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JUL.96

VENTURE 44

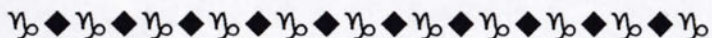
The magazine of the 44th Gloucester Venture Scout Unit - Sir
Thomas Rich's School

JULY 1996

NUMBER 79

UNIT OFFICERS

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



EDITORIAL

Welcome, to the summer editon of V44. You may have strained to pick this bundle of joys off your doormat this morning, after all it is a bit of a big one for us. At the school the new buildings are nearing completion and will be up and running ready for September. The external G.C.S.E. exams are over now and the remaining members of the unit have just been put through their paces in the schools internal exams.

Within the unit we have seen a few changes in numbers recently, we would like to extend a big warm welcome to our ten new members who recently joined us from Year 9 (3rd year). The Unit has also seen a new uniform, ready for its expedition to Norway. Now once more I hand you over to our Chairman, for his little word.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

This term as you will see has been an eventful time for the Unit, the most notable being the doubling in size of the unit with the introduction of the current Year 9. We look forward to continuing success with them in September. Our expedition to Norway is looming in only one and a half weeks. I can say from all of us going that we are all getting excited, most notably me, being it's my first time abroad. Just about everything is ready for our departure on the 24th July, it just goes for me to wish everyone a good summer.

Tim Andrews
Chairman

SCOTLAND, EASTER 1996

A DIARY - BY TIM ANDREWS

At Easter a small contingent of Venture Scouts from the Unit headed to the far north reaches of Scotland with the V.S.L. to do a bit of building. All went well as you shall see if you read the diary that I kept.

MONDAY 1ST APRIL

Today we left Gloucester at 9:45am, and travelled the eight hours to our first destination, Crieff. After arriving at 6:00pm we were treated to fish & chips, before proceeding to our lodgings in a field, courtesy of Alan Robbins. Upon setting up our tents, we found that the V.S.L. had a few pieces missing from his and we had to do a mix and match job on ours. A tent for the V.S.L. was very kindly provided by Alan.

TUESDAY 2ND APRIL

Today we headed away from our base at Crieff to visit another ex-member, Mark Simmons in Perth. Mark who works in the museum in Perth very kindly showed us around the complex. After a quick sandwich lunch we headed off looking for some snow. Finding it on the side of Loch Tay we proceeded to get very excited and wet!

WEDNESDAY 3RD APRIL

Today the V.S.L. took us up our first snow peaked Munro, (my second Munro though). It was a hard slog up Schiehallion (1053 metres), however we all made it to the top before it started snowing!

THURSDAY 4TH APRIL

Today we said good-bye to Alan Robbins, and made our way even further north to Black Hill Farm, Nr. Dingwall. We arrived at dinner time and started on our task for our visit straight away. The task was to build a Polytunnel (a huge long plastic greenhouse). Why? I here you all say, because it's a lot colder up there than it is down in Gloucestershire.

FRIDAY 5TH APRIL (GOOD FRIDAY)

Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to work we go. We stayed at Black Hill Farm all of today and worked on our wonderful Polytunnel.

SATURDAY 6TH APRIL

It was another day for us working on the Polytunnel, plenty needed doing and plenty was done. In the evening we played our usual game of Monopoly and watched videos with the others.

SUNDAY 7TH APRIL (EASTER SUNDAY)

This was to be our day of rest, travelling from our base on the East coast, over to Ullapool on the West coast for the day. It was just as sunny today as it had been for the beginning of our stay. We paddled our feet in the water, (it was a bit cold for me though) and skimmed stones before driving back to Black Hill Farm, stopping off at sites of interest on the way.

MONDAY 8TH APRIL

In the morning we worked on the Polytunnel, it is nearly finished now. This afternoon we went to the tourist resort of Aviemore in the Cairngorm Mountains. Here we went to an indoor climbing wall and spent the afternoon there. We all had a great day out.

TUESDAY 9TH APRIL

Work continued on the polytunnel all day. The weather is looking slightly more greyer, T-shirts were required today, but no rain yet though.

WEDNESDAY 10TH APRIL

Our final day of work on the polytunnel. Plenty to be done by all. The V.S.L. and Ben Davies put up the final door on their end and we put up the final window on ours. The polythene was made secure a wall of earth and stones (very posh). The weather was refusing to hold out and it began to rain just as we finished. It didn't leak though, which is exceptionally good for us.

In the evening the Polytunnel was officially declared open by Els on behalf of the Nansen Society. There was a barbecue in the rain, which wasn't helped by Jody and Danny who insisted on having a water fight..

THURSDAY 11TH APRIL

Today it was time for us to return to Gloucester. After rising early we said good-bye to everyone and thanked them for the great time we had. On the journey back all was going well until the exhaust on Frank's van played up, having stopped for it to be fixed, we were only an hour late though.

Many thanks to the V.S.L. for taking us up and to the Nansen Society and Alan Robbins for being such exceptional hosts to us. We look forward to a return visit in the future.

Tim Andrews
Chairman

IT JUST KEPT ON GETTING HIGHER!

On our visit to Scotland, it was my first attempt at a Munro. I was looking forward to the prospect of reaching the summit of Schiehallion at 1053 metres, the weather was generally pleasant, with some snow clouds in the distance. We began early though to make sure our attempt was not cut short by the weather looming on the horizon. Leaving the minibus with our supplies, we headed into boggy moorland along a well walked path. As we gradually got higher it got colder until we eventually reached snow. Whilst walking on through the snow, which was hard work, it began to snow. The pace was quickened to take account of this new obstacle which we had encountered, finally we got nearer the top, and began finding continual 'false summits/peaks'. Then eventually reaching the real summit we stopped for a short break, consuming our Mars Bars™, during which we were joined for a short while by a friendly gentleman and his spaniel.

Our descent was next on the agenda. Having brought some fertiliser bags to hasten our decent, we found no use for them at the present time. We walked on down through the snow, it seemed so much harder going down, especially on the knees and ankles. About half way down we had the treat of our stay at Crieff. A steep, smooth snow covered expanse lay ahead of us. Not wishing to miss out on such a good opportunity, Tim and I proceeded to get our fertiliser bags out and have a great deal of fun, following in the sledge-tracks of previous walkers. The ice-axe I had on my ruck sack was acting as a brake though, so Mark very kindly added it to his load, and off Tim and I shot down the mountain. We did however have to walk again because much to our disgust, the snow had been inconsiderate and melted. I can say after all that I can't wait to do my next Munro, especially if it was as good as this one.

Jody Ballard
Editor

FROM ALL POINTS

Since the last issue there has been a major gathering of ex-members at the Old Richian's dinner, held at the end of March. From far and wide they came, from the Highlands of Scotland, the gardens of Kent, the gleaming spires of Cambridge, the coal mines of South Wales (lots from there!), the Home Counties, and Much Marcle.

Alan Robbins travelled the furthest and together with **Row Lloyd** and **Steve Chalkley** decided after the event to explore the vibrant night life of our fair city. Okay, gents, I shall not be going into detail... **Dave Williams** and **Julian Williams** (not related) were there, as were **Paddy Smith** and **Ali Smith** (who are)... **Gareth Ross** appeared, although he didn't seem to be on the official list! From the dusty world of the museum service came **Chris Collins** and **Simon Hawkins**. The world of building engineers was represented by **Brian Herbert**, and **John Penry-Williams** provided some academic gravitas (tasted nicer than the beer, which was dispensed by **Phil Brown**). Pity about the speech though!!!

Referring back to the last issue, congratulations to **Mark & Dorothy Simmons**, proud parents of Michael Peter, who was born a few days after some members of the Unit visited Mark in Perth. Also a rumour has now become fact - **Brian Symcox** is getting married this summer as reported in Venture 44 No. 78!

Other recent news from **Rob Champion**, still very busy with his horticultural business, about younger brother **Phil**, who is now a partner in an expanding landscape gardening concern in the West Midlands. Another local ex-member who has been in touch again recently is **Mike Barton**, at present changing jobs. Back in Gloucester at least for the time being, having changed jobs, is **Ian Weir**. Ian is planning to return to the Manchester area in the near future, and has news of his old pal **Paul Venn**, who is believed to be somewhere in Germany working in the building trade. Also in Europe at the moment is **Jason Stone**, working as a canoe instructor during the summer.

Nearer to home, I visited **Ian Fletcher** and his family in their delightful house in Whiteshill. Ian is still in the business of teaching nurses, but because of the (continual) reorganisation of the health service

he has to spend some of his time at the University of the West of England, in Bristol. Our congratulations go to **Matt Wilton**, who has just got his honours degree in Geology at Manchester, and best luck to **Brads Salter** who has decided to try his hand at the Royal Marines. Finally a contribution from one of Matt and Brad's contemporaries, **Mike Cheshire**.

F. Henderson

'AN ADVENTURE AROUND EUROPE'

An adventure around Europe was something I had wanted to do and had been planning for years, and finally I had found someone ready to commit themselves, a friend and now girlfriend Emma. We bought all the books and guides, planned out a route, and at the tail-end of August, we set off from Southampton on the overnight ferry, bound for Cherbourg. We had decided not to stop in Paris after mixed reports and because it was still high season, so we crossed on the Metro and caught the TGV to Lyon, a quiet cosmopolitan city and the first stop of our trip. Finding a hotel wasn't hard, and we got one for around £12.50 a night by the station, overlooking a park which turned out to be the best one of the trip.

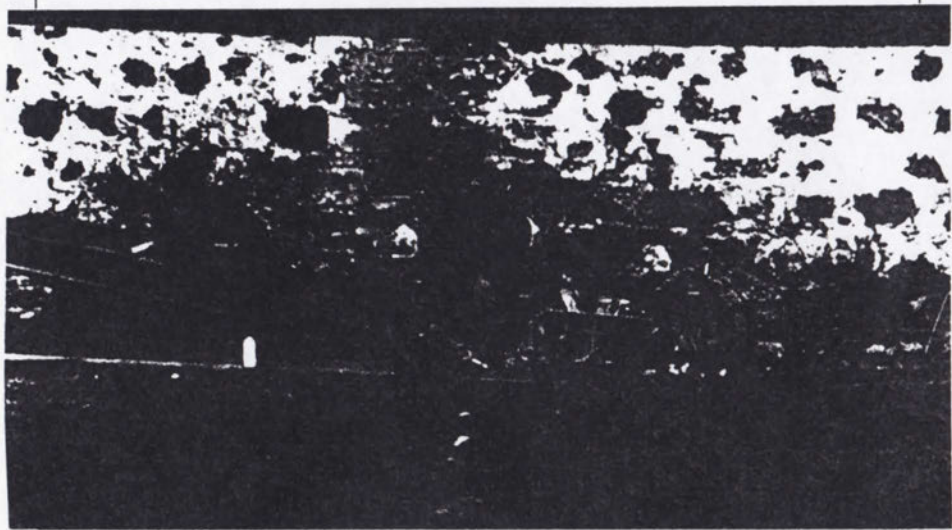
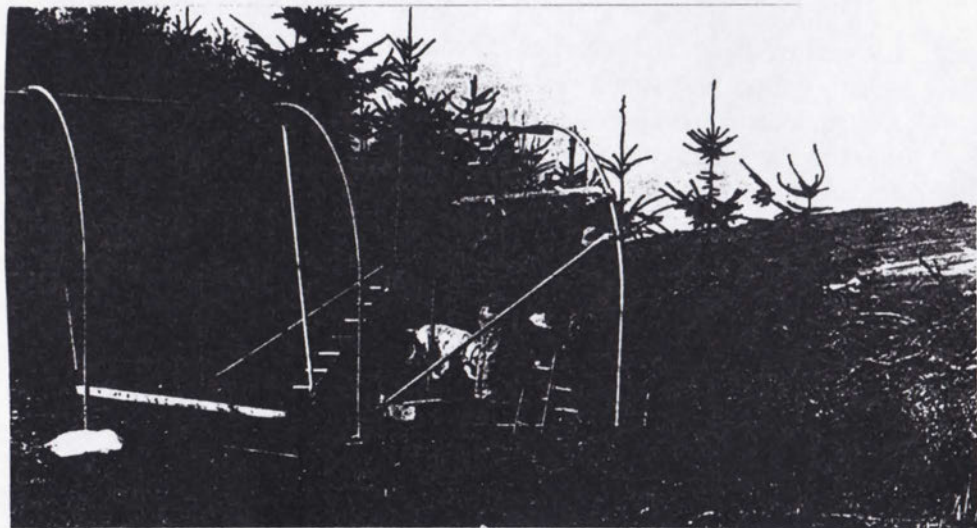
After a couple of nights, we moved onto the South coast and Nice to our only bit of beach-lazing of the trip, passing through St. Tropez and Cannes in glorious sunshine, the train passed along the coast. The beach was pebbly, but standable, and I spent my 20th birthday lazing in the shade and looking out to sea. An overnighter all the way around the coast to Rome was next, doing all the usual tourist spots but which are still impressive. The Vatican was overwhelming. Best was the food though! Next, north, and inland, to Florence, timeless city and home of the Uffizi Gallery which houses Michelangelo's 'David' amongst others. Verona, a quiet town about an hour west of Venice was the surprise of the trip, a beautiful place with an arena and fountain in the main square, and ideal for a honeymoon.

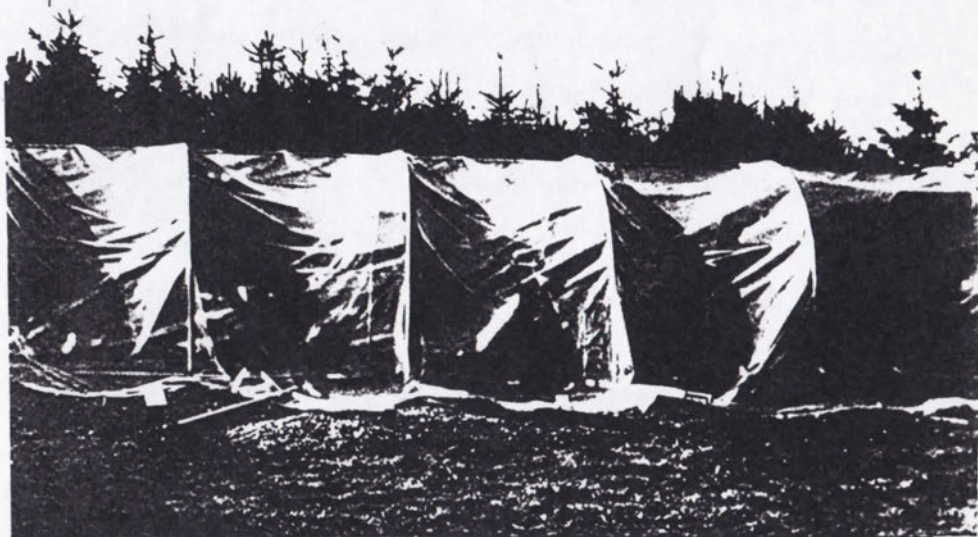
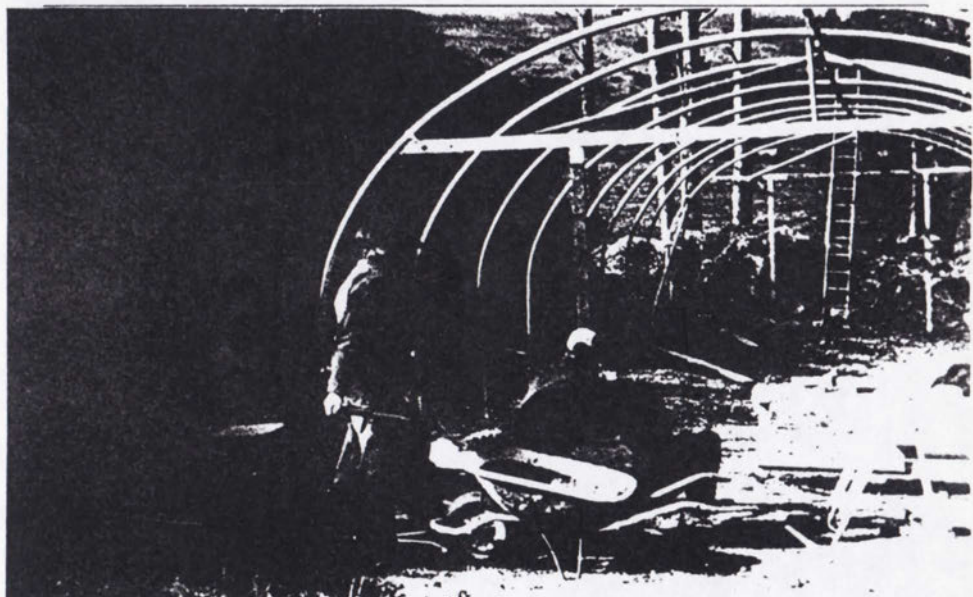
A sad good-bye to Italy, a 'loveable rogue'. Budapest was next, but getting there and avoiding Croatia meant going via Vienna in Austria. Budapest was a real culture shock, where East meets West. Accommodation was provided by a sweet lady who, like so many others, lets travellers stay with her, a major relief on the sleeping problem. Budapest was dirty and crowded, but also unthreatening and historical, a bit like their trains! From now on, we were heading West again, to Prague, the capital of Bohemia. We stayed again in someones house, arranged through an agency, in the hills above the city. We liked it so much, we ended up staying a week here. Prague is so alive and happy, it's 900 year old architecture contrasted with the mostly young population from all around the world. Plus, the beer is good and cheap!

Our last main stop was Berlin, but after arriving there to see the prices and the welcome, we nearly went on to Brussels. We stayed though, but Berlin is very expensive and cold in its attitude, and a bit of a disappointment considering its reputation. On our way back to the ferry port in France and with a day to spare, we stayed overnight in Bayeux to see the famous Tapestry and relax in what is the French equivalent of Bourton-on-the-Water. A perfect end to a perfect trip. We hadn't been mugged, missed a train, got lost or had a (big) argument and we'd seen of central Europe's best sites.

I'd recommend the experience to anyone, and if anyone wants to know where or where not to go they can contact me through F.H..

Mike Cheshire





MOUNTAIN BIKING - FOREST OF DEAN

Following the request of some of our new members, we decided to go mountain biking in the Forest of Dean,. Having ridden the route last year and found it to be incomplete we decided it would be nice to do the whole route this time, and to get someone to check that it had been built before we went. So on the Monday, Andrew and Jody spent their evening cycling the last part of the course. Finding that it had been completed we decided to go ahead with the visit, twelve intrepid cyclists left Gloucester for the Wednesday evenings activity.

Upon parking up in a disused quarry that had been turned into a mountain biking and motorcycle course, we left in our group, leaving the V.S.L. with the bus. It was mainly downhill at the beginning, along an old railway track bed, Though as we progressed on we went deeper into the forest and encountered gravel tracks and low hanging branches. Then came our first hills and our one wrong turn. We eventually got to cycle along the new bit of the track which had only recently been completed. Everyone enjoyed themselves and we look forward to going again.

Phil Reid
Quartermaster

1996 CLIMBATHON FOR HELP THE AGED

On Saturday 29th June a group of six from the Unit took part in a sponsored climbathon for Help the Aged. The team of Tim, Phil, Daniel Wright, Alex Dorn, Adam Griffiths and myself climbed for one hour at The Warehouse, in Parliament Street, Gloucester.

Our task was to scale the thirteen metre high walls as many times as possible in the hour. As soon as the clock started we were off. In, three pairs we belayed and climbed alternately, climbing at a very quick rate.

I was paired with Phil and between us we managed to climb the wall a total of fifty-four times in the hour. Between the whole team we climbed the walls a total of one-hundred and thirty-three times - a total height of 1729 metres. (Apparently about one eighth of the total height climbed at the climbathon - not bad for one hours intensive climbing).

We managed to raise around £180 for Help the Aged, and enjoyed ourselves immensely, although we were a little tired at the end. In all, a beneficial afternoon,

Mark Gilmore
Secretary

EXPLORING THE SOUTHERN LAKES

On 20th June the Sports & Social Secretaries (myself and Gareth Edwards) went on a weeks pre-planned walking holiday in the Lake District. We hoped that as well as being on holiday to celebrate the end of our GCSE's, it would also be our training for the Sun Run (which took place the day after we returned).

The week consisted of six days walking and our accommodation was provided by Youth Hostels. We took the train up to Windermere (a 5hr journey) and walked the three miles to the nearest Youth Hostel as our first bit of exercise. The next day we walked to Hawkshead, crossing Windermere by the Bownes Ferry. The hostel there is a large Regency mansion originally home of the Lakeland novelist Frances Brett Young.

Day two was the trek to Coniston via the beautiful Tarn Howes (best caught early in the morning, before the rush of tourists). We reached the town early in the afternoon so decided to hire a rowing boat for an hour - definitely a worthwhile thing to do. That night we stayed in the more remote Coniston Coppermines hostel which was an idyllic location at the foot of The Old Man. This small hostel was probably the nicest we stayed in, and we would strongly recommend a night there if Coniston is en route of a journey in the Lakes.

The following day we took advantage of the sunshine and climbed The Old Man from which there was a spectacular 360° view. Visibility was good enough for us to see Sellafield in the distance. We followed the ridge on to Swirl How and then

ascended Wetherlam before before going back down for a night at the other Coniston hostel (Holly Howe).

Our next day took us up to Grasmere where we stayed the night at the Butterlip Howe hostel at Waterhead - one mile south of Ambleside. We used our extra time to explore all the climbing and outdoor shops Ambleside.

Our last day was quite overcast and grey so we chose to do a mid-level circular walk from Ambleside - climbing Wansfell Pike from which the whole of Windermere lake is visible. The next day we walked the four miles to Windermere station before the return journey home.

We both thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and were sorry to have to go back home. However we were extremely luck with the weather with beautiful sunshine and perfect walking temperatures throughout the week. Our walks averaged about ten miles each day which was not strenuous but we were carrying 65 litre rucksacks and we also wanted time to explore the areas where we stayed. I would recommend doing a trip like this to anyone, as it is a great way to get to know the Southern Lakes and was also a good holiday after the stress of exams! We would definety do something like it again and are already considering Europe after the A Levels! If anyone would like information on this trip do not hesitate to contact me through the Unit.

Andrew Clifford
Sports & Social Secretary

WORK EXPERIENCE

At the end of March just before the Unit travelled to Scotland, the members of it in the Sixth form went on a weeks work experience. They ended up mountains (metaphorically speaking), down drains, on the road with blues and twos, in an architects office and in A&E at Cheltenham. Here are what some of them thought of it.

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (N.R.A.)

For my week of work experience I went to the Environment Agency (formerly the N.R.A.) at Tewkesbury. I had an enjoyable week there, visiting many sites and departments including: Environmental, Recreation, Pollution Control, Flood Defences, and Planning and Liaison. Whilst I was there I travelled all over the region visiting sites within Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean, Avon, and Hereford and Worcester taking samples of water. I also visited the Second Severn Crossing and the vast expanse of flood defences at Severn Beach.

Tim Andrews
Chairman

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AMBULANCE SERVICE N.H.S. TRUST

As my work experience I attended the Gloucestershire Ambulance Service Headquarters and Station. On my first day I went to the Control and Planning Centre. In the morning I was inputting data for that weeks Patient Transport Services routes. In the afternoon I went into the Control part and looked at the radio system. I got to listen into calls to see what went on, some of these 999 calls and other emergency calls were quite exciting. On the second day I did the same again and on the third day we went

to the Ambulance Depot. From here we went out on P.T.S. vehicles to all corners of the county and brought patients into the hospital. During my lunch break I got a tour of a Front-line Ambulance and a demonstration of what some of the kit is used for. On the Thursday we returned to the Ambulance Headquarters and went to the training school for the morning. Whilst we were there we had a look through first aid manuals and watched some videos before having the afternoon off. On my final day I went back to the Ambulance Depot to go out on the P.T.S. vehicles again. I thoroughly enjoyed the week and found everyone there to be really pleasant people.

Jody Ballard
Editor

CASTLE ROCK, CHELTENHAM

During our work experience I had the great pleasure of being placed at Chapel Rock Climbing Centre in Cheltenham. I was overjoyed at the thought of going there, because I had wanted to do an outdoor pursuits based work experience and this was the nearest I got.

Aside from the climbing I did, I attended dance, aerobic and fitness classes. I was also taught how to use all the multi-gym equipment and undertake fitness tests on people. However I did do some menial chores such as cleaning climbing holds and making cups of tea, I did not mind this though because it was not unusual for everyone to chip in. I was also pleased to find that my climbing had improved over the week after the intensive instruction. My thanks go to all those at the centre for the great time I had.

Daniel Wright

SUN RUN

The 29th/30th June were the dates of the 1996 Sun Run. This year the majority of the 'elite' (this word is used in a very loose context), sub five hour team (Tim, Phil & Gareth) could not make it due to Lower Sixth exams, so we entered a Yr 11 team. Gareth Edwards, Oliver Scarff, Dave Fry and myself went with the intention of finishing as a complete team. Only Gareth had done it before and he had been forced to drop out at check point 3 last year.

The evening ran pretty much on schedule and the buses reached the Herefordshire Beacon without too much trouble. The start was captured live on Wyvern F.M. after the new customary aerobics session. The team took up a fairly good walking pace and we kept our place near the front of the middle groups throughout the course. From my point of view we reached the third checkpoint in good form, with the distance only starting to tell in our legs after the river crossing. Route finding was no problem so we made steady progress. On the hill at Woodmancote Dave Fry and I noticed how close we were to the six hour barrier and somehow found the resources to run the rest of the way to just get a sub six hour time. Gareth and Oli came in minutes later giving us a respectable team time of about 6hrs 5mins. We crashed out in the field until 5:00am when the V.S.L. picked us up. We got home and fell into an exhausted sleep.

In my opinion the team had potential to push harder and I think that next year, with a bit of training, we could get an even better time nearer the five hour mark. However for the first time we are all pleased to have finished as a complete team with a pretty decent time.

Andrew Clifford
Sports & Social Secretary



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 with your cheque, and we'll do the rest.

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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: _____

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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 helped in the running of the unit and its activities. We would also like to thank the following for their services in producing this magazine:

Mrs. J. Austin - reprographics

Mr. P. J. Reid - photography and processing

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