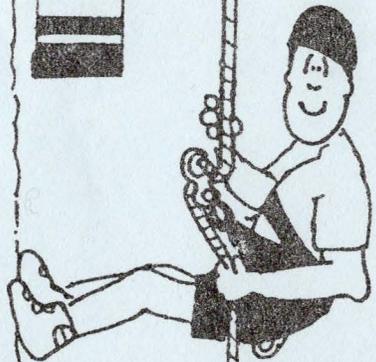
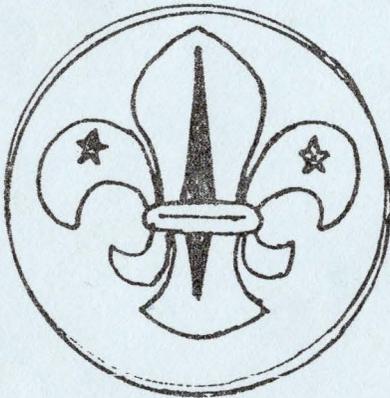


VENTURE

44



Mike.

NUMBER

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UNIT OFFICERS

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

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UNIT NEWS

We welcome this term five new members, Adrian Stokes, Andrew Roderick, Tim Tomlinson, Nick James and Kev Snow, and hope that both they and we will benefit from their membership.

We also welcome a new headmaster to the school, Mr Jarvis. He replaces Mr Holdaway who sadly retired at the end of last term. During his time at the school Mr Holdaway was a great supporter of the Unit, and we will miss him. We are glad to see, however, the Mr Jarvis is taking a keen interest in the Swimming Pool project and is also looking on the bright side of the "hut situation" (which is welcome news). We have come to the conclusion that something must be done about it, at last, and have decided to demolish the rotten end. We spent one evening last month starting on the daunting task of stripping down the area that has to be removed. It is important that something is done since it is our traditional base, and it is an essential to store our abundant kit. We will keep you up to date on this front.

Recent activities have included a half term trip to Hay on Wye, a trip to Swindon Ice rink - for which there was a very good turn out, but not many bones were broken - and an indoor bowls evening. We have challenged another unit to the later activity. A school based orienteer style activity was cunningly organised by Alan.

The Unit also supported a Chris Bonnington lecture at Bristol. It was excellent, and I would certainly advocate to all members who didn't attend that if they get a chance to go to such event in future they should take it.

Paul Kingsbury

Yawn, Another Bed Race!

Just like the Stonehouse Bed race it proved to be a fine summer day, but for many just a little too fine. The temperature at the start was about 27°C and nobody was wearing more than the bare essentials. The race itself was 5 miles long, 10 laps around a flat basic course around the cattle market in Gloucester.

Once again the (in)famous beds of the 44th were on the grid with a couple of crew changes. On Yellow peril was captain Matt Wilton Panji Grainger and last minute replacement Jim Newman, the newest member of the 44th Venture Sprouts. On Blue Streak was captain Brad Salter, Paul Kingsbury and Mark Baker.

The race started at 3 p.m. and the two 44th crews streaked ahead right from the offset and for the first five laps they battled between themselves until Yellow Peril got the upper hand. They were much smoother on the change overs than we were and gradually they eased away from us. Yellow Peril finished in 35 minutes, and Blue Streak half a minute later.

Both crews proved their excellent standard of racing by finishing 11 minutes ahead of the third place team and were undoubtedly the beat bed racers in the whole of Gloucester (well on that afternoon!)

All the team members were presented with either a bottle of wine or a bottle of coke at the end of the race and enjoyed the congratulations of the other crews, most of whom were adults. The money raised by our crews went to the charity Headway, and to the School Pool fund.

Mark Baker

THE SCHOOL POOL

For several years now the school pool has been out of action. In fact it can now be revealed that the last time it was used - highly unofficially - was by the 44th in 1985 to test out the raft to be used on the Wye that year.

The main problem has been with roof which is made of unsuitable material and has been declared unsafe by the County Council. There are many other problems as well, not the least that the authority has a policy not to invest any money in school pools.

After many years of backstage argument and procrastination by the council it was decided to form a committee to get the pool into action again as soon as possible, and since the arrival of Mr Jarvis positive action has been taken.

To date we have had a lot of help and support from individual old boys, including a structural survey by David Barber and architectural advice by Julian Baker. Work has been started, and the pool was drained a few weeks ago and tiles have been cleaned and replaced as required by volunteers from the parents association.

A major fund raising effort will start in the new year, and I am sure ex members who learned to swim and canoe in the pool will be anxious to be kept in touch of developments. Some of you, of course, will have already helped by supporting the recent bed races which have enabled the Unit to raise £457 towards the projected £100,000 needed to refurbish the pool.

HATEDMAY

Y

I always find it hard to begin an account of a past trip. It is hard to stop yourself writing "we left at 6 p.m., we arrived at 6.30, we did this, we did that". I am going to try to avoid the "we we we" syndrome - if you will pardon the expression - so please bear with me.

I was first to arrive, worried whether I had told everybody the correct time - I hadn't but we all got there although in dribs and drabs as usual. the party consisted of Brad Salter, Nick Cambridge, Kev Snow, F.H. and myself. Kit, bikes and canoes were loaded and we set off for Hay on Wye to the caravan kindly loaned to us by Peter Daines. Our arrival was not greeted by a welcome mat or a jolly farmer, but a plague of flies again - Fly II! I now know the answer to the eternal question, where do flies go in the winter time?

Brad was near to tears when he say me pull out two board games from my bag. Not only had I haunted his Norway expedition with "Pass the Pigs" but now I would turn his half term trip to misery with yet more tomfoolery in the form of "Dingbats" and "Pictionary"



DINGBATS®

TIMING TIM ING

Because of Nick's apparent dislike of the idea of going up a mountain on the first day we decided on some canadian canoeing. The bikes were left at base and the van and canoes were driven to Glasbury. There were two canoes, 3 in one, and 2 in the other. Paddling began back to base in cold grey weather, swapping people over every few miles. There were no serious problems until Hay bridge when the 3 man canoe constantly went aground in the shallow water, but luckily no damage was done.



On completing our journey, Frank and I cycled back to Glasbury to pick up the van and then returned to find three cold wet venture scouts supping hot tea. After that, a trip to Hay where two of our party, who shall remain nameless, bought I.R.A. issue balaclavas and proceeded to peer shiftily through the windows of the local building society. (Fortunately the police were very good, and all charges dropped!) That night the previously started board game odyssey continued.

Tuesday was mountain day. Perhaps not one of the most spectacular mountains, but a nice one all the same, Waun Fach, 2660ft. Nick gritted his teeth and we set off the finish the job started a year earlier. Near the bottom we looked up to see a 4 wheel drive club forcing their landrovers up the steep track. One stopped and we saw a man get out, apparently forgetting

he was on a steep mountain side, careering down the grassy slope. he recovered, unhurt, and I thought "Serves him right for cheating with a landrover!"

The summit was reached without any problems despite the thick cold mist, and we began the descent discussing such apt subjects as mountain leadership and competence. Brad and Kev found a fast way of descending by sliding on their b*ms, but they avoided rocks and medical treatment was not required. Back at the van Nick pressed-ganged me into cycling back to Hay. I gave in and we set off riding like maniacs along the narrow lanes.

Back at the caravan the boys took a trip the the river, leaving Frank reading some geology books he had bought in Hay. Kev showed us the joys of cutting off the blood to the brain to induce unconsciousness, and later entertained us with conjuring tricks and other mind boggling brain teasers.

Brecon was our first destination next day. Our shopping list included guitar strings, camping gaz, a harmonica, a chain link extractor as well as the usual milk, etc. Kev tried on hundreds of pounds worth of gear in the Outdoor shop, and I think they were a bit disappointed when he said he was only looking.

Our next stop was at Glyn Neath where we visited a chippy. I strolled in, and the following conversation took place.

Five portions of chips, please

Na, no chips, love

We can wait..

Na, aint got no more

Got any fish or sausages?

Na

What about those pasties you advertise in the window?

Na, we aint got none of them.

Well what have you got?

Pies and rissoles.

Well, five pies then please.

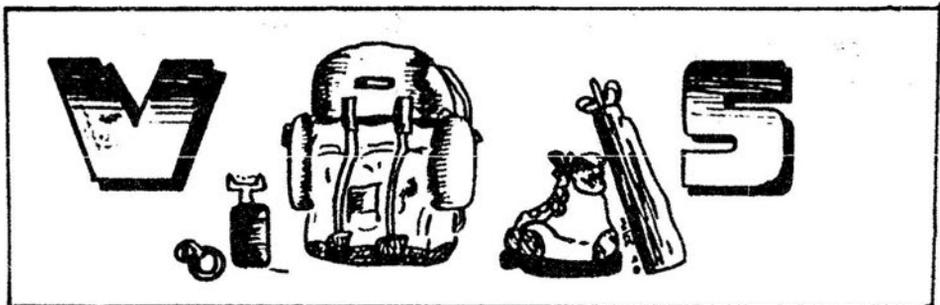
We only got two...

I think I would have done better in a hardware shop. Luckily another chip shop was found that sold chips!

We then set off to find the house of old venture scout Steve Chalkley (sorry about the old, Steve!) We borrowed a mountain bike and left Frank to help Steve who was working on an extension, and went off into the surrounding forest. Our ride took us to an amphitheatre with waterfalls, and on our return in pouring rain we nearly got lost in a maze of forest tracks. All of us took a few tumbles on the ride, eh Kev! It was getting dark when we returned, and the bikes and riders were hosed down and the 44th Mountain bike display team jumped into the van to head back to base for our last night.

Next day we tidied up the caravan and loaded everything and set off home after what had been a varied and very enjoyable few days away from home.

Matt Wilton



IT'S A LONG WYE TO LOWER LYDBROOK

This years raft race was held as usual on the River Wye from Ross to Lower Lydbrook, and we must thank the Churchdown Unit for their excellent organisation.

For a couple of weeks beforehand we had been working on rafts and ended up with one looking like a Chieftain tank and a second which looked as if it were made of match sticks. Matt and I made certain that the craft that broke up last year would survive this time, and our crew consisted of the two of us plus Brad Salter and Mark Baker.

At the start we got away well and the going was quite hard for the first two or three miles, but then things calmed down as the rafts spread out and we were able to take things at an easier pace. We were in good spirits after five miles then people began to tire and lost their optimism. At one point Matt decided to go for a swim and found that he had a job to catch us up!

Any monotony was relieved by chatting with the raft race officials in canoes, and one interesting sight was a man washing his clothes in the river! Towards the end we had to walk in some of the shallow stretches, but we finished in just over three hours and then waited in eager anticipation for the arrival of the second raft, and waited, and waited... .

At last. We heard the strains of "Ricky Fortune and the fortunates" and round the bend came a battered vessel with the front stuck up and the stern low in the water.

Nick Cambridge

We had a bit of a snag near the start and were left behind. Soon into the race we decided there was a design fault, so we had to make some modifications. We got going O.K. and the crew, Paul, Ryan, Jim and myself settled in to enjoy the paddle.

It was just before Kerne bridge that we hit trouble. We were attempting to pass another raft when we were provoked and violently attacked by it's crew. They overturned our raft and tipped us all into the river. We grabbed at our kit and food that was floating away, but in the confusion lost a paddle. We were a bit surprised by all this, but we gathered ourselves together and righted the raft.

Below the bridge we caught up with our assailants in shallower water and tried to pass them, giving them a wide berth, but they decided to have another go. This time they took the caps of the rear barrels and forced them down into the water so we lost buoyancy. We thought of retaliation, but it would have looked bad to the large crowd of spectators on the bridge. A fight wouldn't help the image of Venture Scouting!

We tried to get the raft back into action as they left us, and decided not to try to pass again. At this point some of us felt like giving up, but we gallantly decided to try to get to the finish. despite being wet through and cold our spirits improved as we reached the Lydbrook eventually.

Sam Cambridge



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

THE QUIZ KIDZ

The Annual Parents' Association Quiz evening was upon us again, and naturally we decided to try to improve on our "modest" third position of last year.

The battleground, as before, was to be the school hall. We made a tactical last minute substitution and instead of the reliable Phil Brown, enter Adrian Stokes, a new enthusiastic member who (perhaps) knew everything from the formula of Beethoven's symphonies to the notes of a uranium atom (AND vice versa!). Apart from this change it was the same-as-last-year team of F.H., the Wiltons senior and junior, (Dave and Matt), Nick Cambridge and myself. We all came together as an alchemical reaction to form the "Venture Scout" team. Original!

The hall was full budding young 4th formers (yobs) and bashful parents, ashamed of their sons malignant behaviour. The quiz started and questions ranged from how many sections are there in the Sunday Times to what is the average depth of the alimentary canal (or was it the Panama?) N.B. There are 8 million sections in the S.T., but no one has ever read them all.

The quiz was divided into sections e.g. Food and Drink, Once upon a time. A joker could be played on any round (except the music round), which would double the team's score on that round, but could only be used once. We played ours on Current Affairs having wasted it on the General Knowledge round last year. The musical round involved several "ditties" from certain eras, i.e. the '80s, '70s, '60s and classical music (F.H. did well here, folks.)

At the half way stage we were in second place, just behind the "Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles"!?!?

Despite trying our utmost we failed to make up the deficit and ended up in a miserable second place, but the Turtle team was not turtles after all, but an all adult team, so we did well after all. Each one of us played our part, especially Adrian who knew the name of the presenter on breakfast television who wrote a book on the Loch Ness monster! - Do you?

Next year we hope to be polishing more silver ware in the trophy room, and I'll be writing jubilantly of victory, I am sure.



Paul Kingsbury

ERM...ah, oui

The next addition will have a certain European theme to it - no, it won't be in polish (I hope) but in keeping with "les times" et 1992, we thought it relevant to produce a common-single-European-format. Appropriate articles from ex-members welcomed. Remember to look out for this, we hope to get there before the (united) Germans do!

P.K.

On Saturday 17th November a party from the Unit travelled to Bristol to see, or rather see and listen to CHRIS BONNINGTON. For those of you who don't know, Chris is probably Britain's most famous mountaineer.

Most prominent of the many exploits he described were his ascents of the himalayan giants. This Unit is proud to number amongst its ex-members one who has experience of alpine and himalayan climbing. We reprint here part of an article which appeared in issue 14 in which STEVE CHALKLEY describes the first ascent of a peak seventeen years ago.

HIMALAYAN ADVENTURE

"Expedition to the Kulu Himalaya, 1973

A British expedition consisting of the Burgess twins, Bob Toogood, Bob Dearman, Paul Quin, Tim Norris and Steve Chalkley climbed routes on Ali Ratni Tibba (18,013ft), and other surrounding peaks in June....Later Dearman and Chalkley climbed the previously unclimbed southeast ridge. The climb took 2½ days....."

MOUNTAIN magazine 1973

.....At five in the morning we set off (later than we ought) but we were uneasy about the weather - it was the warmest night yet - heralding the arrival of the monsoon. The snow was barely frosted at 15,000ft! By 0900 hr we had slogged our way to the Col of the Obelisks, a row of three huge granite blocks, several hundred feet high, and faultless.

From here the ridge proper started and still uneasy about the weather we had a brew, as dehydration was our greatest problem, and we needed a minimum of 7 - 8 pints a day at this altitude. At 1000hr we saw what we were waiting for - the clouds parted and the sky was it's usual deep blue. A quick treatment with u/v cream and the climb started in earnest.

To gain the ridge we climbed a steep snow gully for about 1000ft. This started easily, but there was a short vertical ice pitch in the middle, about 20 ft high, so we roped up. I led this with the aid of pitons, ice axe and hammer. The gully continued, dangerous because of the slushy snow and loose rocks. Then we saw our main problem - the east face. It was vertical, dropping down from the ridge...We were heading for the shelter of a huge gendarme on the ridge, which was to be our bivouac site. It was 1400hr. Whichever way we turned we saw only faultless granite, so we did a descending traverse for 300ft. Climbing on virgin rock demands great care, as no hold can be trusted. Eventually we reached a vertical to overhanging crack above us leading to our chosen bivouac site.

Bob's forte is climbing artificial - the bigger the overhang the better - so he led. I was impressed, as I'd done little of this work. My turn came, and I had to use the aids he had put in, and remove them. It was exhausting work removing the pegs whilst carrying a 30lb load up a shear face. After about 50ft I fumbled with a sling, a peg and some karabñners, and I dropped the lot. I looked down in dismay, fully expecting to see them spinning in the void, but as luck would have it they lodged some 50 ft

below me. None too politely Bob suggested I should fetch them and lowered me off. I fought back to where I had been and finished the pitch. It was getting late. Bob greeted me with "now **** off up that!" pointing towards a nasty crack above. Determined to justify myself I jammed my fists in and forced my way to the top. I nearly fell off at seeing the ledge - a four star bivvy site. It had clean snow, protection from the overhanging gendarme, and rocks to make a retaining wall. (Not five star, no water!)

We settled in our bivvy tent, a plastic and nylon bag, to make brews of Kelloggs "Rise and shine". This was all we needed; solids were completely unpalatable. Corned beef, mint cake, Mars bars - the very thought made me feel ill! Strangely enough the only chocolate that we could eat at altitude was Twix bars, but it was impossible to replenish the calories we had actually used as we could only get down about 2500 in comfort.

I spent a cold night in the tent as I had only a duvet jacket, and no sleeping bag. I dozed fitfully until 0600hr when a shaft of sun light hit me. When we crawled out, the view was magnificent. A panorama of peak after peak, but our heads cleared when we peered over the arete at the 300ft sheer drop of the east face.....

I took the next pitch, and this was to be the crux. A slab rose steeply for 100ft from the ledge with one small horizontal crack at 15 ft, meaning it was a bold unprotected lead with the east face on my right, waiting...

I frictioned up to the crack, banged in a peg, clipped on and stood up. It became steeper, and I searched for depressions or bumps for holds, but there were none. I was filled

with doubts and shouted to Bob "I don't think it will go, but I'll try to friction off the peg so watch the rope!" I placed my boot as flat as I could on the slab, and put my weight on it. It didn't budge, and I was away! After a few feet the slab eased, and pitch followed pitch, none too difficult, until we were together on snow. Then before us stood the granite block that was the summit, and that was it!

The descent was tricky down the south west ridge, and we were forced to bivvy again as the snow was slushy and perilous. Next morning we arrived back at base before 0900hr, and soon had to put the mountains behind us and start the long, long journey home.

The return was a riotous affair - high life in Rawalpindi, bargaining in the bazaars of Afghanistan, a knife fight in Turkey, nearly getting shot in Iran....

The rest of the summer was spent at Chamonix, climbing...

Steve Chalkley



