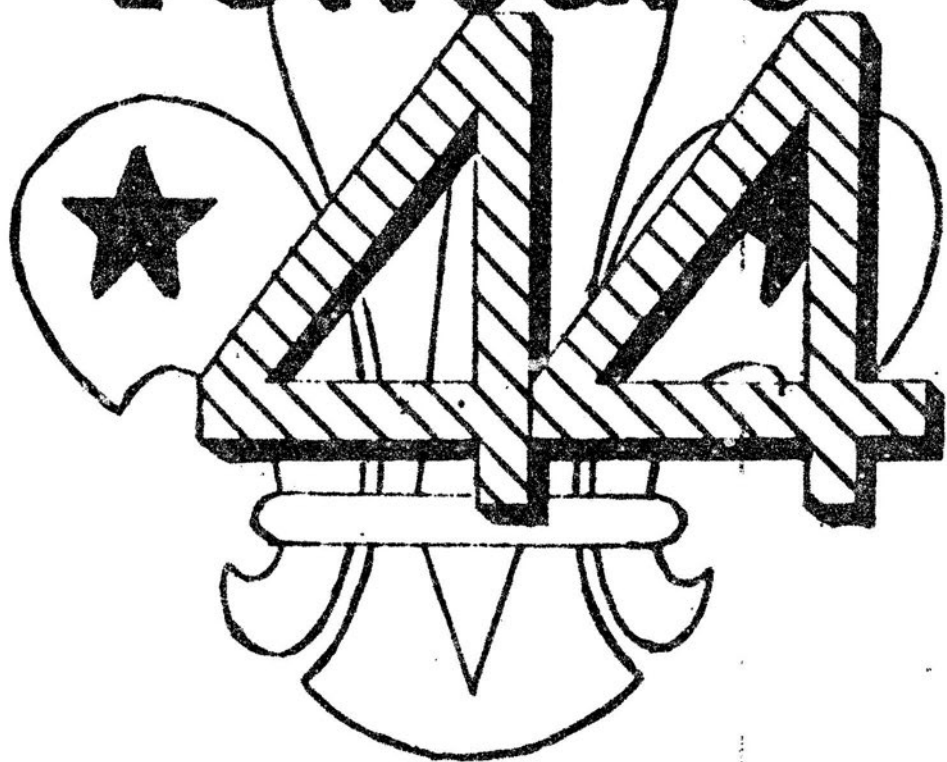


# Venture



September 81 Number 40



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

NUMBER FORTY

SEPTEMBER 1981

EDITOR Jeremy Hobbs.

UNIT OFFICERS

Leaders	Frank Henderson Phil Brown
Chairman	Pat Phillips
Senior Exec.	Stuart Bishop
Secretary	Dave Jerrard
Treasurer	<del>Rich</del> <del>Kat</del> well
Recorder	Nick Iliffe
Exec members	Hugo Ashby Paddy Smith
Quartermasters	Keith Nuttall Brian Symcox

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## EDITORS REPORT

Having been appointed Editor of this magazine at the recently held A.G.M., I must take this opportunity in this is my first edition to thank Mark Simmons, my predecessor for his sterling work over the past two years. My thanks also go to Rich Kerswell who acted as "caretaker" recently.

At present, with the imminent departure of several members to various seats of learning, or directly into employment, there are places to be filled in the unit. Some of these have been filled by prospective members who have joined in unit activities in the past few months. The new members are BRUCE RADFORD, PADDY SMITH, STEVEN OUNSWORTH, ANDY MANDERS, and last term BRYAN SYMCOX who has already made an impact on the daunting task of quartermaster, which he shares with Keith Nuttall. Already they are playing a full part in our activities, including participation in the Black Mountains Hike competition, a challenging event held in July. Other events during the summer included a sponsored canoe event held on the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal aimed at raising cash to buy a double canoe for the Nansen International Childrens Centre - to be used for disabled children. Almost £200 was raised, and the canoe was delivered in July.

I have mentioned the A.G.M. held last week, and the number of people present was very encouraging. As there are only 22 actual members in the unit, the presence of several notable ex-members and prospective members produced an attendance of 35, which was very satisfactory.

The major event of the summer, the expedition to Scotland will be dealt with in our next issue.

Jeremy Hobbs.

## LIFE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

The first thing that struck me as I crossed the border from Austria to Czechoslovakia was the number of security precautions between the Austrian and Czech border

posts. There was a tall wire fence stretching as far as the eye could see, watch towers spaced at half mile intervals along the border, a ploughed strip of earth which contained land mines. At the czech border post every car and lorry, apart from diplomatic vehicles, was thoroughly searched by guards using sniffer dogs.

As we drove through the "iron Curtain" we could see that the countryside and buildings were completely different from those in Austria. There were no fences to be seen, and no livestock apart from the occasional goose in a backyard - just miles and miles of crops growing. They were in poor condition, with weeds growing amongst most of them. When we came into town, the two main colours of Czechoslovakia, and presumably most other communist countries, were prominent - red and yellow. All the public benches, lamp posts, and the majority of the houses were painted in red or yellow.

One prominent feature was the state of repair of the buildings. The plaster was crumbling away from many of them, and surprisingly there was no visible evidence of any attempt being made to deal with this.

The situation in Prague was similar except that some buildings, such as tourist attractions, were well kept, and the crumbling buildings had wooden scaffolding erected around them to stop pedestrians being hit by falling masonry!

There are some good shops in Prague, but these are few and far between. Most of the shops are understocked in most of the items they should be selling and overstocked in the goods that really aren't necessary. For example meat, apart from varieties of sausage, is almost impossible to obtain, as are fresh vegetables. Gherkins - strangely are common! Fruit is rare apart from August when Prague is overflowing with water melons. Clothes are quite reasonable, although not of the quality of western goods. Good meat, vegetables and some fruit can, of cour

(continued on page 11)

V.S.L.'s NOTES

At this time of the year it is customary for the Unit to undergo a radical change in composition as the established members move out into the big world and a new generation come in to take their places. This year sees a shake up of major proportions as nearly half of our membership will be lost. True there are a good number of aspiring Venture scouts at the doorstep, but they will have a daunting task if they are to live up to the standards set by and match the spirits of the "class of '78"

The Unit is fortunate in two respects despite the inevitable loss, firstly in that the group who are ready now to take on the executive roles show every sign of maintaining the dynamism of the Unit, and secondly two key members of the "old gang" will still be with us, at least for several months. Stuart Bishop, now senior member, and Pat Phillips will be guiding the new executive along the right lines. With these two young men leading, I have no fears about the continued prospering of this Unit, and a quotation that I had prepared for this issue is no longer entirely apposite - "And it is the talk of the whole country that all the better men of the district were leaving it" (Veterans of '72 and '78 may recognise that lament from 'Njal's Saga')

Who then is leaving? One of our younger executive officers, MIKE BARTON has got into an apprenticeship with a local company - at a time when jobs for young people are hard to come by. Mike had become one of the Unit's characters, with his somewhat excentric style of dress, presently masquerading as a Chinese engine driver. His long hair and laconic humour will be missed. Our other Michael, MIKE TOWKAN is off to Bath University, but will be working at Dowty until Christmas on a sandwich scheme

TIM SMITH is also setting off towards a university place at Reading. Tim, one of the Units keen sportsmen, compensated for lack of size with great determination in all he did. He has thoughtfully done something about re-



-placing himself, by sending along his brother, Paddy, similar in size but with curly hair!

There are several members who are at present waiting to hear from universities etc., and whose future is not settled, but we know that we will ceratinly lose four of our most senior members, all of whom are Queen's Scouts who have played a prominent part in the life of the Unit for several years.

NIGEL BREWSTER has served the Unit as secretary for the past two years. Not noted as a conversationalist, Nige has always kept a "low profile" and got on quietly and efficiently with any task he has undertaken, and in doing so has earned the respect of all of us. His common sense and good judgement will be greatly missed on the executive. Nigel is following several other eminent members to Brunel University to read engineering - and doubtless to play a little badminton!



I am not too sure that MARK SIMMONS, as ex-editor of this magazine would entirely approve of this format. Mark has always been a young man of definite opinions, and he has never been afraid to express them. I have always been amazed by the number of things in addition to Venture Scouts that Mark is involved in. His enthusiasm and commitment seem limitless, and one abiding memory will be of his instant recognition of various species

44th GLOUCESTER VENTURE SCOUT UNIT

Summary of Income and Expenditure for period April 1st 1980 to March 31st 1980

<u>Income</u>	£		£
Subscriptions	169.00	Capitation Fee	96.60
Associate membership	30.00	Subsidies on hikes, etc	37.00
Tuckshop takings	163.38	Repairs to hut, etc	34.65
Barn Dance profit	173.02	Badges, uniform, etc	24.91
Jumble sale profit	124.05	Books, training material	23.13
Sale of waste paper	78.25	Entry fees	45.45
Sale of equipment	397.57	Purchase of equipment	848.46
Sales of soft drinks, etc	208.98	Purchase of spft drinks etc	195.20
Sponsored bed race	60.58	To Stroud Round table	60.58
District Raffle	28.20	District Scout Assoc	18.80
Norway payments from members	1945.00	Norway Expedition	2509.61
Sponsorship for Norway	70.00	Italian Earthquake Fund	10.00
Jubilee Fund	500.00	North Wales Conservation support	125.00
Sale of Canoes	20.00	B.W.B. Licences	33.00
Donations	17.00	Reunion expenses	30.00
Bank Interest	37.48	Bank charges	8.81
		Venture 44	33.88
		Maps	8.00
		Engraving trophies	5.20
		5-a-side expenses	23.36
		Sports and social expenses	9.41
		Postage	6.20
		Sundries	20.25
		Total expenditure	<u>4207.50</u>
Total income	<u>4022.51</u>		
balance b/f from 1979/80	<u>404.55</u>	c/f to 81/82	219.56
	<u>4427.06</u>		<u>4427.06</u>

Treasurer; I.D.Weir

Audited and found correct in accordance with vouchers etc. 16 June 81; J.D.Holdaway.



of low flying aircraft screeching over Ogwen Valley. Rumours that he knows the names of all the pilots cannot be discounted. Mark is going to Leicester to read Geology.

A good unit needs a good executive, but a really good unit needs rank and file members of quality as well, and one such is RUSS WATSON (no relation to racing driver John, but with a similar approach to cars!) Without doubt Russ must be one of the most cheerful and friendly venture scouts that has ever graced the Unit, and his presence at an event always ensures that it will be lively. Russ is off to Lanchester Poly at Coventry. In a different direction, to



Swansea University goes IAIN WEIR. No one at present in

the Unit can recall it without Iain. It will seem strange when he goes. In 3 years on the executive he has never missed a meeting, and he has been on every major activity since he joined (one more than me!) The mercurial Iain has been a major influence in the Unit for a long time, and in losing him we lose our senior member, our most experienced mountaineer, and a first class treasurer. Of course, those three positions will be filled, but there is only one Iain Weir, and he is irreplaceable.



F.H.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET 1981

The loss of your captain midway through a season is a blow for any cricket club-especially if he is of the calibre of Mike Proctor- step forward David Graveney. This was reported to be an unpopular decision in the north of the county-that's us! He certainly got some stick from a section of the crowd at Cheltenham, but he is a good bowler, and a useful middle order batsman (we are told!)

We are lucky to have arguably the world's finest batsman playing for us, Zaheer Abbas, who scored a thousand runs in June, hit 11 centuries and topped the national averages with 88.69. It is always a pleasure to watch the runs flowing from his bat at an alarming rate for opposition bowlers. Whilst "Zed" may have been scoring apparently with effortless ease, however, Gloucestershire managed to lose nearly all their John Player League matches draw most of their Schweppes Championship games, and to fall out of the two K.O. competitions.

On paper the side looks formidable, with Phil Bainbridge developing into a fine batsman, moulding himself on "Zed". He won the Commercial Union Award for the best under 23 batsman, judged by A. Bedser and C. Elliott. If he wants to play for England, however, he had better change counties!

What we really need is a class fast bowler. Alan Wilkins has bowled well, and we all know of Mike Whitney's fairy-tale Test debut, but he has yet to prove himself in the three day game. On the flip side, John "Charlie" Childs produced the season's best analysis of 9-56 against arch rivals Somerset, and was unlucky not to be in next winter's touring team.

Us unfortunates in the north of the county get a pretty poor deal with fixtures - only four county games in Gloucester and Cheltenham, and 3 J.P.L. games. We also had the Australian Floodlit match, but the tourists were disappointing - reaction after the test series. If the size of our crowds decide the percentage of games played

here the authorities ought to note that there were less than 200 people at Bristol to see Chris Broad score his first century of the season, and that was a Saturday! The facilities at Winget are non-existent, and those at Cheltenham are a rip-off. Hot dogs at 65p!

The lasting impressions of the season are seeing Zed scoring the inevitable century, and of Martin Stovold making his equally inevitable duck!

Iain Weir

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### PADDLE '81 - PART THE FIRST

Wave after wave pounded across the bows slapping the small yellow craft into a sickening roll. Captain Rowland struggled manfully with the controls trying to keep the boat on an even keel, but the outboard was ineffectual against the onslaught of the wind-whipped waves, wall-owing helplessly, walls of grey/green water towered ominously on all sides. "If one of these breaks over us..." With the water washing around my knees I grabbed a handy dixy and baled for all my worth. Cutlery and other items of baggage, once carefully stowed, flew everywhere. "If another one of those swamps us, we'll be goners!" I thought...As we dipped for the third time, I remember saying "You'll pay for this, Henderson! I must have been out of my mind to agree to this!"

"This" was just one episode from Paddle '81's Swedish leg. Paddle '81, brain-child of Ernest Davies, erstwhile friend of our V.S.L., started on July 9th in Helsinki on its epic 600 mile voyage across Scandinavia to its destination - Oslo.

It was an international event aimed at raising money via sponsorship and the sale of souvenirs for a holiday scheme for disabled children based on the Nansen International Children's Centre at Krattebøl

Taking part was a group of proficient and experienced canoeists from many European countries ably supported (often in the face of insurmountable odds) by a brave band of what could only be described as international lunatics. F.H., Row Lloyd and yours truly fell into this category.

The organisation of this event was somewhat intermittent, to say the least, though this produced more excitement and high spots than might otherwise have been expected, witness the episode related above.

Unfortunately not all offers of sponsorship were forthcoming, though an extremely valuable one in terms of morale boosting was the Bounty sponsorship. Not only did the company help financially, but supplied the expedition with enough Bounty bars to give the 12 canoeists one per day for the next three years! Not for nothing was the expedition renamed the "Bounty run". The link between Bounty and mutiny did not go unnoticed either!, but the daily taste of paradise did fortify the canoeists. Without them they may not have survived that night on the island without tents or food.....but that is another story.

To be continued next time. Phil Brown.

LIFE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN continued from p 3  
-se be bought by people with sufficient money.

There are two currencies in Czechoslovakia, the crown which is the standard currency, and there are roughly twenty crowns to the pound, but another crown is available to foreign diplomats. Czech citizens can also buy this - but at five times the standard rate!

Finally, one thing that must be said is that there is a very good underground railway system in Prague. Trains arrive at a station at about three minute intervals, and it only costs one crown to go anywhere.

Hugo Ashby.

Sorry, no room this issue for solution to crossword in last edition. This will appear in number 41.



FIVE A SIDE FOOTBALL.

This will continue this term at Gloucester Liesure Centre. Alternate Sunday evenings, 8.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m Please note these dates!

Sept 13th, 27th. Oct 11th, 25th.

Nov 8th, 22nd. Dec 6th, 20th.

The charge will be held at 50p per head for the time.

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The District 5-a-side tournament will be organised this year by the Unit, probably in December at Beaufort.

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BARN DANCE

Following last year's successful event the next Barn Dance will be held in the School Hall on the evening of Friday November 20th, dancing to the music of the K.Lee Folk Group. Tickets available in early October

Adults £1.25. Students 80p.

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BUYING GEAR FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES??

As many of you may know a new shop has opened in Gloucester - MOUNTAIN GEAR - situated in Worcester St, - proprietors, Pete and Pam Brown.

Several members have already shopped there and found the service and advice excellent. Pete and Pam have offered to come along to a Unit meeting later in the term for a session on outdoor equipment, and are also willing to offer special terms to members making purchases there.

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Next edition due out soon - main contents being concerned with the Unit visit to Scotland this summer. Copy to the editor as soon as possible!!





