

V44 MAGAZINE



NORWAY 99

Edition 86

Venture 44

The Official Magazine of the
44th Gloucester (Sir Thomas Rich's)
Venture Scout Unit

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Chairman's Note

Welcome to the autumn edition of the 44th Venture Scout Unit's magazine. The contents report the summer activities and expedition to Norway. Thirteen of us left on the two-week trip after months of saving, fund-raising and earning our way. As you will hear we enjoyed a fantastically memorable trip.

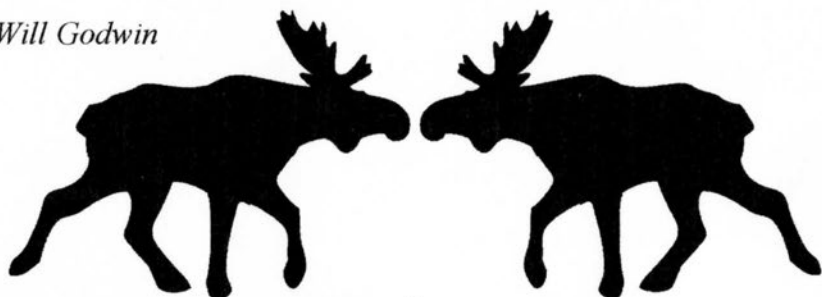
Many thanks go to both Phil and Celia Brown. Their help in planning and support throughout the trip was invaluable and helped make the expedition a great success. Thanks especially to Phil whose ongoing support is appreciated by the entire unit.

Some readers may know Mr Ernst Davies. He was our contact in Norway and arranged our splendid accommodation and also kept us busy with restoration work on two forester's huts. Many thanks go to Mr Davies for his help with this and other activities during our stay.

The end of the winter term is just the start of what promises to be a busy year with a full programme. We would like to hear from any readers with reports of your activities to add to our "From all points" section.

All that remains for me to say is, have a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I hope you enjoy the magazine!

Will Godwin



Editors Note

This is a special “Norway ‘99” edition of the V44 magazine. It focuses on some of the many activities that were undertaken during the summer expedition to Norway. Thanks to the use of a new photocopier, we can bring you a selection of photographs taken during the expedition. As well as reports of the trip to Norway, there is still the usual news of what’s been happening since the last edition of V44.

Remember, we are always pleased to hear from past members, so wherever you are, please write or email (note the new address on the second page) and tell us your news.

Enjoy the magazine, and beware of the trolls!

Rachael Brown



NORWAY 99



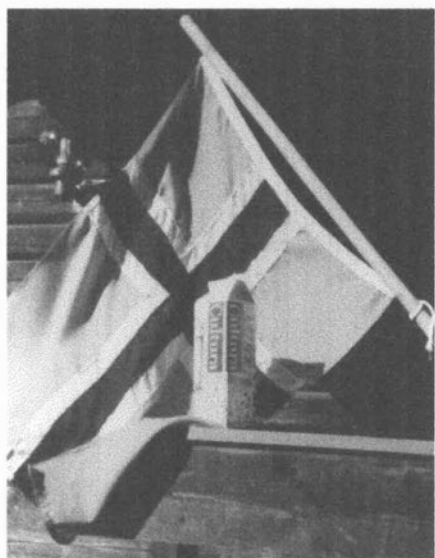
PARTY MEMBERS:

Will Godwin
Chris Smith
Dave Clifford
Nick Wright
Perran Spear
Owen Morley

Lucy Payne
Rachael Brown
Rich Clark
Andrew Norman
Adam Griffiths
Phil Brown
Celia Brown

SNAPSHOTS

FROM NORWAY



“I’M THE KING OF THE CASTLE....!!!”

The Ferry

24hours aboard MS Jupiter; generally quite attractive.

The female population on the boat meant that Adam found it difficult to control himself for any period of time, but eventually we dragged him away, long enough to eat. On the way to Norway most of us didn't sleep at all but spent our time watching the sun go down, going to the cinema, then watching the sun come back up again.

The scenery was spectacular: sea, sea and more sea. Occasionally we passed a few oilrigs. The rest of the evening was spent in "Club Viking" listening to live music and later a unit sing-along (myself NOT included) to "Bohemian Rhapsody," which was quite poor ...and I won't even mention Phil's dancing!

On the journey back we opted for the 180Krone "all you can eat meal." I was quite disappointed, as most people didn't take full advantage of the opportunity. Even Pez was beaten before the three hours were up. I took full advantage and ploughed my way through 8 dinner plates full of food including, (take a deep breath)... 3 main meals (chicken, beef, gammon), 12 types of meat (including elk sausage), salad, a huge plate of fish, 2 huge bowls of "Mr. Whippy" ice cream, 2 puddings and cheese. Then we sat down for a while before helping ourselves to marshmallows and chocolate as we slowly passed the pain barrier.

Eventually we managed to get up.

The rest of the journey was uneventful, apart from the all you can eat breakfast the next morning!



Rich

Campfire songs in Norway

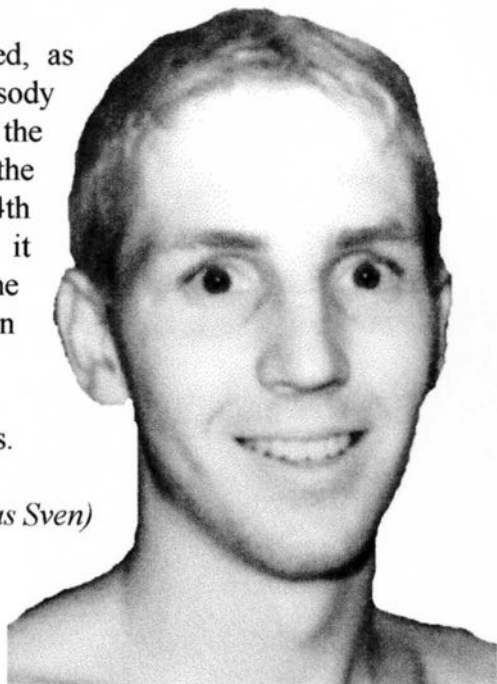
Once the sun had gone down and the stars had come out, there was little to do in rural Norway. So we gathered the twigs and lit them (after about 7 firelighters and copious amounts of paraffin).

At one campsite we sat in a hut (in between being attacked by the VSL with an axe) and started a rendition of "Everywhere we go". In between Phil told us two stories, one about the ghostly figure of "Froggy" and the other about a troll and the three Billie goats gruff. Our voices raised the roof especially when we got to "Was-e was-e whah whah." Many years of scout campfire songs passed well, but as all good things do, they ran out and so, we moved on to The Beatles, Abba and the first line of about every song ever released. Towards the end of the expedition we had another campfire, but this one had the theme of "poetry." Great.

Spike Milligan was recited, as was Bohemian Rhapsody (which I think turned into the unit anthem). Although the singing voices of the 44th leave a lot to be desired, it was good fun with everyone bringing in their own distinctive tones.

Next year, I'll take earplugs.

Chris Smith - (also known as Sven)



Oslo

Having spent two days working hard on renovating the forester's huts, we decide to take a day off. It was suggested that we spend our time on a day trip to the capital, Oslo. We are also doing well with funds so we decide to take the train. We drive to the nearby railway station and after a short wait catch the next train into the centre.

On arrival we make our way to the docks and take a ferry across the bay to where the famous polar exploring ship, "The FRAM" is sited, in its own Fram Huset. Mr



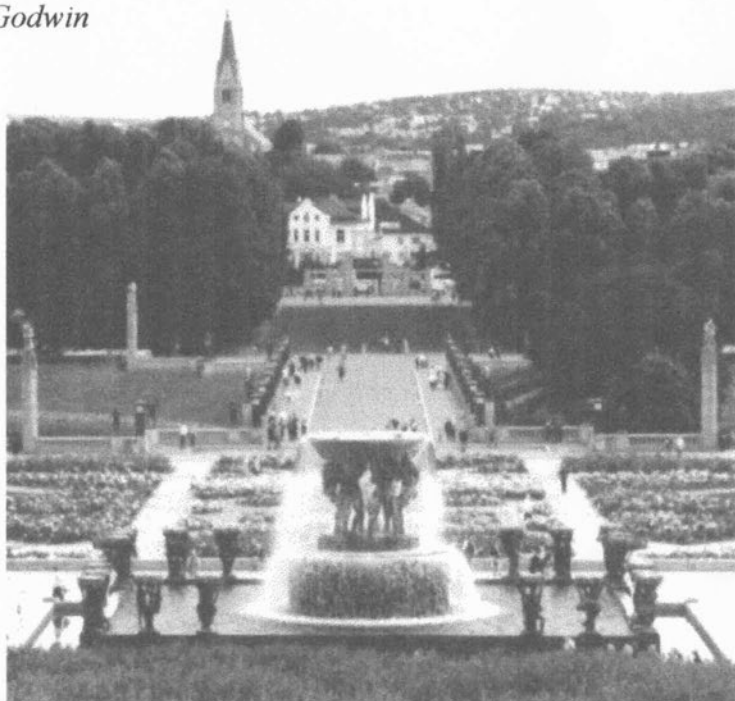
Davies had the evening before bestowed on us honorary membership of the FRAM society, an honour that facilitates our free entry! The FRAM's sailors, Nansen and Amundson have become national heroes and the exhibitions about their polar expeditions were excellent. Near to the FRAM was a museum about the "Kon Tiki" and "RA" expeditions made by Thor Heyerdahl across the pacific accompanied by models of both boats. An interesting insight into the ingenuity and bravery of early civilisations. Would you attempt to cross raging oceans in boat made of reeds and rushes?

After the return ferry trip we went in search of lunch. We walked

to the Frogner Park and ate our bread and spread lunch - a classic part of any venture scout expedition! We had first seen the park on slides of the 1990 expedition. Sculptures tracing the human age cycle were all over the park. Naked piles of bodies surrounded by their living clothed counterparts who were clambering and clicking for all their worth!

We ended the afternoon in a fantastic city, shopping and wandering around the town. We had enjoyed a day seeing the other, more cosmopolitan side of Norway.

Will Godwin



What about the Saga of Suzanna? Gossed over that one a bit, didn't you Will!!

(See later for this story of passion, sorrow, broken hearts and bath salts in a down-town Oslo soap shop!!)

Climbing and Bouldering



On arrival in Norway, one of the first things said was, "I'd climb that."

The journey into the interior of the country passed some amazing cliffs reaching up endlessly into the skies. So the one actual climb which we found was about 20ft! - A bit pathetic in comparison. This climb was still quite eventful and good fun with Will doing some serious "pruning" of the cliff face. We set up two routes, one easy and the other a bit harder with an added overhang

for good measure. After everyone had had a good climb we decided to call it a day after a few rock falls (and one broken camera).

The other climbing we did was a bit of bouldering on the edge of a picturesque river. There was a good traverse along an eight-foot cliff with the added bonus of dropping into puddles if you fall. After a chat to a friendly local who was nearby, we returned to our campsite exhilarated.

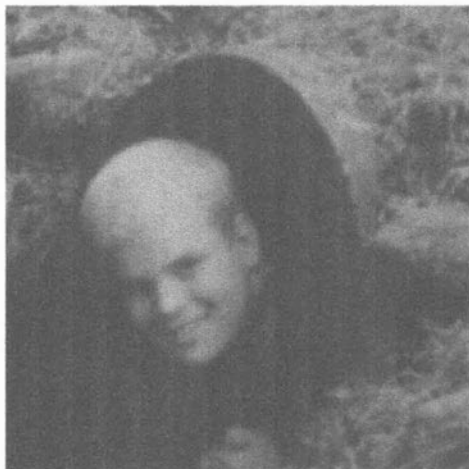
Dave Clifford



Troll in the Hole

Ernest Davies is a Norwegian speaking Welshman. He drives a battered old Volvo and was our main contact in Norway.

In exchange for the use of three wooden cabins in Norway, we helped renovate some hunter's cabins for a friend of Ernest's. Over five days the huts were swept scrubbed repaired and modified so that they would be cosier in winter. Also trees were cleared, paths laid and seating built. While all this was going on Ernest would



wander between groups offering advice and opinions, the most common of which was, "well it's pretty, but just not practical." Not the best thing to say when a group of two or three scouts had spent the best part of a day building a path with steps and logs at each side - or digging a bloody big hole.

On day one, Dave and I volunteered to dig a well. The huts were in the middle of nowhere and had no water or electricity. The streams only flow in autumn and spring so we were assigned to "dig a small hole by the stream" that would fill with water and provide a more reliable source. So we dug with a shovel and a stake for the whole day. Just as we thought we were finishing Ernest would give us about 10 suggested improvements, most meaning more digging.



By day four our hole was huge, easily six foot square, and had been dug out of the bedrock.

My blisters confirmed that the job was finished. A few boulders were placed for aesthetics and Dave and I sat back and admired our work. It seemed years ago that I had cried "I didn't come to Norway to dig a bloody big hole" or Ernest had come to inspect our work and jumped in and started digging like a man possessed and telling us to put some effort in.

I don't know if our hole works or not, or whether the wood ants have reclaimed the huts or not, but I do know that spending five days with an 80 year old slave driver really inspired me.

I can't wait to return to Norway and have more experiences like 1999's trip. Top notch!

Perran Spear

The Duke of Edinburgh in Norway

One of the main reasons for the trip to Norway was to carry out our silver Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. Two groups of us prepared for the long hike by buying plenty of food at a local supermarket and packing all we needed in our rucksacks. Leaving the venture scout leader and expedition supervisor (mum & dad) behind, the two groups of us set off armed with maps and compasses (and plenty of snack supplies) ready to tackle the 50 km hike which lay ahead of us... and up a moderate sized mountain.



We started at a small Norwegian village called Lesjaskog and walked along a fairly flat dirt track stopping occasionally to admire the magnificent waterfalls and to adjust our heavy rucksacks. After about ten minutes we discovered that the track got steadily steeper but we continued regardless of our already aching feet. Due to losing count of how many streams we had crossed, we found ourselves on the wrong side of the Storgrona, which is a fairly wild and turbulent river. A short backup and a quick scramble up a steep bank put us back on our path. Whilst our group stopped for lunch, the other group continued ahead of us and began the long steep climb up the mountain. When we had finished our food they were already out of sight.

The path was nothing more than grassy, rocky terrain, marked by red paint and a few large boulders. It was hard work but we eventually saw the other group several miles ahead of us. Several hours passed before we realised that we would be three hours late for our ETA at our prearranged camping spot. Knowing that all together we could never catch up with the other group, we sent on two of our best walkers to catch up with the other group and assure them that we were fine and would be back quite late and not to worry. We watched them march away and looked on as they quickly and easily ascended the mountain.

Our slightly smaller group of four continued slowly but steadily and soon reached the top of the mountain, only to find that the map was still at the bottom. We all stopped for a well-deserved rest while we send Will to rush 200 metres back down to where we suspected the map to be. Five minutes later we watched him return holding the map triumphantly. We continued over the top of the mountain and found the flatter ground easier to walk on. It wasn't long before we had crossed the mountain and were making our way down the other side, just as the sun was going down.

After a while we saw a few clues that civilisation was nearby. These consisted of a few scraps of carrot peelings, a road and eventually the minibus, a tent and a group of tired cold people waiting for us with hot drinks and mars bars.

After one full day of walking, everyone decided that they couldn't manage to cover the same distance again the next day, so all but four of us gave in due to extreme exhaustion and one case of mild hypothermia. A quick reorganisation of kit and a hot meal later, the four of us who had decided to continue the hike were fast asleep in warm sleeping bags, crammed into a small tent.

The next morning we packed up our belongings and were off ready to attempt the second part of our hike. Apart from one steep climb up a second mountain (this one was really a large hill), the walk was pleasant compared to the previous days adventure. The ground was fairly flat and we soon covered the 21 km planned for the day.



That evening we were again greeted with hot drinks as we rounded the corner into our first proper campsite of the expedition. A group photo and hot showers were our first priorities. And soon after we pitched the tent and sat down to a meal of chicken supreme (well cooked) and rice (still crunchy!) The evening was spent relaxing and reflecting on the day's events.

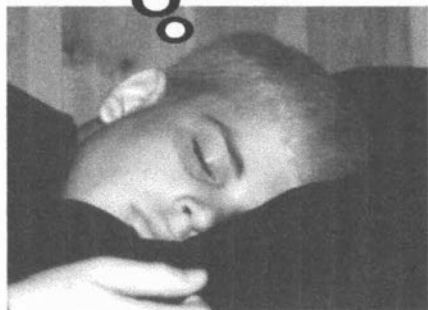
We still had 6 km to go until we had finished completely. We did this early the next morning as we walked part of the way into a small town called Lom. 30 minutes later we were picked up in the minibus and taken the rest of the way into Lom where we were rewarded with coffee and waffles.

Rachael Brown



SNAPSHOTS

FROM NORWAY

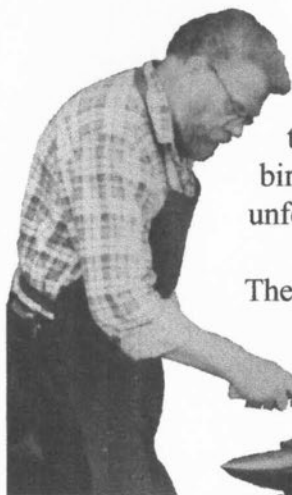


Norsk Skogbruksmuseum

We arrived at the Norsk museum to find traffic jams and people directing us to other carparks. We managed to park the van and all piled out into the sun. The next task was to find our way to the Norsk museum. Celia had soon recruited the assistance of a man with a horse and cart. On we got and were taken in style.

They were actually holding a hunting and fishing festival within the grounds of the museum. As well as the many people demonstrating the older ways of working and traditional crafts, it was surprising what we saw, including racks of guns and knives - some peoples eyes lit up. The search to find the perfect Norwegian knife at the right price was on!

The highlights of the festival included blacksmiths making knives in front of our very eyes and a trailer with a petrol motor for carrying dead elks on - complete with a dead elk modelling it! There was also plenty of "wildlife" especially around a certain food stand.



The museum itself actually looked at Norwegian life in the past, how they survived during the winter as well as how they hunted. The country's range of animals, birds and fish were also featured, unfortunately in static, stuffed poses.

The sun shone and the hunt for the perfect knife was satisfied with the lightning of wallets.

It was a brilliant day enjoyed by all.

Andrew Norman

The Journey to, and the 'Nigardsbreen' Glacier.

Finally the morning had come when I would get to see the glacier, something I had looked forward to the whole trip. The journey there was a good few hours long over treacherous mountains through snow and strong winds. After a good few coffee (and waffle) breaks for Phil we were just an hour from the glacier. At this point we were travelling down the other side of an extremely steep mountain when I heard the person next to me (the driver, Phil) say, "Oh S**t!" Celia replied, "What's up?" and rather dauntingly Phil said, "The brakes, they don't work". My thoughts were that he's a good driver and that he'd get us out of this and that he did. He cleverly brought the van to a halt where we all gave a great sigh of relief and a cheer of thanks.

We thought it would be best to get this checked out and so decided to phone the AA for assistance. Unfortunately Norm informed us that his mobile was on the roof, so Will and I started to untie the ropes to find his bag. Then we heard a voice, "It's all right lads, I've got it, it was in my day sack." great. Thanks Norm.

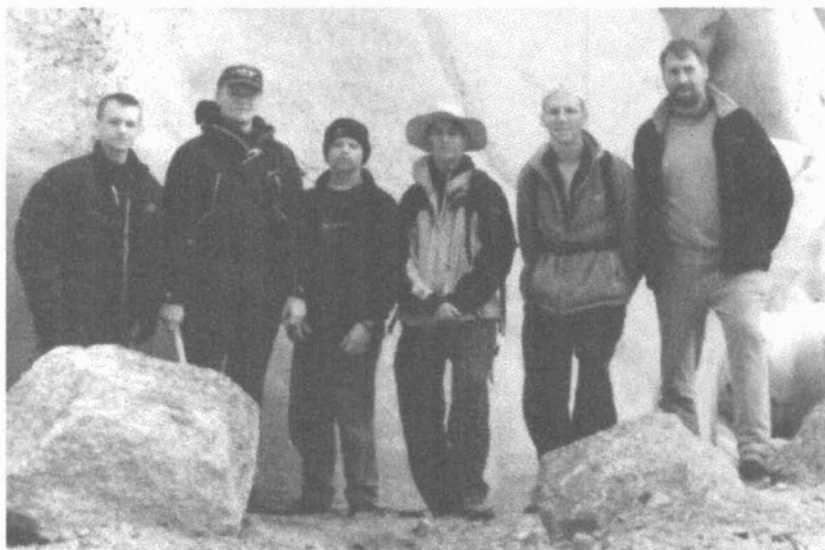
We rang the AA, told them the problem and all they said was they'd be there as soon as possible. Eventually they did arrive. The mechanic reset the brake system and said that it was basically due to the over use of the brakes and that we should use our lowest gear to get to the bottom.

That we did but unfortunately it was too late to go to the glacier, I have to admit that I was a bit annoyed at this but hey, that's life. However, later on when I was in the shop with Celia, we

saw a leaflet about tours to the Glacier. After great conversation it became apparent that we could visit the glacier on our own early the following morning and still have time to get back to Bergen to catch the ferry home.

A small group of us decided that it would be worth it, to get up in the morning and go and see it. So the next morning Will, Nick, Chris, Owen, Phil and I headed off towards the glacier. A short while passed and eventually it was within sight and what a view it was. It was fantastic, now I could finally understand why Frank and the older lads talked about it so much after their earlier visits.

Now my expedition to Norway was complete, there was no way I could go to Norway and not see the glacier, but I did, thanks must go to Phil and Celia for making it all possible.



Adam Griffiths

Lake Swimming & Snowball Fights

One of the cool things about going on a trip with the venture scouts abroad is to experience things to do together that you can't do in Britain: fun things such as rumbling. Although rumbling is something you can do anywhere.

We discovered two such activities in Norway: lake swimming and snowball fighting - both great fun, different and one can incorporate rumbling somewhere in the activity if required.

Lakes in Norway are prolific to say the least. There are more large lakes in Southern Norway than in the rest of Europe combined (probably). And of course they are surrounded by some of the most spectacular mountain scenery. So it was only duty on the V44 trip to Norway to do what the locals do - go and jump in the local lake after a hard day at work!



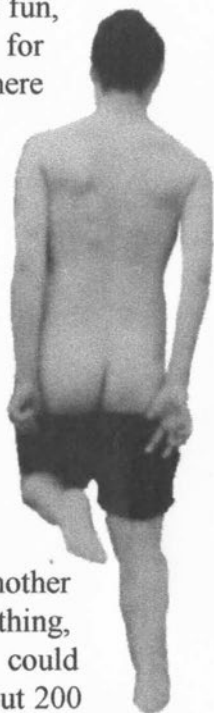
There were two lakes near where we stayed in Sand which best suited our needs. One was approximately 2 miles away from 'Natursti' huts where we were based for most of our stay, while we were renovating the hunters' huts nearby. Will and Nick got up around 6am on the first morning to attempt to jog to this lake, but to no avail. However, after a long hard day's work at the mountain huts, the small brown lake looked surprisingly inviting. We went back to 'Natursti' to get our stuff then 'ventured' into the murky waters.

The lake was about 100 metres across, and had a sort of floating stage with a ladder on which was great fun, and a floating platform, which was perfect for running leaps and bombs into the lake. As there were no showers at 'Natursti', the lake was also useful to wash in, and everyone enjoyed being refreshed after a day of tree felling and vegetation clearing at the mountain lodges.

Another lake that we swam in was further away from 'Natursti', but larger, and it still had this deep red-brown tinge, which Ernst (the elderly gentleman we met up with in Norway) said was because of the underlying peat of the area.

Not put off, it was everyone togs on and another refreshing swim. There was no platform or anything, but there was a nice beach and we found we could swim across to the beach on the other side, about 200 metres across, which many of us attempted. On the way over, one of us decided to announce the large numbers of pike that inhabit these waters - there was subsequently an immediate race to the opposite beach!

Another activity you don't get the opportunity to do much in old blighty is snowball fights! We saw plenty of snow in Norway, despite it being summer, although it was never really cold (similar summer temperatures to Gloucester in the vales). It really was a beautiful sight glistening on the mountaintops, reflecting off the lakes and contrasting with the clear blue sky, the sunbeams dancing and sparkling off the powdery white, the green of the grass... okay, I'll quit this sentimental lark - snowball fights is what snow is really for!

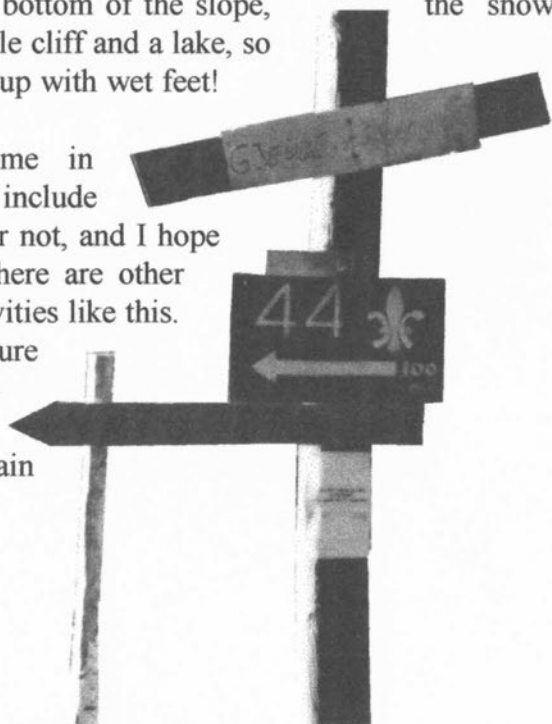


The first snow we encountered was on the Duke of Edinburgh hike, and we had our photos taken there. But the first snowball fight we endeavoured was on the way up to see the glacier (even though we never got there - but that's another story!). There was a fair bit to the side of the road, so being Venture Scouts a 'rumble on the snow' opportunity couldn't be missed. It was on a slope, so it was quite amusing to see everyone slipping and sliding around and falling flat on their faces, but it was great fun.

The other opportunity for snowball fights was on the way back to Voss on the last day in Norway, which was the best piece of snow we had found. It was huge, and everyone's aim soon improved, and it was a classic fight. However, it was also on a steep slope, and walking up it was often a 'one step up - two steps down' manner! Also, at the bottom of the slope, the snow kind of ended in a little cliff and a lake, so several people ended up with wet feet!

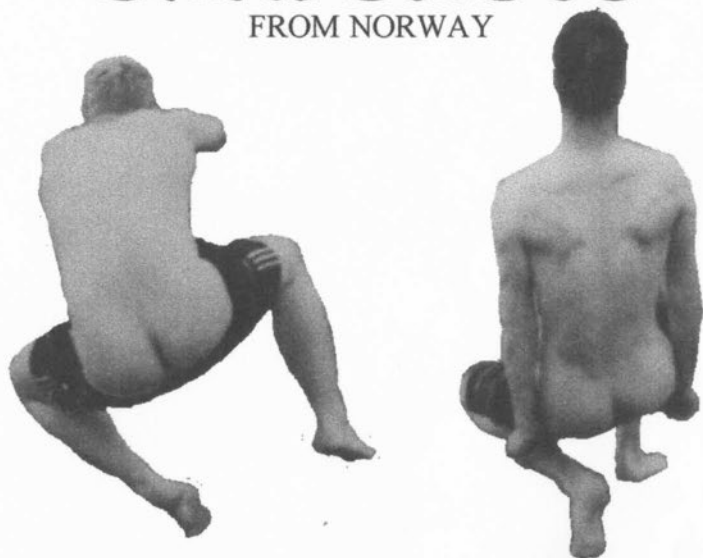
It was a great time in Norway, whether I include the rumble element or not, and I hope that in future trips there are other opportunities for activities like this. I also hope that future '44-ers' carry on the 'rumbling' tradition, and visit Norway again in the future.

Owen Morley



SNAPSHOTS

FROM NORWAY



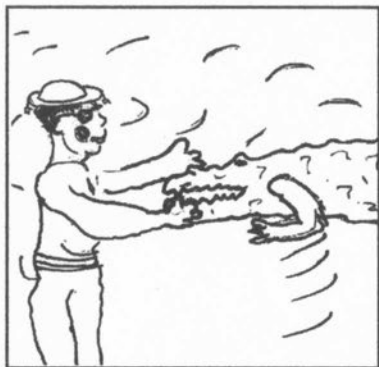
“NOW THAT’S WHAT I CALL A FULL MOON!”



The Story of the Elephant Man: A Comic Ear, I mean Tale.

In Norway, many strange events happened. This is one of them - The swellings of David.

WARNING: This article contains strong poetic licence. This has been used to lengthen and liven up an otherwise boring article. NOTE: All drawings are to scale!



David Clifford: Alligator wrestler and grizzly bear back rider.



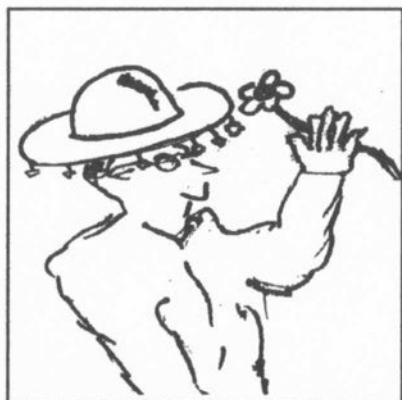
Out in the field David had his Thermos and 20in knife always to hand!



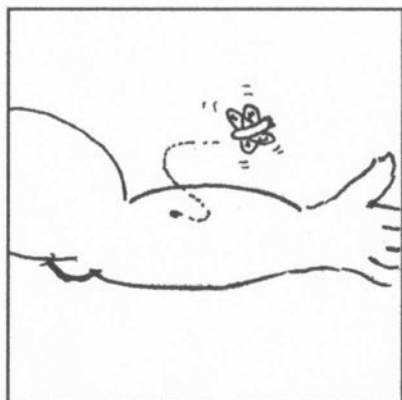
Suddenly he saw something. Moving like a well oiled machine he went for his knife...



Reaching into the long grass David gripped the neck, and neatly sliced the head of something...

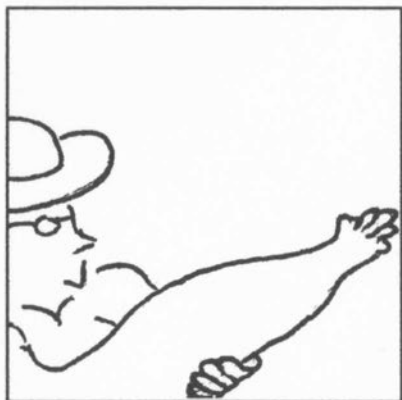


It was truly a magnificent daisy. It would be excellent in his daisy chain!



But just as he turned to go, a killer fly bit him on the arm.

Next day... "Er... Would someone look at my arm?!"



After walking round a country show with his arm in a wheelbarrow, David went to the Norwegian pharmacy.



The pharmacy gave him some Norwegian TCP, I mean fly cream to rub on.



THAT NIGHT THE FLY STRUCK AGAIN!



In the morning David was nowhere to be seen. In his place was a strange creature - half man, half elephant!

When we finally learned that this was David, it was too late. The swelling was hilarious!



David attempted to cover the ear with his beanie for the next two days. It showed through like... well like a big ear. We didn't tell him... that often!

Two days later the elephant jokes were laid to rest. (Of course they weren't, we still take the Mickey even now!)

Words and Pictures - Nick Wright.

Of Peaks and Pines

Well another Nordic expedition has been recorded for posterity in the pages of Venture 44 to be mulled over in future years by historians not yet born. I wonder what they might make of us ?

As for myself, it was a great relief to finally arrive on Norwegian soil. These days so many bureaucratic obstacles are thrown up in the face of anyone daring to plan a youth visit to the local town let alone an adventurous activity abroad that it is no wonder so many adult leaders are simply jacking the whole scene in and staying at home relaxing in their gardens with a good book and a beer - no hassles, no stress! Now there's a thought

So armed with my PCV (D1 Restricted) Minibus Licence, Own Account Certificate, EU Waybill, umpteen dozen tachograph discs, not to mention the usual Green Card and extended travel insurance and breakdown policy documents, I drove the school minibus with its seams bursting with bodies and roof rack piled with kit bags triumphantly along the quayside in Bergen as we headed east towards Nord Odal where an old friend of past visits Ernest Davies awaited us (we hoped!) with accommodation and the promise of hard work.

I hope you have gained an insight into what we did during our busy and at times hair-raising stay from the others' articles. Being a veteran of 5 previous visits to this magical kingdom of Norway I found it strange in that I was having to fill the boots of Frank Henderson, inadequately so when it came to the adventurous activities such as mountain climbing and trekking and the telling of long dark tales. My inclinations are to be found in other directions I fear!!

I know everyone in the party brought back with them some vivid and happy memories of our trip and found out a lot about themselves in the process. I was even impressed by the Nigardsbreen Glacier this time - the view of it from the breakfast table in the new Breheimsenteret as we tucked into waffles, cream, jam and coffee was particularly spectacular!! (I did make the trek to the ice face this time - honest!!)

The First Female in Venture Scouts

I feel extremely proud to say I was the first female in the 44th VSU. After 2 years of asking to join I was eventually allowed in - closely followed by Rachael I'm glad to say!

I found venture scouts extremely daunting at first. As I entered the hut 15 pairs of eyes focused on me and I felt very uncomfortable. However, the following weekend I packed my rucksack and went on my very first, but truly memorable scout trip to Cornwall. During this tie-breaking week I was made to feel welcome and eventually I started to relax.

Several weeks later, after my initiation of being stared at, humiliated and generally made to feel uncomfortable (only by some members I hasten to add!) I was treated the same as the rest: eating my lunch in the hut, watching television, serving in the tuck shop and playing pool (when I was allowed.) I even took part in a "sign-stealing".

I eventually began to feel a true member and by the time it came for me to go to Norway, my gender was no longer an issue - well, until I volunteered to wash Dave and Norm's T-shirts and socks as they didn't have a clue how to wash them! I refused to wash the Beast's for obvious reasons! ("Beast" being the new name of Perran.)

I'm really glad I joined venture scouts and I thoroughly enjoyed my trip to Norway and wished I could have joined sooner. I'm glad that I managed to rise above the teasing, sexist and blonde jokes from the misogynists in the group, because in joining I've had a great deal of fun. In joining I've had a great deal of new experiences that I couldn't have had elsewhere, all of which have been personality building.

Thank you everyone for making me feel welcome and to Rachael for being excellent company in Norway.

Lucy Payne

This is Your Life: The Raft...

There were two rafts stored next to the Scout hut, both of a good design and well used. One was giving a good home to a family of woodworm. The only problem was that there were three teams of rafters. The obvious solution was to build another raft.

The third team consisted of Matt, Olli, Giles and Rich - with help in the construction from Rachael and any other willing volunteers. Together we looked at a pile of wood and collectively thought "Oh Dear!" In less than three days we had to turn this pile of wood, rope, barrels and nails into a mean, lean rafting machine.

We set about drilling madly using a complicated procedure that involved four drill bits of different sizes. Onlookers argued over how to design the raft. It can't be that hard - can it?

Finally a design was decided upon - one which was different from the design of previous rafts. Working by car headlights we plodded on in our slow but precise manner. By the end of the night we only had the main "H" frame built. It is important to note that it was a very good H frame though.

During one entire lunch time we slaved away in an attempt to finish the raft but only succeeded in attaching two footrests and a ropey device that was to aid the transport of the raft when not on (or under as the case was) the water. Our best friend Mr Smith also paid us a visit giving us some positive pointers. How kind.

The next day was Saturday and Will kindly agreed to help out and open the hut for us, he also saw that all of us were working - at last! We screwed in two beams to secure the barrels, strapped the barrels in securely, nailed on the seats and stood back to admire our creation. Somebody muttered, "It's going to sink." Why state the obvious and spoil the moment? Not bad for a few hours work. The race will be a laugh anyway. Probably...

Matthew Key

... That Sank

After getting completely lost in Ross-on-Wye we eventually made it to the start of the race. The tension mounted as over 50 pairs of eyes were focussed on us as we slipped our hurriedly made yet sturdy (?) raft into the water. It actually floated a good 20cm above the water - until we sat on it. The shock that our makeshift raft was still floating with four people sat on it was probably what caused us to become grounded after only three minutes. It took us several minutes to start paddling again but we were sinking fast. This was the first of many unwanted experiences.

It wasn't long before our expert handling of our beautiful craft brought us alongside "The Vikings." This raft was manned by a bunch of girls with horny hats. With typical sportsmanship we rammed them. Consequently there was a water fight. Naturally we won the battle and left the Vikings helpless as their raft crumbled beneath them.

After many minutes of hard tedious paddling we found ourselves grounded... yet again. It was while we were pushing our raft to the relative safety of the deeper waters that we had an inspiration. In theory, if we stood up on the back of the raft we would have more power in our paddling and hopefully more speed. The only fault in this plan was the tendency to fall off into the water. My first of many such visits to the river happened to be near a sewage outlet.

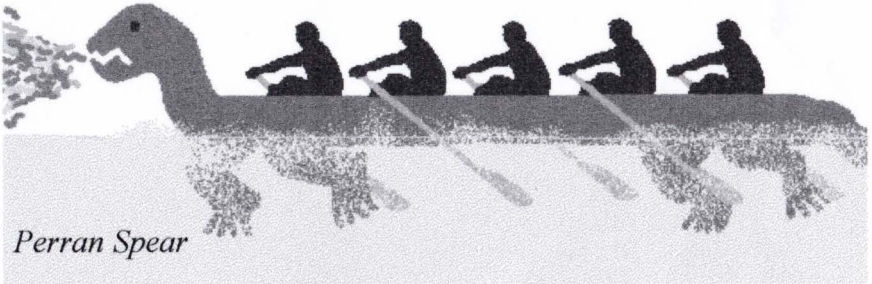
Three and three quarters of an hour later, we found ourselves near the end. The only thing lying in our path was a stretch of vicious looking rapids. As we passed around/over the first of the many rapids our poor tender craft was hurled against a rock. I found myself flying and landed 6 foot away in the water. To avoid this from happening again we carried what remained of our raft over the finish line - two hours behind the previous finishers.

The damage to our raft was extreme, the holes were big and the water came in. I think we will need to make some adjustments before next year.

Giles Moorhead

Dragon Boat Racing

On Sunday 17th October several members of the 44th travelled to South Cerney to compete in the annual dragon boat race. After last year's triumphant victory, it was quite a shock to come last in the first race. A couple of beef burgers soon set us up, improving our time to come second in the next heat, although our overall time shifted us up to second. A team talk before the third heat really inspired us and we obtained the fastest time yet and first place in that race. Annoyingly, we still were stuck in second place overall. By the final race we were starting to feel it in our arms. We dug in and achieved our fastest time and a worthy second place. Well done to all and remember, we will be back to kick ass next year.



**WE WISH YOU A
MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW
YEAR!**

