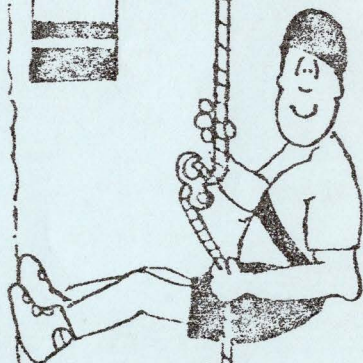
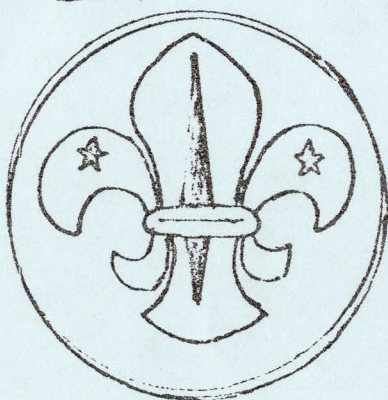


# VENTURE

# 44



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NUMBER

63



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

NUMBER 63

APRIL 1990

UNIT OFFICERS

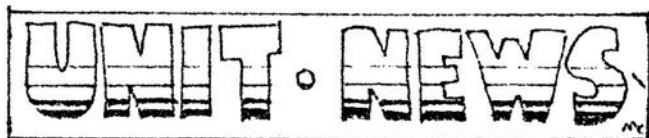
|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Leaders       | Frank Henderson |
|               | Phil Brown      |
|               | Alan Quinn      |
| Secretary     | Matt Wilton     |
| Chairman      | Nick Cambridge  |
| Treasurer     | Mike Cheshire   |
| Quartermaster | Paul Kingsbury  |
| Executive     | Brad Salter     |

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Production and Graphics for this issue

~~MIKE~~ PAUL Matt Brad. Nick


 A stylized logo for 'UNIT NEWS' enclosed in a rectangular border. The letters are blocky and outlined, with horizontal lines running through them. A small 'NY' is visible in the bottom right corner of the logo.

It must come as a shock to many of our regular readers to see another V44 so soon after the last one, but the material has been coming in, so we have been able to put this issue out earlier than planned.

The Unit has been fairly busy recently and reports on several activities appear in these pages. The Cotswold Marathon provided more evidence, if it were needed, of the enthusiasm of post-Peristroika Venture scouting. Tree planting has been balanced by some tree felling, but environmentalists will be pleased to learn it is 296 up to 7 down at present. We took to the ice at Swindon a few weeks ago, and in an attempt to demonstrate that cerebral activities are within the scope of venture scouts we entered a quiz competition and finished third out of 27 teams. More of that next issue, but it gives the lie to the story of the earwig which reputedly crept into a certain members ear to eat his brain, and died of malnutrition...

We recently played host to a District Venture Scout meeting. The attendance was poor, and we have received no response to a challenge to other Units to an indoor bowls tournament. Is anybody out there??

Back at home a county council report on the school has identified certain problems with the Scout Hut and has "recommended" the appropriate action - demolition! Luckily, as somebody will have to be paid to do it, this has not become a major problem yet, but it is something to think about!

WET AND WINDY WALES

When I turned up at the hut one gloomy tuesday morning in late October it was deserted. Then one by one others turned up, and a (new) clean van was loaded up and we set of for a 3½ day stay in a caravan near Hay on Wye.

After everyone had turned his hand to "spanking the plank" on the V.S.L.'s guitar we arrived at our destination. From the outside and from within our accomodation looked more than respectable, the only black mark was the presence of masses of dead flies.

Once unloaded we set off again for a gentle six mile stroll along a section of Offas Dyke to Kington. Leaving the map in my (un)capable hands we set off in the pleasant sunlight. The conversation among the party seemed to consist mainly of slagging off each others taste in music. I am glad to say there were no "S.A.W." supporters - maybe there is some hope for todays youth after all! We met the V.S.L. on Bradnor Hill and returned to base.

After the meal there was some card playing and some reluctant singing (the word "singing" is used loosely). During the night there were several outbreaks of G.B.H. as members thought it a good idea to attack one another without any cause, seemingly all night long.

The next day we were joined by Mr Kellie. As the weather was bad we decided on a low level activity, and set off via Brecon to Ystradfellte where we walked along the side of the River Mellte. The river flowed over and through the limestone producing an interesting landscape (at least to one geographer/geologist) of waterfalls and caves. the highlight of the day for most of

the party was walking behind the largest waterfall a la Blue Peter. The bulk of the party found a route to Penderyn where we were met eventually by the Bedford. Back at last at base, another meal, prepared by inexperienced Venture Scouts but nevertheless quite acceptable was followed by more cards, more forced singing, and more G.B.H.

The next day saw the weather turn from bad to worse, with low cloud, and heavy rain. Despite this we set out to climb Rhos Dirion, over 2200 ft. Even at the bottom of the hill the wind reached gale force and drove the stinging rain into our unprotected faces. Undeterred we tackled the track, which was quite exposed and the wind threatened to pluck us off the mountain side. On the top we did our best to get lost in the mist and bogs, but the V.S.L. came to our rescue and we reached the summit and quickly headed back, wet through, for another night of cards, singing, and G.B.H....

Next morning we decided to beat an early retreat, having been advised by the farmer that a flood alert had been given out at 6 a.m. We walked down the field to view the swollen river. Not a patch on recent floods, but enough to see us off. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the V.S.L. for organising the trip and the younger generation of venture scouts for making it such fun. Cheers

JUSTIN SARGENT

## BED RACE DRAW

1ST PRIZE £250 \* 2ND PRIZE. £100 \* 3RD PRIZE. £50

Draw will take place in the High Street, Stonehouse  
on Sunday, 6th May, 1990

**RACE STARTS AT 4.00 P.M.**

*Proceeds to: National Child Birth Trust,  
Special Children's Adventure Playground and other local Charities.*



We arrived at Murray Hall an hour before our start time and went straight to the kit check. I opened up my rucksack, and after dragging out the hoards of pasties, Mars bars and lucozade we eventually found the sleeping bag but then the checker had the cheek to ask if I'd got any emergency food! All the kit approved and then after much confusion we found the V.S. start, and were off at 1729.

We left Murray Hall, and not having practised this section of the route, we hadn't the foggiest where to go. We decided to trail a another team, but they were only going to the toilet, so I was reluctantly forced to get the map out so close to home.

We proceeded up and over Robinswood Hill and were worried when coming off the hill every one was going left when the map said clearly right. We trusted the other walkers rather than our map reading skills, but later found out that each way was equally correct.

Walking on through Hucclecote, we were over taken by a man clutching the most delicious smelling chinese take-away. If only I could have persuaded him to walk ahead of us all the way our time may have been quicker, and just one taste of his prawn balls would have done wonders for the lads.

We arrived at Brown Lodge to be greeted by Churchdown V.S.U. and were asked if we were scouts, cubs or beavers, because of our youthful good looks. We're Ventures, we said irritably,

and we were later to find out that we were to be asked the same question at every checkpoint. On through Badgeworth, and a stop at the foot of Greenway for Mike to change footwear. As we stopped everyone behind us stopped, and it became obvious that they were just following us!

C.P.7 was in an old army base where they were handing out hot chocolate. I told the lads only to drink squash so that we could get a move on, but Mike, who will remain nameless, took the hot drink. Unfortunately as we left Mike's drink was accidentally knocked over a hedge...

On to Elkstone where we were greeted by people telling us how well we had done, and that we should sit down and get some rest. It was then we realised that this was the scout finish, and of course they thought we were scouts! We corrected them and were off.

Informers had suggested that the next stretch of road was long and tedious, and boy, were they right. Near the junction by Gaskell's Farm two teams walking in our vicinity took a right turn instead of an obvious left. They vanished into the darkness and we never saw them again, but to tell the truth the route was so boring that we didn't care a monkeys.

On the next leg we got even more cheesed off so we switched into trance drive and plodded on. Brad tried to raise morale with one of his very long jokes, but we just wanted to club him to death when he gave the appalling punch line.

We were still cheesed off when we arrived at Bisley, the point where many people give in, but we were fit to carry on, and suddenly felt better about the whole thing. at Bull's Cross we met up with Frank and Justin Sargent. Justin, an experienced marathon walker, walked with us from



there. Again I had to drag the lads away from the C.P. tent where hot dogs were being cooked!

Walking down Pincot Lane we remembered an old tyre which we had strategically placed on one of the practise walk to have a laugh with but none of us could be bothered, so it was left for next year.

Up by the Edgemoor Inn we were warmly greeted by two fellow walkers lying in the road in survival bags, shining torches in our eyes. We, after 30 miles, in our own sweet way told them where to get off!

From Edge it was a knee breaking downhill for a long time, but we knew the end was near so we kept going. Then Nass Farm and sunrise as we walked on through Tuffley.

My God! We'd done it! 13 hours 45 minutes may not be a good time, but it was our first attempt and we were the youngest team ever to complete the full marathon!

Matt Wilton

-o-



MARATHON  
FOOTNOTE

Congratulations to the gallant team from the 44th who completed this arduous event. It shows

that even inexperienced walkers can make the grade with the right spirit and determination. Full marks to Brad, Paul and Mike, and of course the chief whip, Matt.

Incidentally, it is interesting to look at the results of 10 years ago: First in 7 hours 13 min P. Champion, D.Brown, 44th Glos: Best Novice team I.Weir, S.Bishop, P.Phillips, 44th Glos, Veterans trophy, F.Henderson.....

Our mission...

To penetrate deepest Herefordshire and to plant 300 trees...

Our squad

Paul Kingsbury (P.R.A.T)

Mike Cheshire (L.A.T.E.)

Matt Wilton (H.U.N.K.)

Stu Finch ( where can I start?)

This crack set of commandos, and Mike, set out one cold winter's morning after the usual comment, "Where's \*\*\*\*?"- "Oh! He had homework!" we set off for our destination. the house was set back in idyllic surroundings perfect for an am..bush. Ha, ha, I hear you chuckle. A bearded man stepped forward, could this be our contact,  $y=x^2$  was the first words mentioned - it was our ex physics teacher Mr Graham Middleton. "Hi sir" cried Mike, who was smartly ripped from the van and beaten repeated around the head "Ah" said Mr M. "Just like the old times!"

We were split into two groups, one to plant a hedge of hawthorn, beech and oak, and the other to plant a small copse of hazel and sweet chestnut in an attempt to return the hillside to what it looked like 200 years ago. It was very hard work and no thanks to yet another ex staff member in the form of Andy Pearce, but he did make a good cup of tea and helped Mrs Middleton cook the lunch.

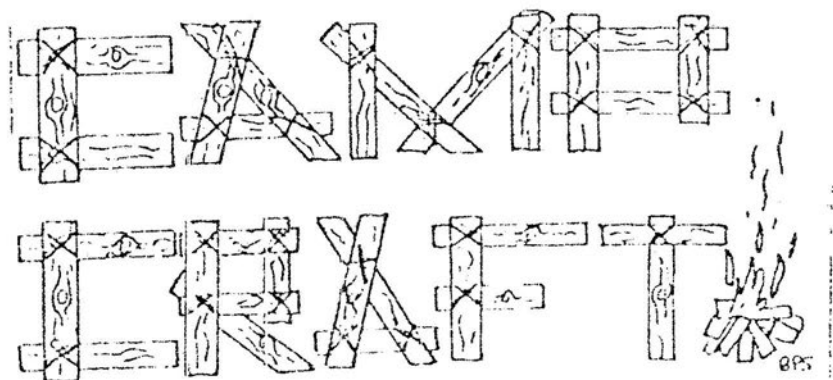
The big bang was yet to come, as someone had left muddy footprints on the courtyard. The name "Cheshire" was bellowed and echoed round the hills of Herefordshire, and he was grabbed



in a South Bavarian headlock and bundled into the house to be force fed with bangers and beans

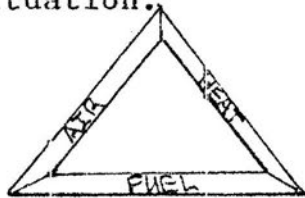
Many secrets were leaked over the dinner tables on the running of the Physics department in the "old days" before we went back to work. After about 3 more hours and plenty of eyes being kept on that cheshire kid the task was finished. 296 trees was the final score, and we felt that we had done our bit for conservation.

Stu Finch



## FIRE

This is the essential to survival. It provides warmth, protection, a means of signalling, boils water, and cooks and preserves food. You must be able to light a fire in any situation.



This is the fire triangle. The three sides represent AIR, HEAT and FUEL. If any of these are removed the triangle collapses and the fire goes out

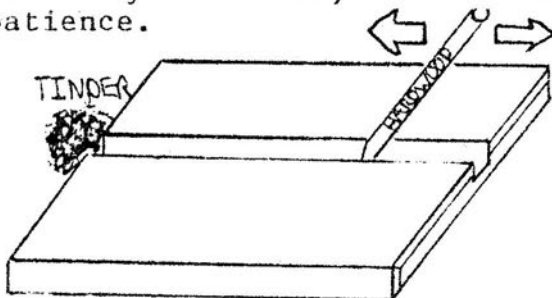
When lighting a fire in windy conditions it is a good idea to dig a trench to shield the fire. It is always a good idea to carry some tinder round with you in a waterproof box. The tinder must be dry and fine enough to catch alight with a small spark from a flint or a battery... when you planning a fire, making "fire sticks" will help a great deal. These are made by making shallow cuts on a stick. This "feathers" the stick so allowing it to ignite more easily.

The best readily available fuels are hard woods which burn well and give great heat and will last a long time. i.e. keep the fire going through the night. Animal droppings also make excellent smokeless fuel and are definitely readily available. Smokeless fuels can help repel flies and mosquitoes, and smoke may attract attention.

To light a fire it is best to make a bed of fine tinder and a wigwam of sticks above. When this is burning add larger sticks and logs.

Lighting can be done with a magnifying glass focussing the rays of the sun on tinder. Try to make the spot of light as small as you can. Blow gently on the tinder when it starts to glow.

A "Fire plough" is another method which works by friction, and takes a great deal of patience.



Rub the hardwood plough up and down the groove vigorously which will produce its own tinder and eventually it is going to ignite.



I am sure that the V.S.L. knows that it is very dangerous to surround fires with porous rocks because the moisture in the rock will expand quicker than the stone causing an explosion sending lethal slivers of rock flying through the air!

I hope that you will not need to use some of these skills ever, but as all scouts know, it is always best to BE PREPARED.

Brad Salter

THE TRANSATLANTIC EXPERIENCE PART TWO

GO HIKE THE CANYON - AND HAVE A NICE DAY!

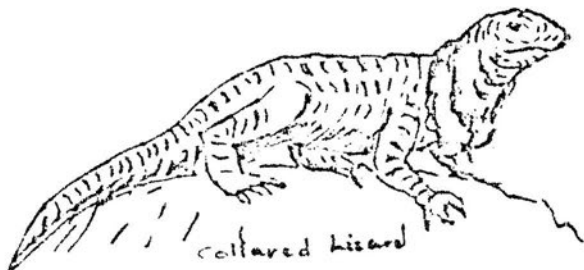


We had been five days on the road in our Ford Thunderbird. From Denver, Colorado, the route took us up to 12,000 ft as we crossed the Rockies and on to the the spectacular scenery and geology of Dinosaur National Monument in the Green River badlands. We marvelled at the bizarre landforms of the Zion and Bryce National Parks in Utah before heading south to Arizona. It was nearly sunset when we eventually reached our prebooked campsite on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. As the darkness gathered we looked across this vast gash in the high flat plateau, home of the Navajo indians.

It was impossible to take in the enormity of it all. That night whilst a hearty meal was being consumed at Bright Angel Lodge, plans were made for the morrow when we intended to do the fifteen mile journey to the floor of the canyon and back.

Before dawn we were preparing for our hike. At an altitude of 6900 ft it was cold at 6.a.m., although by midday it would be well over 100°F. Just after seven we set off down the Bright Angel trail, each carrying a gallon of water, as advised. There were four of us intrepid English folk, two male and two female, all of us experienced walkers, but this was no ordinary hike. The route was not difficult, descending in zigzags hewn out of the towering rock walls for about 3½ miles. Shelters at regular intervals were provided with water supplies, but we eschewed these temptations and carried on to the flattish ground at Indian gardens. Here a water course provided moisture for succulent vegetation, and large prickley pear cacti and Yucca fringed the sandy track.

From Indian Gardens only the brave venture on. For two miles the route follows the course of a "bad water" creek before reaching the most spectacular part of the descent, where the track is at its narrowest down the Devil's corkscrew. An evil looking collared lizard stood in our way



at one point, but vanished before I could get my camera out. We were now but a mile from the mighty Colorado. It was three hours after leaving the rim that the final bend was rounded and the river lay before us.

We scrambled over rocks too hot for comfort to the edge of the water. Despite the air temperature of over 100°F, the fast flowing muddy water was icy cold. We paused for a quick lunch, and summoned our energy for the journey back. At this point it should be mentioned that most who get this far follow the river for two miles and cross to Phantom Ranch where they pass the night before returning. We Brits, however, were going up on the same day.

The ascent ahead of us was 4500ft, a little higher than Ben Nevis. We were tired from our descent and the unrelenting heat - it was going to be hard work! We were by no means the only people about and at one point fell in with a girl who had just finished a raft trip down the river. She had a loaded rucksack, and despite our slow and deliberate pace she soon fell behind us. Above the Corkscrew a "mule train" of tourists was encountered taking the easy(?) way down - they looked as tired as us!

Just before Indian Gardens a change in the weather occurred. After eight weeks of drought a storm was brewing. The sky darkened and above the great wall of the canyon lightning flickered. The strange gloom and the weird whistling of the ground squirrels in the great amphitheatre we had entered created an eerie atmosphere. Fear of sunstroke was replaced by a more acute general unease. We took a long rest on the plateau before setting off on the final climb. Progress was slow as one of the ladies

was suffering from severe cramp whilst I was totally exhausted. The last two miles were sheer hell but eventually we made it, ten hours after we had left. For the next two hours I could do nothing but lie in the tent, listening to the evening chorus of frogs and insects, but after a steak and an iced beer later that evening I could look back on a day that I will remember for a long, long time!

F.H.

-o-



May I take this chance to thank all our loyal ex-members and friends who are supporting the Unit by joining the 100 Club. If you haven't yet joined, there are still vacancies but you will miss the first draw due on April 1st.

Whilst on fund-raising the Annual Bed Race will soon be upon us, and I am sorry to say that yet ANOTHER begging letter will accompany this issue.....

We feature this time items from two folk who have been frequent contributors in the past and would be delighted to receive more such articles for subsequent issues.

Just room here to report that it is now all official, SIMON HAWKINS is getting married this May. I look forward to the happy day where doubtless a bit of a 44th reunion will take place, but where on earth is Llangeinor? F.H.



FROM RICH'S TO RAGS

I blame Frank Henderson

No sooner had I made tentative inquiries about joining the Venture scout unit than I found out why it is called the 44th - it's only on the 44th time of asking that you get a Unit member to cough up his promised magazine article (including this one!)

Fifteen years later I find myself still chasing writers and deadlines. No longer as editor of V. 44 but as chief sub-editor of the Oxford Mail, the tabloid evening newspaper for Oxfordshire. Admittedly the deadlines are now several times daily and the subject matter is from the whole globe rather than just the VS/STRS world.

But the principles, pressures - and pleasures - are largely the same. [The pay's a bit better mind you, but I miss the Bowls Club perks....]

I recall painstakingly setting up my father's manual typewriter to produce stories to exactly the width required for V44's format, retyping whole pages if necessary - leaving undone French essays for Mr Cutting. I blamed Frank. Glue, staples and good-natured cajoling from the VSL got V44 out to its readers.

My appetite was whetted (back to the Bowls Club)

From there I went on to edit the Richian and a rag mag designed to raise funds for the replacement STRS minibus - both with talented VS colleague Tim Sargeant. Called Headbanger and illustrated by a silhouette headmaster being hammered into the ground, the rag mag was a fore runner of the Sunday Sport in terms of good taste, prompting the then German master Tim Saluveer to return immediately the copy bought by his young son at the bus fete. Glue, letraset and a still patient Mr Cutting got it out to its readers.

'Publish and be damned?' We did, we were - and I blamed Frank Henderson.

University followed in the form of a history degree at Nottingham. On arrival I threw myself into the production of the fortnightly student union tabloid newspaper, editing it for two years. Threats, beer, many late nights and a very understanding Derbyshire printing firm got the paper out to its readers.

But it was very nearly history as far as staying on my course was concerned. My tutors blamed the paper for my poor attendance. I blamed Frank.

Too bad, my appetite was by now well and truly sloshed.

From college I graduated to Thomson Regional Newspapers and a reporter's job with the Evening Gazette based in Middlesbrough - after I had checked the road atlas to see which coast the

town was on....

I stayed for six years, covering everything from lost cats to Royal visits, marriages to murders, I even worked for The Sun out of Wapping, spending many cold hours 'doorstepping' the then girl friend of Prince Andrew, to no avail. I blamed Frank.

My last two years at Middlesbrough were as a sub editor, a journalist who alters and puts headlines on reporters' stories to the length and style decided by the chief sub.

And that's wot I is now, at Oxford.

From typewriters and glue, I have moved over the years to the most advanced editorial system in the UK - full colour personal computers upon which my staff of 11 can reduce news stories to the exact style that I require at the touch of a few buttons.

Most of the 'traditional' printing crafts have gone, the computers now producing stories on sheets of bromide paper which then needs only to be cut up and reassembled to a page scheme designed by my department.

From the STRS duplicator I have moved to a huge printing press producing thousands of copies of the Oxford Mail every hour, featuring colour photos taken just minutes before.

But not much has changed really.

The challenge of having to fill every blank

page, the non-stop chasing of contributors to produce copy on time, the constant ticking away of the clock - yes, time does go faster as you near deadlines! - plus the creativity that that adrenalin-laced cocktail produces, all are common to all of the above publications.

As is the thrill of seeing in print something that you alone thought of, wrote and had published. from Venture 44 to the local 'rag', it's the same.

And I still thank Frank.

#### ROB DALTON

Footnote: Rob left STRS and Gloucester in 1979. He now lives in Oxford with his teacher wife Louise, daughter Holly (2) and son Ben (7 mnths)

-o

#### AS EASY AS SHELLING PEAS

Half way through Sunday lunch my brother reported a leg was showing, and the dining room quickly emptied, leaving a somewhat bewildered great aunt behind. Wellingtons (not green) were hurriedly donned and off we trooped to the distant maternity shed. We arrived in time to see the lamb, by then half way out literally be 'dropped' as its mother decided it was time to stand up.

Meanwhile Jane was whispering words of encouragement and trying to get the ewe to breath in time with the contractions! Whilst all

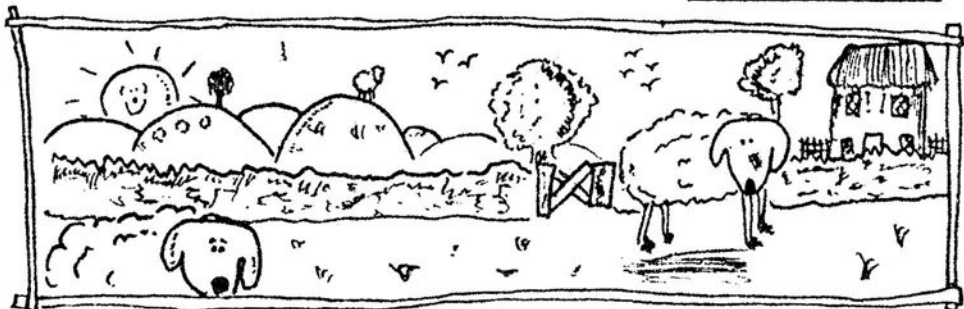
this was going on, ward 10 (fourth pen from the door) was in the throws of a more difficult labour. Rather than adopting the conventional head first position, the lamb chose feet first and head well back. In true James Herriot style my father rolled up his sleeves and readjusted the lamb. Now where was the chap from Allied Dunbar?

It was then time to return to Christmas pudding and custard...

A couple of hours later Rob rushed into the kitchen with a small black lamb, wrapped in a towel. It was the twin of the second lamb born an hour or so before being discovered, and was suffering from the cold. The intensive care unit sprang into action, a well oiled machine with all the latest facilities. First the extensive towelling down and the hair drier to get the circulation going. then a quick squirt of ewes milk before the incubator (in fact the cool oven of the Aga) Someone did mention it was a 'taste' of things to come!

The present tally is 31 lambs from 22 ewes and only another 25 ewes to give birth. Selective breeding was introduced into this years proceedings; the smaller ewes were mated with Arthur, the shorter ram, since taller Berts lambs had long legs causing complications at birth last year!

PHIL CHAMPION



## LOST, STOLEN OR STRAYED.

Information is required as to the whereabouts of the four young persons depicted below. Last seen at about 6.00 a.m. one Sunday morning in Tuffley area of Gloucester. If found please return to S.T.R.S., or at least please return the reflective bandoliers as they are needed for the Cotswold marathon next year....



Next Issue due out in late May/ early June.  
 Featuring. \* BED RACE \* \* MOUNTAIN BIKES\*  
                   \* SKI-ING IN AUSTRIA \*  
                   \* PLAYING BASKETBALL FOR ENGLAND\*  
 Contributions by May 10th, if possible.



