

EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS (and we still do not start on time)



Proposed

Oxford University SCOUT CLUB.

A Meeting to discuss the formation of a Club to bring together members of the University interested in Scoutcraft, will be held at 8.15 p.m.

Barnett House, Broad Street,

ON

Tuesday, November 11th,

The Chair will be taken by

S. MONTAGUE BURROWS, Esq., M.A.
(Oxford County Scout Commissioner)

WHILE

A. J. TASSELL, Esq., M.A., J.P.,
(Chief Scout Commissioner).

has promised to speak.

All members of the University interested in the Movement are invited to attend.

KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

C. ERIC PURVES.
DOWELL LLOYD JONES.

EASTER ACTIVITY!

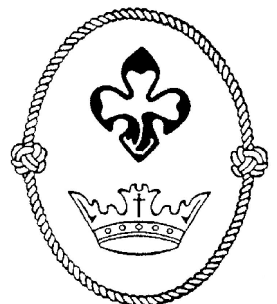
Read what you missed

SCOUTS V GUIDES

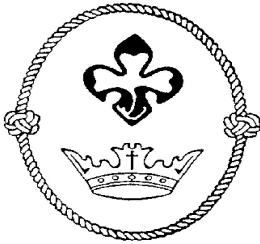
The dispute continues

SAGGA-DO-DO-DO

Push pineapple, shake the tree



postscript



Issue 355

First of Trinity 2004

An OUSGG publication

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Co-Chairs: Jacqui Bradley and Jenny Robertson

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Treasurer: Maddy Bunce

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All correspondence, pictures, and articles to postscript@ousgg.org.uk or by post/pidge to Phil Alderton, St Peter's College, Oxford.

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Any items received will be presumed to be for publication unless otherwise notified. The editor reserves the right to modify contributions.

Views in *Postscript* are those of their authors and might not correspond to those of OUSGG or related bodies.

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"I'm a professional cynic, but my heart's not in it" (Blur)

Scout and the City

Over the vacation I sat enthralled in front of any available television set watching a natty series with the charming title of *Brat Camp*. The conceit was that badly-behaved, overly-spoilt middle class teenagers were put in the care of a US 'correction' company, who would instil discipline, respect, and suchlike; turning the tearaways into angels. When I first tuned in, I was expecting some *Full Metal Jacket* style abuse and beatings, but was quite surprised by what was going on.

They dump the oiks into the middle of the Utah desert and force them to sleep under a tarpaulin. There were no matches or lighters, but they had to light fires with a bow (something I've never managed), and they didn't even let the newcomers have cutlery (that had to be earned). Just to ruffle them up a bit more, every few days they would go on long hikes which often went on into the night as some kids couldn't manage it or were refusing to walk. Thing is, though, there was little that could not have been learnt by the kids through Scouting (or, to be fair, other outdoors-based youth organisations).

Whilst I found watching it hugely enjoyable, I did feel pangs of envy. I'd love to camp out in the Utah desert, but would probably want to do it on my own terms, and not those of the centre. Moreover, the fees the company charge (well over \$10,000 if I recall correctly – I can't be bothered to check), is well in excess of what we charge. However, recent reports suggest the government, when not trying to turn us into an East German style surveillance state, want all secondary school children to have the chance to attend summer camps for outdoors-based experience and teamwork/leadership/citizenship skills. We've been offering this for 96 years, as do many other youth movements. Indeed, *Scouting for Boys* was a book of suggestions for existing youth movements, not a plan for a new one. One has to give Baden-Powell more credit than we sometimes do (myself included).

Phil Alderton, Editor
PS

Inside...

<i>Chair / Club Notices / Filler</i>	<i>Page 3</i>
<i>From our own Correspondents</i>	<i>Page 4</i>
<i>Easter Activity</i>	<i>Page 5</i>
<i>Scouts v Guides</i>	<i>Page 7</i>
<i>SAGGA</i>	<i>Page 8</i>

From the top

Jacqui Bradley & Jenny Robertson, Co-Chairs

As you will see from your Jennyfied termcard, Jenny and Jacqui, Partners in Crime, have arrived on the OUSGG chaise longue. We've planned a drink-filled term, which we hope you'll enjoy as much as we do. It should be suitably ... for anybody with big Es looming.
PS

Disturbing Websites

Jonathan Harvey suggests you should point your browser to

< <http://www.rathergood.com/biscuits/> >

Jo Miller, meanwhile, randomly inserted < <http://www.paperfolding.com/insects/> > into a piece for *Postscript*. I mean, it's not like I can have nothing better to do than browse the Interweb-thingy all day, is it? **PS**

Sheep

A Mr F T Sheep rang in, bleating us to insert a plug for his award show. Send your nominations to him at < flossy_t_sheep@yahoo.co.uk >. Preferably *before* the ceremony. **PS**

Cheap shots

Earlier in the year, the Scout Association began selling prints of Ernest Carlos' painting, *The Pathfinder*, to raise money for the 2007 jamboree celebrating 99 years of Scouting. We are disappointed in the choice of work, and reckon his *Raw Material* or the frankly scary *If I were a boy again* would be far better candidates for such a sale. Besides, surely nobody would want to have a copy of anything seen in Ken Barlow's house? **PS**

Words of Wisdom

Maddy: I'm torn between tidying up and drinking...I'll go and get my purse

Mark: I'm not having a slapping competition with Phil at 5 in the morning.

Sam: Icicles – the perfect pervert murder weapon

Mark: Are you playing with my ticker?

Sam: I had a nightmare the other night – I dreamt I was treasurer

Michael (to Alison): "Stop playing with me!"

PS

Time was...

Poorly translated excerpts from the membership book of the Thaelman Pioneers - the younger branch of East Germany's Free German Youth

"The Laws of the Thaelman Pioneers

- We Thaelman Pioneers love our socialist fatherland, the German Democratic Republic
- We Thaelman Pioneers wear with pride our red neckerchiefs and honour it.
- We Thaelman Pioneers love and respect our parents.
- We Thaelman Pioneers love and defend peace, and hate warmongers.
- We Thaelman Pioneers are friends of the Soviet Union and all brother socialist peoples, and have friendship with all the children in the world.
- We Thaelman Pioneers study hard, are orderly and disciplined.
- We Thaelman Pioneers love and respect all work and all working people.
- We Thaelman Pioneers love truth, are reliable and friendly to each other.
- We Thaelman Pioneers are trusting of technology, explore the laws of nature, and get to know the treasures of civilisation.
- We Thaelman Pioneers keep our bodies healthy and clean, do sport regularly, and are happy.
- We Thaelman Pioneers prepare ourselves to become good members of the Free German Youth.

Our Pioneer greeting is "For Peace and Socialism - Be Prepared!- Always Prepared!". We carry out the Pioneer greeting by raising our right hand with closed fingers above the head. Our Pioneer badge consists of the letters JP (Junge Pioniere), three blazing flames, and the inscription "Be Prepared". **PS**

From our own correspondents...

Christina Mowl

Greetings to all from Folkstone, that's my little home by the sea on the south east Coast for those who don't know. As ever not sure what to send to *Postscript* so thought I would give a little spot of news and an activity idea. I am sure we are all stuck for ideas with our various guide groups, rangers etc so if anyone thinks of good ones, send them in and we can nick each others!

As some of you may know I have recently started a job as a youth worker and hence have to find ways to amuse children of all ages. So far I think I have managed to impress them with my stock of guide type games and ideas, though don't want them to run out (that's where you guys come in). Anyway for those interested here is one such idea that worked really well the other day.

The Enlargement Wall

Some of you may have heard of this old favourite of a camp fire stunt, but I hadn't thought of adapting it for a children's party, that was until we had 60 little ones to amuse and I was stuck for an idea. Anyway with the help of the youth club we managed to find excellent props and this was how it went:

My friend amused the crowd with the aid of his parrot puppet and explained how he had found a magic blanket that enlarges things. (No doggy puns please) Two assistants were then asked to hold up the blanket in front of a screen behind which I and another worker were hidden. Children were then selected to throw over items including a tiny chocolate bar ('Miniature Heroes' work well), a teddy and a small ball, we then gleefully heard the squeals as we threw back huge versions of each one. Finally one of the helpers (any victim) pretends to spit over the wall, the children then wait expectantly.... then we get to squirt everyone with water pistols from behind the screen! It's great fun, and amazed me how excited all the children were, I guess things like soaking leaders never go out of fashion. Anyway If you have ideas why not send them in, make me look inventive and provide our editor with articles!

Noga Zivan

At 48th Oxford there once lived three Cub Scout leaders; Emma from town, Mark from new gown, and Noga from old gown.

And they were happy and joyful playing spaghetti tag and races with their 20 little Cub Scouts. They went camping at Youlbury and played Crab Football. They learnt about maps and Scouting and Australia. And it seemed as though things would always continue in that happy way, protected by the unreality bubble which surrounded the city of Oxford.

But time moved on and soon Noga graduated, and left forever the cosy world of the 48th.

She travelled a long, long way, across the sea, to a place where two Scout Associations still maintained the memory of old religious strife, and where change was in the air. She looked around and cried 'Is there any room for me in the new Scouting Ireland now being born?'

And quietly, quietly, a little voice said, 'Turn left out of the gate next Tuesday night. We are waiting for you.'

So off she trotted one cold Tuesday night, towards a tall spire called Christchurch. Here she found 15 little cub-scouts recently abandoned by a Cub Scout leader called Siobhan, who had headed North to the magic bubble of Queen's, Belfast. And so was born a new team at 32nd Rathgar, Mervin from town, Noga from old gown and Mark, from new gown. And they lived happily ever after, for Mark and Noga teased each other mercilessly and it was fun.

The End.

The Easter Activity

Alistair Green *was there*.

“Are you all right?” Jo asked. “No,” I replied, and promptly collapsed.

It was Monday evening, and we, along with Michael, were half-way up Angler’s Crag, a short distance from the Ennerdale scout camp site. I was beginning to think that it had, perhaps, been a little unwise to ignore the path and try to climb straight up the steepest part. Especially since I was holding onto the rocks with my hands as well as my feet, just to avoid falling off. But most of all, I was knackered. Having put rather too many layers of insulation on, I felt as if I had run a marathon in a sauna – and besides, I wasn’t exactly used to this sort of thing.

It had all seemed like such a good idea when I signed up for the trip to Ennerdale at the end of Hilary Term. By then, the work had driven me crazy enough that I was starting to appreciate jokes about Grignard reagents – clearly a very worrying sign – and I knew that several weeks of revision lay ahead. It was obvious that I was going to need a break.

The strange thing was that, as I sat on the side of the crag, looking down at Ennerdale Water and getting my breath back, it still seemed like a good idea.

At length we reached the summit, before returning to the bothy at the camp site in time for dinner. Having eaten our pasta and lit the wood-burning stove – a task that required skill and pyromania in equal measure, both of which Michael possessed – we set about planning the next day’s walk.

It was to be a ten-mile round trip over the fells to the other end of Ennerdale Water, and then back along the Lakeside Path. “It looks a bit ambitious,” I said, noting that the route involved climbing three peaks, the highest of which, Starling Dodd, was roughly five times taller than Angler’s Crag. “Don’t worry,” Jo replied, “You can probably do more than you think you can.”

And so it was that, the next morning, refreshed by a full English breakfast, we set off. Michael and Jo had also been refreshed by a good night’s

sleep; I, on the other hand, had been awake for 26 hours straight, thanks to a combination of rustling plastic covers on the beds, a fridge that started up and then juddered to a halt at regular intervals throughout the night and – mentioning no names – loud snoring.

The seven-hour hike passed off largely without incident, except for lunch on the plateau at the top of Gale Fell, where we were surprised to find ourselves being stalked by a sheep. As we ate, we gradually became aware that it was heading slowly but deliberately in our general direction, in much the same way as a lioness moves in for the kill. Apparently realising that it had been spotted, the animal turned and went off in search of easier prey. This sparked a lengthy conversation about Chris Seward and Flossy the Sheep, after which we pressed on to the summit.

That evening, Alison arrived and seemed rather bemused to find me examining my right foot and leafing through a copy of *The SAS Survival Handbook*. I was looking for the section on the treatment of blisters, having trodden in a hidden foot-deep pool of muddy water near Floutern Tarn and walked for several more miles with somewhat damp socks.

The rest of the night passed rather confusingly as we all tried to play a card game called ‘solo’, to which no-one – not even Jo, who suggested it – was entirely sure of the rules. We turned in early so as to be ready for the next day’s walk, and this time *nothing* was going to keep me awake.

Sam arrived the following morning, just in time to join us on our hike. The plan was to drive to a car park a little further around the lake, then walk to the far end and ascend into the fells for the journey back. Michael was put in charge of navigating to the car park, despite having said the day before that he was banned from direction-finding after Winter Walking. This was, perhaps, not a wise decision as he proceeded to take us down the wrong road. A road so narrow that Jo and Alison both had to reverse back up it for several hundred yards before a driveway gave them the chance to turn around.

The excitement continued as Jo momentarily lost control of her car on a sharp bend. Fortunately

she managed to correct the skid before the car could leave the road.

Eventually we reached the car park and set off on our walk, despite the fact that it had started to rain. The presence of two physicists and a mathematician in the group ensured that a conversation about deriving the Navier-Stokes Equation swiftly followed.

At the far end of Ennerdale Water I broke off from the rest of the group and walked back to the camp site along the other side of the lake. Having damaged my foot the previous day, I thought that a very long walk would probably not be wise, and in any case I could see that the tops of the fells were enveloped in cloud.

The others had told me that they expected to return to the camp site by five o'clock, and that I was to call out mountain rescue if they were not back by 5:30. They finally arrived at 5:29 and 40 seconds. Michael explained that they had been delayed because "the visibility was interesting". At one point they had been forced to walk along a narrow ridge, in a strong cross-wind, and "couldn't see just how much bugger all there was" below them.

Jo and Alison left first thing the next morning. At this point, three facts became apparent to Michael, Sam and me:

1. It was raining heavily.
2. We no longer had access to a car.
3. We had no food.

Accordingly, we had no choice but to walk into Ennerdale Bridge – a distance of about a mile – in search of provisions. The only shop in the village appeared to be the post office, which sold pasta, tomato sauce, Cumberland sausage and little else. Having purchased these culinary delights, we headed back to the bothy for a much-needed cup of tea.

By Friday the rain had stopped. As this was to be our last full day at Ennerdale, the morning was spent cleaning the toilets and sweeping the floor of the bothy. After lunch, Sam's dad turned up to give us a lift into Cockermouth in his X-Type Jaguar.

The next few hours passed quickly as we pottered around the toy and model museum

before going to a tea shop. Suitably refreshed, we decided to go for a walk through the town's beautiful parks (which, co-incidentally, took us past the Jennings brewery). Eventually the footpath petered out, but since we knew we were on a public right of way, we took an educated guess as to where it went and cut across a field. At the far end was a gate, which we climbed over to emerge into an industrial estate. Turning around, we saw a sign attached to the gate. It read, "Keep Out – Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted."

After dinner at a local pub – washed down with Jennings Cumberland Ale, of course – we caught a bus back to Ennerdale Bridge and spent the rest of the evening playing Scrabble.

All good things must come to an end, and so it was with the Easter Activity. As I headed back towards the M6 the next morning, past a large sign that read "Smelly Armpits Welcome", I reflected that it had, on the whole, been an enjoyable week. Thanks to Michael for taking on the unenviable task of organising it. **PS**



This looks more idyllic in colour

Time was....

"The snobbishness of class against class is one of the causes of the present social unrest that is damaging our country. You younger fellows can put a stop to it if you only have the will to do so.

It is for the better-off fellows – you who have had the luck to get a better education – it is for you to hold out a hand of friendship and goodwill to your less well-to-do brothers. If you are a gentleman – as you profess – you will do it. Indeed, I am glad to believe that the best public schools and universities are already doing it, not in any sense of condescension, but as brother men and fellow-countrymen."

Lord Baden-Powell, *Rovering to Success* (Herbert Jenkin, 1930)

Culture Wars

Hayley Thompson *throws her hat into the ring*

At the end of last term, I was lucky enough to watch the Gang Show. Like last year, this was a fantastic example of the diversity of scouting and guiding. Yes, I'm sure that most of the scouts could tie a Brownie in knots and yes, the guides probably could give Ready, Steady, Cook a run for its money. However, this was something quite removed from the traditional, stereotypical images of the two movements. They sang, they danced, they dressed as giant tea bags, they acted and most of all they looked as if they were enjoying themselves. The show always finishes with a big finale, where they sing snippets of songs from the show and then the traditional songs to end a Gang Show. This always looks impressive as every performer loses their costumes and puts on their uniform. They look smart and they look proud to be wearing it.

My involvement with the Gang Show is small, I just do the Front of House, sell programmes and show people to their seats. Along with the other Scouters and Guiders who work Front of House, I wear my uniform, a Gang Show sash and the official scarf. Now, I'd like to think that I don't always look like I have fought with a tree on my way to meetings but I was quite shocked by what I saw. What is wrong with the Guides? The Scouts, Explorers and adults all looked well turned out. The visiting Beavers and Cubs were recognizable as such even if they weren't as neat as their elder counterparts. And then I looked at the all female side. The visiting Rainbows will always get away with looking sweet as they have that 'ah' factor. The Brownies seem to glow in the dark. The Guides don't even look as if they are wearing a uniform with their collarless, symbol-less T-shirts. The YLs and Rangers are a bit hit and miss and then there are the adults. My uniform is a white T-shirt with blue collar, blue sweatshirt, blue trousers/skirt and a blue badge tab. So why don't any of these blues match or indeed go together? Scouts 1, Guides 0.

Then I looked at the badges. I can remember wearing my Brownie badges on my sleeve and my Guide badges on a sash. This was seen as progress and yes, it did look quite smart, even when you had to start going down the back of the sash. And what can Guides do with their (much reduced) badges

now? They can put them in the new equivalent of the handbook. That's it, well done, that badge took you several months to complete, go and hide it away somewhere in a book. Or you can wear them on your uniform but there is no prescribed placing so Guides who want to display their badges do so in random places on their jumpers. The Scouts all have matching badges, regardless of where they come from and it looks good. Scouts 2, Guides 0.

And then there is the programme. There has been a move away from the traditional roles of guides in recent years with an attempt to broaden their horizons and teach them skills that will be useful in life. I went to a girls school and without Guides, I probably wouldn't be able to do some of the practical skills that I learnt at Guides. It was a fun way to spend Monday evenings and it wasn't at all like school. Now, the programme seems to have learning objectives and seems very much like school. Many things that I enjoyed as a Brownie and Guide have been banned as they are considered unsafe. The distinction between Guides and a youth club is quite vague. On the other side of the fence, we have the Scouts who are clearly Scouts. They can read a map, tie knots, camp and very little of it seems like school. It seems fun. As for the activities that they can get up to, the list seems endless. Things that cause the GA to keel over in a dead faint, don't bother the SA. Yes, they do risk assessments but the individual leaders seem to have discretion over whether an activity is deemed safe or not. Scouts 3, Guides 0.

In the sanity stakes, maybe the Guides win. Just look at the definition of Winter camp. Indoors, heating, proper cookers, -4°C outside. In tents, jumpers as the only form of heating, camp cooking, -4°C outside. Scouts 3, Guides 1.

Oh dear, Guides, what is going on? Is it any wonder that girls are now joining the Scout Association and abandoning the blue? Yes, there are problems with the Scouts, many of which Phil has highlighted recently for us. The more I learn about the Scout Association, the more impressed I am. I have benefited greatly from my involvement in the last 16 years but now I'm wondering. If I was 10 again, which would I choose? Come to that, next year will I be working at the Gang Show in vague blues or mushroom? It's very tempting. PS

SAGGA – The Great Escape

Jo Miller *on life after SSAGO*

Trinity term, and older members will soon be wondering about, or have already faced, the question “what next in Scouting?” (using “Scouting” to cover Scouts and Guides, before people write in). For many of us it was a marvellous surprise to find that Scouting does not end after Ventures; there is a more grown-up version at university. But that seems to be the end. Even those who hang on through DPhils have to move on eventually into the big world and get jobs, and it seems the only way to carry on with Scouts is to become a leader. It's all very well, but children aren't such good company, and you can't sit up sipping port late into the night with your Cubs.

Well, it turns out there is a smooth transition. Most of you will know SSAGO (the Student Scout & Guide Organisation, not a misspelt pudding). Yes, that's what the rally was all about, and it's a national umbrella organisation from groups like OUSGG. There's also a group called SAGGA. The pun with the over-50s holiday company is probably not accidental, but it stands for Scout & Guide Graduate Association.

Having joined SAGGA shortly after graduating, I finally got around to going on a trip with them this weekend. “The Great Escape” was also their AGM, so there was a dull meeting to sit through, but otherwise the format was similar to small SSAGO rally, complete with barn dance. There was one major difference: instead of being aged 18-24, the oldest participant was perhaps eighty, and the youngest just a few weeks old. There were recent graduates like myself, as well as

generations of their parents and grandparents.

So what do these people do? Well, there are half-a-dozen loose groupings around the country who hold various local evenings and trips. There are also national events, such as a sailing weekend, and a summer camp at which service work is done on the selected campsite. Many members are of course leaders, and together they also help out with Scouting events like the Malvern Challenge. SAGGA also had a great deal of input into GASCIT, the camps in 2000 and 2003 for Guide and Scout groups unable to camp on their own. It's a flexible, welcoming society, full of, well, people like OUSGG. Intelligent, friendly, enthusiastic, and practical. If you've graduated, or are about to graduate, then do join and they'll send you their magazine so you know what's going on. If you turn up at an event, you'll probably see familiar faces from SSAGO rallies, and you'll certainly meet people very much like the friends you've made in OUSGG.

See < <http://www.sagga.org.uk/> > for more details. **PS**

AS MIK'S NEWEST AGENT, ERI> IS SENT DEEP INTO THE WAR-TORN REPUBLIC OF BODGRODAVIA...

