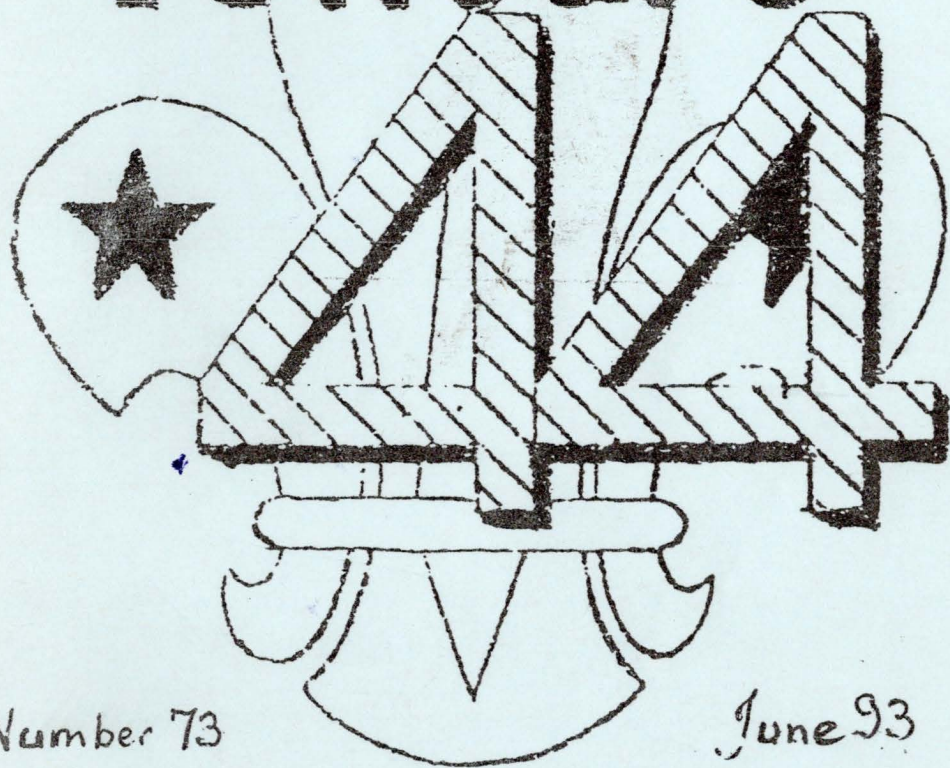


Venture



Number 73

June 93

NEWBURY



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

NUMBER 73

APRIL 93

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NOTES AND NEWS

It's the beginning of a new era for the 44th, and indeed this magazine. A sturdy new hut and an influx of new members. As this is also my last magazine production as your beloved editor, it's like retiring.

I've leafed through my vaults of yellowing V44s and unearthed some memorable reporting from my term of editorship.

No 62. " The raft split down the middle... Our initial reaction was laughter.... bits keeled over with 6 inch 'army screws' swinging about everywhere..." P.K. on the Raft race

No 63. "...just one taste of his prawn balls would have done wonders for the lads" M.W. on the Cotswold Marathon.

No 67. " The provost of the moon disperses it's magnitude of power upon the mountain, the glaciers gleaning as would a perfect diamond.." K.(eat).S...

No 68. "It was at check point 4 when Mike was unfortunately taken ill. Being the jokester that he is, he thought he would barf on an innocent traffic cone." J.N., Sun Run '91.

No 69. "We set off for the campsite at Achmelvich - except Brad, who missed the (only) turning and did 20 miles extra...Brad was discovered talking to some apparently friendly strangers in a van who looked suspiciously like the Birmingham 6."

"Kev proceeded to gash his leg, tripping up in an excited frenzy as he saw a six pound ling being caught by a fisherman." Death thursday 13th...

I am sure you'll agree that it makes colourful reading! Jeremy Lai-Hung will be the new editor, and I'll be confined to the "From all points" section - so good luck Jeremy! I would also like to thank Frank for all the time and effort he has put in running the unit which has given me times I'll remember for the rest of my life, and hopefully I will still be able to make a contribution the the unit in the future

Paul Kingsbury

It's over to you!

As Paul says we have increased our membership over the past few months and extend a warm welcome to (in strict alphabetical order) James Adams, Tim Andrews, Jody Ballard, Jody Bevan, Adam Bradley, Mark Davis, Dave Frodin, Mark Gilmore, Matt Hawkins, Luke Hemming, Gaz Hughes, Jer Lai-Hung, and Gareth Owen.

Since I joined the 44th's when I was a mere sapling sprout at the tender age of 14, I have learned many new things. A list as long as the V.S.L.s beard could be produced at a few moments notice. The opportunities and new horizons that have been opened up are too numerous to mention. I have visited places both at home and abroad that I am sure I would never have got to under my own steam before the age of 18. Uppermost in my own mind must be the way that Venture scouting (44th style) has given me a genuine appreciation of the outdoors which I have definitely chosen to follow on throughout my life. My love for climbing is entirely due to my introduction to the sport through the Unit. Also I have made friendships which I am sure will last forever (three weeks sharing a tent with someone and you definitely get to know them - no single sex school pun intended!)

But as they say, it's not just about what you can get out of it, it's also what you can put in. I would like to think that I have put something back for all that I have taken out, although I shouldn't be the judge of that. Now, as I leave for pastures new, we, the newest of the "old ones" hand over to the next generation who presently seem to be doing an excellent job. I respect them for joining in on what must have at first seemed a rather daunting group of smelly youths (myself not included - my personal hygiene is of the highest standard, whatever my mum might say). they have joined in the fun, and also (most commendable of all) the hard work.

So I leave you with this lads, join in and grab every opportunity, I guarantee you'll enjoy it - and well done for your efforts so far! Keep up the good work! -

Matt Wilton

THE QUIZ (1)

After years of being pipped at the post by the odd point, plus one 1st equal position, the Unit team eventually made it as outright winners in the hotly contested P.A. Spring quiz. The regular five, Matt and Dave Wilton, Paul and Tom Kingsbury and the V.S.L. were joined by Steve Clutterbuck, whose encyclopedic knowledge of modern music ensured the victory. Sadly the dream team now splits up, but the green shoots that will grow to the next gnarled tree of knowledge are already evident....

THE QUIZ (2)

One Sunday evening at Brown Lodge, the Churchdown Scout H.Q., three members of the unit competed in 5th County V.S. quiz. The questions were generally hard, but Jim Adams, Gaz Hughes

and Adam Bradley were well placed until the last round when things got a bit heavy. Some disappointment was evident on the way home, but the determination to do better next year was expressed.

The Scout Hut

Almost exactly a year ago the old scout hut was reduced to a pile of rubble. During the course of a few evenings and weekends a process that had been going on slowly for many years was accelerated, and now the site is covered by a layer of concrete.

In September 1992 negotiations started for a Marley type prefabricated garage, 32 by 16 ft, at (of course) a generous discount. We hoped it would be ready for Christmas, but we had not allowed for the building regulations department of the City council. Despite completing all the paperwork, and having taken all the necessary action the bureaucrats at North Warehouse were not to be hurried. Phone call after phone call yielded evasive responses as to why permission to start off was being withheld. Eventually, in late November, a local councillor was approached and asked to sort out the matter, and two days later we were given the go ahead.

In mid December a contractor moved in to excavate the foundations. Trenches were dug, and they promptly filled up with water. It was mid January before the concrete base was completed, and mid February before the lorry load of bits and pieces was unloaded - rather far from the site. From then on it was hard labour carrying the sections, and eventually one extremely windy weekend construction started. The first corner was put in position on a saturday afternoon, and that night a gale blew up. On sunday morning the frail looking structure was still standing, and

since then the pieces have been assembled bit by bit by the members, several ex-members and parents and the leaders, and is now a few hours away from completion. The next V44 will be put together in the new building which will be fully fitted out before the start of next term. F.H.

The Cotswold Marathon

This year the experienced Matt Wilton and Jim Newman were blessed with the presence of six eager, young, prospective members; myself (Jer Lai-Hung, Dave Frodin, Gaz Hughes, Matt Hawkins, Mark Davies, and last but not least James Adams. For us youngsters it was the longest walk we had ever attempted. Nevertheless we were not daunted by the large distance involved. I think this was because we had never really thought how long 36 miles really is.

When we eventually left Murray Hall decked out in our reflective gear we joined to form one big group. On the steep ascent up Robinswood Hill we realised that we had too many layers of warm clothing and started to strip. Then it got dark and cold, so we put things on again, realising our mistake.

Whilst in Upton we were treated to a very informative tour of the village by Gaz and James. We were lucky to have people who knew every short cut there was, and we took great pleasure in overtaking other teams.

After passing through Hucclecote we reached Chosen Hill, and I thought "I'm tired, I've got to walk out of Gloucester and then walk back again. Oh Dear!". In Churchdown we saw the chip shop full of walkers, but resisted the temptation and continued to the check point. Gaz treated his blister, the first of the walk. Congratulations, Gaz.

It was a long road to Badgeworth. Dave and I immediately took the opportunity to play "I went to the zoo and saw..." We consumed a whole packet of custard cream biscuits, very nice!

Then came the Greenway hill, the one that some of us had cycled up just a few weeks earlier. Walking up was easier than mountain biking up it, to my surprise. 10 minutes and a few urinations later we reached the summit and another check point and a well deserved cup of orange squash.

From that point we were on windswept roads, and it was pretty cold too. the road seemed to go on for ever with the odd checkpoint along the way. After a few miles we reached our official stopping place, but we were going on. A swift drink of hot soup and we rejoined the road. This was where conditions started to get a little uncomfortable. The temperature dropped and our feet began to ache. The road was very long and boring, and I made the decision to drop out at the next checkpoint because my feet were really hurting. Next time I will wear more appropriate footwear. The next three miles were very long and painful.

With the few minutes of rest we had in the barn at Winstone I noticed the look of tiredness on everybody's faces. I watched the rest of the group set off, and waited to be rescued.

The next stage was long and gruelling, and it took it's toll on Gaz, James and Matt who all called it a night at Edgeworth. The intrepid Dave and Mark decided to carry on with the experts, but as the night wore on their feet wore out, and they decided to save their energy for more appropriate activity, such as sleeping. So at Bisley Mr Davis and Mr Frodin retired.

The extremely daring Matt and Jim waited to join up with another team, and went on to complete the marathon - total distance 36 miles.

I worked out that we completed 219 miles between us in one evening. Apart from blisters all the new members thoroughly enjoyed the marathon, and now we have our sights set on one thing - to all complete the Cotswold marathon next year!

Jer Lai-Hung



The distance represented by the width of an O.S. map (1:50,000) is 40 km (24 miles).

Adam Bradley suggested a sponsored cycle ride to raise money for the new hut. It seemed a good idea to do a cross-map ride, but we little realised that indirectly it would bring us fame (of a sort), but no fortune! The trip was advertised in the School newsletter to parents last term, and someone sent a copy to the BBC Radio 4 programme - The News Quiz. They read out the statement which concluded "the venture scouts were planning a sponsored ride across the width of their local O.S. map." Very droll, we all thought.

The first map crossing was made from The Pleck, near Monmouth, over to the Wye valley, then via minor roads through Kerne Bridge, Aston Ingham, Kents Green, Over to Staverton.

Adam describes the trip made one March day.

We set off on a cold Sunday morning. There were five of us - myself, Matt Hawkins, Gaz Hughes, Tim Andrews and Jody Ballard, with the V.S.L. in the support vehicle. We reached our start, a narrow country lane in Wales. It was freezing.

We first had to go downhill, so everyone raced off and nearly killed ourselves at the bottom. From then on we took it easy because it was our first uphill and it was very slow and tiring. At the top, at Llangrove, we stopped for a drink then carried on down to the Wye Valley. The route avoided any steep hills and we made good time through some nice scenery.

Halfway along the sign "Rich's Pit stop" told us we were at the house of ex deputy head master, Mr Winstanley. we stayed there for half an hour eating sandwiches and then got back onto the road. We faced the steepest uphill of the ride to Cliffords Mesne. It proved easy, and we coasted up. When we got to the top my flipping chain came off, and I leant against the nearest rider to stop myself falling down. I stayed up. but the unfortunate Gaz took the fall.

It was now raining and we were really annoyed, but as we were all tough Venture Scouts we just carried on. We split up rather with Tim and Jody dropping behind. I think we must have done something wrong, because we were now getting drenched. Time seemed to be going really slowly, and 1 mile seemed like 5.

As we reached the city the rain was getting even worse. Passing the school we knew there was only a few miles to go....

Staverton - we had done it, soaking wet, muddy with sore backsides. We thankfully put the bikes in the van and rested. We had completed 35 miles in 2 hours 45 min. which I thought was pretty good going.

Adam Bradley

100 CLUB 100 CLUB 100 CLUB 100 CLUB 100 CLUB 100

Winners over the past 6 months are;

JAN: Dave Wilson FEB: George Evans MAR: Mike Barton
 APR: Ian Fletcher MAY: John Pepperell
 JUNE: Steve Preston.

FROM ALL POINTS

It has been good, as ever, to hear from so many ex-members over recent months, as this enables me to up date readers on the progress of our supporters from all over Britain (and Vietnam, of course!).

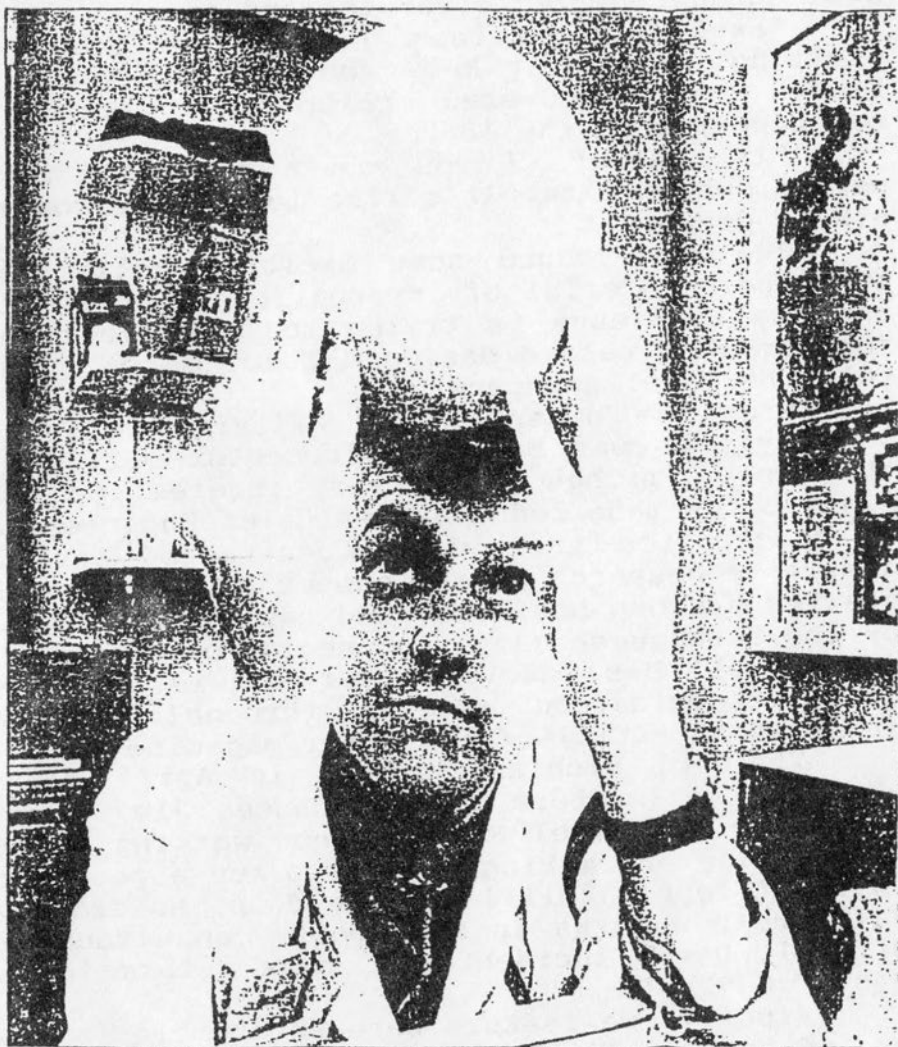
So in no particular order, gossip, scandal and innuendo (is that a firm of lawyers or a pop group? Ed).

Whilst ordinary folk endured a wet winter, Nige Brewster was off to the antipodes on a holiday which enabled him to see at least part of one of the Australia/West Indies test matches

John Sweet and family have recently moved house - remaining in the leafy suburban utopia of Tunbridge Wells. John and Margaret now have three sons, Oliver, Joshua and Toby. Other movers of late include the Hobbs family (only two at present) to Southdown near Bath. Jer has established links with the local V.S.U. who have raised some money for the ward in which he works. Another nursing ex-member, Ian Fletcher and Dori are now living in Stroud. He will be close to Andy Manders, who works in Bath, but lives in Stroud.

Wedding bells are ringing this year in various quarters. Mike Barton is taking the plunge in July, and Mark Collins will also be giving up his freedom shortly after. Simon Williams and Tracey are heading altarwise in September, and Dave Wilson suffers the same fate in April next year.

As far as we know Mark Simmons has not got married, but seems to be having a great time in his new job with the Newcastle based North of England Museums Service.



Mark has worked on conserving thousands of items in museums and other institutions birds eggs to insects, pressed plants, skeletons, stuffed and bottled creatures and fossils.

"Exploring all these museums has been very exciting. You never know what you are going to find. I've uncovered collections packed in newspapers from the 1860s.

"It's great if you are a naturally noseyperson, which I am. It's like looking in somebody else's drawers."

"We have found some exciting collections and superb material of international importance, and the challenge is trying to preserve things forever when nature designed them to rot" Mark told the local newspaper.

From the other end of Britain, news from Jon May, who was back in Gloucester earlier in the year. Jon has had a very interesting time since being made redundant as Chief Engineer for an electronics firm who subcontracted for the Admiralty Research Establishment at Weymouth. He started his own business, and has been called on by the Portuguese navy, and seems to be making a success of his exciting new venture - the old 44th determination showing through! Jon has promised an article for a later magazine.

The Old Richians dinner in April saw a number of ex-members in attendance. Jim Soo was there, as was Nigel Rankine, now working in the square mile and making enough to run a posh car! Julian (Flopper) Williams turned up, as did Dave Vale who now works in a property consultancy in Bristol. Dave, incidentally, owns a farm in the Massif Central.

Finally, we feature here an article from an ex editor of V44, Steve Clutterbuck, in an attempt to bring a little bit of culture to the publication....

SPELLS OF A DARK MAGUS

'Live Evil', 'Dark Magus', 'Bitches Brew', 'Sorcerer', 'Prince of Darkness', 'Black Satin': Miles Davis was the dark side of jazz's moon. His death in September 1991 brought to an end a career which baffled, bemused, and horrified many but enchanted, bewitched and enraptured many more.

Miles' music displayed a dark, contemplative, almost existential edge from the late fifties on, but before this he began to experiment with form and style on the ground-breaking 1948 recording 'Birth of the Cool'; a recording which in many ways set the tone for what he (and many other jazz musicians who recognised the importance of the material) was to produce for the next 20 years. Bebop was all the rage on New York's 52nd Street in the late forties. Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk and Dizzy Gillespie were setting audiences alight with their fast, furious and exciting playing. Jack Kerouac, in 'On the Road', perfectly captures the sense of the wild freedom experienced at bebop gigs:

...the behatted tenorman was blowing as the the peak of a wonderfully satisfactory free idea, a rising and falling riff that went from "EE-yah!" to a crazier "EE-de-le-yah!" blasted along to a rolling crash of butt-scarred drums... He just hauled back and stamped his foot and blew down a hoarse, baughing blast and drew breath, and raised the horn and blew high, wide and screaming in the air.

Although Miles was recording with Parker at this time, he wanted to go elsewhere with the music.

He loved bebop, but found it a little limiting as time went on. The 'Birth of the Cool' brought the sound of jazz away from the sense of chaotic freedom which bebop had given it. Miles used musicians such as Gerry Mulligan and Lee Konitz; their sound was lighter than that of the bebop players and gave the recordings a sense of breadth and depth. Miles says of the recordings:

Bird and Diz played this hip, real fast thing.... Their music wasn't sweet, and it didn't have harmonic lines... Bebop didn't have the humanity of Duke Ellington.... but 'Birth of the Cool' was different because you could hear everything and hum it also.

As Miles developed in the fifties, he began to play with the likes of John Coltrane, Bill Evans "Cannonball" Adderley, and "Philly" Joe Jones to name a few. With Coltrane, Miles formed one of the most celebrated partnerships in jazz history. With Miles, Coltrane found a voice which suited both him and the music: a uniquely fluid sound which at the same time had sharp attack and definition. Later in his career, Coltrane would plunge into uncharted territories of free experimentation, with music that wasn't for the faint-hearted. But with Miles, he produced some of the greatest saxophone playing in all of jazz. Along with Coltrane, Miles used Julian "Cannonball" Adderley. His slightly blues-ier and more melodious approach made him the perfect foil to Coltrane's fire. Throughout his career, Miles formed ensembles who worked almost perfectly alongside each other and the quintets and sextets he put together in the fifties were amongst his best. with Coltrane, Adderley, Paul Chambers, "Philly" Joe Jones and Red Garland he recorded 'Milestones' in 1958; a wonderful collection featuring a version of the Thelonius Monk

classic 'Straight, No Chaser', and what must surely be one of the greatest tunes Miles ever recorded, the self penned 'Miles'. The track surges along with a barely concealed sense of joy and sheer arrogance. Here, Miles himself plays at the peak of his 'Cool Jazz' powers, and the interaction between Coltrane and Adderley is almost unbelievable. The song could not possibly be bettered.

The years 1958 and 1959 were for many the peak of Miles' career. he had the best band around, and his own playing had developed to the point where he was in full control of his medium. in March 1959, with Coltrane, Adderley, Jimmy Cobb on drums and Bill Evans on piano, Miles recorded what certainly has a claim to being the greatest modern jazz recording, 'Kind of Blue'. Miles went into the studio with bare sketches of songs, and developed them there and then with the band. the results are breathtaking. Miles' horn, particularly on the track 'All Blues', speaks with a lonely, existential voice backed sympathetically by Cobb and Evans. the record is a complex exploration of the blues; Miles' passages articulating a sense of yearning for what is lost and of contemplating the loneliness to come are offset by Coltrane's magnificently intense solos which allow us a glimpse into the abyss of sorrow. tunes such as 'So What', 'Freddie Freeloader' and 'Flamenco Sketches' show us just what can be achieved by musicians at the peak of their abilities. In ten years Miles had totally transformed the jazz scene in New York. He was now, in many ways, the major player in the jazz world.

After the European tour of 1960, Coltrane left the band to pursue his own career (although he did record a few numbers with Miles which were

released on the 'Seven Steps to Heaven' record of 1963) and Cannonball Adderley had moved on shortly before. Miles went through a number of different musicians in the early sixties: Sonny Rollins, J.J. Johnson, Sonny Stitt, Hank Mobley amongst others. He also worked with composer Gil Evans, a partnership which produced the celebrated 'Sketches of Spain' and 'Porgy and Bess' sets.

In 1963 Miles began playing with Tony Williams on drums, Herbie Hancock on piano and Ron Carter on bass. With the introduction of Wayne Shorter on tenor saxophone in 1964, he had created another superb ensemble. They recorded six excellent albums in the period 1965 to 1968; 'ESP' (1965) and 'Filles de Kilimanjaro' is a pivotal recording in Miles' career. It points forward towards the extraordinary experiments of 'Bitches Brew' and to a lesser extent 'In a Silent Way'. On 'Filles...' Miles uses a standard jazz quintet line up with Ron Carter on electric bass and Herbie Hancock on electric piano to produce a strange, almost blues-like quality mixed with the quintet's by then recognisable free-jazz approach.

(Steve's article will be concluded in the next issue of Venture 44.)

Apologies for the long delay in production of this issue, it was due out at the end of March, but G.C.E.s, National Curriculum, Her Majesty's Inspectors have all contributed to the delay!

The next issue (under new management) will be out before the end of July. Articles should be submitted as soon as possible.

