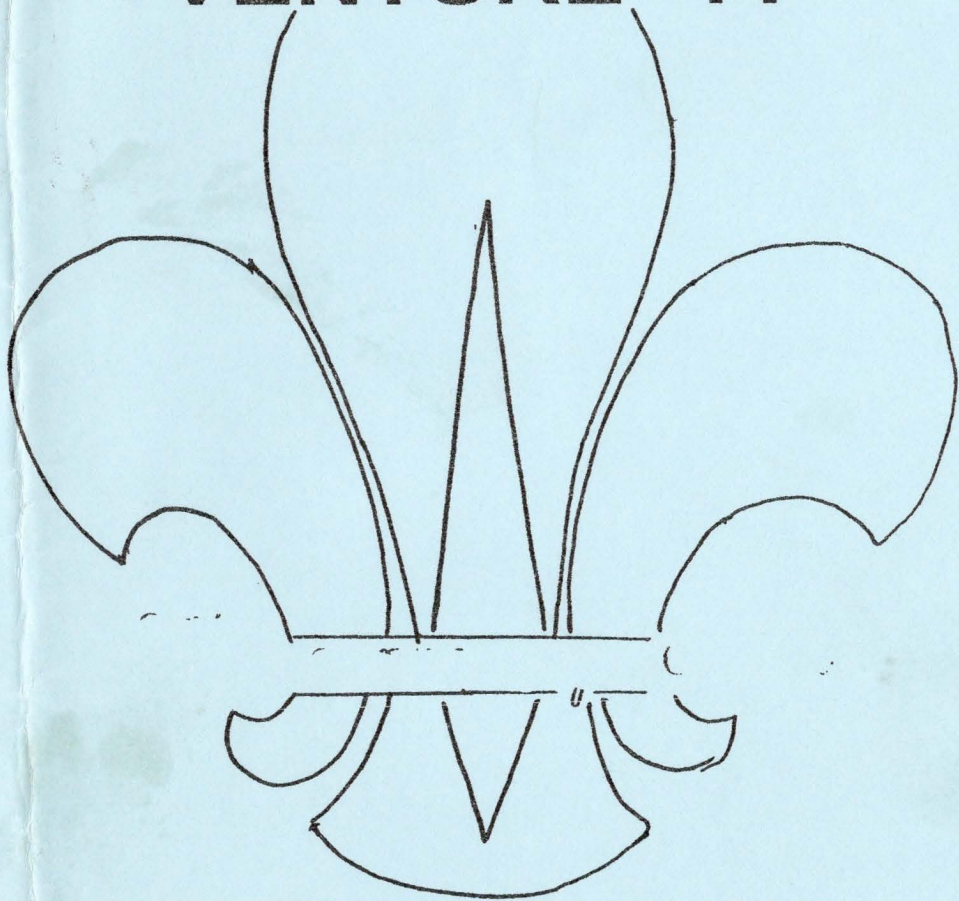


# VENTURE 44



*Number 76*

*March 95*

44 VENTURE 44



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## UNIT NEWS

Welcome to our rather late Christmas edition - Happy Easter!

Much has happened since the last issue, which seems to have been produced ages ago (it was!), so we have only included a few things. No room to mention the raft race, the Cotswold marathon and the last P.A. quiz - could it be because we didn't win any of them?

On the school front we reported in the last edition that Mr Ian Kellie had been appointed acting head, and we are now very pleased to say that he has now been confirmed as the 25th Headmaster of Tommies.

A few days ago H.R.H. Princess Anne officially opened the swimming pool and the new changing rooms. Incidentally a plaque in the entrance hall to the pool acknowledges the 44th Gloucester V.S.U. as one of the major contributors to the fund raising.

One bit of bad news is that Alan Quinn, our assistant leader and school caretaker will be leaving this summer, and he will be sadly missed - more about that next issue.

The new tuckshop is now in operation. It is at the back of the kitchens facing out over the bowls green. It seems O.K. apart from having to clear the snow off the serving hatch on a few cold mornings....

New additions to the Unit include James Cook, a.k.a the bluecoat boy, who had the privilege of welcoming Princess Anne to the school, Chris Malley ex-King's School, and our token year 9 member, George Powell. We welcome them and hope they will enjoy their time with us.

Jody Ballard



## A RIGHT ROYAL OCCASION

If you think that meeting Royalty might be exciting, I am afraid to say that you are right - well I was nervous rather than excited. when you do meet one of the royals here is a check list of what to do

1. Always prefix your remarks with "Your Royal Highness"
2. Bow your head (or curtsy - but only if you are female)
3. If asked a question, reply promptly, but always end it with "Ma'am" (very tedious...)

When I met Princess Anne she stunned me with a difficult question - "Where do you live?" - Interesting, huh? Well, I suppose it was a great honour. After the official ceremony which she carried out without saying anything, she spoke to me again, asking me about the choir. Then suddenly she was out of the door and into her car, heading for Cheltenham Races. We waved dutifully, and she was gone. It was the end of the very first, and probably the very last Royal visit to Rich's. Well at least it was better than lessons!

■ **FOURTEEN-year-old Sir Thomas Rich's School pupil James Cook (right) donned a 17th century school uniform to meet the Princess Royal yesterday. The Princess visited the school to open the recently-refurbished swimming pool, and also met acting head Ian Kellie (centre) during her visit.**



## Hay-on-Wye, October 94

Sunday afternoon, October 23rd, and the Unit prepared for a visit to the Welsh borderland. Six out of seven turned up, complete with mountain bikes, but where was the seventh? Bike problems had struck, but eventually we located Mark on a road side in Upton St Leonards, and after a food stop at Tim's house we got on our way. We arrived at our caravan base at about 5.30 and set up tents and enjoyed a cuppa. That evening we whiled away time with a game of nomination whist, and realised to our dismay that the V.S.L. was a demon player. after a merciless thrashing we retired, dejected, to bed.

The next day seemed to take ages to arrive, as Dave couldn't decide where to sleep. In the tent? no; in a survival bag, no; inside, for ten minutes, then no; outside again... Finally he settled down, but he made it up to us next morning by cooking a brilliant breakfast. After that we prepared for the day's activity. Our objective was to cross the Black Mountains from near Talgarth and cycle to Abergavenny ( about 18 miles), but we had to climb up to 2264ft along a muddy and rocky track. We were delayed for an hour having to repair a puncture caused by the most spectacular crash I've ever seen. the collision resulted in one person head down in the deep track side mud, and another sitting in the mud along way from his bike. Once we had fixed the puncture we continued down more cautiously until eventually we hit the road through the forest, and after a few ups and downs and some heavy rain showers we arrived at Abergavenny, and set off back to the caravan. After the evening meal, minced beef and rice, we started a game of monopoly. I partnered Tim, whose policy was make or break. we broke badly.

The next day dawned, and after another good breakfast we set off for Kington. One of our number was feeling quite ill so he didn't join us on the walk along Offa's Dyke. It was a nice walk through some beautiful Welsh and English countryside. Dave, with his great experience of map reading confidently led us. In 20 minutes we were hopelessly lost. We eventually found ourselves back on route, not before accepting some free milk from a farm we called at. We also gained a companion in the form of a sheep dog which stayed with us for four miles. We eventually left it at a farm where the farmer's wife said she would try to return the rover to its owner. The fourteen mile walk was tiring but enjoyable, and the heavy rain that seemed to be falling all around us only hit us once, thank goodness.

When we reached the van we set off to Hereford to go swimming, and after that feasted on fish and chips, and I was elected to write this account. Later on we played monopoly again, but because of a complex system of deals between various players, the game never really finished, though Dave and I ended up disputed winners.

Next morning we tidied up, and Phil admitted that his tent did leak rather. We thanked the farmer for his hospitality, and set off for the second hand book shop centre of Britain, Hay on Wye. We had a good look round some of the book shops, and the more cultured members of the party (the V.S.L. and yours truly) purchased books.

After lunch we headed back to school, unloaded, refitted seats in the bus, rebuilt our bikes, and set off home. Once again I'd like to thank Frank for giving up his time to take us. It was BRILLIANT - hurry on Hay on Wye '95

lestyn Morris<sub>5</sub>

# Scotland, Summer 1994

Last summer a small select band from the Unit took up an invitation from the Nansen Society (UK) Ltd, to help out on their latest project in Scotland. So one day in late July, The V.S.L., Steve Clutterbuck, Luke Hemming and myself (Tim Andrews) set off on the 12 hour journey to the Black Isle, across the bridge from Inverness. On the way up we stopped off for a cup of tea with Heather Robbins at Crieff. At our destination, Redcastle by the Muir of Ord, we met up with old friends of the unit, Ernest and Ben Davies, and Danny Schepens and other volunteers who were to work with us over the next week.

Our base was in an old school house above the Beaully Firth, which was about 12 miles from our work place, the steading at Blackhill Farm which we were helping to convert into a workshop facility. The work we did was very physical, and the main task was shoveling out 12 inch depth of ancient cow dung from the rough cobbled floor. However, when we stopped for a tea break we had great views down the Cromarty Firth.

It wasn't all work, though, as we managed to fit in many other things including

a visit to the Loch Ness Monster centre



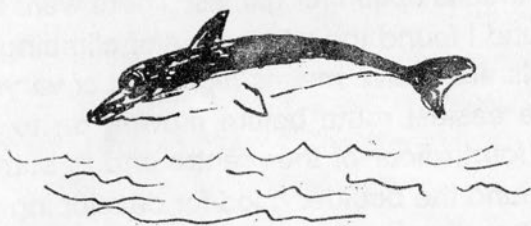


a view of the Ospreys at Loch Garten



a trip behind a preserved Caledonian Railway steam loco.

a sighting of the Moray Firth Dolphins



a private tour round a scottish castle

a visit to the battlefield of Culloden Moor

and a lot of other interesting activities. We are really looking forward to another visit in 1995.

## How to Climb a Warehouse

*Recently Gloucester has gained a new recreational facility - the "Warehouse". The old Pickfords storage block in Parliament Street, opposite the Bank of England is now an indoor climbing centre. Officially opened in November, it is now regular territory for many members of the Unit. The Warehouse currently houses forty five different route on walls of varying degrees of difficulty, suitable for lead and top rope climbing, an outdoor wear shop, a bar, a multi gym, conference room, and the world's largest indoor free-standing boulder. There are also dormitories for school and scout groups that may wish to stop overnight.*

### **Our Reviewers comments.**

I first went to the warehouse as part of the fifth and sixth form outdoor pursuits option for games. There were not too many people there, and I found the whole idea of climbing inside quite novel. The walls are twelve metres high, and of varying difficulty. I began on the easiest route before moving on to the boulder. This is on the fourth floor of the centre and is surrounded with crash mats. I found the boulder good for developing my climbing skills as well as testing my manoeuvrability. I found my first visit to be good value for money, and I shall be frequenting the centre in the future. There are courses available for both the beginner and the more advanced climber which are good value for money, and I shall hopefully be doing one of these before long.

Jody Ballard

Three members of the unit have already proved their competence and skill on the wall and have taken the test the qualifies them to lead on some of the tougher warehouse routes. Congratulations to Tim Andrews, Dave Frodin, and Phil Reid.



## The World Indoor Climbing Championships

After a break last year the British round of the World indoor championships returned to the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham. A dedicated group from the unit turned up on the last day to see what was on, and offer some advice to the international field assembled. The wall this year was really formidable, with a few vertical bits, but mostly overhangs. For the men's final there was a frightening section which would have taxed a fly, let alone a human.

The first event we witnessed, the men's semis saw four climbers out ahead of the rest. Not surprisingly, they were all French but co-incidentally they were all called Francois. There was some light relief before the two major finals with the British junior decider. A cocky fourteen year old shot up the wall, making it look really easy as he topped it, but the others all fell well before the summit.

The women's final was sadly without Isabelle Patissier, who had surprisingly failed to qualify, but world champion, the American Robyn Erbesfield was on top form, and though facing a strong French challenge, she eventually came through to win.

As expected the men's finals were tense and gripping, but climber after climber fell on the last section. Then World Cup champion over the last four years Francois Legrand, fourth in the semis made it to the top. The next two climbers failed, including Francois Petit who was sixteen when we first saw him three years ago. The final climber was Francois Lombard, who won at Birmingham in 1991. He had to reach the top to snatch the World Cup from Legrand. The tension was unbearable as he missed a vital hold at the crux, but somehow he regained control and hauled himself up to the top.

As ever the organisers were a little optimistic with their schedules, and the presentations started at 7.30 p.m. instead of the 4.30 p.m. as advertised. Still, it was a good day out, and we look forward to trying out bits of the wall when they arrive at the Warehouse.

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Did you know that in the first eight weeks of the National Lottery the number that came up most frequently (four times) was the number 44?

And did you know that the last event the 44th Glos V.S.U., swam in at the district gala (4 swimmers, 4 lengths) was event 44, and at the end we had 44 points? Spooky!!

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# District Swimming Gala

After several years when we were unable to find four people who wouldn't sink in the pool, we managed to enter a team in the Gala this year. On the evening of Saturday 28th January, a team consisting of Chris Malley, Phil Reid, Jody Ballard and Tim Andrews arrived (early!) at the Leisure Centre for the competition. As the evening progressed the team performed well, with some good individual performances - Tim being placed second in his first ever diving event, Chris and Phil being third in their events, and Jody, despite being unwell still managed fourth in his. Real success, however, came in the two relays which we won (the last by a few inches only!) Unfortunately we still ended up second by a couple of points behind the Beaufort Unit!

Congratulations to the team for their performance, and thanks to F.H., A.D.Q. and Mrs Arnold for their help during our training for the event.

Chris Malley

## **Summer Expedition 1995**

This year we hope to be returning to The Black Isle in Scotland for another working session at the Nansen centre. The visit will be during the first two weeks of the school summer holidays.

Full details will be available soon.



## From All Points



As ever over the festive season plenty of news from ex-members from various parts of Britain, and further afield. First, from the land of Oz, news of *Andy Chalkley*, whose wife, *Teena* has given birth to their first son, *James*. Andy, who gave up teaching some time ago to drive buses, now owns a fleet of twelve vehicles based at Perth, W.A. Also in the same area, *Mark and Fidelma Evans* are now (a) Australian citizens and (b) married. They actually returned to the northern hemisphere for the wedding last summer, which took place in Sligo, in Ireland.

Another traveller who has, we believe, passed through Oz and moved on to Thailand is *Yosh Cowmeadow*. A month ago he was about to start a trek into the Golden Triangle, the territory of opium growing mountain tribes. Well at least if he gets into any difficulties he can always contact the embassy in Bangkok, where he should be able to get assistance from *Ian Simmons*, who is first trade secretary at said establishment.

From nearer to home, *Mark Simmons*, still Edinburgh based, has been between contracts, but now starts in the West Lothian museum service. Our other Scottish outpost on the Highland border at Crieff was visited this summer by the group from the Unit which went up to Inverness. We were entertained to tea and scones by *Alan and Heather Robbins*. Alan, by the way, is thinking of coming down to the O.R. dinner in April.

Just south of the border in Keeganland, *Rob and Louise Dalton*, (and their ever increasing clan) have decided against another move south. Rob was offered another post on the SUN newspaper, but preferred to stay where it is all happening.

From the south of the country, news from Weymouth, where our computer experts hang out. *Jon and Ruth May*, continue their thriving business, and perhaps sometimes come into contact with *Keith and Sheila Franklin* -(so why the welsh inscription in the Christmas card then, Keith?)

News also from some of the 1989 renaissance group. *Matt Wilton* has been very helpful in advising us on some new climbing gear. Matt, when not studying Geology at Manchester is working either at Cotswold Camping in Manchester, or Field and Trek in Gloucester as a "technical expert".

*Brad Salter* remains in the Gloucester area and spends most of his spare time weight training and power lifting. Brad is a bit bigger than he used to be.....

*Mike Cheshire* was also back in town over Christmas, and sends a brief resume of his movements since leaving Rich's. *After my A levels at Gloscat, and a lack of appreciation for the finer points of the university entrance application system, I ended up in Luton (University of..) doing a B.A.(Hons) in Media Studies. I was there about a term when I decided it wasn't for me for reasons ranging from the curse and changes in its structure, to the size and shortfalls of the college. then there were the less than safe living blocks built for us in the worst area of the town, not overblessed with scenic bits to start with! I finally made the difficult decision to leave, but happily finished and passed my first year, laeving a lot of really good friends.*

*After much hassle and letter writing, I ended up where I am now, the College of St Mark & St John (Marjon for short) in Plymouth. It is a small, friendly, informal college on the edge of Dartmoor, doing mainly sports and teaching degrees. (Anyone interested can find out more from me via F.H.) The worst bit*

*was all the freshers activities & drinking second time round!*

Making a briefer visit to Gloucester than usual over the festive season was *Paul Kingsbury*. Paul has been on a field course in Majorca - all right for some! Earlier in the year Paul spent some time in Poland - perhaps we may hear something in a later edition on his travels there.

From an earlier age, when venture scouts were venture scouts and small brightly coloured glass beads were small brightly coloured glass beads, news recently from one of our men of Kent, *John Sweet*. As John's young family is growing up he has become active in the P.T.A. at the local school, and is looking for fund raising ideas - aren't we all! John has continued his interest in badminton, still playing, and is secretary of the thriving club in his neck of the woods. Could it really be twenty years ago that John was a member of the winning team in the Cotswold Marathon?

More brothers in the news. In the summer *Paddy and Mandi Smith* became the proud parents of *Andrew*. However this was not before brother *Ali*, and *Penny* pipped them to the post by producing their son, *Ben*. Now both Paddy and Ali are living in Upton Bishop - Paddy working with a firm based at Much Marcle, whilst Ali is working on the farm with elder brother *Tim*.

Also on the move, *Simon and Tracey Williams*. Simon still works for the same Geophysics company in London, but now commutes from Hampshire, whilst Tracey works in Winchester. Still a keen sailor, he spent some time with Irish friends sailing off Greece, flying both British and Irish flags at an appropriate historical moment. Younger brother, *Dave*, is now working in Gloucester again for Rhone-Poulenc, after a spell at Avonmouth. A contemporary of Dave, *Jason Stone*, is also back in Gloucester for a while before going to do an outdoor pursuit course in Devon later in the year. Both Dave and Jason hope to be active with the unit in the near future.

News from the N.H.S. *Ian and Dori Fletcher* have recently celebrated the the first birthday of son Keiran. Ian has recently gained an M.A. from Swansea in Philosophy and Ethics in Health Care. Still teaching nurses, he is now working for the Avon and Gloucestershire College of Health, one of the biggest N.H.S. education institutes in the country. Ian is concerned at some of the "rationalisation" going on in his area of health care, as he puts it - a nice word for redundancies... *"At the end of the day it will turn out to be a matter of economics. the sad part about all of it is that the economics (as with most areas that this government touches) won't taking into account quality. You can't get good quality education on the cheap!"*

Our other leading N.H.S. operative, *Jer Hobbs*, is still down in Bath. Jer says that things are changing, and there is less and less nursing and more and more red tape associated with his job. Like Ian he has grave doubts about many of the changes that are going on in the service. Jer, by the way continues to make comebacks at soccer, despite suspect knees, lack of breath and approaching middle age!

## Venture 44

Issue number 77 will be out during June. All contributions are welcome. If you do anything interesting let us know. You can always let us know if you don't do anything interesting as well.

## 100 Club

Winners over the past few months;

September	Mrs V. Calvert
October	J.D. Holdaway
November	P. Champion
December	J.T. Penry-Williams
January	J. Sweet
February	K. Franklin
March	B. Herbert

If you are a 100 Club member you should receive with this issue of Venture 44 an up to date certificate of membership giving the date when the next subscription is due. If you are not a member, you wont get a certificate, so you can work out what to do.....

### UNIT BANK ACCOUNT

The executive committee recently decided to change our banking arrangements, removing our meagre funds from the Co-op Bank, and moving to Lloyds who are offering us more favourable terms. In future all cheques for the unit should be made payable to

G.C.C. Sir Thomas Rich School - Venture Scout.



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