

# VENTURE

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VENTURE 44. The magazine of the 44th Gloucester  
Sir Thomas Rich's School Venture Scout Unit

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The next issue of the magazine is already in the pipe line. Articles to the Editor by June 30th please.

# COMMENT - - - - -

Activities since the last issue started with the Back to Essentials challenge in and around the hut. This was just a test of basic scouting skills such as map and compass reading, making a sling and lighting a fire from wood and two matches in a force ten gale - this last to prove so difficult that one member was reduced to produce kindling wood by gnawing it beaver fashion - not a pretty sight!

The half term hike along Offa's Dyke Path was undertaken manfully by six members, despite the occasional bad weather and the loss of the odd tent along the way. An account of this is to be found in this issue.

Another eagerly awaited event was the bed-push, an annual favorite now with the Unit. The pushers put in an excellent performance, details of which can be found in an article below, and over £175 was raised for various charities.

The First Aid course over the last four weeks or so was attended by all of the younger half of the Unit, all of whom passed easily. As a result of this several have virtually gained their Venture Awards.

A number of regular activities have recently begun again including canoeing and the ever popular weeding and tree felling, and mowing of lawns.

Y.C.

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As mentioned above by Yosh, progress in the Venture Award has undergone a recent surge. I would like to congratulate all the following who have now gained the award

Rob Holford	Simon Hawkins	Rich Kerswell
Yosh Cowmeadow	John Pepperell	Jon Wright
Jer Hobbs	Brian Herbert	Brian Symcox
Dave Jerrard	Paddy Smith	Dave Wilson

F.H.

### THE ART OF PROCRASTINATION

After last years fiasco in assembling the bed we had vowed not to be so dilatory this year.....

On friday night we decided to do something about the two-wheeled bed. Two motorbike wheels were to be put on the rear, so that there were four, and a steering wheel on the steering column, so then there were five.

The hut was a hive of activity - nameboards being out out, letters being masterfully drawn out on the inevitable 'sticky-back plastic', essential to all good Blue Peter rush jobs. Meanwhile John Pepperell was mending the numerous punctures in the rear tyres... every time he got the wheel on, another one appeared...and the headboard was being painted a ghastly gold colour.

At 10 p.m. we gave up, Phil and Pad having gallantly offered to come in on saturday to apply the finishing touches, or were they just thirsty?

Sunday morning, 10.30 a.m. the foolhardy team of 11 with self appointed subs Dave J and John P. arrived at a windswept airfield, resplendent in sweatshirts, shorts - or red jeans, and socks of various degrees of luminosity and colour.

We sprinted to the front line of the grid to warm up - and then stood still for 15 minutes, to get cold! When the marshalls eventually decided to start us we had the dubious pleasure of a roundhead trying to fire a gun (musket) only to have it explode in his face.

Having watched Barry Sheene starting a race on one wheel, we tried to translate this technique to a two wheeled version so we could be first in the race at one stage, but we succeeded only in scarig our self appointed driver, Paddy, witless. Our support team later told that it looked pretty spectacular and dangerous from the side lines!

Then followed five laps of running, egg- throwing, pushing and sweating, all so that we could complete the

ten mile race in 81 mins 7 secs - an average speed of 7.396753 m.p.h. (I think!)

Brian Symcox

Footnote

The above article makes no more than passing reference to the conditions under which the race was run - rain, cold and high wind. The gallant team who put up such a fine show were

Pat Phillips	Rob Holford	Simon Williams
Brian Symcox	Andy Manders	Dave Wilson
Steve Ounsworth	Rich Drew	Jon Wright
Paddy Smith	Brian Herbert	Simon Bennett.

The final total sum raised ALL OF WHICH is going to local charities was, in fact,

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY ONE POUNDS and 20p.

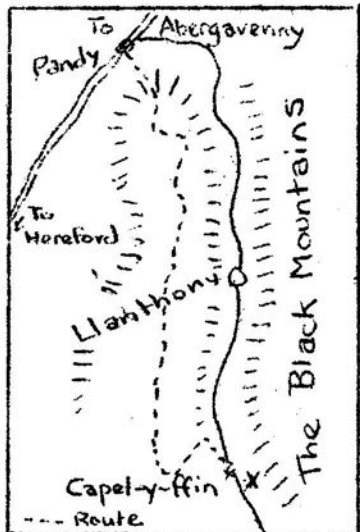
F.H.

-o-

THE DYKE THAT OFFA BUILT

We all made final checks and adjustments to rucksacks and equipment and we set off up to the mountain ridge to join the Offa's Dyke footpath. Mainly our aim was to hike from Pandy to Knighton (about 50 miles) along the path, camping three nights en route.

After lunch on the ridge we made good walking between the trig points, despite having to negotiate somewhat muddy conditions with the harsh and cold weather closing in. With occasional breaks in the snow

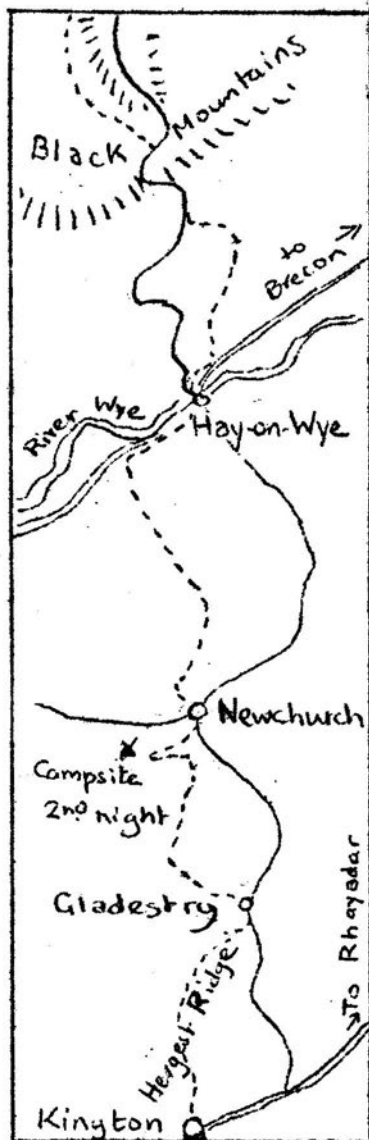


clouds which were enshrouding the mountain tops we could see the highest "peak" in the vicinity clearly covered in snow. After about eight miles on the ridge, the decision was made to descend to the valley below so that we could seek shelter. It was beginning to snow, and our descent was rapid down to the settlement at Capel-y-ffin. It was here that we would camp.

Our chosen site could have been more aptly named a 'swamp site'. When we unpacked our rucksacks, to our dismay we found that unfortunately a tent had 'gone missing' on the way. We were faced with "mooring" our tents to the site and with sleeping three to a tent. But fortunately later that night Iain Weir, having driven up by car, came to our rescue with a replacement tent, and stayed on over night.

Next morning our outlook was much brighter. It had stopped snowing and we were soon off on our way to Hay on Wye, with some cheerful advice from Iain to help us on our way. We soon reached Hay where we were able to get some lunch and stock up on our food.

That afternoon hiking was hard, and the field was fairly



(continued on page 8.)

44th GLOUCESTER VENTURE SCOUT UNIT

Summary of Income and Expenditure for period April 1st 1982 to April 22nd 1983

<u>INCOME</u>	£	£	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£	£
Membership Subscriptions	247.00	(185)	Capitation Fee, 1983	140.00	(115)
Associate membership subs	68.00	( 56)	District H.Q. Roof Appeal	25.00	
Disco Takings	244.00		Disco Expenses	96.99	
Tuckshop Profits, share of	466.21	(326)	Equipment Purchases	277.52	(175)
Jumble Sale Profits	102.94	(120)	Leisure Centre Expenses	79.14	( 54)
Expedition Income	405.00	(332)	Expedition Expenses	615.13	(315)
Bed Race, 1982.	49.58		To Local Charities	49.58	
Grant (Rowing Club) re canoes	150.00		Canoe construction etc	277.53	
Sale of canoe	40.00		Canoe licences	24.00	
Barnwood P.C.C. Tree clearance	150.00		Entry Fees	47.00	( 60)
Deposits, Norway Expt	135.00		Venture 44	41.57	( 34)
"Richian" Shop takings	157.63		Thos Cook, Norway Deposit	60.00	
Sale of Sweat shirts	51.45	( 30)	Bed Race entry 1983.	50.00	
Sale of pens	5.00		Transport Expenses - School bus	28.92	( 32)
Bank Interest (Deposit ac)	21.95	( 16)	Purchase of Pens	10.00	
Sundries	9.54		Bank Charges	3.39	( 3)
			Railway Soc, shop profits	20.00	
			Engraving Trophies	10.40	
			Stationery	8.25	
<b>Total</b>	<u>2303.30</u>	(1608)	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u>1893.72</u>	(1432)
Brought forward from 81/82	<u>385.67</u>	( 220)	Balance of income over expenditure	409.58	
			Carried Forward to 1983/4	<u>795.25</u>	( 396)
<b>Total</b>	<u>2688.97</u>			<u>2688.97</u>	

N.B. Appropriate 1981/82 figures in brackets

Accounts presented by Treasurer; Richard R. Kerswell

Audited and found correct in accordance with vouchers etc. 23rd April 1983. J.D.Holdaway. Hon. Auditor.



well stretched out, with Rich and Paddy heading the field most of the time. We got to the farm camp site after covering a mammoth 16 miles that day, and we were glad to rendezvous with the V.S.L. and Jim Hawkins at Newchurch.

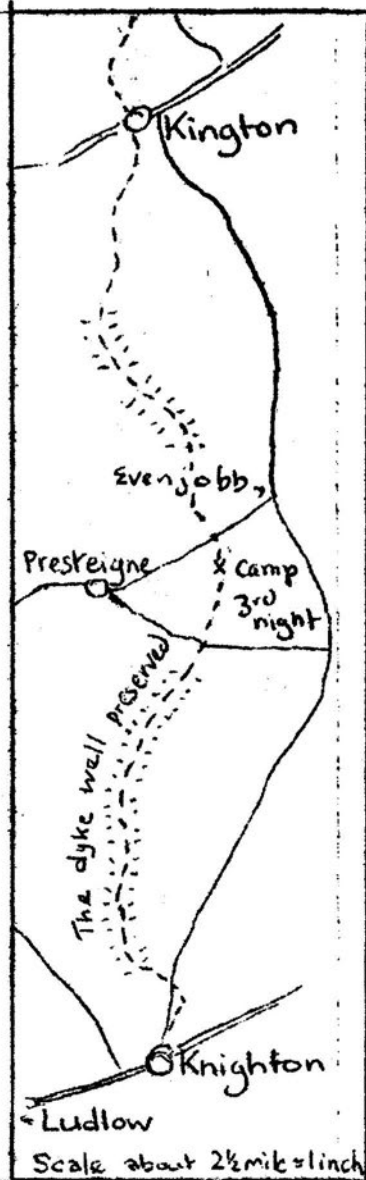
Our third days hiking meant heading once again into those Welsh hills in order to make our way towards the town of Kington. We stopped at the little shop at Gladestry and all of its food stocks seemed to leave with us.

At Kington we had our lunch and then pushed on through a hard period up and down to our final campsite. This proved to be on the front lawn of a kind elderly lady, and the rest we gained there provided a welcome opportunity to carry out some repairs on our battered feet.

Our final day's hike was to be an 8 mile stretch to our destination, Knighton. The V.S.L. met up with us on the way to complete the last section.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for waiting for me when I did occasionally lag behind a little. Many thanks also to Iain Weir for bringing the replacement tent.

Jon Wright.



### MOUNTAIN MUSINGS

On the rare occasions when Venture Scouting hits the headlines, it is as often as not in connection with an accident in the mountains. There was considerable adverse publicity following the unfortunate events in the Brecon Beacons over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, as a result of which people are purported to be asking what these youngsters are doing in the mountains anyway? Sadly much of the comment is uninformed and, as ever in these matters, people jump to conclusions and apportion blame before all the circumstances are known. However, two questions do arise from all this, and I shall attempt to express my views on them.

First of all, why do scouts, and indeed many other people venture into the hills, and secondly, are enough precautions taken by mountaineers to guard against any accidents.

There is no adequate answer to the first question as to why people climb mountains, the traditional dismissive answer "because they are there" is hardly satisfactory. Each person who takes to the hills will have his own reason, and a great deal has been written by the more articulate aficionados on this subject. I do not propose to delve into my own justification here, but suspect that my rationale is, as well as the reason of most others is fundamentally selfish. Nevertheless, most of those bodies concerned with training young people seem to feel that adventure in hazardous country is in some way valuable experience, and although I do believe that some youngsters are driven into the hills for entirely the wrong reasons, I have to agree in essence with this point of view. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and although not everyone likes this particular pudding, many seem to come back for second helpings!

As to my second point, which is essentially 'can any accident be avoided?', this is another difficult one to

answer! Certainly mountains are dangerous places but so also are main roads, gymnasias, playing fields, kitchens and the like. In all these environments danger can be minimized if the nature of the hazard is understood - and also if that essential ingredient (which can never be quantified) called common sense is used.

Two items that are often raised at enquiries into incidents in the hills concern whether or no members of a party were properly equipped, and whether leaders were properly trained. Nowadays there is no need for anybody to go poorly kitted into the hills. Supplying equipment for activities in the hills has become a growth industry over the past ten years, with a bewildering array of goods to choose from. If the aspirant mountaineer bought all that he was advised to, he would need a very large sum of money plus a sherpa or two to carry some of it. Even if one is properly equipped in the physical sense with good boots, warm clothing, waterproofs, compass, map etc, there is still the previously alluded to mental equipment, common sense which may be lacking. I feel that under some circumstances a youngster in jeans, ~~tee~~ shirt and training shoes, an outfit that would horrify a lot of officialdom, may be less accident prone than the properly turned out yet inexperienced walker. The casual walker might well think twice before setting out in bad conditions whilst the man in the approved gear may well place too much confidence in his clothing and equipment and set off into trouble. It is a sad fact that enquiries into accidents often reveal that the party was "properly equipped."

I will deal with the other important item, training in the next part of this article in the next issue

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F.H.

Copies of the Annual Report of the Unit are available from the V.S.L.

LETTER FROM ARGENTINA: A Short Walk in the Andesby Row LloydFeb 12th

Buenos Aires - not so good air - hot and sticky,  $34^{\circ}\text{C}$  and 84% humidity. Time to head for the hills!

Feb 13th

I hooked a rail ticket west as far as the line goes Neuquen (1200km), bought what food I would need and packed my rucksack. I decided not to take a stove or a tent intending to travel as light as possible - my one little concession being a saucepan for hot drinks, on wood fire of course.

Feb 14th

Caught the midday train - packed with people - off over the very flat very big pampa.

Feb 15th

After a gruelling 24 hours detrained and caught a bus to the small town of Zapala

Feb 16th

I am lucky. The weekly bus to Rahue leaves today. Dumped beside dirt road in two house town at 4.00p.m. The bus due back in seven days, so its feet from here on.

I walked 30 km and arrived at the National Park campsite which I could use after registering with the border police.

Feb 17th

A quick breakfast and a rapid charge up the pass and over into the next valley. At first the track was easy to follow, but soon in dense forest I lost it. I had my compass and knew the way I wanted to go, but it was just physically impossible, so that I had to retreat and find the track once more. However, this cost me several hours so I had to camp  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way up the mountain.

Feb 18th

No problems today - straight over the top to be greeted by fantastic views of the Cordillera and V.Lanin. Rapid descent to the valley and the lakes and a superb camp-

-ing place.

Feb 19th & 20th

Reluctantly left the valley and found the road. Hitched to Barilochee (days), and booked into the hotel.

Feb 21st

A complete day masquerading as a tourist, meeting Australians, Japanese, Americans, and of course the ubiquitous Germans; hung around in restaurants etc, generally being self indulgent.

Feb 22nd

Enough of this easy life! Back to the hills, but by an easier way, by bus to Villa Cathedral, and then by cab -le car to Cerro Cathedral - this is the way to climb the mountains. The path is well marked keeping about 100m below the precipitous ridge. Occasionally a condor drifts effortlessly overhead, a truly breathtaking sight. After several hours the track divides. I took the left fork and descended slowly through two corries until I reached Refugio Frey, a mountain hut. The hut offers basic facilities, a wood fired stove, a table, a bunk, plus good company. It is surrounded by sharp needles of granite, which are well used by climbers.

Feb 23rd

Retraced my steps through the corries to the fork in the track. A red arrow labelled "Jakob" points at a near vertical scree, and I am not joking. With what courage I had left I clutched my saucepan and plunged down a rapid 400m descent. From there a switchback route eventually led onto a ridge looking down over the Refugio. Another near vertical scree, and within half an hour a hot cuppa beside a roaring fire. The toilet facilities are interestingly labelled Winchester Cathedral....

Feb 24th

There is a magnificent peak behind the Refugio. It took only an hour or so to ascend, but rather longer to descend, as the route was not easy to follow. From there on to the road it was 20 km, but all downhill. Then by hitching and bussing, I was back, very late, in Bariloche.



