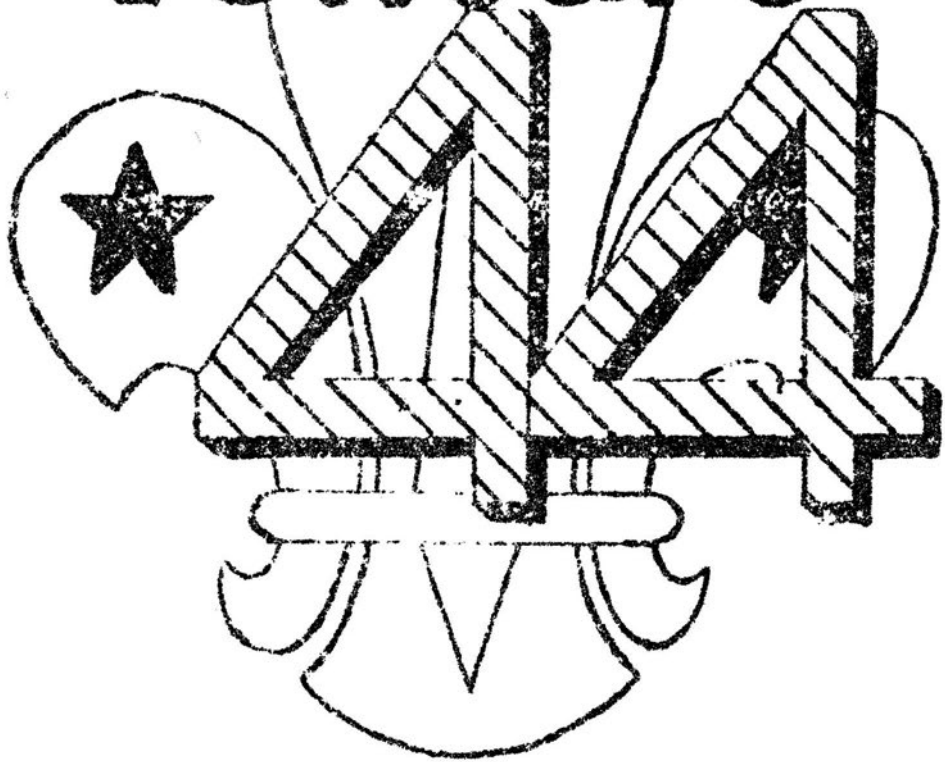


Venture



No. 42



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

NUMBER FORTY TWO

MARCH 1982

EDITOR Jeremy Hobbs.

UNIT OFFICERS

Leaders	Frank Henderson Phil Brown
Chairman	Pat Phillips
Senior Member	Stuart Bishop
Secretary	David Jerrard
Treasurer	Richard Kerswell
Recorder	Nick Iliffe
Exec members	Hugo Ashby Paddy Smith Steve Ounsworth
Quartermaster	Brian Symcox

CONTENTS

Editorial.	Jer Hobbs.2
Sports and Social Round up	Stu Bishop.	3
Scottish Expedition Report		
contributions by expedition members		.4
Cotswold Marathon 1982. . .	Mike Barton19

Contributions for the next issue of Venture 44 are now
urgently required. Please send any material either to
the editor or the V.S.L. before Friday 30th of April.

EDITORIAL
(Crawling Time)

It was beginning to look as if this edition of Venture 44 would never see the light of day, but here it is, and I hope you enjoy reading it. This issue is basically concerned with the scottish expedition which took place in the summer - however I think that there is a fair sampling of news of events that have occurred in recent months as well.

A winter hike was held in the frozen wastes of North Wales several months ago, which reminds me of the awful weather we suffered in January. Several of us, under the guidance of the V.S.L. found time to clear snow from the paths of those less able to cope, and we also found our selves called upon salvage missions as a result of burst pipes during the big freeze.

The annual Jumble Sale was yet again a great success and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our friends and relations of Unit members who took up position behind the piles of merchandise. Thanks also to the 'tea ladies'.

The sum of £50 from the Jumble Sale profits has been donated to the Appeal Fund set up in the District which is part of the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Scout Movement. The aim is to raise £2500 in order to purchase a "Visispeech Display Unit" which is a most valuable aid in the education of deaf children.

For the first time in a little while a group went to the Mendips to do some caving during the half term holiday. This was planned as a result of the enthusiasm of some of our younger members following several visits to the Forest - including one to the much loved 'Old Bow'.

Well, this edition was well worth waiting for and I feel that even from this editorial many ex-members can identify with activities which they may have enjoyed in the past!

Jeremy Hobbs

SPORTS AND SOCIAL ROUND UP

In preparation for the annual Cotswold Marathon - a better name would be the Masochists Marathon - an orient-eering event was held one Sunday afternoon in February. Malheureusement il fait beau et le soleil brille and the seven teams of two got stripped off at the car park at Fiddlers Elbow in anticipation of an energy sapping afternoon.

The route took us up over Coopers Hill, down through Cranham and up over Painswick Beacon.

The first team finished last - yes, really! Having set off at 5 minute intervals, the clear winners were Tim Smith and Dom Mills. The other pairs promptly made it known that they, of course, were only treating it as training, and were obviously not competing in order to win!

On Friday 12th March we played one of our now regular indoor cricket fixtures against the City Strollers.

The first game saw few runs scored. Our opening bat and skipper, the VSL, out for a duck, thus dashing all his hopes of being the 15th(?) man in South Africa. We came out as winners, however.

A more exciting encounter was the second game. We amassed 131 in 10 overs, Pat Phillips 51, the Strollers replied with style, and we won eventually by 15 runs. It was good to see a scratch second six led by Dave Jerrard playing extremely well, despite their lack of experience in this form of cricket.

The "Golden Welly" reared its ugly toe-cap this week in the form of the prize for winning a Pop quiz entered by the Beaufort and Churchdown Units and ourselves.

We were most impressed by the format of the event and all were agreed that the organisation was very good.

After the first round we had a lead of 2 points, which we stretched to 42 by the end.

Continued on page 20.

SUMMER IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

Last year a small group of Venture Scouts travelled west and north to visit Mull and sample the highlands. It was five years ago that the 44th took part in Island Venture, and none of the present party were in the Unit at that time. Quite a lot was packed into the 13 days, a few highlights are recorded in the following pages.

The party consisted of the following:

Old men; F.H., Phil Brown, Iain Weir

The lads; Nick Iliffe, Dave Jerrard, Hugo Ashby,
Rich Kerswell, John Pepperell, Keith
Nuttall

The boys; Brian Symcox, Paddy Smith, Steve
Ounsworth.

Dairy; Thurs 20th Aug. Leave after collecting 'O' level results. Camp at Crawford, Dumfriesshire.

Fri 21st. Glasgow, Glencoe, Ferry to Mull, camp beside Loch na Keal.

Sat 22nd. Visit Tobermoray, Dervaig, Calgary.

Sun 23rd. Climb Beinn Fhada, Ben More (3169ft)

Mon 24th. Boat trip to Staffa - Fingals Cave.

Walk to Mackinnons Cave.

Tues 25th. Visit to Iona.

Wed 26th. Leave Mull, to Oban, camp near town.

Thurs 27th. The Argyll Highland Gathering, then start on hike along Glen Etive.

Fri 28th. The hike./ Ascents in Glencoe.

Sat 29th. Fort William, camp at Banavie, Glenroy

Sun 30th. Ascent of Ben Nevis.

Mon 31st. Cross the Highlands to Edinburgh, the festival fringe, south to Gretna Green.

Tues 1st Sept. Back to Gloucester.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

The Isle of Mull is of Isles the fairest
Of ocean's gems 'tis the first and rarest;

Green grassy island of sparkling fountains,
 Of waving woods and high tow'ring mountains.
 Translated from the Gaelic, Dugald MacPhail.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

BEN MORE

HUGO ASHBY

The morning started with the inevitable midges which accompanied our breakfast before we started off towards our local mountain, at 3169 feet the highest in Mull.

The initial pace was set by Paddy Smith—fortunately nobody followed his example of running up the "hill" and so he eventually slowed down.

It was decided that to reach the summit we would cross some screes, which although not very difficult, caused some hearts to beat more quickly when a stone slipped below somebody's foot (!) and climb up a ridge which would lead directly to it. Unfortunately before the ridge was reached the party split into two groups - the slower group wanting to climb another hill which would involve a slight detour. This group was rewarded by the sighting of a golden eagle. Phil acted as go-between for the two parties. The view from Beinn Fhada was magnificent! As we climbed down to rejoin the others we saw our first deer of the journey. There were two separate herds both having between 20 and 25 animals in their number. On the southern side of the ridge we saw a smaller herd and Phil decided to spend the afternoon stalking whilst the rest of us headed for the summit.

Lunch was consumed hungrily about half a mile from the summit, the difficult ascent was then continued and we passed through patches of low cloud before emerging at the summit as the cloud blew away leaving us with another fine panoramic view.

We descended via a simpler route. It was decided that when we arrived back at the camp some of us would brave the cold and bathe in the stream which ran close by. It was surprising that Brian couldn't wait that long, as he had plunged into deep water before we actually got back,

unfortunately he was wearing his clothes and camera at the same time!

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

FINGAL'S CAVE

JOHN PEPPERELL

After getting up early on Monday morning we set off towards Calgary Bay (the only sandy beach on Mull.) Having arrived at the bay half an hour late - you cannot go fast along the roads on Mull - we ran across the beach towards the jetty only to meet the boatman half way. He gave us all a lift on the back of his pick-up.

We set off on the two hour journey to Fingal's Cave on board the small boat amidst rough seas and a lot of spray, not to mention a variety of different types of birds, ably identified by the V.S.L.

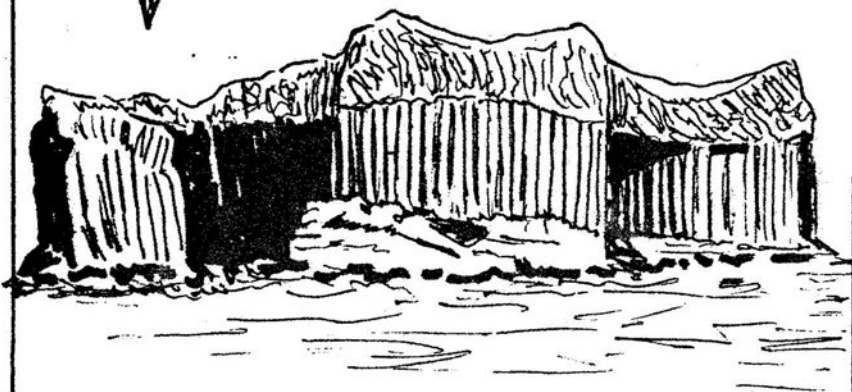
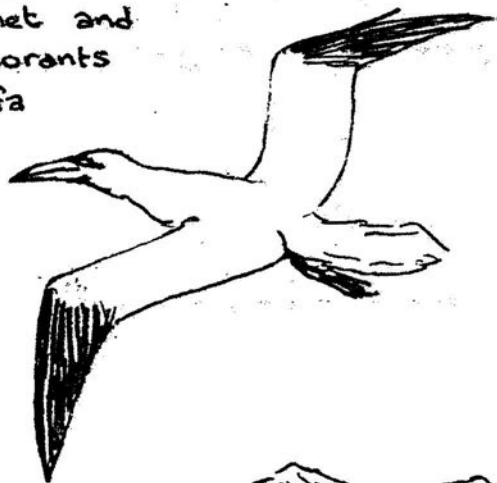
On approaching to cave on the island of Staffa, the boatman stopped the boat a short distance from the black jagged rocks whilst we took photographs. We were despatched to the island on a small rubber dingy. Actually to get from the dingy on to the rocks took some negotiating as big Phil discovered.

Having been walking and scrambling for ten minutes, we reached the mouth of the cave. The cave is about 200 feet long and 60 feet high, tapered off along its length and consists of vertical columnar structures of rock. No wonder Mendelsson was so inspired! After a while we made our way back, and as we left a large party arrived in a large boat, and yet more sightseers landed at the famous site to give it the once over and take photographs.

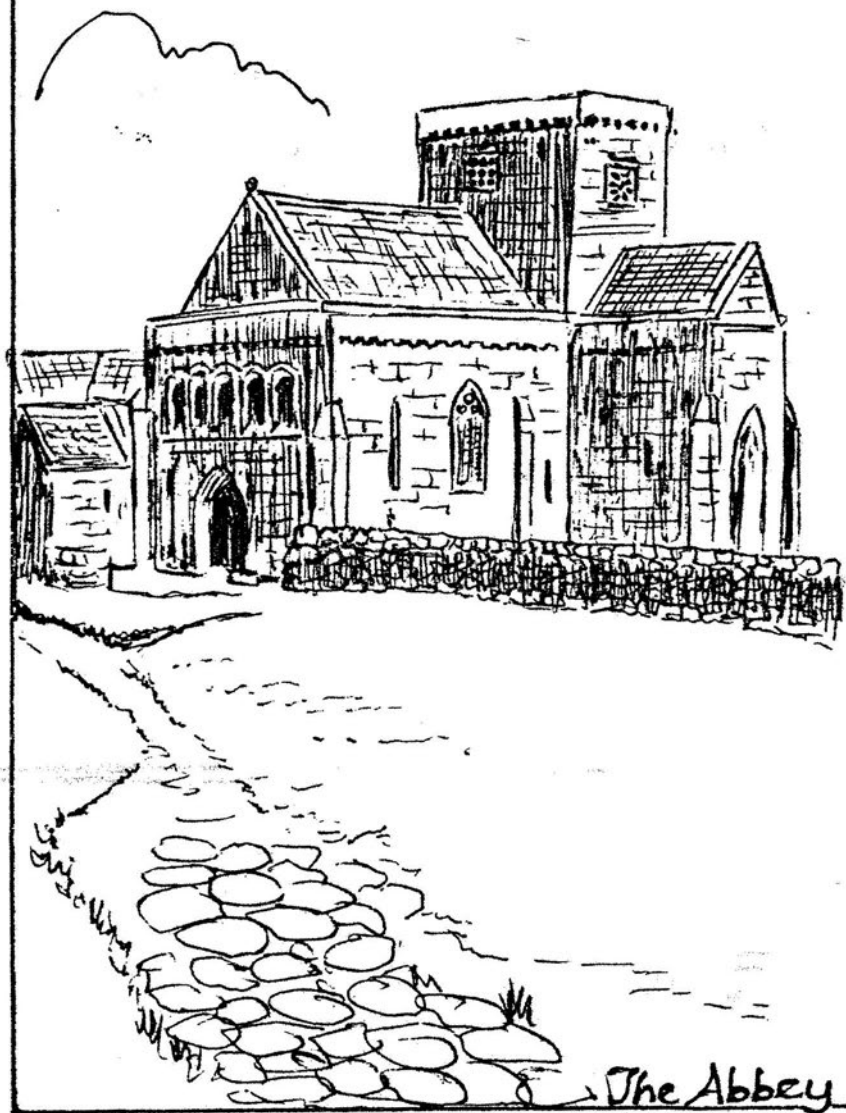
We ate lunch on the way back, the journey being made more interesting by the fact that we managed to get lost temporarily in the thick fog that shrouded the coastline. We eventually arrived back at Calgary, thankful that the fog cleared suddenly at the critical moment.

That evening a gentle walk was taken to visit a less spectacular cave near Inch Kenneth, Mackinnons cave and an interesting day was brought to a close.

Gannet and
Cormorants
Staffa



IONA



The Abbey

IONA, ST COLUMBA'S ISLENICK ILIFFE

On Tuesday we decided to visit the Isle of Iona. We made a late start from the camp and arrived at the little village of Fionnphort in the early afternoon, and had our lunch looking across the sound to the Holy Isle. We boarded the ferry, and arrived, ready to be converted. Iona is a very beautiful island which has not been greatly affected by the spoils of tourism. The main part of the ancient buildings, along with the modern village, is just down the road from the harbour. The focal point, the Abbey, has been built and rebuilt many times since 795AD but it still retains all the old beauty. It was previously a monastery, and is a sort of "Mecca for Christians". The road that links the Abbey to the village is lined by many ruins and memorials, including a ruined nunnery. To tour this island in the time available would be very tiring and difficult, so some of the party decided on an investigation of the restaurant by the Abbey. Several of our number (well me in particular) thought that the service was very good! The time sped by, and we soon had to leave the beautiful island, taking with us many varied memories of a very enjoyable day.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

"I never come to Iona without the feeling "some god is in this place". Iona more than any other place I know gives a sense of peace and inner freedom. What does it? The light that floods around on every side. The lie of the land, which coming from the solemn hills of Mull seems strangely like Greece - like Delos even. A combination of wine-dark sea, white sand, pink granite. Or is it the memory of those holy men who for centuries kept Western civilisation alive?"

Sir Kenneth Clark Civilisation.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

OBANKEITH NUTTALL

I

Two uneventful ferry crossings marked the beginning of our journey back towards civilisation, and after we'd spent some time in crowded Oban, we set off to locate a campsite. On the second attempt a site was found, but unfortunately it was positioned next to some of the noisiest air planes, sorry sheep, (I always get those mixed) that we had ever encountered.

After pitching the tents and consuming our meal, some of the party returned to the big city where we investigated the night life before returning to camp with the prospect of visiting the Oban games on the following day.

II

The entry of our humble party to the Oban games was, to our delight, ceremoniously marked by the playing of many a wee bagpipe. However, our thoughts on this subject were soon to change - oeh what a racket! There was not a big hand for the boys in the band from us at any rate!

The large variety of games we saw that day were, on the whole, very well performed to the degree that we all understood what was supposed to be happening in each of the events. The majority of the prizes in the "heavy" events were carried away by Hamish MacDonald, who wore the Stewart tartan, and one Geoff Capes, whose kilt was large enough to suffocate the audience. Geoff was narrowly put into second place in the weight over the bar competition, and a new world record was created, beating the old one by nine inches. The height was an incredible sixteen foot seven inches! This was the climax of what proved to be a very interesting and enjoyable day.

-o-

THE HIKERICH KERSWELL

Who would have thought that nine venture scouts would be standing in a disused quarry in Scotland one hot summer's day, rucksack-a-bulging and looking helpless as the now famous Bedford van disappeared into the distance. This was the case as we started our three day hike. Our mission was to arrive at a non-existent telephone box on a road in Scotland by midday on Saturday. It was 5p.m on Thursday.

At about 7p.m. we decided to camp by the side of a loch. We skipped a sensible meal that night to avoid more confrontation with the swarms of midges that hampered our progress for the duration of the hike.

The next morning, many bites later, we awoke and after comparing bites, broke camp without breakfast - eager to start moving. Most of the morning was spent walking along the edge of the loch through some rough woodland, which required some skillful navigation. There then followed a spell of road walking which we all enjoyed, despite the sore feet.

We all decided to have a feast in the afternoon - to replace the evening meal, so all the tins in sight were duly opened and the contents consumed! After this display of greed, we staggered on our way to the bottom of the final 500 foot climb.

We arrived at the top half an hour later and after a short break we strolled on confidently, taking it in turn to fall into bogs! We arrived triumphantly at our chosen destination that evening, happy in the knowledge that we had but little walking to do the next day. The evening was spent in attempting to repel the midges. A fire was constructed, the smoke from which was supposed to clear the little darlings, but it had the reverse effect so in desperation we retired to our tents. After a restless night we successfully made our rendez-vous at the head of Glencoe after a short walk on Saturday morning.

A WALK OF QUALITY

F.H.

Looking back down the steep hillside we could still see Phil at the end of the "hidden valley", behind him the northern wall of Glencoe. The three of us who were left behind by the hikers had decided to investigate the delights of the Glencoe area, and had set out on the Friday morning to penetrate into the well concealed glen tucked away between two of the "Three Sisters". A clamber over the boulders in a dried up stream bed in between steep cliffs brought us suddenly into a broad flat grassy valley where the Macdonalds once hid cattle rustled from the Campbells. Here Phil decided to stay bird watching whilst Iain and I set off to higher country.

A novel method of using a compass didn't take us too far off route, but led us to a rather hazardous ascent of a slightly unstable rock face. Sooner than expected we were above 3000 feet, and the summit of Stob Coire nan Lochan (3657ft) was reached. I recalled two earlier visits to this peak in dreadful weather, and marvelled at the transformation. No swirling mist, biting wind or spitting rain, but tranquillity, and a superb view. To the north the quartzite heads of the Mamores with Ben Nevis behind, and rugged peaks in every direction.

The walk along the ridge to Bidean nam Bian (3766ft) the highest peak in Argyllshire, was simple, but the steep cliffs and deep corries provided a wealth of breath-taking views. A leisurely lunch was followed by a not entirely successful attempt to master the delayed action shutter mechanism of a Cannon AV1 camera, before a precipitous descent from Stob Coire nam Beith (3621ft) to the main road in the Glen was made. This proved to be the least interesting and most Exhausting part of the trip, as is often the case when one descends from a good mountain walk, but any feeling of anticlimax vanished later that night as we sat in the Clachaig Inn recalling the magic moments of a great day in the hills.



Geoff Capes in action
Oban 1981



Glencoe. The Memorial
Bidean nam Bian behind

"Almost everywhere in the Highlands below 2000 feet there are vast hordes of midges (Chironomidae) which affect the movement of mammalian life, including man to a considerable extent. The stags are terribly irritated by midges while their antlers are in velvet.....But nothing keeps pace with the ubiquitous midge, which has been the subject of enquiry by a special committee and a research team. The place of the midge in human ecology is such that a greatly increased tourist industry to the Western Highlands could be encouraged if the midge could be controlled....."

Fraser Darling and Morton Boyd
The Highlands and Islands.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

ODE ON A MIDGE BITE

Spot

What

A chironomid

Did

Anon.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

FORT WILLIAM

DAVID JERRARD

In the distance the van was just visible. We stumbled along towards it happy in the knowledge that we would be able to go somewhere where the midges could be avoided preferably home! On reaching the van the news was broken to us that we would be tackling Ben Nevis the next day!

It was decided to spend the rest of the day in Fort William, so that we could buy presents for our families. In the midgeless Fort William some people found that the temptation of buying such articles as Carlsberg Special Brew Lager too much to bear, whilst others reluctantly parted with the green stuff to buy their sisters furry little things! Having totally exhausted Fort William -

which seemed to consist of only one main street, we set off again seeking a camp site.

We pitched our tents at Banavie beside the Caledonian Canal. Fortunately the site had a shower, a convenience encountered for the first time during the trip. There was also an early warning system in the form of a gaggle of geese which kept watch with better effect than the most ferocious of german shepherd dogs!

That evening the VSL decided to take us to the world famous three parallel roads of Glenroy, made up from glacial action. It really is an extraordinary sight to see. After a visit to a really scottish chip shop - meat pies and haggis - at Corpach, the rest of the evening was spent playing football and queuing for the shower.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Fort William, 1690.

"The Highland summer was passing into autumn, brown shawls of bracken on the mountains, oak leaves and elder in yellow bands along the shores of Ardgour. On some days there were chill mists from dawn until dusk. On others, a single sunlit hill glowed incandescently against a sky of thunder clouds..... Their strength and morale were low. There was too much whiskey....."

John Prebble, Glencoe.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

BEN NEVIS

BRIAN SYMCOX

On Sunday we were to ascend Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the British Isles at 1356 metres, which is a long way up when you are starting from sea level.

We got up at about 8 o'clock that morning, so we would have finished by early afternoon and would be able to go south towards Edinburgh that night. We drove to the base of the 'easy way' up, and started to walk at about ten. The first part was flat, but we were soon on the proper ascent. The AVSL left many of us standing as he forged on.

After about three quarters of an hour we stopped for a welcome drink from a stream which had evolved from the lake (loch) which was just below the halfway point. After another fifteen minutes we crossed the most dangerous part of the route going across a stream over rock with a massive drop below. We could now see over some nearby peaks.

After the midday stop we decided to go on for half an hour, but when the time came to stop, Rich, Pad and I felt that we were close enough to the summit to carry on to the top. However, it was further than it looked. About 200 metres from the summit Nick and Dave ran past - eager to be the first at the top.

We stopped at the summit to eat lunch. Having finished the V.S.L. decided to put Newton's Law of Gravity to use putting a huge piece of rock into his rucksack to carry back to the van.

It seemed to be much steeper on the descent which tortured the knees! Of course we all came down much more quickly with the exception of the A.V.S.L. and John, who who went down a tempting left hand turn near the end of the route and ended on the wrong side of the river!

It all made for a very enjoyable walk. The weather had been perfect with not a cloud in sight, hence a splendid view was possible.

That evening a meal of haggis, parsnip, potatoes and turnip was enjoyed followed by a 'jelly drink' finishing off a perfect day, which even the regular dusk invasion of midges could not spoil.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

EDINBURGH

IAIN.D.WEIR

We reached the scottish capital on a deceptively sunny morning following a swift journey across the central highlands and eventually the impressive Forth Bridge. The party dispersed and Phil, the VSL, and I set off to see as much of "Auld Reekie" as was possible in three hours - which meant a trip up and down Princes Street.

The V.S.L. and I decided to join the crowds climbing the Scott monument, but Phil decided to opt for the less disorientating pastime of watching one of the many, many fringe theatre groups performing that day (The Edinburgh Festival was in full swing). This group's pantomime consisted of painting a step ladder with white gloss paint, and inviting the not too enthusiastic passers by to join in the fun.

The view from the top of the monument (when we eventually squeezed up through the crowds on the narrow spiral staircases) was very impressive on this cold and clear day. All the famous landmarks of the city were visible - the castle, Arthurs Seat, and below us, Phil.

We then decided that after two weeks of life in the wild we would indulge in some culture so we paid a visit to the Scottish National Art Gallery which was featuring a special exhibition on fakes illustrating all the various forms of frauds and imitations met with in the art world. Culture satisfied, we drifted back on to Princes Street, calling in a few shops, and pausing to watch even more of the 700 odd fringe groups, most of yet lower quality than the first one we had seen....Then we had an ice cream.... mine was vanilla.....then we all got into the van.....No stale buns at Hawick.....

-o-

LINES ON THE ROAD

The A74, The A74
 From Gretna to Glasgow
 The juggernauts roar
 And highland bound tourists pass by
 by the score
 A muckle braw road is the A74.

(Attrib. Burns)

(Well, we have to fill the gaps somehow! Ed)

THE COTSWOLD MARATHON 1982

All reasonably healthy normal people have the physical capability, so long as definite injury does not occur, of completing the Cotswold Marathon. The thing, however, which in most cases decides the final outcome of the event is purely mental. Far before ones limits of utter physical exhaustion are reached, it is common to persuade oneself that it is not possible to continue. The point along the route where this occurs obviously differs from person to person.

Within my team confidence began to ebb on the approach to and along the Greenway. The bunching of three 44th teams between Churchdown and Ullenwood caused some lack of concentration, and made me look for excuses to retire. Eventually the teams separated, and we were a unit once more. Continuing to Coberley we were joined by two more walkers who had lost a team member on the Greenway, and we continued fairly healthily to Edgeworth where foot trouble reduced us to four. At the next check point, after battling through the bogs of Battlecombe to Bisley the inspiring sight of two more retired 44th members led to us shedding another of our happy band.

We three continued, managing a joke, a smile, and even the occasional laugh. Gradually, however, we drifted into a sullen unbroken silence. Our hearts lifted as we crossed the great muddy field, but sank to an all time low of depression when we got lost in Tuffley when we deviated from the regulation route. After what seemed and endless time circling around Tuffley, Murray Hall at last was sighted. The last few gruelling yards, a word of exultation, and the unique and ever dissatisfied Mike Towkan, the praiseworthy Dom Mills and myself had completed the 1982 Cotswold Marathon in a time that would not break any records, or be remembered by anyone for a long time.

Mike Barton.

Sports and Social Round up continued from page 3.

The 44th team of myself, Pat Phillips, Rob Holford and Dom Mills were quietly confident (except for Dom!), and in the end we had a comfortable victory.

The Golden Welly is now back in its rightful place, gathering dust on a shelf in the hut!

Stu Bishop.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Overheard in the hut one lunch time.....

"Hey, P***y, how tall are you?"

"I'm just 5 feet now."

"Are you as tall as T*m yet?"

"No, but I'm getting taller"

"Do you measure your height often then?"

"Yes, we've got this thing on the wall to do it."

"What is it, a micrometer?"

(N.B. Any legal action should be directed at Andy Manders, and not the editor of this magazine.)

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

The Cotswold Marathon - A footnote...

Readers of Mike's article will be interested perhaps to know the details regarding other walkers from the unit. Our teams this year were largely inexperienced, plus the few old stagers who simply wished to finish.

The best time for a unit member was recorded by Stuart Bishop who led in a composite team of himself, Bri Symcox, Andy Manders and John Pepperell. Pat Phillips who was the last starter in an "ad lib" team shepherded a group home and all those plus Mike, Dom and Mike deserve praise. The six who retired all covered a considerable distance, and have every reason to be proud of their achievement - next year, perhaps!

F.H.

