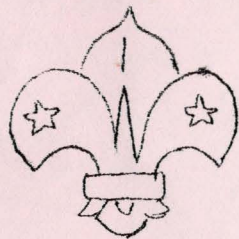


44



Venture

44

JANUARY	1980
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VENTURE 44. A sort of magazine, by, for, and about, the  
44th Gloucester (Sir Thomas Rich's) Venture  
Scout Unit.

NUMBER THIRTY FOUR

JANUARY 1980.

EDITOR Mark Simmons.

UNIT OFFICERS

Leaders	F.Henderson W.R.Spear C.C.R.Pashley
Chairman	Pat Phillips
Secretary	Nigel Brewster
Treasurer	Iain Weir
Recorder	Mark Simmons
Sports Sec	Stuart Bishop

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Articles, comment, High court writs for consideration  
for the next issue to the editor as soon as possible.

## NOTES AND NEWS

I must apologise for the late production of this edition of "Venture 44", but unfortunately I have been busy of late. The Unit has been equally busy with many and varied activities.

First event of the winter season was a night activity. This involved a cross-country navigational exercise in and around the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley area. There were three teams - an experienced one with an average route, an unexperienced with the easiest route, and an average team with a so called impossible route. Against all odds the average team were first to complete their route, closely followed by the inexperienced team (we won't mention the lift) then followed by the experts who got lost!

The half term camp was at Hay-on-Wye where despite mutinous threats and an inability to carry out most of the proposed activities everyone in fact came back still talking to one another.

The membership situation seems to be much brighter now, with a healthy interest being shown by the fourth form. Two new members are MIKE TOWKAN and PHIL PHILLIPS, younger brother of present member, Pat.

A very successful event was the Barn Dance in November. This was attended by nearly 200 people, who all enjoyed themselves immensely. The event also proved to be very good financially, with the Unit gaining a profit of over £120.

Soccer is still going strong in the Unit and members past and present can be seen regularly at the city Leisure Centre on Sunday nights. Hopefully, with all this practise we should hold our own in the forthcoming District event.

Contact with other Units is developing; we went over to Quedgeley for a talk on drugs, and to Churchdown to see their interpretation of "A tale of two births". The 51st joined us for a five-a-side session one Sunday.

The Christmas Reunion came and went with sightings of

rare and exotic past members. The V.S.L. showed his prowess at darts by beating Bren Noonan in the final of the tournament held there.

Other events include caving, Glosaid furniture collecting, Judo, a Mountaineering course attended by Nige Brewster, Iain Weir and myself at the Welsh Scout Centre at Hafod - near Simon Lapington's place, and a sponsored fast inspired by the "Year of the Child". Christmas saw the Unit play an active part in the "Raid the Larder" scheme, and some 80 food parcels were sent out to people in various parts of town.

The first event of the new year was the winter hike, a gruelling walk of 44 miles along the North Devon and Somerset coastal path from Minehead to Ilfracombe.

Looking to the future, summer could well see us in Norway, and the immediate future offers such delights as the Cotswold Marathon and a variety of other events.

Mark Simons

From the V.S.L.

I can't let Mark get away with his opening paragraph without explanation! The reader is entitled to know how he has been "busy of late". Mark was playing the lead role in the school play "Androcles and the Lion" and no sooner had that finished than he took on the task of organising the Raid the Larder scheme he has mentioned. Incidentally, the part of the lion in the play was taken by Bill Spear, whilst chairman Paul Jennings played a gladiator - eaten, sad to say, by the Lion!

Talking of Paul Jennings, it was he who instigated and organised the sponsored fast which resulted in over £100 being raised for the charity "Family Concern". Paul has now completed his Sixth form career and by the time that this is printed will have left school. Paul has impressed us all with his refreshingly direct approach to his role as chairman, and he will be greatly missed. I am sure we all wish him the best for the future. His departure made it necessary to elect a new chairman at a recent meeting and it is a measure of the present state of the Unit that



four people were proposed, all of whom I know could have done the job really well. The Unit may be small now but "never mind the width, feel the quality!" The election resulted in PAT PHILLIPS becoming our new chairman.

Finally, a note on Mark's predecessor in the Editorial chair, Rob Dalton. Rob is now very much involved on the staff of the Nottingham University students paper, and has prospects of being editor of that next year.

F.H.



### 5-a-side Football

The Unit now uses the Leisure Centre for 5-a-side matches on alternate Sunday evenings from 8 to 9 p.m.

Any associate members who are interested in joining in when available are welcomed BUT as we often get up to 15 players, it will be helpful and save disappointment if you could check up the week before to find out whether or not we are oversubscribed. Please contact

STUART BISHOP Tel Glos 417329

Dates for the next few months are as follows:- Feb 17, March 2, 16, 30. April 13, 27, May 11, 25.

There is a small charge of 40p per session.

### ASSOCIATE MEMBER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Enjoy this magazine, it may be the last one you get! That is if you are an associate member, and you have not paid your 1980 subscription yet. The cost of production, and distribution of Venture 44 keeps going up like everything else, and only your continued support allows us to stay in business. The subscription is only £1 p.a. - more if you can afford it - and should be paid as soon as possible to IAIN WEIR (c/o School). Iain's records show that subs have been received from JOHN PRICE, JOHN PENRY-WILLIAMS, ANDY MESSAM, ROB & PHIL CHAMPION, PETE GREEN, NICK PEARCE, ROB DALTON, GREG BENNETT and PHIL GORMAN.

Cheques, P.O.s. payable to 44th Gloucester V.S.U.

### THE VENTURE AWARD



By the time Venture Scout age is reached, the desire to collect badges and other adornments which characterises the younger age range of the Scout movement has usually abated, together often with the eagerness to pass tests and so on. Within the Venture Scout section there are but two progress markers, of which the Queen's Scout Award is the highest, and best known. The other one is the Venture Award, which should be readily - but not easily achieved by the average venture scout. The award scheme is in practice quite simple, but surprisingly enough its implementation seems to create problems in some Units - probably because of its extreme flexibility. The policy of this Unit is to try to arrange programmes whereby members can satisfy many of the requirements of the award simply by participating in the "normal activities", but there are still areas which require a definite individual action. One such area is in the section titled "creative pursuit". In discussing training progress with members, this is often an apparent stumbling block.

In fact, however, when constructively approached, most members can find something within their interests and activities which can be used to satisfy this award requirement, and I suspect that the biggest problem is modesty! As a rule people seem reluctant to admit to some of their interests - could it be that enthusiasm for anything other than pop-music and First Division football is regarded as unfashionable today? - but I have been very favourably impressed by some of the discoveries that I have made as a result of probing into the "forbidden territory". So at our last general meeting we were shown a very good collection of slides on railway topics presented by one member, whose possession of a camera was previously unknown to me! I hope that that occurrence will act as a stimulant to other members to perhaps shed their inhibitions and let us hear about their interests and pursuits and so go a step further to their Venture Award, and so ultimately the Queen's Scout Award.

F.H.

HALF TERM AT HAY

We arrived at our destination near to Hay-on-Wye late into the morning. The van was left parked just off the main road and we walked along a track and through a field to the caravan which was to be our home for the next four days. However, on arriving at the caravan we found that it was already occupied by thousands of flies. Promptly we set out ridding the caravan of the pests, and we each developed our own techniques for swift kills.

We then drove into Hay, and after obtaining our lunch from the chip shop, made our way to the largest second hand bookshop in Britain. It was filled with shelves and shelves of books, but the majority of the party appeared attracted to the furthest corner of the shop. What books were there, I haven't the faintest idea.

Real activity started when we were driven to Gladestry from where we were to walk along the Offa's Dyke path to Bronydd and back to the caravan. The walking party soon split up into two groups - those who were happy to take the route at a leisurely pace, and those who went away at an enormous rate of knots. Unfortunately for the faster group, they took a wrong turning, and returned to the caravan about half an hour after the slower group, having walked an extra two miles! The flies worried some members of our party sufficiently for them to pitch tents outside the caravan.

It rained heavily the next day. We drove to Dan-yr-Ogof and proceeded to walk along the River Mellte valley. Most of us walked along the existing path, where it could be found, but our chairman decided to find his own way along a cliff face. This resulted in him getting stuck about a hundred feet above the river, and unable to move either back or forth. He was rescued by the V.S.L., and we continued our walk. The river went over a number of spectacular waterfalls, and the path eventually took us under one of them.

We made our way from there to Hirwaun to visit Steve Chalkley. We were told that we were going to help empty his cellar, a statement taken by most to mean help clear



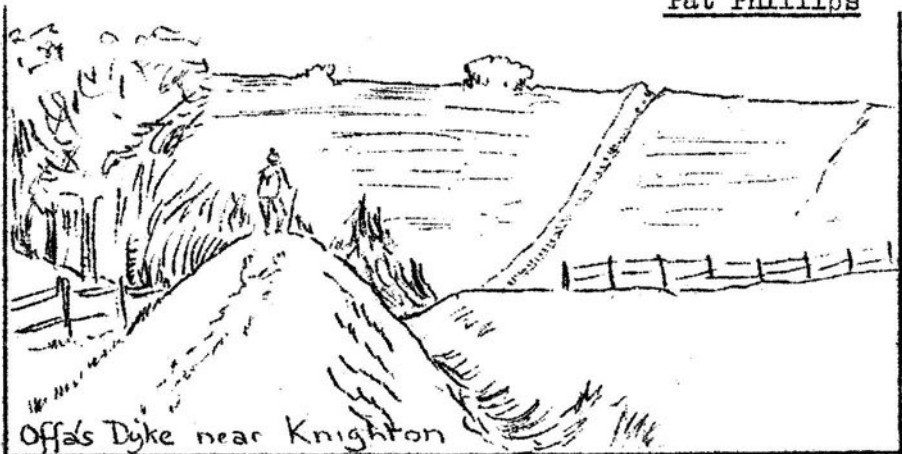
out some home-brewed beer or something like that - no chance! Emptying the cellar meant just that. In fact there was only half a cellar when we arrived and our job was to shift two or three cubic metres of rubble because Steve was going to convert the cellar into a living room. One advantage, however, was that before we started Steve and Denise gave us a lovely hot meal.

On the third day we went into the Black Mountains, as the weather had greatly improved. After lunch had been taken beside a mountain stream, we went on to the top of Waun Fach, the highest point in the mountains, and then had a long ridge walk.

That evening we were visited by Chris Pashley, who arrived in his "new" car, promptly announced that he was hungry, and proceeded to cook everybody their evening meal. By the way, congratulations to the car, which made the return journey to Gloucester in one piece.

Having cleared all of our belongings from the caravan on the fourth morning, we proceeded to Evenjobb and walked from there to Knighton, once more on the Offa's Dyke path. The dyke was a lot more obvious along this stretch of the trail. Our agricultural expert, Tim Smith, supplied refreshment during the walk by slicing up a couple of swedes. On meeting up with the V.S.L. we returned to van and were soon back in Gloucester.

Pat Phillips



Offa's Dyke near Knighton

HOLIDAY 1980

The first winter hike of a new decade was to be along nearly 45 miles of the North Devon Coast Path between Minehead and Ilfracombe. The party comprised myself, Mark Simmons, Iain Weir, Nige Brewster, Russ Watson, Tim Smith and Nigel Holden, all eagerly awaiting the V.S.L.'s entrance in the faithful old Bedford.

Anyroad, soon after 10 o'clock on New Year's Day, we set off. The van was stocked up with Ryvita, together with other bulinary delights, evidence of the V.S.L.'s policy, "If it's cheap or free, it will do nicely!"

Amid cries of "Easy on the welly", the van mustered up 55 n.p.h. down the motorway stretch. On reaching our starting point around lunchtime, we were dropped in Minehead to start the seven mile walk to our first "camp site". Thus, rucksacks on, we began our monotonous journey.

A gradual rise out of Minehead took us up onto high moorland and past Selworthy Beacon (1013 ft.). Continuing alongside Bossington beach after a steep and slippery descent we came in sight of Porlock.

So about three hours after our start we approached the farm where we were to stay, in the thriving metropolis that is Porlock. It was here that we encountered the celebrated Colin Cox (Oh! Him!, I hear you enthuse) better known as "THE EXMOOR WALKER". The whole length of our stay he was in a permanent state of high spirits, not least when he gave us the benefit of his advice on the correct way to put up a Force Ten. (Advice which we did not follow on seeing him on the floor tangled up in the fly sheet.)

After experiencing a fairly mild night under canvas, we purchased yet more Ryvita, and pressed on towards Lynton and Lynmouth, about 15 miles.

We were walking along the Northern edge of the Exmoor National Park, and the up and down route took us to many points where we had good views south across moorland, and north across the Bristol Channel.

We took refreshment at a small cafe in Lynton and,

disgusted by the lack of tea cakes, we proceeded to a field directly behind the Blue Ball Inn at Countisbury, and pitched our tents. Not a bad site!

Rain during the night slightly bogged the van down. Consequently many hands and much brute force was required to shift the vehicle - an operation which was successfully carried out although Russ and Nige ended up with a lot of mud on their respective waterproofs.

We soon got started, however, on the third leg, Thursday's route being Lynmouth to Combe Martin. With about 3 miles to cover we approached Headstone Hill (1145 ft.) then we came close to Great Hangman. On reaching the top (1044 ft.) we were confronted with dense fog, strong winds and rain. Darkness was falling after a very damp day when we eventually descended into Combe Martin. From there we were driven to a farm a few miles up the road. Here we partook of our final meal which proved to be something special. The main course being Haggis, swedes and potatoes. It was suitably accompanied by a bottle of a modest white wine.

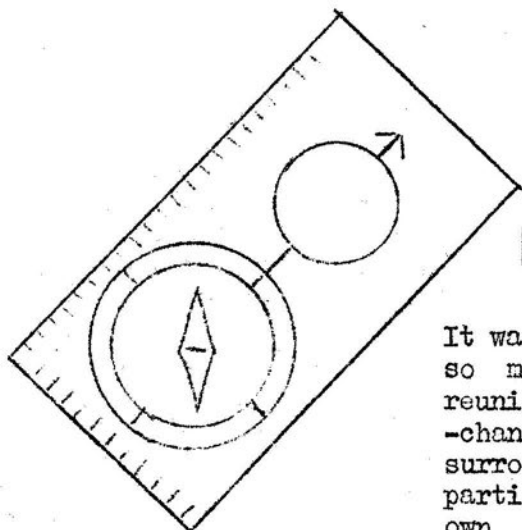
The last day was a gentle stroll in comparison with the others. The team walked from Combe Martin to Ilfracombe in just over an hour. The V.S.L., who came to meet us, missing us on the top of a hill arrived sixty minutes later.

After another hair-raising journey we were back in Gloucester by late afternoon on Friday.

I'd like to conclude this article in the true predictable "Venture 44" way, with the words, "Despite minor problems, and enjoyable and unforgettable time was had by all!"

Stuart Bishop

LATE NEWS of associate member, JOHN KEARSEY. John has been accepted for an overseas posting by V.S.O. A trained engineer, he could be going to Fiji, Nepal or Thailand. We wish him well in this exciting venture, and hope that we will receive progress reports for future editions.



## FROM ALL POINTS

It was good to meet up with so many ex-members at the reunion at Christmas and exchange news in convivial surroundings - and it was particularly good to see our own antipodean wanderer -

ANDY CHALKLEY making a pilgrimage to the old country during his summer holidays to sample the "pon brew", which, apparently, is not a patch on Fosters. A number of stalwarts were unable to attend, including the following who all sent their apologies and seasonal greetings - PETE IRVINE and AL ROBBINS (both of whom were in Scotland), ROB PRAGNELL, NICK PEARCE, STEVE CHALKLEY and JOHN SWEET.

JOHN PRICE, despite travelling widely in the east in an attempt to avoid writing an article for us, has eventually been tracked down. He is now back at Cambridge as an Oriental Studies Scholar, and has produced an account of a visit to Egypt.



Egypt is a hot, dry, country about five miles wide and 600 miles long. There are a few bedouins dotted about the desert and a railway line along the north west which stops at war cemeteries and army camps, but essentially Egypt is the Nile Valley.

I was lucky enough to have two girls and an old Eton-

ian as travelling companions. Women are considered as property in Egypt and I had several offers to swap one of the girls for a couple of camels. Considering the reliability of Egypt Rail the acquisition of a camel seemed to me quite a good idea. The girls were not amused.

Egypt is much more than the Pyramids and the High Dam. The Egyptian Museum has an antiquated, imperial atmosphere. You half expect Howard Carter, in a threadbare tweed jacket, to appear from behind a mummy at any moment! Egyptian soldiers lean on their sub-machine guns on every floor, just so you don't forget that the British left a while ago. Islamic Cairo is no less interesting. With a handful of small change you can gain access to mosque and minarets. One local even performed the call to prayer just for us. The small question of "baksheesh" then arose.

I'm not too sure about Old Etonians on journeys. One night we arrived at a hotel and were offered a bedroom with three beds, one double and two single. The two girls seized the single beds. I am not class conscious, but he insisted on sleeping on the floor (where he was subsequently devoured by two inch cockroaches).

Egypt is the home of 10 million Coptic Christians. One day we headed off into the desert in a taxi to visit one of their monasteries. The attitudes of these people and monks were very different to those of the Muslims, especially with regard to women. The closed, inward looking community was genial, but claustrophobic compared to the expansive ruggedness of the Muslims. The monastery was situated out in the desert, miles from the nearest village. Perfect isolation.

I didn't have a lot of success with the language. On one occasion I asked a taxi driver how long it took to get from Cairo to Aswan by the train. He shook his head tugged at his jet-black moustache and then replied "About 127 years." Egypt is never dull.

JOHN PRICE

LATE NEWS. Congratulations to KEITH FRANKLIN off to Kinloss to represent R.A.F. Scampton at Badminton next week. Is he going on a shuttle service?



BACK PAGE, THE

Chap with a beard, gets out of this Bedford and goes into the D.G.\*

On his arm is a NEWT. Striding up to the bar he orders his lemonade. The barperson looks at him questioning-ly, filling the glass as he/she does so, and curiosity gets the better of him/her.

"What do you call it?"

"Tiny", comes the reply.

"Why on earth do you call it that?" asks barperson.

"Well, it's MY NEWT, isn't it?"

St\*\*rt B\*sh\*p.

\* D.G. The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy has this to say on the subject. 'D.G., the initials of Dagflest Gargleblast, whose early experiments in plate tectonics were responsible, amongst other things for the Hercynian orogeny, chlorophyl toothpaste, and the rather erratic course of the A39. Also abbreviated version of "Double Gloucester", an Earth term describing both a variety of cheese and a public house on Cheltenham Road....'

Four Venture Scouts in a tent on a winter hike, cold and wet outside... "Let's play crib" says Tim

" We've got no cards!" says Russ

" Let's pretend that we have" says Stu.

Nige solemnly shuffles non-existent cards...

Play commences, and Tim says "Seven"

" Another seven - two points." says Stu

" Seven! twenty one for six!" says Nige.

" Four - that makes twenty five" says Russ.

" You \*\*\*\*" says Stu, "Why didn't you play the other seven?"

"Well, I had it" replied Russ, "But I put it into the box!"

(Any resemblance between characters on this page and real people is entirely coincidental. The Editor wishes to state that he cannot be held responsible for any thing at all printed here.)



