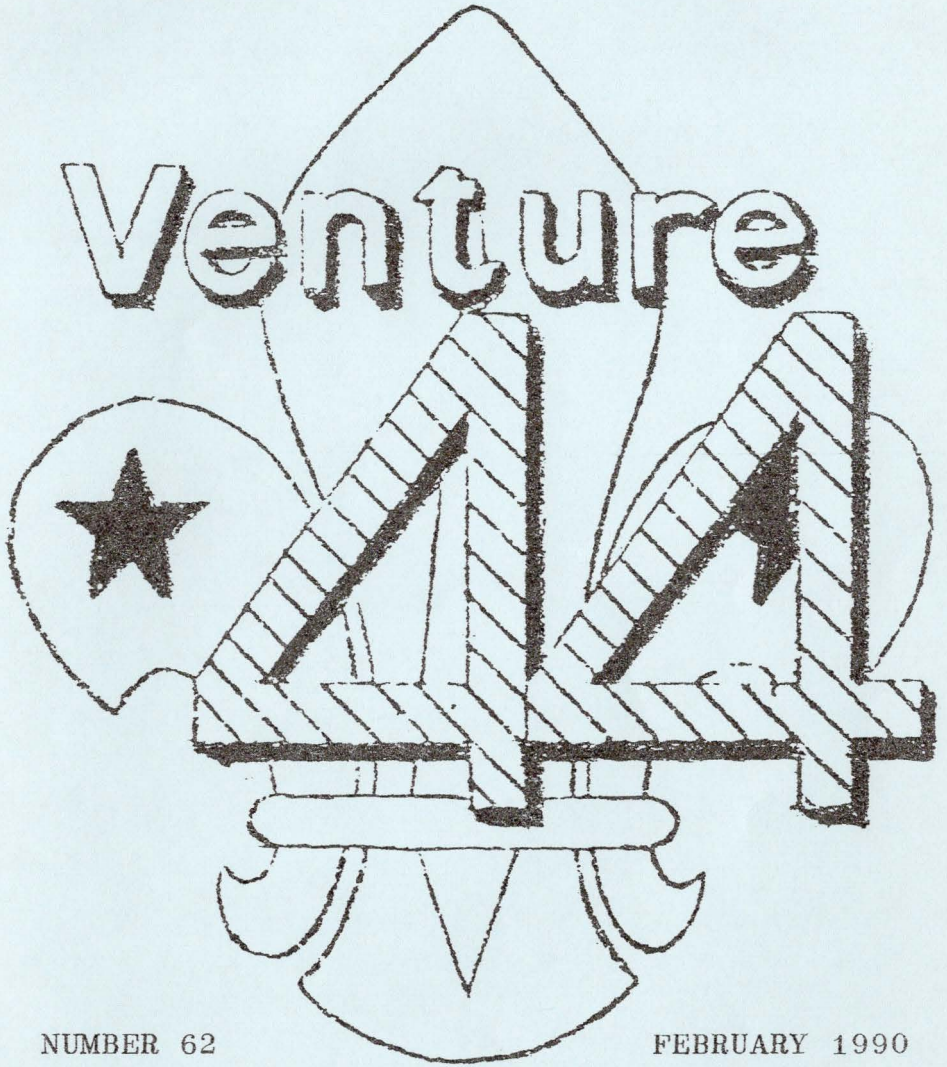


Venture



NUMBER 62

FEBRUARY 1990

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

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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
Executive	Brad Salter

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Production and Graphics for this issue

Matt

Brad

PAUL

UNIT NEWS

Despite bad weather recently (more of that later) Unit outdoor activity has continued with training for the Cotswold Marathon going on most weekends, and a tree and hedgerow planting session in deepest Herefordshire. This last activity was in cooperation with ex staff member and long time supporter of the Unit, Graham Middleton, now an active conservationalist in his new domain.

With the revival of interest in caving the ancient and often unreliable acetylene burning caving lamps (stinkies) have been brought out of hiding and repaired and refurbished. They do add an element of adventure and uncertainty to caving trips that is lacking with electric lamps

Indoor activities have included an introduction to the art of carpet bowls. Tony Allcock and David Bryant have nothing to fear, however as getting the bowls to stay on the carpet proved a major achievement, let alone getting near the Jack!

Since the last issue, Panji Grainger has played for England under 15s at basketball, against Wales, and at the time that this is being printed he is off to play against Holland. Other sporting honours to Nick Cambridge who has played hockey for the county under 16s. Rumours that Paul Kingsbury and Ryan Buckley will be in the Ryder Cup team later in the year are thought to be exaggerated

APOLOGY

The quality of the illustrations in Issue 61 left much to be desired, and in this issue we have taken steps to try to overcome this problem which should produce better results. Particular apologies to our own England Basketball player, Panji, who was rather badly done by! We hope that the illustrations in this issue are better!

WETAHER

(A bad spell of weather...)

Just before Christmas high winds and heavy rain struck the city, causing some structural damage, but we were little prepared for the bad weather at the end of January in and around Gloucester.

On thursday 25th the V.S.L., chairman and secretary set off to collect a gas heater from the hut. Luckily we went via Hempstead and just avoided being trapped in Southgate St when masonry started to crash down onto the road. At MacIntyre Caravans we were advised to park in what little shelter there was as caravans had been blown about in the yard that day. From the office high waves were seen surging up the canal which was closed to traffic. Spray blowing off the waves indicated a Force 9 gale on the Beaufort scale. In the shelter of Sharpness dock a docker was sea sick whilst unloading a vessel! Fences and trees were uprooted all over the county and two deaths occurred. On the roads a number of large lorries were blown over



During the next week the river rose rapidly and the Worcester and Tewksbury areas suffered. In the Gloucester area the usual riverside sites were inundated, Haw Bridge, Wainlodes, etc. By midweek Plock Court was awash and on Saturday everyone in Gloucester was waiting to see if the river would rise over the Quay. As it was it missed by a few inches, but all the low lying land in the Vale of Gloucester was under muddy water, in some places moving at great speed. On the Maismore road torrents rushed off the fields and some houses were flooded on Alney Island. The R.S.P.C.A. had craft out pulling live stock to safety

The Sandhust area suffered, but fortunately friends and relations in that locality were cut off for a day or so but not flooded. Boats travelling along Sandhurst Lane found the water rushing through the northern bypass bridge a hazard, but in nearby fields windsurfers and jet skiers were having great fun. At one point on Saturday the A417, the A438 and the A38 and many other roads were all closed and the experts looked back to 1947 for a comparable situation. In fact the river was 13 ft above normal this time compared with 14 ft then, the worst flooding on record.

On Sunday a working party off to plant trees at Breadwardine had a chance to look at the Wye in Herefordshire and see that although the river was high there was no flooding to compare with that in the Gloucester area.

Well, so we SAW it, but what did we DO? What could we do? Well, as scouts we were prepared to help if needed, but fortunately the situation was under control and was handled by the authorities effectively.

What we could and should be prepared to do in emergencies like this is

Offer help to other voluntary bodies in activities such as cleaning out property of people who have suffered in the floods

Offer to erect fencing for elderly or disabled folk where storm damage has occurred.

Offer to cut down and cut up trees of moderate size damaged in storms.

These are all things the Unit is equipped for and has done in the past. What we should not do, and no scouts should ever do, is try to take on tasks for which we are not trained and have no experience. Dramatic rescue bids and the like are the province of the properly trained experts and not the overenthusiastic amateur.

F.H.,M.W.



IN THE SWIM

After several years off it was decided to take the plunge and have a go at the District Swimming Gala. December arrived and on a wet wednesday afternoon a small group of potential Adrian Moorhouses set off to Barton pool to see if they could remember how to swim. Pity the pool had been drained...Under the supervision of George Evans, who has a part time job as a life guard at the Leisure centre an hour was spent in small pool, and George selected a team of himself, Nick Cambridge, Matt Wilton, and Adrian Knight.

Entries were duly made, and forgotten until the week before, and on the thursday, Adrian had a damaged arm after a rugby match, Nick had an injured foot after the same match and Matt was gloomily predicting shame and disaster. Quick changes were made, and Brad Salter joined the team with Mark Baker as reserve.

Saturday night, two days after the great storm, and the wind and rain were back, but not only did the team materialise, but three intrepid supporters in the form of Mike Cheshire Paul Kingsbury and Stu Finch braved the inclement weather, and we headed for the Leisure Centre

As happened before the Venture Scout part of the Gala was reorganised due to the non-appearance of a team and a two hour wait until event 39 had to be endured. George pointed out around the pool a number of Gloucester Swimming club stars, and Matt's fears of humiliation resurfaced. However, Nostradamus got it wrong this time. George competed first in the Free style, and in a very close finish he just missed second place. In the Breast stroke Matt made a great start but another close finish resulted in third again. Nick fared better in the Back stroke with a convincing second. The Medly relay saw the three of them back to finish second, and we were then upgraded when the first past the post were disqualified, giving the 44th the race. The Free style relay saw Brad joining the team and in yet another very close finish third place was recorded.

So the no hoppers, including three 15 year olds, (from a school with no swimming pool!) in their first competitive event finished up second out of six teams. An encouraging start to 1990.

THE TRANSATLANTIC EXPERIENCE PART ONE

It had taken us three whole days and nights on the road to get us to Florida from London in Ontario. My family and I stood in the scorching Florida sun waiting in a mile long queue to get our tickets to the Disney World Magic Kingdom. I had begun to wonder whether it was worth the big hassle and the three agonisingly uncomfortable days in the van. I guessed that it would be another 10 to 15 minutes till we got our tickets and the heat was just so hot. I stood looking beyond the Micky Mouse gates before me at all the people with their shades and bermuda shorts moving from one amusement to another, wondering if I would ever get there. Standing there waiting was like being in a sauna, and I almost wished I was back home. This was not my idea of fun.

We finally did get in and paused for a quick look at the guide book to see wher to go first. I decided it was time for a large, cold coke. another 10 minute wait. I soon realised that if I wanted to see anything in Disney World I'd have to get used to a lot of queueing!

As time went on I started to enjoy myself on all the various attractions and rides. I marvelled at their use of the latest technology, especially in the robots. I also loved the tours

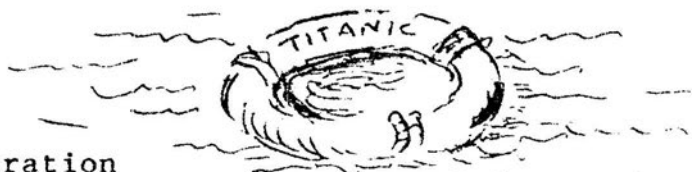
showing how such films as "Honey, I shrunk the kids" were made. There was never a dull moment, and I even began to enjoy the hot weather. I was not looking forward to the day that we had to leave Florida and all the fun of Disney World where, after all, I finally got to shake Micky Mouse's hand. Yes, despite the heat, Florida was real COOL.... See you next year Micky!

SAM LAZAR

Part two of this series to be printed in the next edition describes a journey into the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

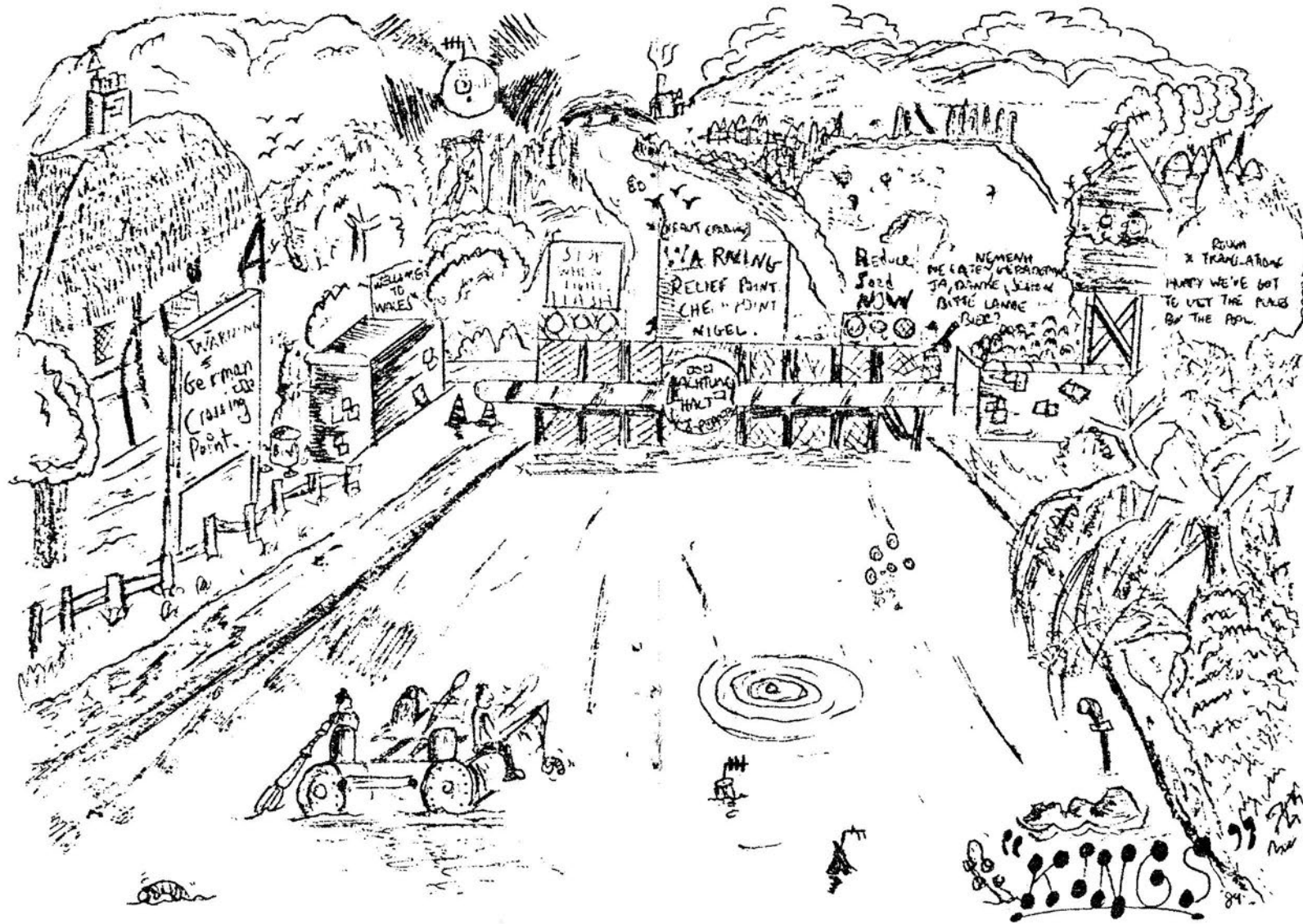
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RAFT RACE



Preparation

There were two teams of four rafters from the Unit entered. The first, consisting of Ade Knight, Brad Salter, Matt Wilton and myself were going on a raft that had been previously raced, so had some chance of finishing. the second team of Ryan Buckley, Mark Baker, Mike Cheshire and Derek Gabb were in charge of a purely "touch and go" craft, unsullied in its lifetime by H₂O! (Thanks here to ex-member Dave Williams of A.B.M Chemicals who arranged for us to obtain some big blue barrels for the new raft)



Many lunch times were spent preparing the rafts, strengthening joints, and attaching luxurious plastic seats from old school chairs. These were (a) a comfort feature,

and (b) a safety feature, since the army surplus screws were painful to sit on! Pieces of carpet added a final touch. Despite all our preparation, the day before the race saw much to be done. Matt and I decided to paint the raft black (matt black, off course) as we only had black paint. I must confess I was rather impressed by the menacing gothic appearance, but alas it was only for a raft race.

The Day

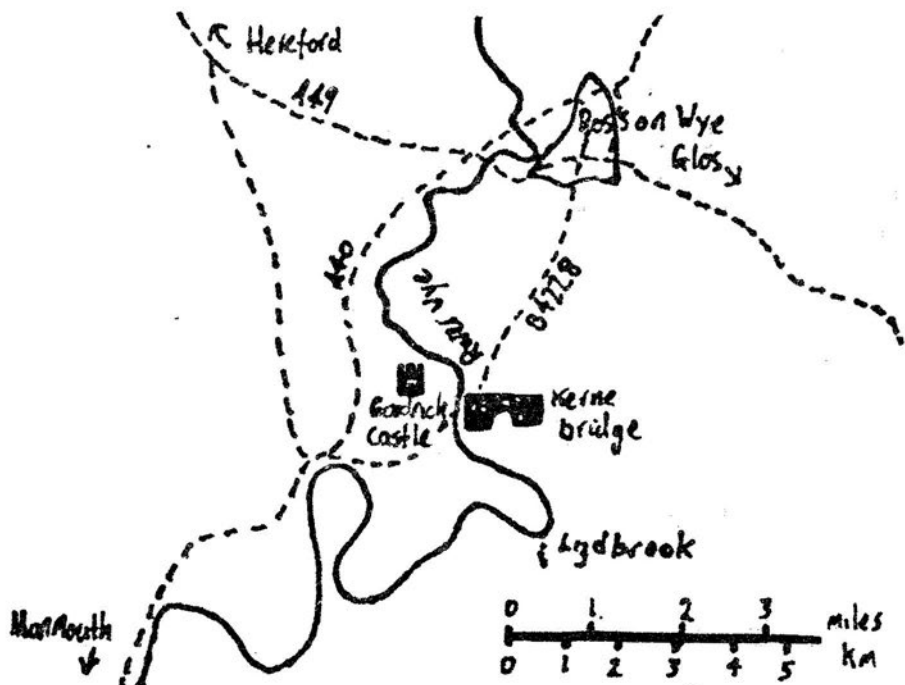
During my morning paper round I thought of the coming event. I arrived at 9.34 a.m., four minutes late expecting every body to be ready to go but no, a certain person (M*k* Ch*sh*r*) whom I wont name was AWOL, prompting questions such as 1) Had he bottled out at the last moment, terrified by the adventure that might lie ahead?

2) Had his brain become unhinged by the thoughtof impending disaster?

3) Had he overslept?

We never learned the truth, but we dragged Mike out and set off in the "Dorm". We exchanged many comments on the journey, but the e was no apparent rivalry between the crews. When we arrived at a car park by the river we had to hurry from the word go. It appeared that every rope was loose and work was done until we were called to the start. We cast a look over other rafts, including one with a toilet, and a segmented acid house raft, which were then fused together to make a giant raft, which was ordered

off the river by marshals. Our raft seemed very heavy, probably because of the amount of food stored away. as we felt the cold water touching our dry skin, I thought THIS IS IT, MEN! Armed with our (Maxi)Preece built paddles, designed(?) by F.H., we lined up next to our other crew, and we were off.



Keeping up with the leaders - for a while - we left the others for dead. We developed an energy economic, ozone friendly, co-ordinated rowing technique, and watched other rafts going further ahead. Using our smooth rhythmic propulsion we tried to catch one raft ahead, but diaster was ahead.....

The ship wreck

I will try to explain how I remember the hours of labour and painstaking endeavour came to grief;

1) Our raft went aground just after Kerne bridge. There seemed to be some damage on one corner and my seat seemed loose.

2) An unnamed person (Ade) said it would be O.K. and so I climbed on.

3) The raft split down the middle. None of us realised the seriousness of the situation, and our initial reaction was laughter, until the bits keeled over and there were thick planks with 6 inch "army screws" swinging around everywhere. Brad was lucky to avoid a nasty cut.

4) The water was suddenly deep and fast, and we clung to the wreckage and got no help from an unfriendly canoeing marshal. Luckily a passing non-scout canoeist helped and we got the wreck to the shore and dragged it up the steep bank, through dense stinging nettles.

We were all disappointed, especially Matt and I, and felt that we should have tried to finish with one half of the raft - even now I think we could have!

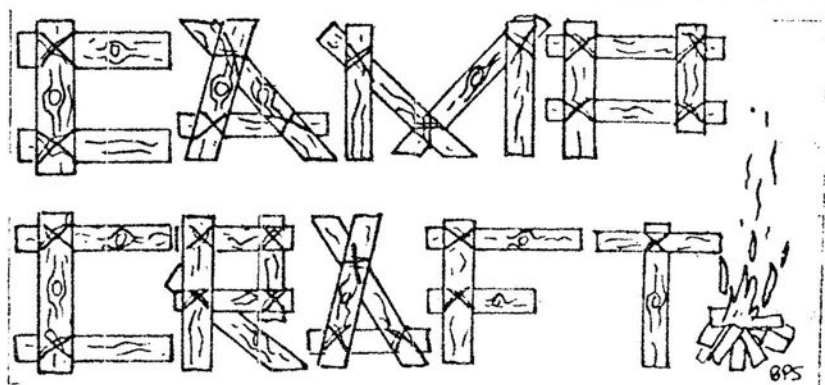
At the Finish

We were lucky to have supporters at Kerne Bridge and we were driven down to the finish by Phil and Mr Wilton.

It was a long wait before the other team came into sight. They were slow, but they FINISHED which was the main objective! We expected some stick from them, but surprisingly we didn't get it, probably due to them being very fatigued. They provided some entertainment by running aground just before the finish, and

Mike showed his determination to keep his feet dry. It ended with lil' ol' Ryan Buckley having to drag the raft to the bank whilst the others watched. After eating some hamburgers we loaded up the van and went to collect the wrecked raft, then back to school, and then home, to tell my family all about it. Looking back on it I think I will remember it for a long time, but I can't wait for this years race, and will be even more determined to finish!

Paul Kingsbury



CAMP CRAFT

I enjoy reading about survival skills, and like putting them into practice, and consider a knowledge of these skills to be a valuable asset for an individual. Also, as I am a Venture Scout it should always come in useful.

An activity that all Venture Scouts should participate in is camping, so I thought it would be appropriate to write this article.

(N.B. A lot of the following information is for use only in an emergency)

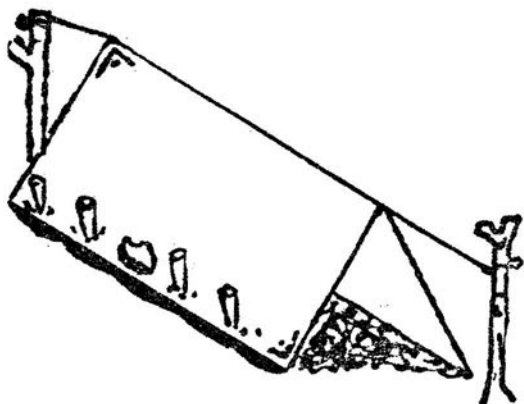
When you think of camping you think about shelter, and in a survival situation you can improvise many different types, e.g. a bough shelter.

Chopped trunk,
(or blown down)



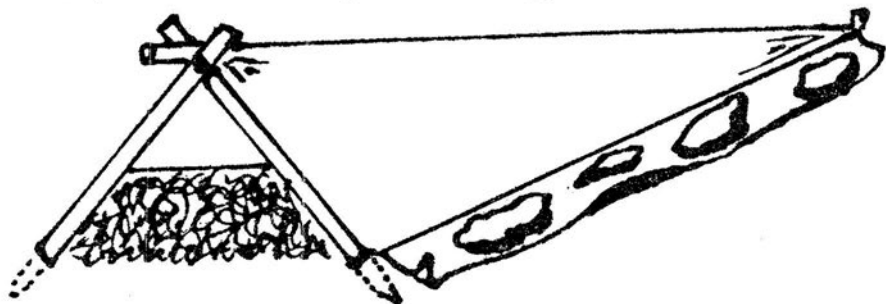
As in the diagram the best type of tree for this is a conifer. the branches sweep down towards the ground and an opening can be formed by climbing inside and pushing the branches back. To improve the density and waterproofing of the shelter it is a good idea to interweave the branches.

If you are carrying some kind of ground sheet or survival bag then a number of shelters can be constructed.



This type is useful when there is hardly any wood around. Notice the DRY grass/bracken - NEVER lie on cold or damp ground

Another very simple shelter can provide a waterproof covering for a night.



In any survival situation it is always a good idea to improvise as much as you can, and also conserve what ever you have got. When you have a warm fire burning it is ideal to erect a wooden screen behind the fire or light your fire in front of a large rock to reflect as much heat as possible into your shelter, thus conserving energy, and making you warmer.

Brad Salter

IN THE NEXT ISSUE another article on the survival theme by Brad will be featured.

ALSO an account of a how four Venture Scouts planted 293 trees on a conservation project.

AND the story of the November visit to Hay on Wye will eventually appear in print

PLUS many more interesting items - we hope!

NUMBER 63 should be out in early April.

FROM ALL POINTS

News this time from the far north where ALAN ROBBINS runs a thriving forestry business.. We print here sme extracts from a letter from Al reputedly one of only two he intends to write t5his year, so we are greatly honoured!

Great to hear that the 44th is up and running again. hope it all goes well and that you end up with an enthusiastic bunch who appreciate all the effort etc...

We (the business) have never been so busy which is both good and bad - don't sem to have time to do much outside work these days. The house, being old, is soaking up time and ever increasing amounts of money (new roof this spring). However work does get me out into the hills, albeit relatively low down, and forests so I don't lack an appreciation of the aesthetic values of the countryside. Of course we are for ever being blamed for scarring the landscape, either by felling mature trees that folk consider shouldn't be felled, or by planting up areas that they consider shouldn't have trees on them. Anyway, if recent news is anything to go by we should move down to Gloucestershire with some 3½ million trees blown down a few days ago!Needless to say, if you are planning an expeditionary force to the frozen north (of the U.K.) we've got a great paddock for hardy campers....

Yours Aye, Alan.

From the salt mines of Winsford in Cheshire we learn that IAIN WEIR has tied the knot in October and we wish all the best to the new Mr and Mrs Weir.

Also recent news from NIGEL BREWSTER who has also become engaged - congratulations to Carla and Nige, who has also changed job and is now Finance Director at Letheby and Christopher Ltd (Hospitality caterers).

Also changing jobs recently, PAT PHILLIPS, who has now become General Manager of a distribution and warehousing company based in Heston (no more 4.00 a.m. 'phone calls to do a milk round, says Pat).

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In our previous edition mention was made of the supporters 100 Club, set up to raise money to help support the Unit's major expeditions such as this summer's visit to Norway. There has been a minor problem with this but it has been sorted out and the scheme will go ahead. However we could still do with a few more participants, so if you haven't applied to join yet, please do so - £12 a years subscription.

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In the next issue an article on mountain biking is planned, together with a "WHICH" type report based on the experiences of Unit members who own bikes of various makes. If any ex-members have anecdotes or cautionary tales please send them in by mid March.

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