



## VENTURE 44

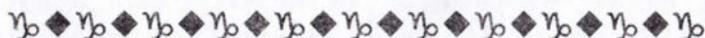
The magazine of the 44th Gloucester Venture Scout Unit  
- Sir Thomas Rich's School

OCTOBER 1995

NUMBER 77

### 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

Our apologies for this rather late edition of V44 due to the majority of the unit, including myself participating in public examinations. Most notably we must congratulate Mark Gilmore on getting all grade A's and above in his GCSE's. Currently the unit stands at fifteen members giving us a regular turnout for activities, this year however we had to say good-bye to two outstanding, committed members, Gareth Hughes, and Dave Frodin who leave us to focus on their A-levels but remain at Rich's. We also say good bye to Iestyn Morris who has helped in the unit for the last two years as he leaves us to do his A-levels at Gloscat. Some of the most recent activities include mountain biking in the Forest of Dean, the Sun Run for Help the Aged, our summer expedition, raft building, the "Five Valleys Walk" around Stroud for the Meningitis Trust and our half-term camp at Hay-on-Wye. Most of these activities can be used as part of the Duke Of Edinburgh's award scheme which the majority of the unit are participating in. At the school itself, a new building project to add another quadrangle to the school is soon to begin, and our new caretaker has arrived.

Jody

## Scotland 1995

For the second year running a small elite group of the Venture Scout Unit travelled to Scotland with the V.S.L. in his new minibus. Our ten days in Scotland consisted of, a lot of work, however we also did plenty of other activities as well.

We finally arrived in Scotland after a ten hour drive all day Saturday.

On Sunday we got straight down to work, strimming in the morning. Then in the afternoon we visited Cawdor Castle, the home of Macbeth. Luckily we did not meet his ghost.

Monday and Tuesday were spent pulling down an old corrugated iron shed. The job was not as easy as it seemed! All the bolts were rusted and in the end the job took us a day and a half. On Tuesday afternoon Phil and the V.S.L. cycled to a 100ft gorge whilst I stayed at camp and chatted with some Belgians.

Wednesday and Thursday involved a good workout for us. We moved over seventy barrows full of stone from inside a barn to outside the same barn. On Thursday evening we were invited by one of the neighbours to go salmon fishing. This was done by circling the Salmon with nets as they swam by the boat, it also required a lot of patience. In the end we caught six fish and we were allowed to keep one of them.

On Friday we got involved in making a door for an empty frame.

Saturday and Sunday were our days of rest before the long drive back to Gloucester on Monday. Our thanks go to the V.S.L. for an all round good expedition.

By Tim Andrews

### Scotland, some favourite memories

The first glimpses of the highlands made up for the 500 mile or so journey. The view of the mountains as we sped along the A9 was so peaceful and untouched.

After the warm welcome we received from the staff at Black Hill I was glad to hit the sack, after we had unloaded the van and put up our tents behind the steading.

I have many memories of the week, too many to write about here, so I will mention a few of the best. Apart from the work we did we were able to go out on many trips, visiting castles, Loch Ness, and many other interesting places in the area. One was a cycle ride to Black Rock gorge. This was a deep narrow gash, over 100ft deep that had been cut through the hillside by a rushing stream. It seemed to go down forever and was dark and foreboding.

Another venture took us up Ben Wyvis 3432ft above sea level. There was no easy way up and we had to toil up a very steep slope that wound up to the summit ridge. After several hours we reached the top and enjoyed the beautiful view.

The most memorable of events was when we were invited by a neighbour to go salmon fishing in the

Cromarty Firth. Both Tim and I were unsure as to what we would be doing, but after the first catch we soon settled down to it. We were told that the netting method we were using was a very old one, and that few fishermen used it these days. After the initial wait that lasted over an hour, everyone jumped into action which lasted for another five hours out in the shallow water of the firth. The last catch was the most spectacular as we managed to catch five in one go. We were rewarded for our efforts with a fine salmon which we gladly accepted and proudly took back to the farm where it was cooked and shared out. It was gorgeous!

Our stay at Black Hill ended with a barbecue which was attended by all the friends we had made during our stay there. I would like to thank all of those who made the trip so enjoyable, and the activities so good. I also hope I will be able to return to Black Hill in the future!

Phil Reid

### Stop Press

Plans are now being made for another visit to Scotland by the Unit during the Easter holidays when it is hoped to be involved in another work project and also complete some D. of E. Silver awards.

The major summer expedition will be back to the high mountains of western Norway, a favourite hunting ground of the Unit over the years. any ex-members interested in being involved either in either of the above should get in contact with the V.S.L. soon. .

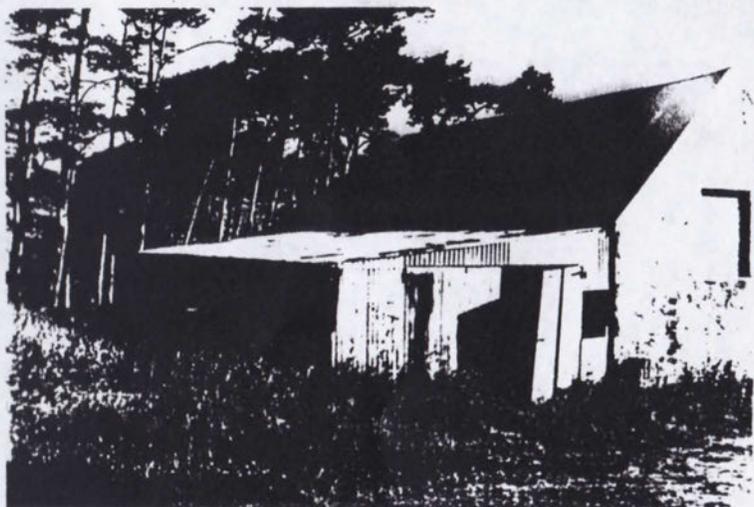
## Mountain Biking In The Forest Of Dean

The warm, dry, sunny months provided the Unit with the chance to give the dusty trails of the Forest a good hammering. One Wednesday evening was spent exploring the many trails around the Mallard's Pike lake area. Many of these tracks were new from the new Forestry Commission projects, and provided us an ideal mountain biking route.

A few weeks later the bikes came out again and we went for another trip to the Forest. This time we did a circular route around the Speech House/ Cannop area. The ride was a bit longer than anticipated due to recent deforestation (and they hadn't finished the track, 5 months late!), meaning that we had to deviate from the planned route on many occasions. We were not disheartened though and the extra ten miles which we did mainly uphill made it a much better ride.

Whilst we were riding around the Forest the likes of Miguel Indurain, Alex Zulle and Sean Yates were slogging their way through the Alps in the Tour de France. I think a bit more training is in order before the Unit participates in the Tour! Everyone seemed to enjoy it and I am sure they'll be back for more at the earliest opportunity.

Andy Clifford

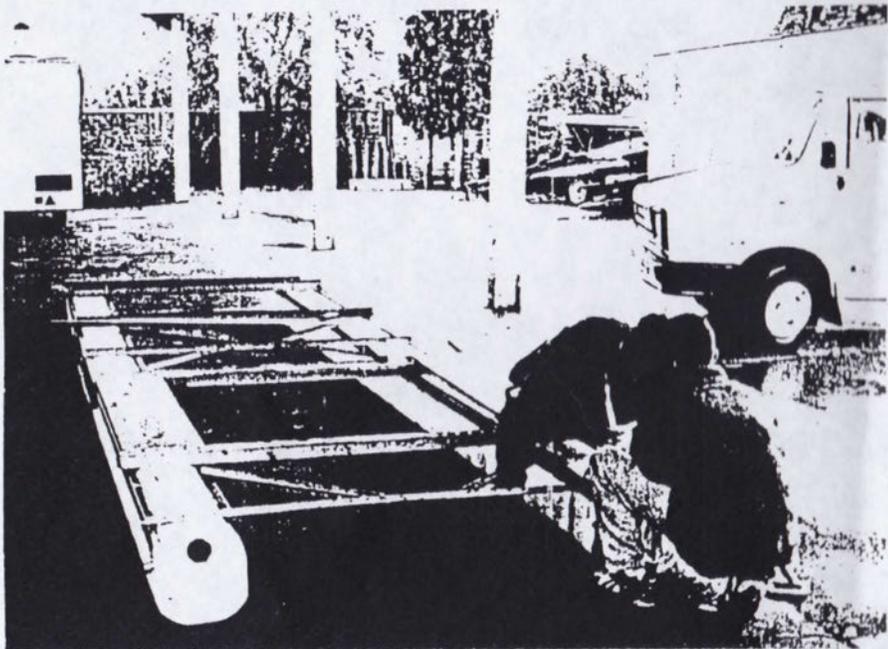


The old tin shed at Black Hill standing before and after a visit from the Unit.....





Phil, Tim, and the Cromarty Firth Salmon they netted whilst staying at Black Hill (the salmon is the one in the front.....)



Work in progress in completing the new raft (see article over leaf). To the right is the site of the old scout hut, now concreted over, with the latest V44 vehicle poised for action - Bedfords are now out of fashion, so it is Leyland-Daf-Freightrover-Sherpa whatever, these days. On far left is the famous "Greasy Spoon", a fast food mobile catering unit which vies with the kitchen and tuckshop in extracting cash from overweight and dentally challenged school kids.....

## Waun Fach - Hay-on-Wye 1995

On the evening of our first night we sat at the table in the caravan which we were to call our home for four days. We discussed the route and drew up our plan for the next days hike to the top of Waun Fach. Looking down at the map I only had a vague idea what was to follow. We arrived at our start point with the V.S.L. and we looked up at the mist shrouded crest of the 810m mountain. The first part of the walk consisted of a gentle climb along a well marked path. We then encountered steeper territory and we began walking through ferns and heather. We climbed higher and went onto a marshy scrub land we were now in thick mist and the wind speed had risen dramatically. We climbed on, the mountain was shaped into terraces. All the time the wind was whipping faster and the mist was becoming denser. We reached the top and now the ground was a giant peat bog. We constantly followed our compasses and found the exceedingly small cairn marking 810m. The V.S.L. then left us and we walked on along the ridge meeting all the points that we had viewed on the map the previous night. Walking along the ridge the rain pelting on our backs, we were all drenched ( except for the Gore-Tex™ & Texapore™ owners club). Our final encounter on the walk was the ascent of Lord Hereford's Knob. As we approached the wind increased and the walk became a struggle with the wind pushing us back we finally reached the top and made our way down to the meeting point - ½ an hour before the predicted time and the V.S.L. had not arrived. We drove back to our 'home' to dry off.

Oliver Scarf

## The Race That Never Happened

It was decided after the 1994 Churchdown V.S.U. Raft Race that we would construct a new super raft, that would leave the rest behind. This worked out well because Tim was able to design and partially build it as part of his GCSE Technology project. Tim drew up the plans and work was begun on the super raft straight away. The raft was half finished when disaster struck in the form of vandals. The decided to jump on it and bend the metal cross bars. This meant that the raft had to be dismantled and rebuilt with new cross bars.

Two weeks before the race the raft had yet to be finished. This required lots of work during our lunch hours so we could eventually finish it on time. We finally completed the raft a few days before the race, but the day before the race disaster struck a letter came:

**"DUE TO LOW WATER LEVELS THE RAFT RACE  
HAS BEEN CANCELLED"**

Well maybe next year!

Phil Reid

## From All Points

Not a great deal to report this time - could it be that ex-members are keeping a low profile to avoid being asked to support the *100 Club*. However there is some news from here and there.

*Peter Green* came into school earlier this term for the unveiling of his painting of the building, with the new library and quad shown to good effect. Since Peter left the sea he has made a name for himself as one of the country's leading marine artists, and has been commissioned by a variety of organisations world wide to paint pictures of sundry famous vessels. Shortly after his visit to Rich's he was off to New York to another assignment. (Anyone interested in purchasing one of the limited edition prints of the school 'portrait' should contact me, but soon!) Looking at the painting, I couldn't help wondering when the school acquired two smoking funnels and a figurehead, but there have been so many alterations recently, I must have missed them... (Sorry Pete!)

Wedding bells have been ringing in the west of the country, as in September *Tim* and *Di Smith* were united at Redmarley - congratulations! Brothers *Paddy* and *Ali* were of course at hand, kindly offering to help any of the many guests to consume their champagne, wine, beer, etc. Ali is now established in a farm at Much Marcle, and the wondering what might turn up when he starts ploughing the fields there...

In Gloucester doing some shopping this summer was *George Sanchez*. George is now head of science at a school on the outskirts of Southampton. Veterans of the units first visit to Ireland in 1971 may recall George's considerable interest in Irish flora, as he was constantly making forays into the bushes around our primitive campsite.

You may have noticed that we advertise our fax number on the back of the mag, and this is to encourage our far flung readers to send in their news, or forward an article for *Venture 44*. In fact a few months ago we received our first fax from Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam (actually it was our first fax from anywhere...) It was from *Rich Drew*, who had just got his V44 no.76. Rich has been working over there, and wondered if I knew of the whereabouts of the elusive *Yosh Cowmeadow*. Rich was hoping to hunt him down in Thailand, and promised to let us know of his adventure, but to date, no news...

News has come of the brothers *Graham* and *Derek Dalby*. Derek, is still with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary sails around the world quite often, but returns to Gloucester for long breaks. Graham and wife, Rachael are still living in Bedworth near Coventry, and despite the experience of his horrific accident nine years ago, Graham is still a keen motorcyclist and went touring in France this summer, and made an exotic visit to Mexico last year.

A contemporary of Graham's, *Steve Clutterbuck*,

has been on hand recently, as he has been doing some supply work at the school. He is hoping to find more permanent employment in the area soon, and we look forward to his help in the Unit in the future.

Yet another traveller, *Dave Wilson*, has just penned a note from Goa (that's the Portuguese colony in India). Dave recommends this exotic locality for a V.S. expedition... "excellent food and beer, and very cheap — you can eat out for two to three pounds. Nice beaches, locals friendly, and wild dolphins in the Arabian Sea."

Finally, the question that you are all asking — is this the summer edition or the Christmas edition? Well there is a reason for a late autumn issue — it is to allow ex-members to make contact over the festive season so that a NEW YEAR edition can be produced in late January featuring lots of news FROM ALL POINTS! I hope you respond! Oh, and by the way, as many ex-members come to the Old Richians Dinner you may be interested to know that the guest speaker on March 30th, 1996 will be yours truly.

F.H.

## 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.

----- ✂ -----

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.



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

Tel: 01452 528467

Fax: 01452 382432