



VENTURE 44

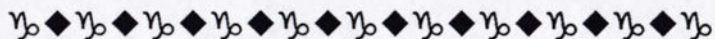
The magazine of the 44th Gloucester Venture Scout Unit
- Sir Thomas Rich's School

MARCH 1996

NUMBER 78

UNIT OFFICERS

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Chairman | Tim Andrews |
| Secretary | Mark Gilmore |
| Quartermaster | Phil Reid |
| Editor V44 | Jody Ballard |
| Sports & Social | Andy Clifford |
| Sec. | Gaz Edwards |
| Treasurer | James Cook |
| Leaders | F. Henderson P. Brown |



Editorial

Welcome, friends to another edition of the V44. Now that everyone has recovered from Christmas and New Year parties, we have decided to throw together another copy of this magazine for you. At the school, the building of the new part of the school continues now the builders have finished their tea break. The infamous Cotswold Marathon has just taken place, and the swimming gala, came and went at the end of January. The practising for both these events is now over for a few months at least. Planning for the summer expedition to Norway is now in full swing , along with a return trip to Nansen in Scotland at Easter. We look forward to seeing many of you again at the Old Richian's Dinner on 30th March 1996. Now over to the Chairman who has a few words he would like to say, (keep it short Tim).

Review of 1995

Okay then, here we go. 1995 has been a good year for the unit with it continuing to go from strength to strength. In the last year we have seen a lot of things, including the installation of electricity in the hut, thanks to assistance from the Parents Association, as without their help this would not have been possible. It just remains for me to wish you all the best for 1996.

The Scout Swimming Gala

Six o'clock on the 27th January 1996 was the culmination of months (?) of training which we had put in for the Scouts Swimming Gala. Many a lunch time had been spent being coached by Mrs. Arnold on the best swimming techniques and this evening put all this training to the test.

Although many of the Unit had been involved in training for the swimming gala, due to circumstances beyond our control (Tim's Dad was celebrating his 50th, many happy returns), only one team was entered for the gala.

Prior to the actual races, there was a diving competition which Phil represented the Unit in. He achieved 3rd place. The first race to take place was Daniel Wright's frontcrawl race. After waiting for all the younger scout races to take place, Daniel took his place on the blocks and after the whistle went, launched himself into the water. After much shouting by the three other members of the team and the V.S.L., Dan finished 3rd, a good start to the competition.

As the evening continued the time for my breaststroke race came round. Although I actually thought I was quite good at breaststroke I was quite nervous. Getting onto the blocks and listening to the shouts of the crowd intensified this and although I gave it my all I was disappointed with the 4th place I achieved. Nevertheless we had to continue and although we weren't in the lead we knew we were well co-ordinated and would do well in the relays.

Jody Ballard was next to represent the unit, in the backstroke race. He was up against strong competition and managed to achieve a commendable 4th place.

The relay races were next. Everyone tried their best and this showed with 2nd place in both the 4x1 freestyle and the medley relays. After this, all we could do was wait for the scores to be counted. After some time we found out we had come second which we were very pleased with, considering we were expecting to come near the lower end of the positions.

An enjoyable evening was had by all, and next year we expect to improve considerably and be serious contenders for 1st place. Thanks go to the V.S.L. and Mrs. Arnold for giving up their time to help us train.

| <u>RACE</u> | <u>COMPETITOR(S)</u> | <u>POS.</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Frontcrawl | D. Wright | 3rd |
| Breaststroke | M. Gilmore | 4th |
| Backstroke | J. Ballard | 4th |
| 4x1 Freestyle | Dan, Phil, Mark & Jody | 2nd |
| Medley | Phil, Mark & Jody | 2nd |
| Diving | P. Reid | 3rd |
| Overall team position | | 2nd |

Mark Gilmore
Team Captain

"Are we nearly there yet?"

The 1996 Cotswold Marathon.

This year we entered two teams for the Cotswold Marathon, both of which did well, one being fourth and the other, minus one member also completed the whole marathon. So here are their reports and one from the Javelin (Hucclecote)V.S.U. who also competed.

After the 1995 Cotswold Marathon we all vowed not to do the 1996 Cotswold Marathon. However due to excessive pressure from other Units in the form of "quitters", "slackers", "losers" and "I bet we...", we ended up doing it again.

Training began just after Christmas and due to over eating and the general lack of regular exercise we didn't quite feel we were ready to walk the gruelling 38 mile course. After a few training sessions practising various parts of the route we were feeling a lot better. The training regime also included swimming and circuit training to improve stamina.

Finally the weekend of the Marathon arrived, the team was ready and the kit was checked. Fortunately the weather was looking fairly settled and the temperature was just about right. Team one which consisted of myself (Phil), Tim Andrews and Mark Gilmore, had a very good start. After keeping the pace high by running and walking fast, we were in joint first position by the time we reached the half way point where the Scout teams finished. This took us a total of 3½hrs which all

the team were pleased with. We continued with the fast pace and eventually finished the Marathon in 9hrs 19min, but dropped back to fourth place overall and second in the under 18 section. All of this team received a boot trophy for their efforts.

Congratulatos to all the walkers for a good all round effort.

Phil Reid
Team Captain

When there was a gap in one of the teams for the Cotswold Marathon, I thought it might be a good idea to give myself a boost in confidence. So apprehensively and anxiously I accepted. I had everything I needed and thought I was ready. Little did I know how tough the event actually was.

For the fist few miles it was great, the atmosphere and feeling were superb. Then after the hills the area we had not been before came, and we got lost, wandering around Upton-St.-Leonards. We quickly found our way again and ended up hastily on the top of Chosen Hill. After Green Way the pain started, but we all pushed on and then it decreased.

The disaster! I stepped on a rock between check points ten and eleven. A bandage was put on it at check point eleven and it felt okay. It was re-dressed at check point twelve and we walked on to thirteen, but heavy rain and a soggy map in the dead of night made us lose our way about five times. After this I fell again and hobbled

home to check point thirteen to retire, RELUCTANTLY. The rest of my team joined up with another team and walked home in a respectable time of 15hrs. Whilst they finished I was asleep on the floor of Murray Hall cursing my ankle. However, I will definitely be back next year to avenge my defeat and those damned rocks.

Oliver Scarf

Once again myself and three other mugs from Javelin V.S.U. (Hucclecote) competed in the annual Cotswold Marathon. My team which consisted of myself, Chris Wilkinson, James Harley and Andy Sewell. With target set of 11hrs to beat from our debut in the 38 miler last year, hopes were high to go sub 10hrs.

As ever I was raising money for the Cheltenham, based Colbalt Unit, helping to crack cancer. This year's total was £150. Many thanks to those who sponsored me. As conditions held up this year for the later stages, we managed a well deserved time of 9hrs 41min coming in an overall fifth.

The good conditions this year meant that the competitive walkers in the Marathon came in with impressive times, these though were a far cry from the infamous Stevens brothers 5hrs. Consistency prevailed and for the second year running in the senior Marathon, Javelin V.S.U. picked up a boot.

Dan Tiffney
Javelin V.S.U.

Dominican Republic, Here we come!

As chairwoman of the Beaufort Venture Scout Unit, I was asked by the Editor to write a report on our Unit's activities. This year our Unit hasn't been doing its usual activities, for we have been planning and fundraising for our biggest ever Summer Expedition.

Every year since 1982 our Unit has organised an overseas expedition. This year 52 members and ex-members, are heading for the Dominican Republic to build a school in a deprived area, this will take three weeks to complete. Although the fundraising and planning has taken up a great deal of our time, we competed in and won both male and female Venture categories in the district swimming gala. We also mustered up eight teams for the Cotswold Marathon.

Our fundraising has so far totalled over twenty-four thousand pounds, a thousand of which was donated by our patron Michelle Collins (Cindy Beale from Eastenders). We still have sixteen thousand pounds to raise though. This should not take too long hopefully with all the Unit's up and coming events.

Many thanks to all the local & national businesses who have supported our Unit in its fundraising.

Felicity Birch
Chairwoman
Beaufort V.S.U.

Moral Leadership Course 1996

From the 23rd to the 26th of February, 13 members of the lower sixth, including members of the V.S.U., went on a four day Moral Leadership Course, held at the Biblins residential lodge, which is situated by the River Wye in the Forest Of Dean. The aim of this course is personal development, the leaders try to bring out our skills such as self assertiveness, leadership, being able to overcome our fears, and show our confidence, through teamwork. This is all to make sure though, that we don't give out too many detentions and abuse our powers as Observators and Prefects!!!

So what did we do? Well, on the first evening we participated in a navigation exercise just to make sure we could all read a map and use a compass, (after all, there were a number of Ventures from other Units as well as ours). On the route we did, one team managed to go off in the wrong direction, but with the help of a bit of good compass work on their part and a search party on our part, they eventually got back to the centre before 6:00pm. Our main concern though was that they could cook better than they could read a map, as they were to prepare and cook the evening meal. Luckily they were good cooks and we sat down to and enjoyed a very hot chicken Balti. This certainly helped to warm us and the lodge up as the heating had ceased to work!

At about 11:30pm we all started to head off for bed. At this point, Matt our main leader, intervened with the words. "Actually we're not staying here, tonight we're spending the night in a cave". Yeah, right we are,

we all thought and all concerned continued to walk towards their rooms. Matt's next comment was, "No, seriously, we are." So, much to our disgust we all packed our warmest clothes, sleeping bags and torches, at which point the heavens opened up and we proceeded to one of the mini-buses in the rain.

When we arrived we all got out of the mini-bus and walked hastily to the entrance of the caves, a short distance away. This short walk involved climbing down a rock gully to get there. This was our first test of team work. The first thing we noticed upon entering this cave, was the temperature. Being that they are 12°C all year round, meant that they were a good deal warmer than the air outside which was also warmer than the lodge. We were all settled by about 1:30am and soon got to sleep.

Over the weekend we did loads of problem solving exercises. The main exercise was a mock-up of a mountain rescue, where we had to find an injured walker and stretcher them back to base. Tilting and jolting a stretcher through knee deep mud certainly put me off ever being an injured walker! We eventually got back to the lodge at 2:00am and then I and two others had to get up at 6:45am to cook a huge breakfast for the others.

On the Sunday we went caving in Wales, it was absolutely brilliant. We all got thoroughly soaked and caked in mud, but we still enjoyed it and everyone managed to get all the way through, including the taller ones like me, with a little encouragement. Deep inside these caves we all did a chant, which is a good way of relaxing the group and getting in tune with the Earth (so

they say, Ed.) I know it sounds corny (what are they on, Ed), but it does really work! On Sunday evening we had a special last meal with pizza and mulled wine. We then had the rest of the evening to ourselves. Most of us used this time to catch up on some much needed sleep.

On Monday morning we cleaned the lodge as fast as was physically possible, had a debrief of the two main activities of the weekend, then came the hard bit. We had to fill out a personal assessment form to see if we had improved in any way during the weekend. I was pleased to find that my capability of working in a team had markedly improved.

When we had all finished at the Biblins Lodge, we went over to the Wilderness Centre (like Biblins, only bigger and warmer) to clean all the caving kit and do a couple of exercises. These included climbing on the indoor wall. In the end though it was time to pack up and go home, so we boarded the mini-bus and promptly fell asleep.

We arrived back at school, unloaded our mountains of wet muddy kit, said good-bye to our leaders, and tired but happy we went our separate ways. All in all I thought the course was very useful and taught us a lot about ourselves and how we can improve, not only ourselves but each other. The most important two things we learnt were that communication is vital and how to work effectively in a team.

Daniel Wright

Ski Trip - Robinswood

On Wednesday 28th February, a small group of experienced skiers, including the V.S.L. went to Gloucester Ski Centre on the side of Robinswood Hill. Many of the participants had recently returned from a week long residential trip to the Serre Chevalier Ski Resort in the South of France. The soft powdering snow on the runs meant that skiing was fast and competitive, making it the highlight of the visit. There was the chance to try the 80 degree olympic run as well. Avoiding trees now became of greater importance than style and posture.

However, now we were on the dry slopes of Gloucester, looking out over the countryside from the views at the top of Robinswood Hill. We let our imaginations run wild. Gone was the soft powdery snow, replaced by the more restrictive bristles. However, with a reduction in speed, we were able to focus on refining our parallel turns, posture and style. It was a great afternoon, and all those who came thoroughly enjoyed the relaxing afternoon. This session was just a taster to see if in future groups could be brought from the Unit for instruction by the centre staff.

Tristain Meredith

From All Points

We always seem to be reporting on weddings in the Smith family. This time it is Ali, who will be marrying Penny on April 13th at Much Marcle, where he now farms. Another ex-member of Ali's generation (well almost), has recently become a father: Gar Ross and Joanne have a son, Daniel. Other contemporaries of Gar have been spotted recently, including Rod Tapp, on leave from the submarine bases of Western Scotland where he plies his underwater trade. Rod surfaced in the 'Wagon & Horses' in the company of Chris Ellis, who works for the government at GCHQ. Chris still lives in Hucclecote, but George Evans doesn't, having moved to work in London as a Geological Engineer.

In the last issue, Steve Clutterbuck was mentioned as a teacher seeking employment, so it is my pleasure to report that he is now working in a comprehensive school at Malvern. Steve was also a member of our successful team that won the most recent P.A. Quiz Night at school.

Another ex-member soon to be back in permanent employment is Mark Simmons. Mark and Dorothy have been in Edinburgh for some years, but he has been on a series of short term contracts. He will be back at Perth Museum as assistant keeper (Natural History), and hopes to be a Dad at the end of March. Brother Ian, still our man in Bangkok keeps in touch, and seems to know more about what is going on in Gloucester than the many of us who live here!

Another recent addition to the 'Parent's Guild' is Keith Franklin, still working in electronics at Weymouth, who became a Dad last November. A contemporary of Keith's, Phil Champion, is keeping up with the Cotswold Marathon tradition. Phil was a member of the team that set the Unit's record time of just over seven hours nearly twenty years ago. He is now in the Long Distance Walkers Association, and has recently completed two 100 mile challenge walks.

News from Richard Kerswell, who is moving from the North East to take a post in the Maths Department at Bristol University, and from John Pepperell, who still works for Land Rover, but has moved down to Defford near Pershore.

Pat Phillips remains in Gloucester, but has changed his job, and is now managing a fleet of lorries of another large company in the South West. Which one, we do not know, for he has yet to tell us...

Back to the East... The mystery deepens, Rich Drew is still in Vietnam, working for a leading construction firm, and on his days off is seeking the elusive Cowmeadow. However a cryptic Christmas Card posted in England suggests that the bird has flown - any information greatly received!

Is Brian Symcox about to get married? How can we stop all these rumours?... By getting in touch with yours truly.

I hope to be seeing a number of you on March 30th when more news will be gleaned for Venture 44, issue 79!

F. H.

From the Archives, The Log Book Of The Venture

23rd March 1957

Started at 1020 hrs. Paddled to the Junction, meeting one Danish ship, and being passed by a Regent Linnet. We went about a mile along the Stroudwater Canal, passing under Walk Bridge in an undignified pose. To save a portage we transferred to the River Frome, then back to the canal. We reached Bristol Road where we were forced to remove the canoes and carry them some way. We re-embarked in a channel about two feet wide and made slow progress pulling ourselves along by the reeds. At Eastington Mill we pulled the canoes over a field to the Frome. Blockages caused by dead branches and overhanging trees didn't help, and when we were attacked by swans we decided to return. We made a portage at the weir and eventually reached the Junction again. Rain was now falling, and it was getting dark, as it was 1900 hrs. We set off for Gloucester, but were challenged by the Pilot for not having lights, so we increased our speed and reached Griggs at 2100 hrs, tired and very wet....

F. Henderson (aged 16)

100 CLUB

Join the 100 club and help support the 44th Gloucester Venture Scout Unit. For only £12 per year you stand the chance of winning £25 per month. It couldn't be simpler, just fill in the form below and send it to us.

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Send to the 44th Gloucester Venture Scout Unit, c/o Mr. Frank Henderson, Sir Thomas Rich's School, Oakleaze, Longlevens, Gloucester. GL2 0LF

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please make all cheques payable to: GCC Sir Thomas Rich's 44th Venture Scout Unit.

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The 44th Gloucester Venture Scout Unit would like to thank all those who have contributed to this magazine and who have made our activities possible.

44th Gloucester V.S.U.
Sir Thomas Rich's School
Oakleaze
Longlevens
Gloucester
GL2 0LF

Tel: 01452 528467

Fax: 01452 382432