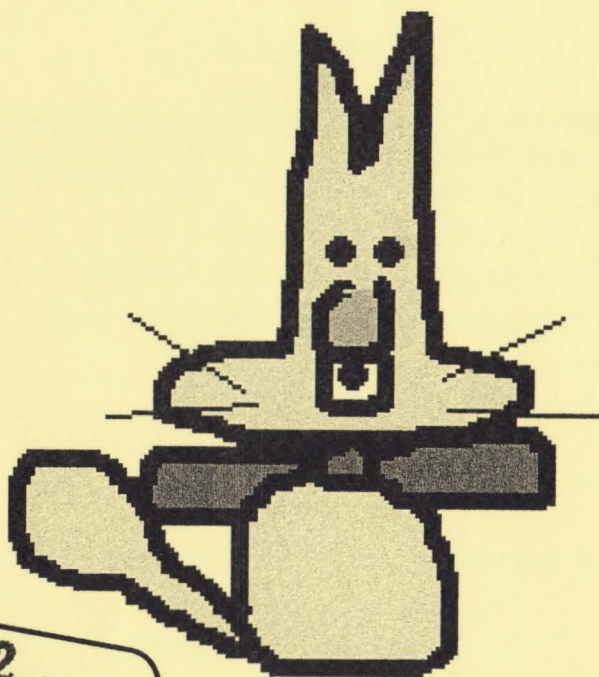


V44 MAGAZINE



Edition 88

Where are they now...?

If any readers of Venture 44 know the whereabouts of the following, please could they let the editor know:-

Stuart Bishop
Keith Franklin
Simon Hawkins
Andy Manders
J. Sargent
N. Pearce

Venture 44

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

Editor : Rachael Brown

Unit Officers

Matthew Key - Chairman
Richard Holland - Treasurer
Giles Moorhead - Secretary
Matthew Ward - Quartermaster
Owen Morley - Tuck Shop Manager
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Sir Thomas Rich's School
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A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A new school year dawns as the Ventures assess the damage from the summer expedition - literally. We achieved a 50% casualty rate, impressive even by our standards! Despite our losses we had a great time and learnt a lot about the "when-things-don't-go-according-to-plan-scenario" that is so common in all Venture activities. Congratulations to all who managed, against the odds, to achieve various D of E standard expeditions. My thanks go to Phil for being our bearer of casualties in the affectionately named "cripple bus" and for having to pay many visits to the well know Stranraer hospital, whilst worrying where the rest of us had got lost for tonight. At the end of it all I'm sure we achieved a resilience to midges - but NEVER EVER go to Glen Loch during August, the midges are nasty @**#! As for next year, Ireland looks to be on the agenda.

We've also assessed the Venture hut and done the following things: the carpet has gone and will be replaced professionally (first time for everything) and we have completed the sealing of the outside walls, so (for the first time) the hut IS waterproof. Plans have been made for the Venture boat to be repaired, then, most probably, sold; and an outside water supply to be installed.

Some members have hinted that various items, belonging to the unit, may have ended up inside their homes, if this is the case could they please bring them back ASP, no questions will be asked!

All that's left to be said is enjoy the magazine!

Matthew



Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
The abodes of covey'd grouse and sheep,

My savage journey, curious , I persue...

Burns

"We only got into the Kirkcudbright Council campsite
because there wasn't a warden to stop us."

PARTY MEMBERS (At the beginning.....)

Phil Brown

Matthew Key

Richard Holland

Alasdair Burchill

Ian Black

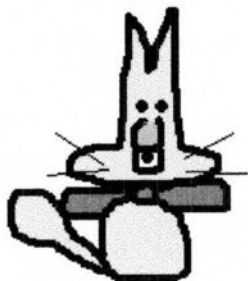
Rachael Brown

Joseph Shield

Jonathan Ellison

Giles Moorhead

And the cat that came back.....





SCOTTISH THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR



The 44th went out one day
To Scottish lands far, far away
Off we went - the nine of us
Crammed into the minibus
With bags piled high on every seat
And boxes full of things to eat
Tents and sleeping bags and hats,
Cameras, gas stoves and roll mats.
At a traffic jam we made some friends
By displaying pictures of rear ends.
When we arrived in Gretna Green
We put away the magazine.
We pitched camp and ate our tea:
Fresh crusty bread and chilli
Tasty cakes made everyone feel all right,
So we played football into the night.
Next morning road works sent us on our way
We went to Stranraer for the day.
Wondering what was in store for us;
At Stranraer we caught the bus
To Port Patrick - far away
The start of the "Southern Upland Way."
We walked for what seemed like hours,
Over beaches, hills and fields of flowers.
To the campsite we returned
And ate our chicken, which Joe burned.
On the swings we all did play
And seeing a "wee doogie" made our day.
Alasdair and Giles got "flaming" indigestion
While Matthew "flashed" - best not to question!



A few days later, all but three
Went on a practice hike for D of E
But, alas - Jon did fall
Getting off a dry stone wall...
"It doesn't hurt at all," he said,
But then he started to turn red.
Matthew and Alasdair ran over the hill
To seek help from the nearby Phil.
With Jon on board, off Phil went
While the others carried on to put up the tent.
At the hospital Jon had no fun -
The doctor thought I was his mum!
Of course I was quite offended.
Jon's broken ankle must be mended.
He was carted off to: "The Plaster Room"
In a super-fast wheelchair - zoom!
Jon soon emerged - his pride hurt
Because he had to wear a skirt!
To keep him happy we had a trip
To the local shop for fish and chips.
Now, the campsite we had for that night
Was home to swarms of flies that bite.
They entered tents and chewed at us
So all took refuge in the bus.
No pubs involved - Jon returned plastered
And chucked us out of the bus (- the b*stard!)
Because he had to sleep with his leg up high
In order to let his plaster cast dry.
That night every carnivorous flying beast
For miles around came to us to feast
They bit so much it made us weep
We only got three hours of sleep.



A few days later, having recovered
From the traumatic experience that we suffered
We took a trip to Bladnoch distillery
To see how Scotsmen made whisky.
Jon's cripple sticks kept sticking in the ground
He provided great entertainment as we walked
around!

Not being allowed to have a "wee dram"
We ate lunch instead - Ryvita and jam.
Except for Rich; AKA "Paddington Bear"
Who managed to spread marmalade everywhere.

After lunch we hosed Rich down
And we took a short walk into Wigtown.
The name suggests hair and toupees
But in this place reading is the craze
For this small village is renown
As being Scotland's best "book town."

The 44th were later seen,
Sat around Wigtown's bowling green.
Reading our books and drinking pop
That we bought at the local shop.
The books getting dull, and the sun still blazing
We discovered the public toilets - amazing!

We drank up the last remains of our drink
And filled up our bottles from the taps at the sink
The water fight was hours of fun
But if I got wet, you'd better run!
Other memorable events included:

Walks to places - quite secluded.
Roundabouts where we made ourselves sick,
And repetitive songs that "got on our wick,"
Haggis, mosquitoes and the people we met,
Made Scotland a trip we will never forget.

RACHAEL BROWN

TALES FROM THE LOGBOOK.....

For the first time in many years it was decided that a diary should be kept of all that happened during the expedition. It was a challenge trying to keep the log book up to date but with a little persuasion (often involving food, money and/or violence) we managed to get everyone to write an entry.

The 44th present to you a selection of quotes and stories retelling some of the many courageous, funny and interesting experiences...

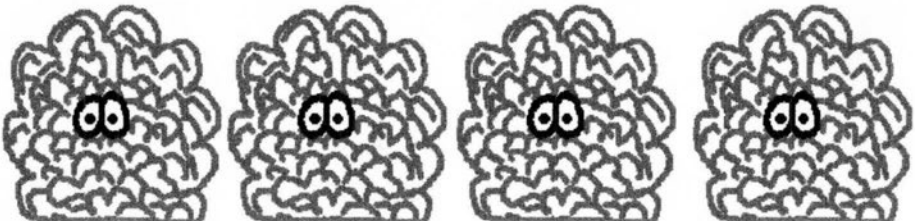
"Our first day in Scotland began with a rude awakening - road works."

Matthew

Tuesday July 25th

Waking up early we all enjoyed bacon butties! To add to our delight Richard actually packed before the majority - a first in 44th history. The van, full to brimming with our junk, set off for Castle Kennedy and its beautiful gardens.

What?! A garden - that's.....cultural! The Castle became a climbing wall challenge and the gardens, after careful inspection, became a wide game area. Superb Rhododendrons became camouflage HQ's and trees, outlooks. Top-dirt-filled hours later ended and nine people emerged from the bushes...



Bronze D of E hike day - "The Day of the Cripple"

Giles

Awakening to a slow start the first thing that greeted us was a heavy mist descending on the loch. Miraculously, after only one hour we had tents packed, breakfasts consumed (out of Alpen packets) and were debating how to hide the blackened circle...

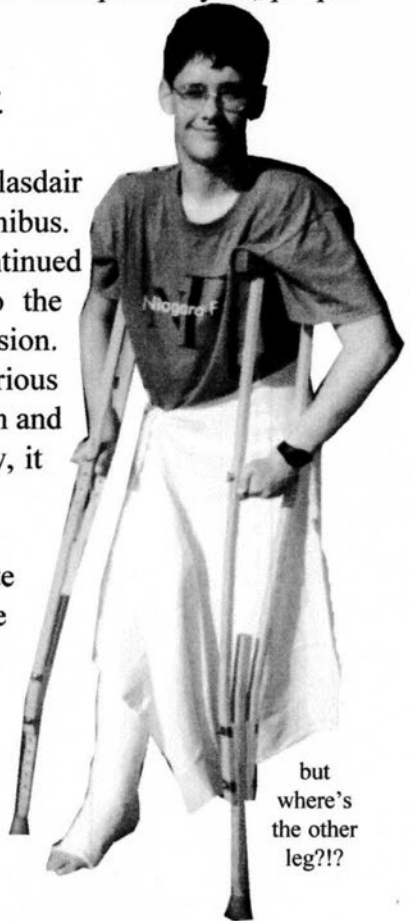
We set off, some faster than others, down the Southern Upland Way once more. So far, we thought the day was going well. Little did we know the tragedy after tragedy to follow...

The track turned to concrete which pounded our feet, the sun came out and heated the ground, forcing us to remove waterproof layers, people lagged behind and the water ran out.

Jon then fell off a wall and injured himself.

With Jon unable to continue, Matt and Alasdair (the heroes of the day) ran on to fetch the minibus. Jon was picked up and everyone else continued minus Matt and Alasdair. Giles ran to the campsite on an amazing marathon excursion. The others lumbered along slowly losing various items of their kit. Matt ran back to find them and Phil took Jon to the hospital ... don't worry, it was confusing in real life as well.

Finally, everyone got to the campsite together. Jon had broken his leg (ankle actually!) and came back plastered (no pubs involved). What better way to greet a knackered unit than a midge infested swamp? Baffled, tired and completely at the mercy of the raging swarms, ventures managed a few hours of sleep.



but
where's
the other
leg???

Friday July 28th - "Of Midgies and Mountains"

Although our departure was delayed we were able to entertain ourselves with water pistols, which suited the mentality of a group of once hardened survivors driven to the extremes by assorted flying insects.

We attempted to climb to the peak of Merrick, however, the threat and eventual reality of the incoming weather, forced us to turn back at the neighbouring peak. Fortunately, the peak we were on was the last to receive rain and so we had time for a cup of tea and were treated to a spectacular light show as lightning struck the surrounding hills.

Acylant



Saturday 29th July

Today was the day of all days, or so they said. Today, Saturday, was the long awaited intensely anticipated activity camp. We were promised sailing, canoeing, abseiling, mountain biking and best of all, quad biking.

The general consensus was to begin with sailing. In answer to our decision a hefty wind sprung up and the loch was bombarded with raindrops as big as your fist... well nearly.

We struggled through a two hour kit and instruction session before eventually taking to the water like foolhardy venture scouts...oh yeah, that's what we are. Almost immediately the wind died and we were left marooned. After some capsizing antics, we managed to paddle our way to shore.

With only an hour left of activities, the instructor asked what we would like to do next. "Quad-biking" we scream! A few revs later, and Alasdair and Rachael...er.... Crawl round the track. Next up Matt and Giles show how it's really done in an insane dual-slalom type mud-fest. Ian and Rich then try their hand and...er...not quite lads..! Rich must have a sore arse as he spent all the time glued to the seat.

Completely knackered, we attempt volleyball, ring home and fall asleep.



"Sunday 30th July: Once again, a slow and weary start to the day. Unusually though, the day was, on the whole, a weary day of rest. Sunday through and through."

Richard

The Silver Expedition

Matthew



Monday 31st July

After a fry up breakfast of haggis, eggs, sausages, flat sausages, bacon and fried bread we travelled to the start of our walk on the Pilgrims Way. At 2.00pm we set off but after five minutes Giles complains of a knee injury. After careful consideration (and much prodding) he is taken to Stranraer hospital to be checked up (at the same time as Jon was getting his plaster cast checked).

Tuesday 1st August.

As we had arrived so late the night before we allowed ourselves the treat to lie in until the stunningly late time of 8.45am. Crawling, hopping, falling out of our tents, only semi-supported by our blistered feet, we were blinded by the delights of a sunny day. Looking around the campsite for the first time, we found ourselves next to a delightful beach surrounded by caravans.

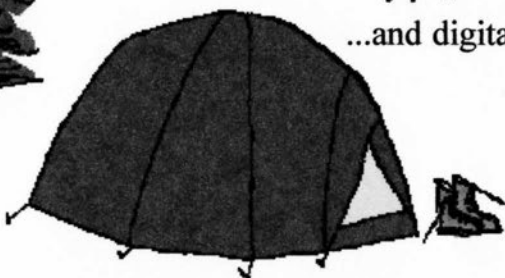
As people emerged from these caravans, it became clear we were local heroes. Phil had the day before, obviously told everyone of our expected arrival before setting off to search for us. Whilst we washed, had breakfast, packed or talked, OAP's seemed to swarm around us, curious of where we came from and where we were going to. Offers of "do you want me to do any shopping for you in Port William" came a-plenty; others gave their support by way of kind words for our success, whilst the campsite manager said we weren't to pay for the pitch or anything - kind people indeed.

Setting off at the humane time of 12 noon to the cries of "goodbye" and "good luck" from the residents, we started the last leg of our hike.

At midday we stopped for lunch and whilst we were munching away we spotted a certain minibus - what a stroke of luck. This allowed us to have bacon butties and Ian to retire after being injured but having completed the distance for his D of E Bronze Hike. An hour later, Rich, Rach, Alasdair and myself contemplated how a team of 8 had diminished to 4. Was it something I said? Out of supplies, we hobbled into the campsite at 9.30pm and immediately became aware of the large quantity of "townies", as they affectionately became known. Finding a dark and quiet pitch we set up only to realise Ian had taken the pegs.

After 5 minutes of terror and frantic improvisation (spoons can be used for many things) I found a spare set of pegs in the recesses of my bag.

A quick trip to the chippy (is that in D of E Rules?) and sleep hit us quickly so even the worry of the "locals" disappeared.



room
with a
view

...and digital toilets!!

Well Used Expressions

Recurring comments, phrases and noises played an important part in the expedition. Some made sense, others did not. Many of the quotations below could be heard echoing off the hills, plus many others which (for many different reasons!) cannot be written down.....

"What's for lunch?"

- "Ryvita!!!"

"Where's Gilbert?"

"#The cat came back the very next day.....#"

"Ian, you're tiny!"

"Mmm... Gor-Tex!"

"Anyone up for poker?" "Anyone up for swimming?"

"Anyone up for golf?" "Are you up for it?"

And from Richard....

"Does anyone mind if I have another slice?"

"Is there any marmalade?"



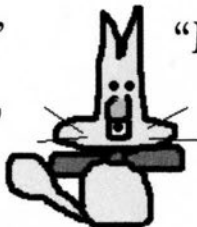
"Is there any more marmalade?"

"If there's no marmalade is there any jam?"

"Mmmmmmm!!!"

"Meee-ooowww!"

"Aaarrrrrrrr!"



"Cripple!"

"Give me back my cripple sticks!!!"

Having completed the silver hike, we continued with the rest of the days activities. These included a well deserved rest, a tour round Bladnoch whisky distillery and a trip into Wigtown - Scotlands famous (?) book town.

Four hours and thousands of books later we were once again joined by Phil and Jon following the replastering (in red and white stripes) of his broken ankle. Although books remain the principal merit of Wigtown we also revelled in the delights of the children's play area. Matt and Rich firmly and unequivocally established male supremacy in the ability to swing on swings.

TO A HAGGIS

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin' race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye worthy of a grace
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While through your pores the dew's distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
And cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like only ditch;
And then, oh, what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin' rich!

Burns

We began the morning with porridge, or last night's custard (Rachael) and after a sluggish start by Giles and friends, we set off for the Galloway Hydro Visitors Centre near Kirkcudbright. Despite being late we joined a tour that had just left. This included seeing the generators, old control room and the dam itself.

However, for most people the highlight was playing with Lego bricks or a "steady hand" game in the childrens activity room.

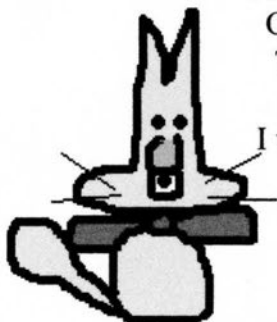
Not content with having studied how it all worked on copies of the original technical diagrams, Alasdair was thirsty for knowledge and began pestering a poor A-level physics student during his summer job. Having prised Alasdair away we went for a picnic lunch in the power plant grounds whilst we saw a certain tour guide run for his car.

We had a quiet afternoon visiting Castle Douglas for a shopping spree then returning to Gretna to tease Alasdair about his "upcoming wedding" (reception at Field and Trek!). After a "meat" and chip supper we ate mandarin oranges before going to bed for the last time in Scotland.

TO A MOUSE

Wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie.
Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou needna start awa' sae hasty
Wi' bickering brattle.
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

Burns



TO A CRIPPLE

Late crippled of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a pass for leave to beg:
Dull, listless, teased, dejected, and depressed,
Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest

Burns

Going Home

Alasdair and Giles it appeared weren't going to wake up for anything, so with military precision and speed, we broke camp without waking them, jumped into the minibus to do some early shopping and left them sound asleep.

Returning an hour later we found two distressed young people - we all set off - a lesson well learned.



The Tragic Tale of Mrs McDooley & Her 'Wee Doogie'

It was a dark and misty night, fog had slowly set in over the small venture scout unit in an isolated campsite somewhere in Scotland when from the midst of the fog a hill appeared, and on the hill was a house. One member of the 44th VSU piped up...

"You see how that mist is clearing around that house?"

"Yeah"

"Well that's all because of Mrs McDooley & her wee doogie....."

As the mist gathers over the hills at Monreith a blanket descends over the coast. A large shadow looms high up on the hill: Monreith house - the remains of a once grand manor.

In the house lived Mrs McDooley, an old woman whose only companion is a small white Scottish Terrier. She gets up from her comfortable red armchair, straightens her large owl-like spectacles and tidies her white curly hair. It was that time of the week when Mrs McDooley usually did her vacuuming. She had recently purchased a new Hoover; it was a Dyson dual-cyclone vacuum cleaner. Mrs McDooley was eager to try this new technology but what she was unaware of, was the severe consequences of her actions...

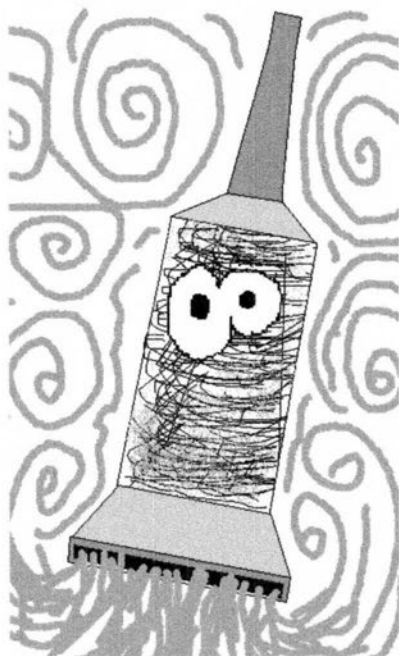
Humming a long forgotten melody, Mrs McDooley began to extract the dust from her carpet.

The suction power of her new vacuum cleaner was immense, so immense in fact that it was capable of sucking the fog in through her windows. Her home was filled with fog as the mist was sucked in through every hole in the house; letterbox; window frame; chimney, the house soon had zero visibility. From the mist came a brief howl then a strange sucking noise and a scrabbling sound...

On the campsite below all the mist had vanished and the howling could be heard for miles around, nobody knew what the monstrous noise could be.

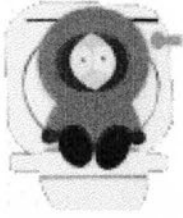
In her house Mrs McDooley was able to see again, the mist was now contained inside her Dyson - as was the dog. Her "wee doogie" was spinning around inside the cyclone that

now acted as a blender. The white fluffy appearance slowly became red as the dog was liquefied...



So if ever you find yourself in Scotland, and the mist begins to clear around a certain large house, high up on a hill, and you hear a ghostly howl, you may have found the home of Mrs McDooley and her (late) wee doogie.

JONATHON ELLISON ("THE CRIPPLE")



“We decided not to trust the camp’s digitally operated toilets and having found suitable bushes we had some breakfast.”

“We walked through deforested areas full of stagnant water which looked like it could dissolve a rabbit whole.”

The chicken in the “chicken supreme” was anything but. It tasted, and looked like compacted sawdust!”

“We stopped off in the glorious setting of a church graveyard for the highly inventive lunch entitled ‘Ryvita.’”



“After being treated to a delicious pot of organic ice cream and having pitched tents, we walked down to the beach to play with Gilbert.”

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE...

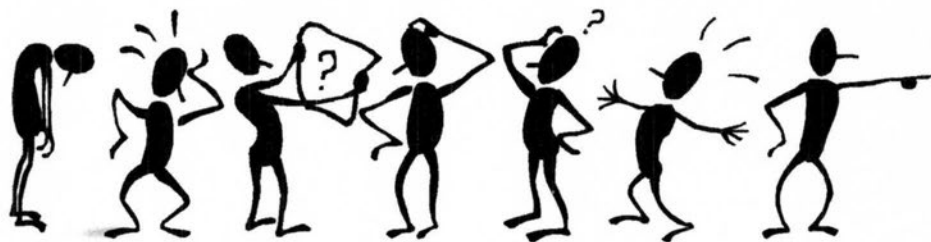
Nine weary venture scouts
Resting by the gate
Jon fell off a dry stone wall
And then there were eight



Eight frolicking venture scouts
Decided they're in heaven
Joe decided to go home
And then there were seven



Seven confused venture scouts
Discussing map graphics
Phil drove off in the bus
And then there were six

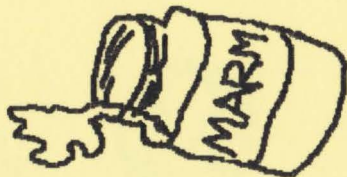


Six fatigued venture scouts
Only just alive
Giles fell and hurt his knee
And then there were five

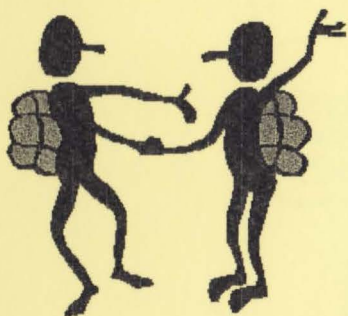


Five jolly venture scouts
Walking through a moor
Ian had an aching foot
And then there were four

Four hungry venture scouts
Sat under a tree
Rich ran out of marmalade
And then there were three

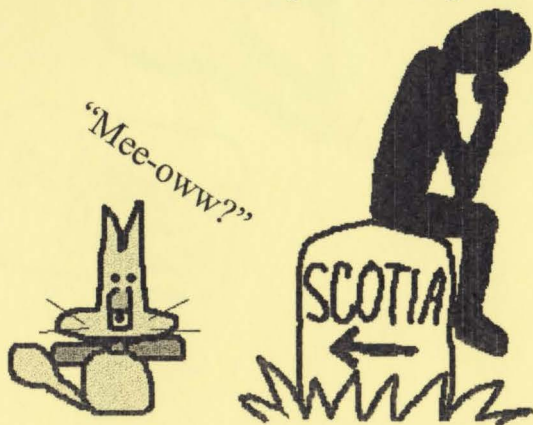


Three desperate venture scouts
Looking for a loo
Rachael went behind a wall
And then there were two!



Two blistering venture
scouts
Roasting in the sun
Alasdair drowned in sun
block
And then there was one

One deserted venture scout
Standing all alone
Matthew's still in Gretna
We forgot to bring him home!



RACHAEL BROWN

