A Raven! My kingdom for a Raven!

Cigarettes; Raven-A.

The End

BLACK MOUNTAINS 1978

This year's Unit team was Steve Allen, Simon Weston, Pete Green and myself. We arrived at Cwmyoy Community Centre at about 7.30pm on Friday. Once our tent was pitched, our kit was checked and in official terms was found to be 'adequate', though our comprehensive first-aid kit did not contain a triangular bandage.

Next day we awoke to a dawn chorus in Welsh, aided by some very English four letter words from Steve on being woken so early. We left the camp at 9.00 am with the sky very overcast. Soon we were overtaking teams which had left before us, and once past the first checkpoint we ascended the Htterall ridge. Due to high winds and the problems of getting off the ridge later in the day, we soon moved back down the valley after stopping for some time at checkpoint 2. By the time we reached the end of valley, the weather had deteriorated. A quick lunch - of Mars bar and Ryvita - and we plodded on into the driving rain, knowing that one team in our class had dropped out because of bad blisters. The next few hours dragged on as we walked over familiar terrain, which we had covered on a previous winter hike. We arrived at the overnight camp site at Capel-y-Ffin in the early evening, just behind two other teams which had left almost an hour before us that morning.

After a miserable night of almost non-stop rain, we were the last team to set out again. However we overtook two teams before we even reached the first checkpoint of the day. They were making hard work of the climb up to the reservoir.

Steve, being team leader, had to stop a mutiny after a slight route disagreement with an anonymous member of the team - I still say we should have followed the way by the stream! Covering ground which we had trodden in '76 reminded me that we had to win this time to complete a 'hat-trick' of victories for Steve and myself. After a refreshing stop at Llanbedr, we pushed on again.

Just after we had turned up a small country lane, I heard someone behind me shout out. I turned to see the

V.S.L. leaning out of his van saying, "How's it going now Wally?" and he received a rather terse reply. With that I turned rushed up the lane to catch up with the others. On the final five miles we tried to increase the pace so that we would reach the Community Centre before the 4.00 p.m. deadline. During this final spurt Simon fell down - several times - and had to limp over a mile to the finish.

However, our final effort was not quite enough. In spite of arriving one hour in front of the two other now remaining teams, we were still 7 minutes outside of the deadline. Nevertheless, we had done it! As I sat in the hall, I sensed that the presentation had a similar atmosphere to that of the Cotswold Marathon - "...and the Senior Trophy, once again to the 44th Gloucester Unit.."
Philip Champion.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE NEW WORLD

This summer, Kevin Neely spent three weeks staying in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He had such an enjoyable time out there that he was encouraged to write a piece for 'Venture 44.' The following article is an extract to be concluded (hopefully) in the next issue. It should be an interesting contrast with the article in Number 28 on certain aspects of life in Russia

R.D.

We jetted into Toronto Airport having had our fill of food, drink and recorded music during the flight. Such things as these were to set a suitable start to a superb holiday that I will always remember. I was to encounter the nice side of Canadian life and also the not so nice aspect of it. I was to meet many different types of folk, sample new food and visit many places of interest.

The first thing that took my notice as the plane was descending was the large number of swimming pools in the suburbs of Toronto. With the summer temperatures as high as 100°F, an average of one in twenty homes have their

own pools. Another noticeable feature was the road system planning; when the first settlers came to Canada, they had learned from the mistakes of many years in their own countries. They soon realised that the quickest way to go from A to B is by a straight line. Thus all the streets are straight and each road crosses the next at a right angle. This system is not only easier for travelling, but also easier for land distribution.

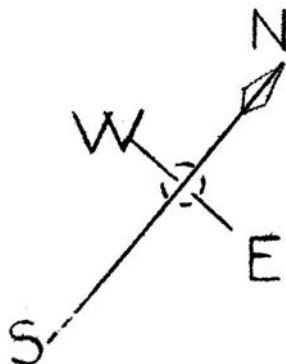
Great Britain is often criticised for bad airport management, but the arrangements for incoming passengers at Toronto were appalling. I had to wait almost one hour before my luggage arrived on the conveyor belt - which was much less efficient than the one at Gatwick. That was after a long delay in a stuffy lounge waiting for a passport check. Fortunately the airport is the only thing I could complain about from the entire visit.

So, I had arrived in the vast continent of North America. After months of saving and sacrifice, at last I had made it, and was now on the Highway leading me into London, Ontario. On the way I encountered a group of people that I had previously only read about and seen on TV. They were the farming people called the Mennonites. They don't use cars or the accepted luxuries of modern living. They live much the same life as did their forefathers, 70 years ago. They don't smoke, drink alcohol nor use powered machinery to plough their land. When I say they DON'T indulge in any of these vices, I should say they are NOT SUPPOSED TO. Many of the younger members of the Mennonite families are breaking away from the strict religious beliefs of their families and are starting to use tractors and they sometimes go into local bars for a drink.

I previously mentioned the Canadian road system. Some of the main highways have to be seen to be believed. For example: the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway, usually called the 401 has 4 or 8 or sometimes even 12 lanes of traffic space! It runs for 500 miles from Detroit to Toronto, to the Quebec border, right up the eastern flank of the Province.

Kevin Neely

(To be concluded in Issue Number 31)

FROM ALL POINTS

Since the last issue a number of our ex-members have taken the plunge and settled down in married life. First to go being PAUL DYER, whose devotion to the outdoor life was such that he took a tent on his honeymoon! At JOHN BARNES' wedding the Unit was represented by JOHN SWEET, WALLY CHAMPION and GEORGE SANCHEZ - who has been working at Heath Row as a security guard - Jon May, and myself

Experiments showed that shaving cream is a good paint remover! ANDY MESSAM followed soon, and PETE IRVINE starred in a mid August spectacular in Edinburgh which rivalled the festival!

Several ex-members have now finished their University careers - congratulations to all concerned - and especially IAN SIMMONS who managed a double first at Oxford and is now going to the London School of Economics. NICHOLAS PEARCE has finished his studies, and next door neighbour TONY JONES, now with a chemistry degree goes to Cardiff, to study medicine. Other contemporaries of his seen in various local ale-houses this summer include MARTIN BERRY, STAN GORMAN and MIKE PARTRIDGE. JOHN PRICE has travelled overland to India with one of the Unit's tents, and we have commissioned an article for a later issue.

Paying a flying visit to Gloucester last week TIM HOLFORD reported that DAVE VALE has recently become a father. Tim, who has been working as a labourer on the M11 this summer will be joined at Emmanuel College next year by STEVE PRESTON. Other summer visitors have included ROB PRAGNELL and CHRIS KEELY, one of the Unit's founder members.

ROW LLOYD has been geologically mapping the Forest of Dean, and there are rumours that DAVE BARNES is engaged. The Unit has recently benefitted from a gift of expedition food from JAKE DAVIES, and namesake STEVE has been observed on a large new green motorcycle. There are

rumours that STEVE ALLEN is already training for the Cotswold Marathon! MARK EVANS has finished working down on the farm and is off to Aberystwyth University where he will doubtless bump into JULIAN WILLIAMS who, we learn, so likes the exams there that he feels compelled to keep sitting them.....

From further afield I recieved a letter recently from ANDREW CHALKLEY, who left the Unit nearly ten years ago. He writes of his ocean going yachting experiences, also his latest interest...

"Our boat has taught us a lot. We've sailed it down to Bunbury from Freemantle - about 100 miles. Hit a storm on the way - 40 mph winds and HEAVY seas - next thing to dying. The boat and us in a wild hostile sea - no time for chundering - 20ft waves, bow a foot or so under water at times. Tying a bowline becomes important when your life really depends on it! We've also had a lot of fun around Rottneest Island, up to Geraldton (250 miles) and racing on the river.

Decided to take up a new sport this year, so I've got myself a Jawa speedway bike - goes like hell - no brakes - runs on alcohol (like the owner, somebody said) and quite "unusual" to ride. First race should be next weekend. I've been practising a fair bit on the salt lakes. We'll see how it goes.

Teaching maths and science at the moment at a private Catholic Grammar School, and really enjoying it. A really organised place - video tapes, intercoms etc, and the wages are unreal!

Glad to hear the Venture Scouts are going well. I've taken the kids camping a few times. Good fun, but it's a bit different here as Aussie families are used to the out-door life. Anyway, I might be off around the world once more next year."

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STOP PRESS. Good to see JOHN PENRY!WILLIAMS, on flying visit to Gloucester. Good excuse to investigate the new decor in the lounge bar of the King Edward the Seventh!

