

VENTURE 44

Number 55



☘
Ireland

August 1985

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

NUMBER 55

AUGUST 1985

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Frank Henderson, Jim Sargeant,
Jason Stone, Marcus Whitmore,
Dave Williams, Dave and Jon
Wright.

IRELAND 1985

For the first time since the dim and distant past of 1971, a party of scouts crossed St Georges Channol to the Emerald Isle, for a cycling tour. We had visions of a peaceful and relaxing couple of weeks, perhaps doing a spot of fishing, some pleasant hill walks, leisurely strolls around some of Eirc's monuments and interesting sights. Silly thoughts, really, this being a Venture Scout summer expedition! The initial thought of cycling perhaps 25 to 30 miles a day turned out, in some cases to be a bit of an underestimation, about 45 to 50 miles being somewhat nearer the truth. In total the party cycled 440 miles across the south of Ireland in 14 days. Each of the days has been described by the various expedition members in this issue, together with appropriate illustrations and photographs.

The party would like to extend their thanks to Mr. Richard Shone, a temporary English master for the last academic year, for arranging a campsite for our first night on Irish soil, and also to all the other farmers site owners and bicycle repair men for hospitality and friendliness during our stay.

Steve Clutterbuck

Friday 19th July

Bicycles, rucksacks and other items collected from six o'clock in the evening onward. Van eventually set off at eight, and the party left Gloucester station half an hour later. Three hours to pass on Cardiff station awaiting the 'boat train', whilst van arrived safely at Fishguard before midnight. So far, so good...

F.H.

Saturday 20th July

We embarked on the Normandica at approximately 0330, as the boat was late. As there were no seats we crashed out in a passageway, hoping to get some sleep, but not so since certain members were hyperactive all night. The crossing was relatively peaceful, but some of the other passengers were feeling the effects of the sea a little.

We arrived at Rosslare at about 07.30, and after finding the VSL and the van we had a hurried breakfast and departed for Wexford. From there we crossed a long bridge and went on to Blackwater, near to which was the house of Mr Shone. We had covered 24 miles in 2 hours. We set up camp in a field which had a pond in it, which we fished successfully, and Stewart managed to fall in..

In the evening some members carried on fishing while others visited to coast, collecting and photographing rocks.

Jason Stone

Sunday 21st July

Breakfast was consumed at around 9.20 by some members, and at around 9.40 by others. While two people packed up the tents, the rest walked over to the farm to offer their services, in expectation of picking strawberries. However, we were asked to mend a number of punctures, very few of which actually materialised.

We had lunch, and after passing on our thanks to Mr Shone we left for, ultimately, Craignamanagh. We went to Blackwater thence to Enniscorthy, where we spent about half an hour trying to find the right road. After that the route was relatively simple and did not need many stops to look at the map. After going through the Black-stairs Mountain pass, we passed through Ballymurphy on through hilly country till we eventually reached Craignamanagh where we met the V.S.L. who greeted us with the news that we had not yet anywhere to stay the night. Therefore we carried on to Inistioge, where to Jason's glee we found a nice trout river, but we had to move about a mile from the village, as the V.S.L., Jase and Dave Williams had found a farm for us to stay at. As we were all cycling to the farm Jase and Dave were busy driving the cows out of the field in which we were to camp. It rained heavily most of the night.

Stewart James

Monday 22nd July

Having arranged the campsite the previous evening the V.S.L. believed I was on good terms with the farmer so after breakfast I was sent to find a shovel, as ours had been left back at Blackwater. We left the farm about 11.00, and set off up a steep hill, to the obvious great delight of Jason, and about half an hour later we got to Thomastown. We then made our way to Knocktopher, passing Jerpoint Abbey, and then headed for Callan along minor roads. Then through the "ghost town" of Mullinahone, and just after this Dave Wright's front tyre decided to have a puncture, which held us up for about half an hour. It was rather wet and the wind was cold. We went on to Fet-hard, past some very picturesque mountains, and took a break before moving on to our rendezvous with the V.S.L. who, we hoped, had found us a campsite, as we had cycled over 30 miles. We met the V.S.L. outside Cashel, a town for the impressive ruins on the huge and imposing rock

that dominates the town. We were greeted there with the "good news" that we had to cycle a further 14 miles to Cahir, and that night's camp. So after a brief stop in Cashel the party, for some reason, split up into three groups. Two of these groups successfully arrived at our destination, but the other, consisting of Jon and Steve cycled straight through Cahir, missing the turning point to the camp, which was signposted quite clearly. After waiting for a while the V.S.L. decided to look for the missing cyclists, and was soon back having located them in the little town.

In the evening the expedition members made use of the pool table at the site, where Dave Wright showed his skill(?). The camp was run by a very nice Dutch couple and was quite a contrast to the previous night's site.

Dave Williams

Tuesday 23rd July

As it was such a good site, a rest day was declared. After everyone had washed or showered we took a leisurely late breakfast (all of 9.00a.m.). The pool table was again in constant use that morning, the honours even.

After lunch it was decided that an afternoon of fishing was called for in the River Suir, so we set off for Cahir to stock up on food and tackle. After much deliberation, Dave, Stew and myself decided to buy permits from Mrs Morrissey at the pub. The other Dave and Jase decided to tread the evil path of the criminal, and they refused to buy permits. (The fish recognised this and so refused to be caught by these dishonest anglers)

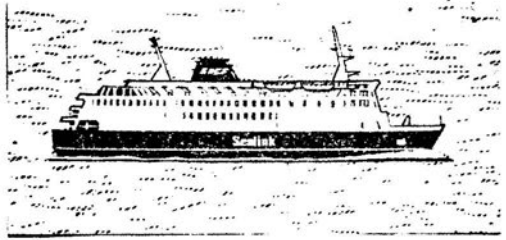
We arrived at the river at 2.30, and after a very long walk we found suitable places to fish. The subtle battle of man pitting his wits against the fish proved fruitless, and not even those who paid caught anything! Instead of trout for dinner that night we had lamb, preceded by a small portion of tripe and onions for those willing to try it!

Steve Clutterbuck



Rosslare

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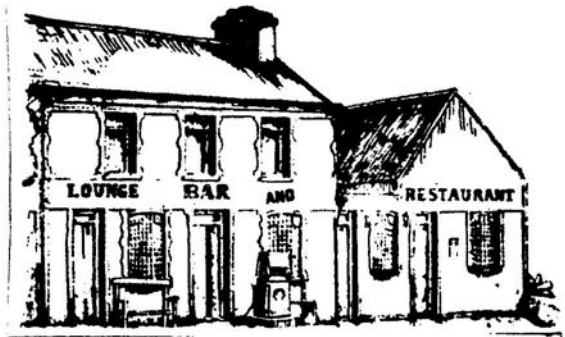
Wexford

11



Blackwater

24



Wednesday 24th July

Breakfast today was begun without the presence of a certain expedition member. Warning to Mr Williams; code violation - late for breakfast.

Having packed up the kit, the V.S.L. then paid for our luxurious stay at "The Apple", then went onto Cahir Castle followed by us bikers. We went into the castle and listened to a female guide as she rattled off the history of the castle in a broad Irish accent, putting us in the role of attackers. After that we were allowed to wander round the stronghold. This resulted in a five foot thick wall of carboniferous limestone mercilessly attacking a certain geology master.

We got on our bikes and journied onwards to Mitcheltown using the rather boring main roads. Towards 4.15 we reached Mallow, where we reported to the V.S.L. and went to the cake shop to buy ice creams. Somehow the V.S.L. had found a friendly bike repair man by the name of Mick Cahill, who had some space available in his field and was prepared to let us camp there (providing none of us were Tories!). Unfortunately he lived nine miles outside town - well he would, wouldn't he! That evening the fishermen were drawn to the Blackwater river, seeking trout, with the usual results.

James Sargeant

Thursday 25th July

After a few bike repairs we packed up the tents and had a photograph taken of us on our trusty steeds. We thanked Mr Cahill for his help and hospitality, and set off at about 10.30. We rode through Banteer, Millstreet and Rathmore, where we stopped to buy our lunch. The days ride was not a tiring one, being mostly downhill. Even Jason kept up (AMAZING). It turned out to be a short ride, only about 32 miles. We met the V.S.L. just outside Killarney at 1.30, and set up our tents at a campsite

about two miles outside of the town. In the afternoon we visited Killarney for a few hours, where Steve and I bought food for the evening meal.

In the evening some people walked to the river for the inevitable fishing. Later a breathless messenger returned with the staggering news that some fish had been actually caught! Dave Wright and Jason "I've read the books" Stone had landed monstrous trout weighing almost 2 oz. Later in the evening we relaxed to the V.S.L.s soothing guitar rhythms.

Marcus Whitmore

Friday 26th July

Today was decreed a rest day, due to the sub-standard weather conditions around the local hills and mountains. After breakfast we all discussed the days programme. "You'd have to be pretty dedicated to go up the mountains today" the V.S.L said, so a day of sight seeing was decided upon. After a brief stop in Killarney (Cricket scores in newspaper) we made our way to the busy town of Tralee where we spent a couple of hours, but saw no rose. Then we wound our way around narrow country lanes through the Slieve Mish mountains on the Dingle peninsula until we reached a small settlement called Inch. We walked along the beach, and photographs were taken - reminding us that we had finally arrived on the west coast of Ireland. For the record books, it was decided that it would be fitting to make a journey to the most westerly point in Europe. However, this was not quite achieved due to a small failure of the exhaust system of JDG 312 V. In fact a portion of the exhaust pipe had broken away, but after frantic efforts the van was again on the road, but due to time restrictions, we decided to return to Killarney. Being good natured scouts we offered a lift to a hitch hiker on the return journey. He was german, and had little to say, but was grateful enough for the transport.

Dave Wright



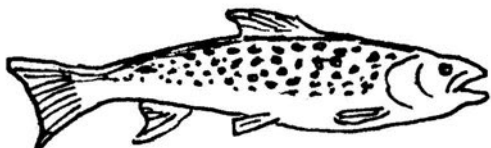
Cahir

114



Mitchelstown

131



One of the many that got away!



Mallow

149



Banteer

166



Rathmore

180



Killarney

194

Carruntoohil 3414 ft.



Saturday 27th July

Saturday was our last full "rest day" at Killarney. It was decided that the "rest" for the day was to be devoted to the unit making an attempt at climbing Ireland's highest mountain, Carrauntoohil. The base camp for the ascent was formed at Killarney by Stewart James, whilst the rest of the Unit headed off in the van.

Carrauntoohil forms part of the Macgillycuddys Reeks. At 3414 feet it is shrouded by mist most of the time. However, as we made our ascent of the foothills and reached Hags Glen, we were able to see the summit looming up ahead with clear skies above. It took about an hour to travel from the van to the steeper climb of the mountain, the Devil's Ladder. A pause was made at a Venture scout camp at the head of the glen.

We reached the bottom of the ladder, which was fairly steep, with a lot of loose scree on the slope. It was 2p.m. before we reached the top of the gully, then after a short stop, we made for the top. Conditions on the final section were not as bad as the Devil's Ladder and so good time was made. About a quarter of the way up the final slope, we were astonished to see a brace of bicycles parked on the mountain side.

At about 3pm we reached the summit. The mists were closing in a bit, but through small clear patches in the cloud we could make out other nearby mountains and in the distance the coastline. There were a handful of other people on the summit, including some friendly Irish hill farmers with their sheepdogs. The farmers were conversing in Gaelic. After finishing the remains of our food we made our descent back to the van and so back to the campsite, where repairs were effected on the Bedfords exhaust system.

Jon Wright

Sunday 28th July

Well, its me again, writing another "fascinating" days travel. We set off for Killarney quite early, and got stuck in the only traffic jams so far, all the locals were going to church. After passing through the town and, avoiding the yanks, we rode 5 miles to Tore falls. At these falls we saw the water cascading down, forming crystal clear droplets on the rocks. (W.B.Yeats, eat your heart out!)

However on the way down we couldn't avoid hearing the Americans who were talking as loudly as they were dressed. We then left for Moll's Gap, climbing 838 feet on the way up. Descending the hill was fairly safe except for the odd bend that was taken a bit too fast

We arrived Kenmare, and a campsite was found three miles outside the town. The genial owner was full of "helpful" information, for example, "Margaret Thatcher had a great grandmother who came from Kenmare." Also he told us of an interesting erection just along the road, so after dinner we went to see what turned out to be a large single free standing stone with a lintel on top (following the directions of a very ancient and very deaf farmer). After a photograph was taken Stewart and I decided to climb on top of it, with some help from Dave Wright. We did, however, have some difficulty getting down.

Later on in the evening we decided to sample the local culture, so six of us went into Kenmare and entered an establishment where live music was being played. We also sampled the local victuals and beverages before returning to the campsite.

Jason Stone

Ex members who were on the 1971 expedition will have memories of Kenmare which is really quite civilised at the present moment. A certain hostelry has sadly gone.

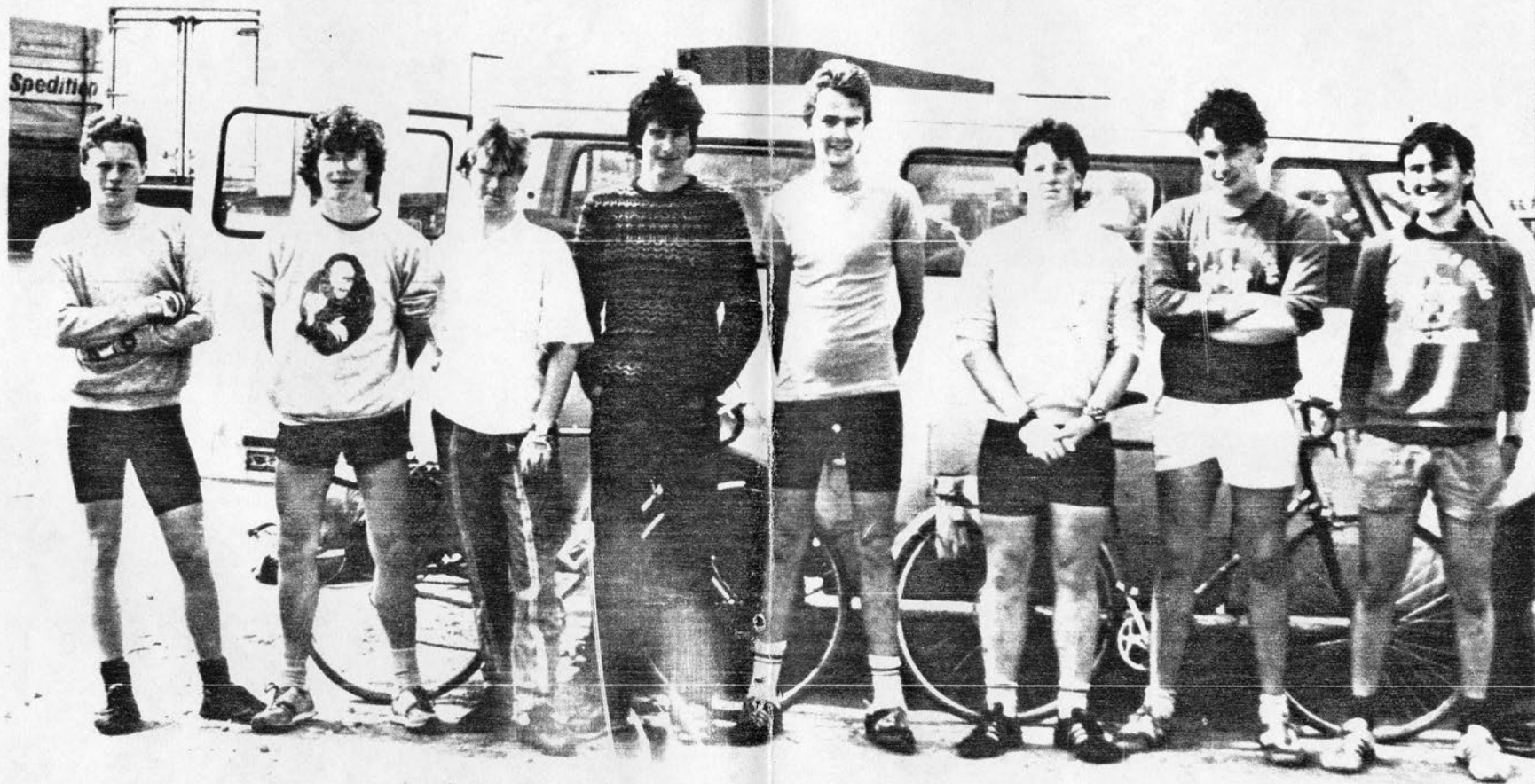


22nd July: Leaving Inistoge

28th July: Killarney's lakes



We made it! Rosslare 3 August

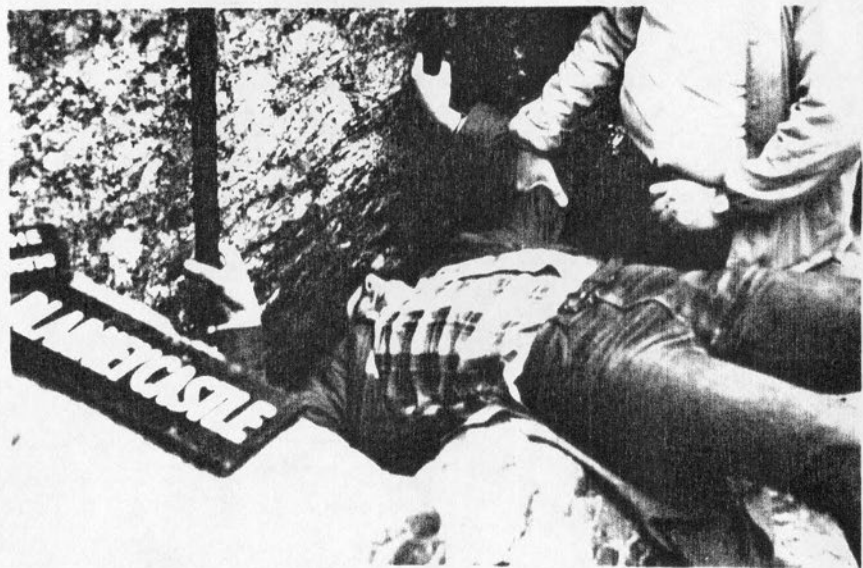


Stew Steve Marcus James Jason Dave Dave Jon



30th July: Repair work at Cork

31st July: Kissing the Bamey Stone



Monday 29th July

Morning call; V.S.L. pokes his head into the tent and says "It's a nice day if you like rain!" After breakfast we rode to Kennmare, and from there we took the road to Bantry which was to take us along the first of the mountain passes we were to encounter that day. We climbed pretty steadily from sea level to 1019 feet for a while. We met the V.S.L. at the top of the climb but Jason was a little way behind the rest of us as he was enjoying himself admiring the scenery. From there we made our way rapidly down to Glengarriff, and Dave Williams did his best to try to kill himself by riding too fast down the mountain. We stopped at Glengarriff for lunch in the rain, and then made for the road inland to Ballingeary. On this we encountered the second mountain pass. Although this one wasn't as long or as high (about 660ft) Jason enjoyed it just as much. the descent saw us arrive at Ballingeary, where we met the V.S.L. and found that a campsite had been located about half a mile out of town. After dinner the members of the expedition indulged in the usual after-dinner intellectual discussion, political debate and aesthetic conversation (pull the other one..)

Stewart James

Tuesday 30th July

We left Ballingeary at about 10.30, and after a few minutes we suffered our first mishap of the day- a puncture. This took quite a long time to mend, as the person repairing it (who shall be nameless) managed to damage the breaks as he replaced the wheel...

We then made our way to Macroom where we planned to buy our lunch. Before arriving there we passed many interesting glacial features such as drumlins, kettle-holes and roche moutonnes, which were very abundant in

the once glaciated valley. After eating our lunch by a reservoir, we made our way to Cork along one of the best Irish roads we had ridden on.

On arrival in the suburbs of Cork we had the second mishap of the day, another puncture. This time we had to repair it at the roadside as we had run out of spare inner tubes. When we met the V.S.L. we were told that a campsite on the outskirts of Cork had been found, and the tents had already been put up. On arrival at the site, Stewart discovered that he had left his sunglasses at the place of the last puncture, so he had to ride 5 miles back to get them! The rest of the day was spent sunbathing (honestly), reading and playing pool.

Dave Williams

Wednesday 31st July

Today was another non-cycling day spent in and around Cork. In the morning the members went into town and wandered around for a couple of hours buying various presents and things.

In the afternoon we went to Blarney Castle, about 5 miles outside Cork. What else does one do at Blarney Castle, other than kiss the Blarney Stone? (not much, actually..). Everyone made the contortionists attempt to wrap their lips around the said piece of rock-Everyone that is apart from Marcus and Jason, who both preferred to remain strong and silent. The question arose about the presence of any Irish people in Blarney. The entire population seeming to consist of loud, overweight, middle aged Americans wearing baseball caps!

Jason had bought a football that morning, and this was used in the evening, much to the consternation of the other campers, and also some essential cycle repairs were carried out. Visits to the down town off licence helped quench thirsts at the end of the day.

Steve Clutterbuck

Kenmare

217



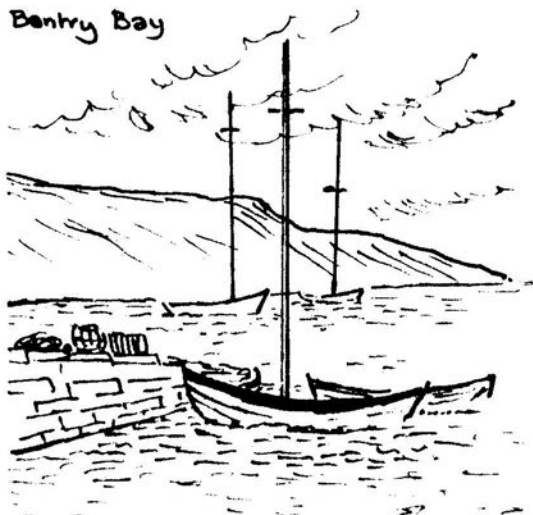
The "world famous" perched block near Kenmare.



Glengariff

234

Bantry Bay





Ballingearry

257



Macroom

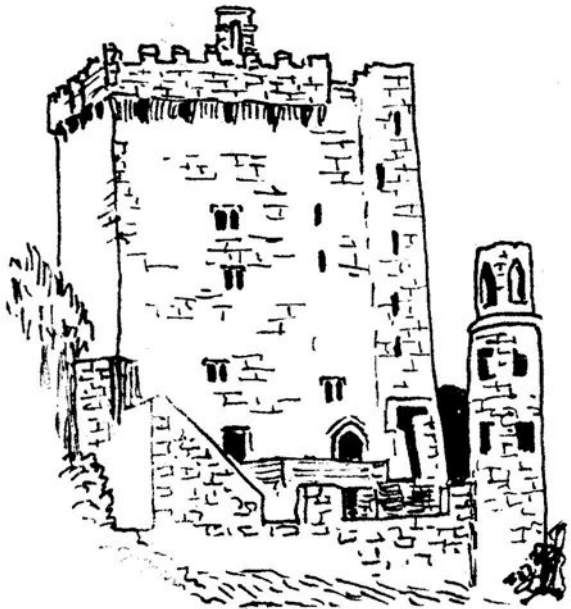
273



Blarney Castle, Co. Cork

Cork

298



Thursday 1st August

Having packed all the kit up we left the campsite at Cork, and made our way to Middleton where we bought bread for lunch. Suddenly there were several soundings of a siren. Many minutes later a fire engine emerged from the fire station, lights flashing. However, they didn't seem to be in much of a hurry, waving to friends in the street as they gradually moved towards whatever emergency they were heading for. After lunch we followed the N25 to the town of Youghal where we met the V.S.L. We pressed on to Ardmore which was searched for a campsite, but in vain. As dark clouds rolled in we headed on to Dungarven, and the heavy rain began. When we set up camp eventually the tents turned out to be wet inside and so they had to be dried out. It seemed a rather luxurious site - keys to get into the toilet..

James Sargeant

(Meanwhile, Faithful Bedford van JDG 312V started to be a little temperamental. It refused to start on Thursday evening. Friday morning, the heavy rain having ceased, a rapid overhaul of the electrics was carried out, and it stirred into life, but only just. Eventually it was nursed on to the main road and raced to Waterford at speeds sometimes exceeding 25 mph. Every spark plug dealer in the town was alerted, all of whom were immensely helpful except for the fact that none of them had the right size plugs. A session cleaning the existing plugs in the middle of town attracted an interested and knowledgeable audience, and eventually all four cylinders agreed to work. Now read on.....)

Friday 2nd August

We left the site at 10.40 and set off for Waterford. Most of the journey was up hill at the start and was

quite hard riding. Everybody kept up well and the pace was fast. After two hours we reached Waterford, where having bought presents for our loved ones back home, we set off again at 3.00 pm. It was about 8 miles to the ferry across the River Barrow. On the way Stewart decided to let the ball bearings in his rear hub go for a roll along the roadside, and this held us up a little. Then we rode on to Fethard on Sea and found the V.S.L. at the campsite. After dinner we had a game of football, and at nine o'clock some of the lads went in search of a farewell jar of genuine Irish Guinness. The rest of us stayed behind to play the guitar and drink coffee, generally pretending to be hippies, whilst Jon "I'm a workaholic" Wright, finding no more washing up to do, went to sleep.

Marcus Whitmore

Saturday 3rd August

Since the shortest route from Fethard to Rosslare was only about 20 miles, it was decided that we would travel to the port via Wexford to lengthen the journey.

At 11.00 the site was vacated, and after travelling at a good pace along straight, undulating roads the cyclists made their rendez-vous at Wexford. Beside the impressive bridge we lunched in windy weather conditions with a mixture of sunshine and showers - one very heavy shower forcing everyone to race for cover as the clouds opened with a vengeance! After some last minute shopping the Unit set off on the last leg of the journey, 11 miles to Rosslare, where we found the van beside the beach.

There was quite a lot of spare time at Rosslare, so after a final meal on Irish soil the Unit endeavoured to relax on the beach, despite the strong winds. The van was repacked for the return journey, and we started to queue for the boat at 7.30.

The ferry was boarded at 9.30. After the V.S.L. had parked the van on the harbour, waiting to board, he discovered that he had locked himself out of the van

Doughal

328



Dungarban

355



Waterford

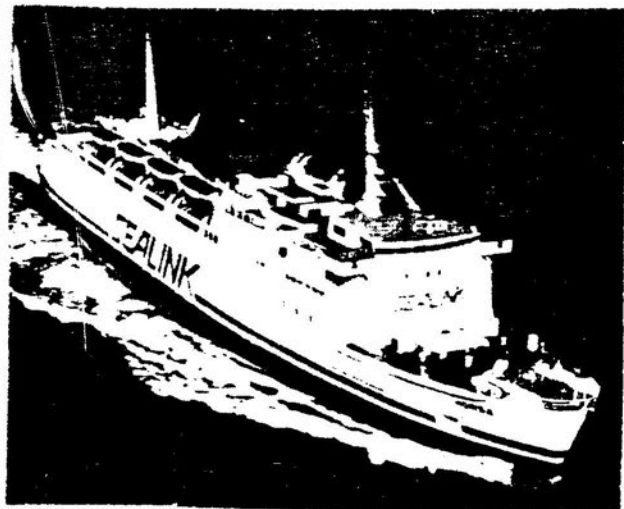
11741



Waterford crystal, one of
Ireland's most popular products
- as far as the tourists are
concerned.

Fethard

399



Kosslare

440

Seamus Scally

IN this column in our edition of Saturday, June 29, 1985, we published an article under the heading "Seamus Scally's Second Coming," accompanied by a photograph of Mr. Scally bearing the caption "Seamus Scally: Drinking Hard."

The caption to Mr. Scally's photograph should, of course, have read: "Seamus Scally: Thinking Hard."

We apologise to Mr. Scally for any distress and embarrassment caused to him by this regrettable typographical error.



and had to remove the back window in order to retrieve the keys. He assures us that it was not the first time he had had to do this, and thought that the german occupants of the car behind him thought it was an English custom (More like an Irish one...Ed)

Jon Wright.

Sunday 4th August

Does this ferry ever arrive on time? The party broke up for the last time and the cyclists headed for the train whilst the van rolled through the Customs shed. Would JDG 312 V make it to Gloucester? It did! After the trouble free drive through the wet Welsh countryside it made home at 7.30 a.m. The train party were due in about 8.30, but sleepy cyclists were deposited at Cardiff instead of Bristol Parkway, and as it was a Sunday, arrival at Gloucester was delayed until mid-day.

F.H.

COOKERY CORNER

Amongst the many culinary delights enjoyed during our stay were the following

CHILI CON CARNE a la MURPHY

Prepare Chili con Carne as usual. The only difference lies in the use of Murphys rice. Like other rice, this naturally is grown in Paddy fields... The rice grains are however larger than usual, often several inches in length. The grains need to be peeled before boiling, after which they may be mashed, or made into chips, etc....

(N.B. Attempts to make rice pudding with Murphy rice have not met with any success, and the uncooked product should not be thrown at weddings, although this is not unknown in certain areas of Kerry and Tipperary...)

KERRY MILK SHAKE

The following ingredients are needed

- * Tibetan Yak's milk, 1 pint
- * Bulgarian Aubergene, one large
- * Emu egg, hard boiled
- Guinness Extra Stout, 4 pints

Mix the ingredients in a large bowl, then strain into suitable glass vessels.

* N.B. Ingredients marked with an asterisk may be difficult to get hold of in rural Ireland, and so need not be included.

-o-

Some extracts from the newly published
GUINNESS BOOK OF LITTLE KNOWN FACTS.....

It rarely rains in Ireland in the summer....

Dave Williams prefers to ride at the back of the group, whilst Jase Stone can always be found ahead....

Irish road signs are the best in Europe.....

You can never get Jon Wright to wash up after a meal.....

The next campsite is only two miles up the road.....

Steve Clutterbuck only owns one tee shirt, and it is a plain one.....

90% of the population of Ireland is teetotal.....

Dave Wright hates Marathons, and F.H. can't abide extra stout.....

Double Yellow lines on the roadside in Ireland mean you can park two abreast.....

Stew James really loves mending punctures, and you can never get Jim Sargeant to stop talking.....

Marcus prefers his icecream made from whipped cream....

This section was not put in simply to fill up space...

PRIZE COMPETITION

This is genuine, folks. Send you answers on a postcard to the Editor, Venture 44, Sir Thomas Rich's School, Oak-lease, Gloucester by October 1st. The first three correct solutions will win the sender a pack of "Venture 44" pens.

1. Who was Wolf Tone?
2. What is Suirbheireacht Ordonais?
3. Where is Atha Cliath?
4. Who wrote "Ulysses"?
5. What was originally made from water from St James Well?
6. Where is the other half of the Blarney Stone?
7. What are the Galtys and the Knockmealdowns?
8. Who was Brian Boru.
9. In what year was the "Lusitania" sunk?
10. Whose ghost walks the streets broad and narrow?
11. What is the Ring of Kerry?
12. Who walked into an alehouse he used to frequent, and told the landlady his money was spent.
13. How do the Irish bagpipes differ from the scots?
14. Who was the Playboy of the Western World?
15. Who was the third policeman?
16. Who or what is Fianna Fail?
17. Who or what is Tuatha de Danand?
18. What did St. Patrick drive from Ireland?
19. Where is Corcaigh?
20. Where would you find a bull opposite a harp?

EPILOGUE

It is impossible to 'sum up' an event like the one you have just read about in a few lines, although such is my brief. The reader will get a flavour of the Irish expedition from the account in the preceding pages, even if consists of only a small fragment of the log that was nightly added to by the cyclists. The full unexpurgated version will be released to the public in thirty years time!

I would like to echo the editors thank-yous on page one to all the good people over the water who showed us such hospitality and friendliness - it was one of the most memorable features of the visit.

It was an expedition with a difference for me as I left the group each morning to head towards our next destination and later in the day managed to locate the small party of often wet and tired but never disheartened cyclists. It was always good to see them, too, and it was soon evident that this lot were living up to the high standards set by previous groups from the Unit. Not only did everyone get on well with one another, but they left a favourable impression wherever they went. The number of site owners and farmers who complimented us on the behaviour and camping standards should not go unmentioned.

Everyone pulled their weight, and it may seem invidious to pick out individuals, but I must say a special thankyou to acting A.V.S.L, the unflappable Jon Wright, whose presence with the group ensured that not a lot would ever go wrong. Also, Stew James, route-finder and planner and chief mechanic who ensured that the cycle wheels kept rolling in the right direction, and Steve Clutterbuck who has put in so much work on this magazine.

F.H.

