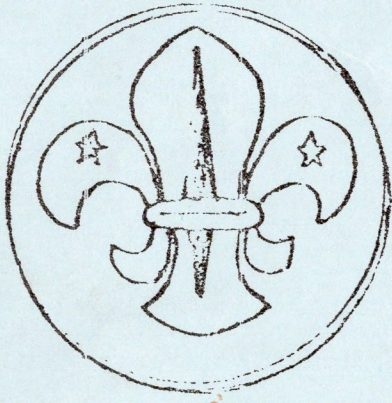


VENTURE

44



Mike

NUMBER

64

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

NUMBER 64

JUNE 1990

UNIT OFFICERS

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

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UNIT NEWS

We welcome first of all two new members, Simon (Sam) Cambridge, our chairman's brother, and James Newman, both of whom are joining in our activities with enthusiasm. We hope they are the first of many new members.

We have been quite active recently with several service tasks including tree felling and hedge trimming. Canoeing on the Avon again has proved popular, and we have purchased another canadian canoe and plan to build yet another! Climbing at Murray Hall and Cleeve Hill has been well supported and more challenging climbs are now sought.

A team from the Unit entered a Survival exercise one cold winters weekend, competing against other Units from the county. It was very interesting, but things didn't quite go to the organisers plan.....On another day a team took part in an orienteering competition on Robins wood Hill and both enjoyed and won it!

There have been two trips to the mountains, one to the Highlands of Scotland where the party camped in the back garden of ex member Alan Robbins - thanks, Al - and one to North Wales. Accounts of these will appear in the forthcoming edition.

As of the next issue I am taking over as editor, although there is no competition, I will undertake the task with hopefully some new ideas whilst still maintaining the traditional quality that you, the readers, have come to expect in Venture 44. The success of a magazine like this is not just the responsibility of the editor. but is in the hands of those who contribute, so please make my job a little easier by keeping the articles rolling in!

PAUL KINGSBURY

MY FIRST INTERNATIONAL

It was Friday 19th of January, nine o'clock and the day of my very first international for the E.S.B.B.A. (English School's Basketball Association). I had just arrived at the Oldham Sports Centre where, with other team members, I got to see for the first time the court that we were to play on. The court was surrounded on both sides with seating for a thousand people.

When the coaching staff turned up (half an hour late) for practice the northern England coach, John Grant, informed us that 800 tickets for the game had been sold! Then the training programme began, and we had an easy session because of the late arrival of the coaches. It started with the usual warming up and stretching and then basketball skills of passing, dribbling and shooting. After this session we were then presented with our international tie and T shirt. After a shower we went to lunch that had been prepared at a local school.

During lunch nervous tension started to build up and I couldn't wait until the game started. Meanwhile, back at the Sports Centre the crowd was starting to build up for the start at 2.30 p.m.

At last the meal was over and we set off for the match against Wales. Back at the Centre we got changed into the kit that team manager Paul Hambly had neatly laid out. After our warm up and briefing by Rick Wooldrige, the head coach, we were ready to go. Fifteen minutes to tip off (the start of the game) and out we went on to the court. You could feel the crowd lift you. The team proceeded with the final pre-game warm up drill. There followed a photo session and the introduction of the players.

After this the game was started and in the first five minutes we took the lead through the

big men Richard Whitehouse and Neil Sams, the local boy. Then the moment came, and the coach beckoned me on. We increased the lead as Wales seemed unable to put the ball through the hoop. I came off with five minutes to go in the half and Wales closed the gap to 20 points at the interval. We went off into a back room where we were briefed on the half by Rick and his assistants, and they also told us of the plan for the second half.

We started strongly and played well in the opening five minutes and managed to keep the points gap between the two teams constant, and so the game drew to a close. After the game there were drinks supplied by Wimpey, who had sponsored the game. Then we showered and changed and enjoyed a meal put on by the school catering services, and speeches from the mayor of Oldham and the two captains. We were presented with our international medals, and bid our farewells to team mates, and looked forward to the next chance to represent our country.

Panji Grainger



EAT YOUR HEART OUT, MAGNUS MAGNUSSON.

I wish I had read some more "Ladybird books" in my dummy sucking days instead of "Mister Men" books (fine literature indeed, I do declare!) Anyway, there was this Parent's Association Quiz night, and being supportive Venture scouts we thought we'd enter a team. However, I don't think it was a good idea to have me in the team, let alone Nick and Matt (no offence, lads) but we gladly accepted the invitation with much enthusiasm.

The event took place in the school hall, and as we entered there was a definite air of intellectual distinction about. Our team contained three Venture scouts plus Phil Brown, Dave Wilton and the V.S.L., a well balanced group with obvious academic quality. We sat down and laid out our liquid refreshment, a large bottle of coke and some wine. Our fare seemed austere compared with some of the other tables which included such ostentatious items as a four litre container of Southern hemisphere tropical fruit squeeze, and a crate of Budweiser low alcohol, low palatability fluid. Nevertheless, we knew it was intellect needed, not pompous irrelevance.

Eventually we were handed two sheets - one showing various photographs of sportsmen and politicians etc who we had to identify, and the other had a list of subjects ranging from Sport to Geography to NAGMRSAA (ANAGRAMS). In addition we also had a "Joker" card which we could play once to double our points on that round. We fastidiously chose to play it near the end, most likely on General Knowledge.

After the first couple of rounds we were doing well and were near the top, but a certain team called the "Western Railway" had an impressive lead. A third form team continually cheered when they claimed to have a question right, but

they still had a score inferior to ours. Other blemishes on the night included insurgent remarks shouted at the poor old question master.

In the interval, or for you poets, the mid brain ache break, sandwiches were perpetually given out by P.A. members, consumption of which did little to ease the tremendous mental stress engulfing our craniums. The second half started with us in a not-so-good not-so-bad position and we had the joker yet to play. As the third form team betrayed their inexperience and grew to be flippant, we rationally played our joker on the General knowledge, but we failed miserably. We should have played it on Anagrams and antonyms, which was the last round in which we did well. We waited with bated breath for the results to appear on the O.H.P. and found we had come third and a mere two points from being second to the Western Railway professionals. We felt quite elated after an evening I had enjoyed very much!

PAUL KINGSBURY

-o-

SUMMER EXPEDITION 1990

In a few short weeks a small group from the Unit will be setting off to familiar hunting ground in Eastern Norway. We will be working for N.I.C. at Krattebol and exploring some of the country around both in canoes and on mountain bikes.

The next but one issue of VENTURE 44 will be devoted to an account of our adventures, and I am sure that the three dozen or so ex-members who have memories of Norwegian experiences will look forward to the latest chapter in the story.

BED RACE 1990

It was a hot summer's day as the thirty or so teams for mthe 1990 Stonehouse Bed race arrived to prepare their trusty steeds for the long torid dual that lay ahead.

There was not only the competition for all the runners but the personal battle against the other crew from the 44th. My team consisted of myself, co-pilot Brad Salter and Wing commander Simon Cambridge who came in as a very very late replacement for Ryan Buckley who had just come out of hospital.

The race started amidst some confusion largely caused by a rogue Mellor Finn bed, and it was at a very fast pace for the first few exhausting laps. Our steed, the famous "Blue Streak", was overtaken by the other 44th bed "Yellow Peril". It was crewed by Matt Wilton, Nick Cambridge and Panji Grainger, the team that did so well last year.

Our team tactics were to change driver every two laps just after the turn, but alas many a change over proved to be very slow and lost us valuable time, although providing a bit of excitement for the large crowd of watchers.

By lap 5, Yellow Peril had taken the lead and we were fourth, so the charge was mounted, with the Streak moving into third place. Speed was now picking up, and on the next lap we were up to second place, not far behind our other crew. We continued the chase, but to no avail. We forced ourselves to within half a lap of Yellow Peril, but by then we were on the last lap. The last $\frac{1}{4}$ lap was a killer after covering 10 miles up and down the high Street. the end was nigh, what joy, what relief, as we crossed the finishing line.

Yellow Peril had finished the course in a staggering 48 minutes 21 seconds, a record for

any 44th bed and seconds outside the all time record for the course. All this in oppressive heat. Blue Streak, after a fast final lap finished second in just over 51 minutes - three minutes faster than when it won 3 years ago.

Mark Baker

Congratulations to Mark. Brad and Simon for their performance - considering the team was only assembled a few hours before the race and they had had no practice with the bed it was a great effort. As for Matt, Nick and Panji they proved conclusively that their success last year was no fluke. It was a great shame, therefore, that our local newspaper, "The Citizen", chose to ignore their achievement. A report was sent but was not printed. Some photos of other beds were however printed together with a feature which included an interview with a member of the so called "winning" adult team. No mention of the actual first and second placed beds. we did fare a little better in the Stroud Paper which included a photo of Yellow Peril and crew, but no report on the race itself.

Following the success at Stonehouse we have entered our two superbeds in yet another event, this time at the Cattle Market at Gloucester on SUNDAY, JULY 15th. This is being run by the Gloucester Severn Rotary Club. Raffle tickets will be sold on the usual basis, and this time we will be donating our 50% to the School Pool fund.

Any ex-members who missed out on buying tickets for the May event can still support the cause by ordering books (£1 each) for this event from the usual source!

DON'T FORGET - SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BED!!
SUNDAY 15th JULY GLoucester CATTLE MARKET

Which Mountain Bike



We all thought it would be a good idea, as most of us own mountain bikes, to write a sort of consumer guide. It was decided to take the following into consideration when assessing each

- i) Make and model.
- ii) Cost when new.
- iii) Shop bought from.
- iv) Personal comments.

We've tried not to be biased, even though my bike is the best by far....Now, alphabetically..

OWNER: Steve Chalkley (Ex member)
BIKE: SARACEN TUFF TRAX
SUPPLIER: No information
LIST PRICE: £299

OWNERS REPORT: A revelation after my first solid but reliable Raleigh Maverick. The Shinamno Exage equipment is superb. The indexed selector means one click finds the right gear every time - important if you are charging down a bank with an uphill ahead. A warning to any



one who does put a bike through the rough stuff, and mine goes under water often, up to the hubs in black peat, gets Old Red Sandstone ground in to the chain etc - when the man in the shop says the bearings are sealed and need not be cleaned-**HE'S LYING!** Bearings do need regular greasing. Also keep a check on the headstock bearings as they have a habit of coming loose. Remember, your bike takes more hammer, and needs more maintenance than a road bike.

OWNER: Mike Cheshire
 BIKE: RALEIGH CAJUN
 SUPPLIER: Noah's Ark, Stroud.
 LIST PRICE: £340
 OWNERS REPORT: I picked my bike from a selection (all Raleighs). I chose the Cajun or rather it was chosen for me as there was a considerable price reduction as it is a 23 in frame. Luckily I'm a big lad so there is no problem. I part exchanged my old racer to help pay for it.



OWNER: Stu Finch
 BIKE: SPECIALIZED ROCKHOPPER SPORT
 SUPPLIER: Chicken Rock, Cheltenham
 LIST PRICE: £430
 OWNERS REPORT: Very pleased with this bike, and there have been no problems with it at all.

OWNER: Derek Gabb
 BIKE: CARRERA KRAKATOA
 SUPPLIER: Halfords Gloucester
 LIST PRICE: £280
 OWNERS REPORT: I thought it was good bike for the price and it had a good write up in one of Matt's magazines. It is sturdy, and I liked the bright colours. I think that the saddle is too big and uncomfortable, but I have had no real problems with it.



OWNER: Frank Henderson
 BIKE: DAWES ROCKY TRAIL
 SUPPLIER: Williams & Co, Cheltenham
 LIST PRICE: £352
 OWNERS REPORT: I went for Dawes out of "brand loyalty", and I got it from a



firm with a good reputation. I am pleased with it as it rides very well and has been no trouble. It is used generally off road, as I prefer my road bike for normal use. I have had problems on long, steep descents when wrists take a pounding and brake control is difficult, and I'm not too sure of the value of "Biopace" chain system. However, it has served me well for over a year now.

OWNER: Paul Kingsbury
 BIKE: RALEIGH MARAUDER
 SUPPLIER: Mitchell Cycles Gloucester
 LIST PRICE: £150
 OWNERS REPORT



A good, simple, straight forward bike which suits my needs. More a "town and country" bike, not an out and out all terrain machine. Nothing has gone wrong with it. I have one little complaint, about the sponge hand grips - they are useless, especially in the wet.

OWNER: Jason Stone
 BIKE: SPECIALIZED STUMPHOPPER
 SUPPLIER: Bike Tech, Cheltenham.
 LIST PRICE: c £700
 OWNERS REPORT



This is an expensive bike and, of course it turns heads, as many so called "mountain bikers" are snobs more concerned with the price rather than the off road performance. I find it robust and reliable off track, and the gears are good, but too low for long distances on road. Two useful accessories are toeclips which help you control the bike on bumpy ground - but there is a problem if your foot gets out and you have to get it back in! - and mudguards which keep

the mud off you in bad conditions. I don't think the "Biopace" system is anything other than a gimmick.

OWNER: Matt Wilton
 BIKE: SARACEN TUFF TRAX
 SUPPLIER: Halfords Cheltenham
 LIST PRICE: £370

OWNERS REPORT: I chose it because it seemed to be the best I could get for the price. I'd ridden a Saracen and liked the feel of it. I must also admit (I am ashamed) I chose it for it's good looks. When I first got it home I excitedly jumped on



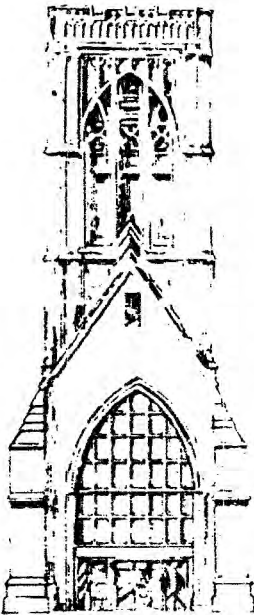
and set off, but got no further than the end of the road before the chain broke! We took it back next day and Halfords gave me a free lock, and, of course fixed it within half an hour. Since then I have had no trouble and have been very satisfied with its performance.

It is impossible to summarise all this, but here are a few final thoughts.

- * When you buy a mountain bike, you gets what you pays for....
- * Mountain bikes are fun...
- * If you have paid a lot for your bike, make sure you buy a good lock AND insure your bike, AND get it post-coded....
- * Look after your bike, and it will look after you...
- * Buy a reputable make from a reputable dealer..

MATT WILTON

LOCAL NEWS



As most of our readers live away from Gloucester, we will from time to time publish items of topical interest related to our beloved and ancient city. The report below is an exclusive from our roving reporter who has just leapt from his mud caked mountain bike, lit his trusty ozone friendly meerschaum, played a Scarlatti sonata upon his Cremona banjo, and mused over...

THE CASE OF THE VANISHING CANAL.

On the morning of Friday 15th of June the staff of the National Waterways Museum at Gloucester Docks were horrified to find one of their star attractions, steam dredger No.4, upside down and full of water. The cost of righting her is an estimated £20,000. But other strange events were also affecting the canal a few miles south.

The roof of a brick built culvert below the canal near Epney had collapsed, and water rushed out into a ditch and on to surrounding fields, which are at a lower level than the canal bed at this point. Your intrepid reporter set off on Saturday to view the scene, and like many other Severnsiders peddled past the "Road closed" notices to reach Parkend Bridge near Moreton Valence. Here a large crane was tipping tons of clay into the water north of the leaky Parkend lock gate to arrest the flow.

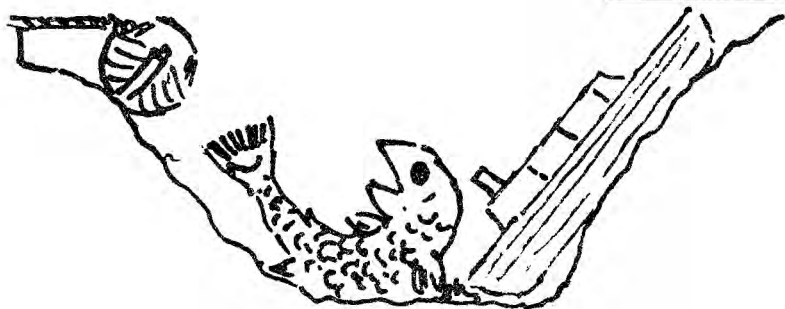
To the south of the bridge the canal was but a few feet deep, and a sluggish whirlpool in the muddy water indicated the position of the hole which had hastily been plugged up by bales

of hay etc. I looked in vain for the statutory Dutch boy with his finger in the hole but was told by a Waterways official that he had gone to watch England v Holland in the World Cup. I wondered whether looking at muddy water slowly going down a hole wasn't more interesting....

Nets had been strung across the canal, presumably to prevent loss of fish, and men with ladders and a boat were building a temporary barrier to the south of the hole. I followed the towpath along the two mile stretch towards the junction with the Stroudwater canal. Quite a crowd here were watching a barge mounted crane bobbing about in the water whilst dumping clay behind yet another leaky gate. Near the junction there was a an array of pleasure boats and two Waterways barges leaning at crazy angles on the steeply sloping muddy banks of the almost empty canal. Many fish - some of considerable size - could be seen, giving the lie to the popular theory that the largest fish between Gloucester and Sharpness is 2½ inches long...

It is expected that the problem will be solved and the canal back in action by the end of August, but anyone planning to come up to the city by water in the next few months will need to bring their wellies.

Saul Bridge





A few weeks ago I set off for a grand tour of South Wales, where I came across a number of ex members.

Friday night was spent in Bridgend at the home of Rowland and Moira Lloyd, after a visit to a convenient local inn to sample the "cwrw da" Row is now working at a

field centre in Porthcawl, and next morning we wandered along the beach at Ogmere Vale to admire some of the geology on his patch.

It was another ex-geology student who provided the main reason for my foray across the border, and leaving Bridgend I headed for the little hill-top church of Llangeinor for the wedding of Simon Hawkins and fiance Catherine. It was an excellent occasion in every way, and at the reception the quality of the food was matched only by that of the company.

There were four smartly turned out ushers at the wedding, two of Simon's friends from Kent and Brian Herbert and Dave Wilson. Now Dave and Bri are not noted for their height, so when I say that one of the Kent ushers was over 6 ft 7, the reader can imagine the contrast!

After the reception I headed west and north to Glyn Neath and up some narrow roads to Cwm Gwrach to locate Steve and Denise Chalkley and their rapidly growing family. It was a pleasant surprise to also see Steve's parents who were visiting the grandchildren that weekend. Now both retired they are shortly moving to Cheddar

Other news of ex members who have been in touch recently, Iain Weir is changing jobs and will be working for a Finnish firm based in

Helsinki, a city he hopes to be visiting in the near future.

John Wright, sighted recently on a weekend visit home, has moved from Brighton to Reading, and Ian Fletcher has managed to arrange his holidays so that he can join the Unit on this summer's visit to Norway.

The lucky winner in the Supporters Club draw this month is Dave Barnes. The winner in the May draw was Mrs Valerie Calvert. There is still an opportunity to join the club, the fee being £1 a month or £12 a year.

THE TRANSATLANTIC EXPERIENCE PART THREE

THE ACADEMICS TALE

TAKE
PRIDE IN
AMERICA

Department of Mathematics
Room 2-342
Massachusetts Institute
of Technology.
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge
MA 02139

7 April 90.

....so I thought I'd jot down a few things that passed through my mind on a wet and windy New England evening...

I guess the best place to start must be of course to point out that the States is a land of extremes: from the arid heat of Death Valley, Southern California to the snowy tops of Colorado to the lushness of the Vermont landscape; from Los Angeles and the glitter of

Hollywood to the dirt and danger of the South Bronx, New York; from the Kansas farmer to the Texan oilman; the Idaho potato to the Florida orange.

In the West the first thing I learnt was that California is called the golden state because the grass is so parched it's golden brown. Made up of two halves - San Francisco and the Bay area (Napa valley, golden gate bridge, the 49ers and Joe Montana, U.C.Berkeley, Stanford and the Silicon valley...) very nice and a mite more civilised than Southern California and L.A. (Hollywood, beaches, Disneyland, UCLA, Caltech, more beaches, and a lot of smog). Everything is more than thirty minutes away by car. perhaps the cultural high point of L.A. is Stan's donuts just outside of UCLA - ever tried peanut butter donuts? - Stan's your man! Tommy's burgers are also world famous - chiliburgers served in the most downtrodden shacks you can find - lots of sauce as only Tommy knows how, and lots of mess! Life in L.A. consists of trying to be beautiful in every sense of the word, and for the average person who isn't, artificiality is inevitable. San Diego is much more civilised and also more sophisticated (UCSD, America's Cup base, Scripps Oceanographic Institute and a world famous zoo). I should say some words about Palm Springs, but I won't, 'cos it's too hot. Lasting memories of California? :- a transvestite wearing bra and panties in the middle of U.C.Berkeley campus, frozen yogurt, girls in short skirts, guys in short skirts, and the ubiquitous raybands. However perhaps the most important fact is that this is perfect camping country - no more wet tents and sleeping bags somewhere in Snowdonia, uh, boys.

Massachusetts is 3000 miles eastward and halfway

to England in more ways than one. gone are the blonde beach bums and sunny skies, in are the serious New Englanders and the Boston Celtics. Difficult to imagine that both states are in the same country and I am sure that a lot of people are suspicious, but they are 'cos Washington says so.

Boston Red Sox have arguably the best hitter in the major leagues in Wade Boggs, arguably the best basketball player in Larry Bird, and also arguably the best lobster around. I could argue that MIT is better than Harvard and that Boston University 'sucks', or you could argue that 'to argue' is pure East Coast, and to argue that you are the 'best' is pure American. Los Angelians claim Magic Johnson is the best at basketball and Kevin Mitchell of the SF Giants the best hitter, but we're in Boston, so who cares? As for Bo "just do it" Jackson, the Kansas City Royal slugger who doubles up as an LA Raider, he does not count as he's in the Mid west!

You could argue that the U.S. is just the East Coast and West Coast put together, but you'd be wrong 'cos where does Texas fit in? - the state that is 5 times the size of the U.K. with hats to match! Or Louisiana and the positively European New Orleans (pronounced "N'awlins"). Or Alabama where a gas station attendant didn't recognise my Massachusetts driving licence - "Where did'ya get this, Boy?". Or Colorado and Boulder where the U.S. cycling team practise by going up vertical mountains. How about Chicago and the "Blues Brothers"? Or that state made up of two gambling metropolises where you can get married and divorced in the same day. Or Georgia where a restaurant worker had never heard an English accent. No, America is made up of all 50 states - or is it 51? you tell me, Puerto Rico!

Where else is there a Baseball "World" Series featuring only Americans and a few Canucks for spice. Anyway what is cricket? English baseball? A game can last for 5 days? - you guys crazy? Where else could you get a world map featuring only North America. Or Danny playing a dummy, or perhaps it is a dummy playing Danny in the White House. Hey, limey, you guys still have tea and cookies at 4 o'clock, huh?...

Rich Kerswell

(Rich is at present at MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), one of the most famous of American academic establishments studying for his doctorate after his initial degree from Cambridge and a masters at Berkeley California. Who was it said that Venture Scouts are thick?)

More American experiences next issue when we hope to hear from Justin Sargent, who is now in the States working at a summer camp.

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COVER STORY.

The observant reader may have noticed a subtle difference between the cover of this edition and that on No. 63. where a beaming Venture Scout was depicted abseiling. Well, if you look at the original diagram it can be seen that the young man was not wearing a harness and was about to plunge to certain disaster. This issue's cover shows the scene seconds later....

Luckily, this fate should not await climbers from this Unit as we have recently benefited from the generosity of the School Parent's Association who have given us the money to update our climbing gear, and we have invested in

new harnesses, helmets, slings, carabiners and brake devices etc. We would like to express our thanks for his grant, which should ensure safe climbing for Unit members over the next few years.

And finally, The marvels of technology..

The word processor on which this magazine is compiled has a "spell check" capacity. The reader may not believe this, BUT, the spelling does get checked - although the odd mistake does creep in sometimes. We thought, dear reader that you might like to see the opening credits of the mag when the spell check was allowed a free rein...

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

NUMBER 64

JUNE 1990

UNIT OFFICERS

Leaders	Frank Headers
	Phi Brown
	Alar Quin
Secretary	Matched Wigeon
Chairman	Nickels Cartridge
Treasurer	Micelle Cheekier
Quartermaster	Pail Kingcup
Excel member	Bra Salter

Any resemblance to any real persons, dead or alive is purely coincidental....

Articles for next edition of Venture 44 welcomed
 These should be submitted to the Editor, Paul Kingsbury or the V.S.L. as soon as possible.
 Happy holidays!

