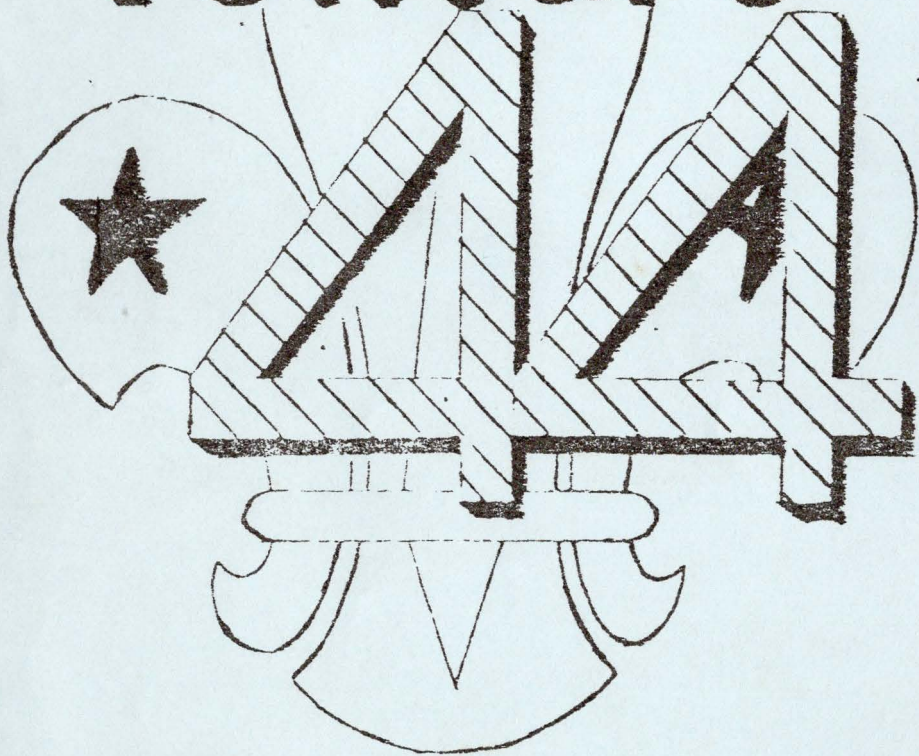


# Venture



NUMBER 61

NOVEMBER 1989



VENTURE 44. The magazine of the 44th Gloucester  
(Sir Thomas Rich's School) V.S.U.

NUMBER 61

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UNIT OFFICERS

Leaders	Frank Henderson Phil Brown Alan Quinn
Secretary	Matt Wilton
Chairman	Nick Cambridge
Treasurer	Mike Cheshire
Quartermaster	Paul Kingsbury
Instructors	Justin Sargent George Evans

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## UNIT NEWS

### The Revival. June 1989.

The story so far.....not long after the bed race in April, when the big surprise was the success of the junior team in the number 2 bed, it was decided to attempt to restart the Unit after a period of inactivity. The fateful question "Are you going to start the Venture Scouts again?" was asked by Matt Wilton, who is now our secretary, and after that enquiry it turned out that there was a small group of interested and enthusiastic people, albeit they were a little below the "official age".

It was decided to hold a series of meetings and activities so that prospective members could get an idea of what was involved in Venture Scouting S.T.R.S. style. Four people attended a preliminary meeting and a long and productive discussion took place. We were back in business, and the four quickly became eight. by the start of this term the eight had become twelve, and in these pages you will read of just a few of the activities that have been going on since the relaunch.

### The Magazine

It is now two years since the last edition of Venture 44 came out. New technology in the form of an Amstrad PCW 9512, and a state of the art Roneo duplicator means that we have an improved foremat, and it is possible that you will actually be able to read the words in this edition! Hopefully we can get back to three issues a year, and as ever we will always welcome contributions from all sources.

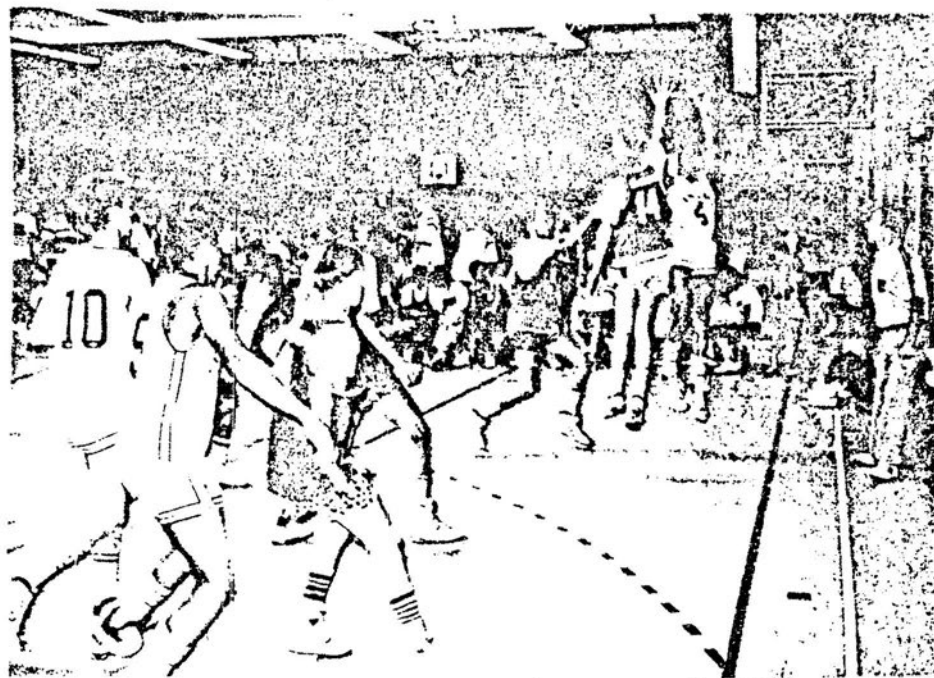
### Expedition 1990

By the time we go into print details of the 1990 expedition should have been finalised. Where are we going? Norway, where else! Another visit to N.I.C. at Krattebol is planned for a working holiday. Fund raising is going to be a necessity, and a Car boot sale will take place at the school on December 10th. Another fund raising scheme will be revealed later in the year.

### International Honour

One of the four founder members of the revitalised unit is Panji Grainger who has recently won a place in the England under 16 Basketball squad. Panji hopes to play for England early next year. Well done!

(Photo shows Panji in action in Germany)



### Hail and Farewell

We welcome to the school and the Unit Alan Quinn who has been caretaker at school since last December. Alan replaces Glyn Jones, who was always a good friend to the unit, and not only have we gained a sympathetic caretaker, but an enthusiastic leader. during the summer term we were able to start using our canoes again under the guidance of Alan, and several instructive and entertaining evenings were spent on (and in) the Avon. Alan has also provided us with a link with the Gloucester Caving club and a number of underground visits have been made, including a marathon journey to the bottom of Wigpool mine in the Forest of Dean, courtesy of the long dry summer.

We say farewell this term to Mr Heap who is retiring after seventeen years as headmaster. I am sure all members and ex-members will join me in wishing him all the best in the future, and thanking him for his tolerance of the unit during his tenure of office.

F.H.

\* \* \* \* \*

VENTURE 44 No.62

Should be published in March 1990.

Featuring: \* Report on the Raft Race \*  
 \* Black Mountains Activity \*  
 \* The United States, three  
 contrasting impressions \*

and who knows how many other interesting features? Articles, letters, art work always welcome!

### The Bed Race 1989

It was a cold spring morning when we arrived at school around 9.30 a.m. We had to load the two beds - "Blue Streak" and "Yellow Peril" - into the trailer, but not before a few minor adjustments were made. Eventually we made the beds secure and were away.

We arrived in Stonehouse at around 10 a.m. When we had found our parking place we unloaded the beds and assembled them. After all the safety checks had passed it was time to try them out - a few laps round the car park and we were raring to go. Then the V.S.L. said "Lads, would you mind helping, it won't take long". Little did we know that he wanted us to tear off all the stubs from the raffle tickets we had sold over the past months, 3000 in all. When we had finished it was almost time for the race to start, so once more round the car park and we were ready.



I was on No.2 bed - Yellow Peril - along with Matthew Wilton, Panji Grainger, and Darren Marr. The No.1 team was Steve Mitten, Simon Goodwin, and Russell Barnes, and they started three beds in front of us, which meant a 30 second start. Our main goal on No.2 bed was to beat No.1 bed.

There must have been about forty beds in all, some looking like they should be in the "Tour de France" and others which looked like they should be still in the bedroom. The race began, and we got off to a good start. It was to last for ten laps up and down the main street of Stonehouse. For about seven laps we just kept plodding along, thinking that we would not reach our goal as we were one man short. Darren had dropped out for a rest, but he was run over by another bed. (We found out later that it was our No.1 bed that had collided with him.) But then we caught sight of Blue Streak ahead of us, and eventually overhauled them. We finally overtook them by a controversial, but nevertheless skillful piece of steering by Panji. From that point we seemed to find a hidden lease of energy, and pulled away from them. By the end of the race we led them by three hundred yards. We were all very happy!

We retreated to the car park when the V.S.L. came and told us that we first in the Junior section of the race and third over all. This came as a surprise to us and at first we thought he was having us on, but we walked to the result board and found it was true - we had won! Not only was there a huge cup, but a cheque for £50 as well! What a great day it turned out to be, we had raised £300 for charity and £300 for the School swimming pool fund from the sale of raffle tickets, and returned to school with the beds as happy as ever.

Nick Cambridge



SURVIVAL NIGHT

We were told no more than that it was to be based roughly 15 miles from Gloucester. Then we jumped expectantly into the van, after being split into two teams. We guessed (wrongly) that we were heading towards the Forest of Dean.

The first team were dropped off near Oxenhall and the rest of us were taken a couple of miles up the road towards Aston Ingham. Here we stopped to ask for directions, and found that we had 'accidentally' called on ex-deputy head, Mr Winstanley. We were treated to orange squash before setting off.

"Be carefully of the paths, some can be misleading" I remember Mr Winstanley saying. No worries we thought. We followed the path shown on the map - "Yep, this is it" said Nick the navigator. After about forty minutes of fields and fences we had the feeling that we were walking in circles, and sure enough we found our selves about 200 yards from Mr Winstanley's home we had left an hour earlier.

Eventually we found the right track. everyone was a little cautious about the story of a 'man-eating' dog. Within about 1½ hours we must have been barked at, and chased by about half a dozen dogs.

Later someone piped up "Put your radio on, Matt." It was tuned in to every station with no luck. "The aerial is broken" said Matt, so I whipped out my (t)rusty penknife, pulled out all the blades and stuck the prong of a fork into the socket. By holding it over my head - perfect reception. After a while my arms tired, so other people took over.



We were an hour late when we reached our checkpoint in a spooky churchyard where we met the other team and then walked past a farm to a huge sloping field. It was now darkening.

We now had a mission, being to find all our kit using clues we had to locate. In the growing dark we had to rescue a BDH container with the clues in from the middle of a pond using only some string and any thing else we could find. We succeeded at last, and everybody volunteered to light a fire which was going well by the time all the kit had been recovered from up trees, in beds of nettles, etc.

The next task was to cook the meal, consisting of trout in tin foil and toast - the toast was not a success, but it was hungrily eaten.

It was now well past one o'clock and bivouacs had to be constructed. We had several survival bags, some string, and by using a few trees a cramped, but waterproof, shelter was put together which kept us dry during the one thunderstorm we had in June.

We woke, crumpled but refreshed from our sleep, brief as it was. After breakfast of bacon egg and mushrooms we cleared up and stumbled into the van and arrived home just in time to have the papers delivered.

Mike Cheshire

DOLGELLAU AUGUST 1989Day One

We set off from school one summers morning, a smaller group than expected, but a keen one, consisting of Matthew Wilton, Brad Salter, Mike Cheshire, Ryan Buckley and Stuart Finch. At Welshpool we stopped and jumped out, eager to stuff ourselves with chips, and claiming we had forgotten our packed lunches.

We drove on to Dolgellau and stopped beside the Creganan lakes where we walked up Pared y Cefn hir, about 1000ft high. from there we had some of the mountains in store for the trip pointed out. We set up our camp at Hafod Dywyll, near the Youth hostel.

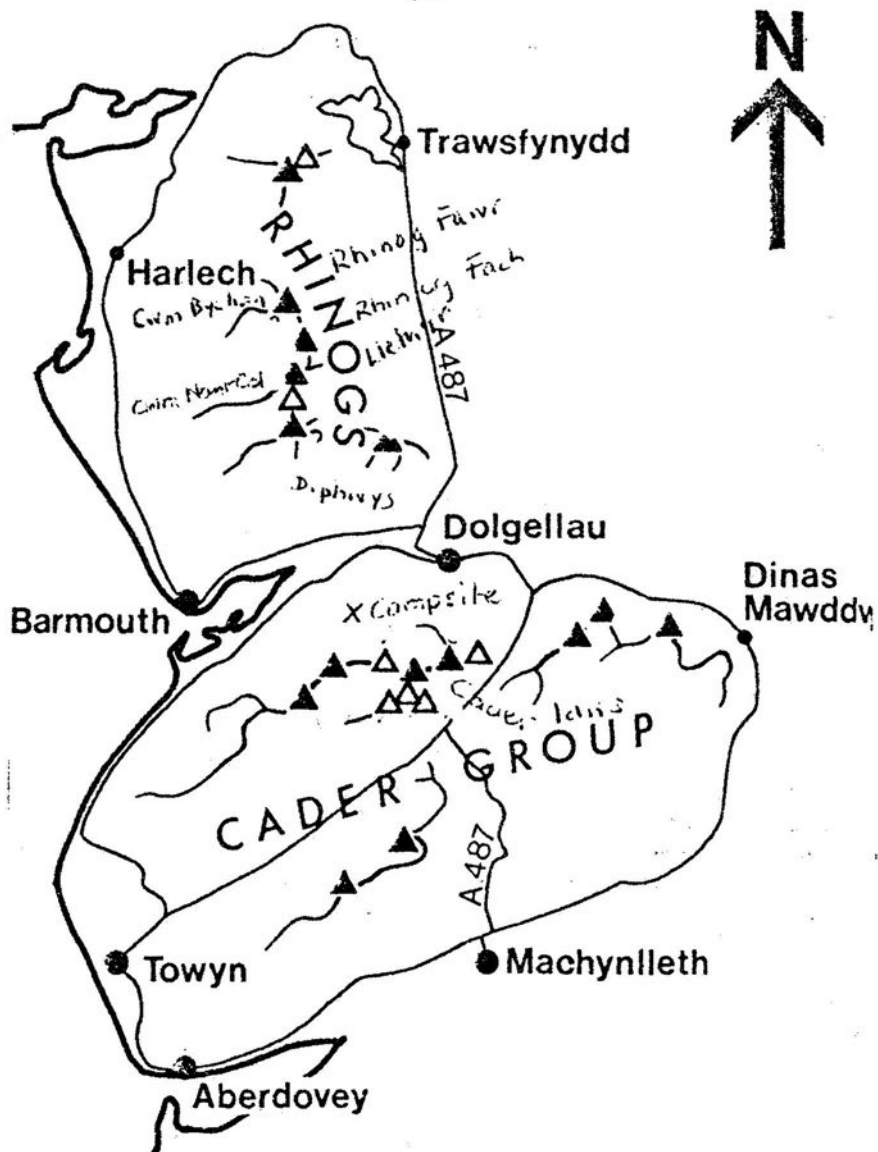
Day Two

After a good breakfast we drove up Cwm Mynach for what was to be the first taste of mountain climbing for three of our party.

we began to climb Diphwys (2462ft) via the old manganese mines where many future geologists were to show their talent for rock smashing. The views from the summit were great, and after we had returned by the same route we visited Barmouth (Abermaw) where we stocked up with Mars bars before returning to camp.

Day Three

Today was the day that we were granted the presence of ex-member Ian Fletcher. We drove to Cwm Bychan, known for it's Romam steps, and some of us asked where they were, as we had expected a beautiful stairway with hand rails, not a load of old stone slabs! We left the steps and went on to Rhinog Fawr. The mist set in and it was very windy, and wet underfoot, so lots of us got cold feet. A bee or some similar insect flew up my trouser leg, and it wasn't until it bit me on the b\*m, I realised it was there. After much



jumping about, it escaped. Luckily Ian, being a medical man, was able to deal with the emergency and no harm was done. We carried on to the summit (2362ft) and ate lunch before descending via Gloyw Llyn. Here we saw some of the rare wild goats, which we stalked on the way down. We drove on to Harlech, and then back to camp. It was raining very heavily, and because the day had started off fine we didn't bother to zip up our tents properly, so you can guess what had happened!



Day Four

We drove to Tywyn and had a go on the putting green. There was plenty of hitting, but not much putting. We then had a trip on the Tal-y-llyn railway to Nant Gwernol behind the engine "Peter Sam" (you may have heard of him, he is Thomas the Tank engine's cousin). We walked back through the woods to Abergynolwyn and drove to Minfford where we walked up into Cwn Cau, up to 1500ft on the southern slopes of Cader Idris. On our way home we stopped off in Dolgellau.

Day Five

This was the day that we were due to climb Cader Idris, the dominant mountain of the area. Brad had a terrible headache and so had to remain behind in the van. We walked to Gwernan lake, and taking it in turn to map read we went up past Llyn y Gafr to Llyn y Gader. We climbed the Foxes path up the steep scree and arrived at the top (2928ft). After a quick lunch we went on to Cyfrwy (2644ft) from where we could see our camp, and descended via the Pony track to Tynant to rejoin Brad. In the evening we visited Penmaenpwl to "see the tide coming up".

Day Six

This morning we drove to Cwm Nant Col and parked at a farm and walked up a track to yet more manganese mines. It was overcast and as we investigated various holes in the ground we got off route. Following a compass bearing we found ourselves below the rocky slopes of Rhinog Fach. A pair of peregrine falcons appeared, and Stuart announced he had dropped his asthma inhaler. We searched the scree unsuccessfully, then, after tasting the blueberries, we headed for the summit (2333ft), and sought shelter behind a wall for lunch out of the wind. We set off to the col above the Llethyr slabs when the V.S.L. told us to wait whilst he returned to find his camera which he had left at our lunch stop.

When we were together we found the steep track on to the next mountain, Llethyr. We paused to build a new cairn at a critical point on the route and then reached the peak (2475ft). The descent to the van was easy, and after a late lunch we headed back, via Barmouth.

### Day Seven

The forecast was bad, so we headed north to Porthmadog, where we indulged in more putting, although we were better than our earlier attempt in the week. Then the visit to the famous second hand record shop where we all came out with our hands laden with musical goodies. After a fish and chip dinner we had to make a run for the station to catch a train to Blaenau Ffestiniog. We rejoined the van and drove to Tan-y-Grisiau where we walked up a steep slope through a tunnel into the old slate mine in Cwm Orthin, then did a bit of climbing by a waterfall, before returning to base.

### Day Eight

We planned to climb Snowdon today, but the weather was very bad. Instead we decided to stay at low altitude and go gold panning. Enquiring at Roberts hardware store we found that a plastic gold panner cost ten pounds, so we decided to stick to enamel plates. We walked through the woods along the river Mawddach past some gold mines and started panning in the river. We found no gold, surprisingly, but did find plenty of "fools gold". We then drove to Bala and went to a cafe for a cup of tea. The knives and forks were chained down, the cups chipped, and soggy locals slurped their tea. It was beautiful... that evening we paid another visit to Penmaenpwl.

Day Nine

Raining again. We packed up our kit and left, heading south for the Alternative Technology Centre near Corris. We now know how to build a windmill, although the tea and flap-jack in the snack bar was the main attraction. Then we headed to Newtown, and on to Kington and eventually home.

Matt Wilton

## FROM ALL POINTS

We print here a few extracts from letters recently recieved from ex-members.

Twickenham  
12 Nov 89

As for news, I still keep in regular contact with Russ, Stu and Steve Grail. Russ is still with British Aerospace, and remains the same as ever. Steve has set up his own Financial Services business, and is getting along fine.

I qualified as a Chartered Accountant in July last year, and am now reaping my rewards for many hard years labour. Regular visits to the ski slopes are now made each winter, and golf courses in the summer - no badminton since University.....

Nige Brewster

\* \* \* \* \*



Bath  
Nov 89

..It's been a few hectic months for me in Bath. I was offered a post in Aberystwyth, but the hospital was a dead end, so I turned it down. Am currently awaiting news of a more senior post in Swansea - it seems a good place to settle as the prospective in-laws live there, so there should be plenty of baby sitters should there be a happy event in the next few years. I am actually plighting my troth next May...

Still hear from Dave Jerrard - he's still flogging wine in London, but I think he finds it increasingly difficult in the smoke...

Don't get up to Gloucester often now - I'm captain of the hospital soccer team and that takes a fair amount of time - having the best season ever this year.....

Jer Hobbs

\* \* \* \* \*

Huddersfield  
October 89

Glad to see that the raft race was the usual astounding success! At least they got somewhere (the bottom of the river!)

Q. Why do Skodas have heated rear windows?

A. So you can keep your hands warm when you are pushing them!

Sorry about that, I couldn't resist it! Does this mean the end of JDG 312 V as we know it?

Life in Hudderesfield is going pretty well at the moment. the Student's Union is very active and there is always something to do of an evening, but if I went to everything I'd be bank rupt by now!.....

Steve Clutterbuck

\* \* \* \* \*

Athens  
October 89

.....Anyway, I have moved to Athens to teach English to delinquent teenage Greek kids, probably until next July. It's a fairly cushy existence, although this teaching business isn't so easy at times! They have decided to give me the two most senior classes - First certificate and Proficiency -i.e. the most rampant hooligans who also have an external exam to pass. The latter standard is more or less like "O" level, with a literature section including "The Quiet American" by Graham Greene - luckily a good book

Anyway, life is quite easy with the price of alcohol refreshingly low and the weather is good - all quite idyllic. The language is a bit hard to pick up, as it's not like these latin based ones, so it's sign language and numbers up to ten at the moment. There's not too much I miss at the moment - I can even get the 'Times' or 'Guardian' late the same day, one thing I would hate to give up.....

Yosh Cowmeadow

\* \* \* \* \*

Cwmgwrach  
Nov 89

Glad to hear the Unit is active again, and I look forward to a hitec Venture 44.

You are right that the magazine keeps old members (am I old?) in touch - do you think there would be any interest in a 'meet' in a 'wilderness' area? I will co-ordinate it if you ask interested people to contact me. I would suggest somewhere in the borders - camp Friday night near a pub - a yomp on Saturday, and camp then make your own ways on Sunday.

.....We all cycle now, 2 mini mountain bike: with outriggers and us on our Saracens. We're getting the boys trained - Michael climbed Pen-y-fan at 3¼ on his own, and Jamie concentrates on eating (I think he want's to be in the Ponty-pool front row!

Steve Chalkley

And now, to fullfil a promise in V44 No 60, we publish an account by Steve of a visit made to the Alps with Row Lloyd.

#### MONT BLANC - YET ANOTHER ASCENT

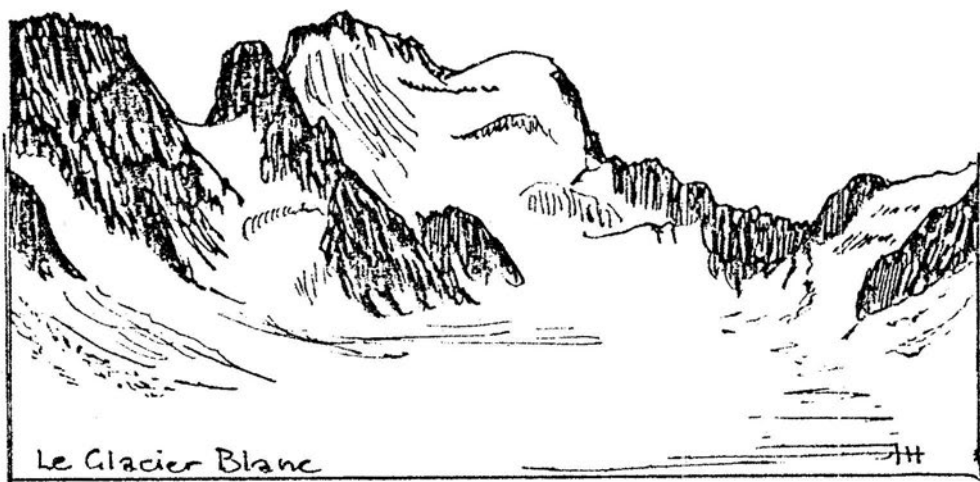
In typical style came a casual enquiry from Rowland - "Fancy a trip to the Alps next summer?" got the usual response. Later it was to be "Bl\*\*dy Chalkley, what's he got me into this time?" Anyway, the plan was set, the Alps to include an ascent of "Blonk" two hundred years to the month after the first ascent.

Wives and future wives were placated, and the old MG fully loaded for the 800 mile journey 24 hours of Autostrada and ham sandwiches later we arrived at "Cham."

Mont Blanc is a massif and has many fine ridges running off the summit all at high altitudes (the top is 15,700+ ft) and many are notched with gendarmes, each being a fine climb in it's own right. The rock is granite which is solid and uncompromising with excellent friction giving superb rock climbing. There are over 1000 routes on the massif, many classics written into the history of mountaineering. There is the Bonatti Pillar, 3000ft of vertical rock soloed by the Italian after losing his comrades on the Freney Face, and the West face of the Blatiere, first climbed by Brown and Whillans which was at the time the hardest route on the mountain.

No route can truly be said to be easy, but

the "trade route" is not technically difficult - strenuous, yes; a plod at times, yes; crowded, yes - but certainly worth doing. It is always at the mercy of the weather, and following met. reports is the name of the game in Chamonix. If it is good, the cable-cars are full. We caught the third car up, and from 6000ft we were on our own.



To avoid the crowded huts we carried a Peapod tent and a Trangia stove. that night camped at 13,000ft on the high plateau, we settled for a short night's sleep. Below us, peaks that had looked imposing earlier in the day were now mere pimples. The lights of Chamonix beckoned - cosy bars, chips! At one in the morning the first party came past, and at three we set off. A crystal sharp sky, hard frozen snow and a limpid pool of light to follow upwards.

As dawn approached ~~in a skimpy leather~~ we were on the final slope to the col and feeling the altitude, the cold wind, and singularly unappreciative of the view. It hurt from now on as superfit Froggies overtook struggling Brits.

Who cares, plod, gasp, plod, gasp....each step with crampons needs care - that's my excuse.. place the axe, gasp, step...place the axe, gasp. I didn't notice it happen really, but suddenly there was no more uphill.. Eight o'clock, photos and congratulations. Stage one complete.

We went on to complete a traverse of the summits of Mt Maudit, Mt Blanc de Tacul and Le Aiguille du Midi before our final descent, exhausted but well satisfied.

Steve Chalkley.

\* \* \* \* \*

Finally, news from Gareth Ross, still in Gloucester, who has started up in business on his own as a curry seller. Ever willing to encourage initiative we include a list of Gar's range of wares on the last page, and wish him all the best in his venture.

#### POSTSCRIPT

New technology or not it has taken a lot of time, effort, pritt, tippex, sweat, draught guinness and bad language to get this magazine together. i hope the effort was worthwhile, and that the illustrations have come out O.K. If not, sorry, we will try to do better next time. Thanks to all the contributors, and particular thanks to Matt Wilton and Mike Cheshire for, as ever, giving up their time to proof read and paste up the pages. if their are anny mistkates, we no who toblame...

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
and a  
HAPPY NEW YEAR  
to all our readers

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