

Sky Blue

THE MAGAZINE OF CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SCOUT AND GUIDE CLUB

Editorial

Hello and welcome to Sky Blue from your new editor! Quite how this happened I am not too sure, at Annual Dinner there was shock that I had avoided a committee position and so here we are!

Due to various factors, but mainly my incompetence, this edition is a bit late, but on the upside has content from the whole year!

I've also given the magazine a new look, as a bit of an experiment. If everyone hates it, it will return to its previous form but I quite like it.

2016 was an exciting year for CUSAGC. Our usual events reappeared - Forward, Marathon, Annual Dinner, Punt Joust, Garden Party, and CTW which was almost a carbon copy of 2015. We also had a couple of fires, went bowling, punting, kayaking, cycling, and made appearances at SSAGO events!

I personally managed to do everything from climbing Mam Tor, to cooking a course for Progressive Meal despite living 2 miles from Cambridge, to, in a rather undignified manner, falling out of a kayak into the Cam while attempting to disembark.

2016 was also an exciting year for Scouting. It was the 30th birthday of Beaver Scouts and the 100th birthday of Cub Scouts, the latter of which saw me camping for a weekend on a campsite overrun by more than 1000 over-excited Cubs! Guiding also got in on the act, with the centenary of the Senior Section.

I am sure that 2017 will be another successful year for the club, and we will continue to go from strength to strength.

Adam

2016-17 Committee

Chair: Tom Webster

Secretary: Ed Holt

Treasurer: Emma Crickmore

QM: Oli Cubitt

SAGLO: Margaret Duff

Social: Cara Woods

AAC: Matt Maltby

Webmaster: Ed Holt

Sky Blue Editor: Adam Swinton



Committee Reports

Chair

Tom Webster

CUSAGC have had a good year. We managed to recruit a new member and placed several more people at 28th Cambridge, increasing our presence further, at the cheese and wine evening.

We've managed to put on a wide variety of events throughout the last year, from standard features like progressive meal and testing service activities to new events, kayaking and bouldering so far and archery planned soon. Social events varied from board games, bowling to the most exciting event of this term, tent putting up.

Marathon was held in Thaxted and was generally a success with a good turnout from teams and volunteers. The weather was surprisingly pleasant and teams again were very unsuccessful at getting lost or making it to my base. Many thanks to all volunteers! Forward is in the planning and will be held at Toft People's hall. A route has been planned and we have had many teams interested. Progress had also been made in dealing with the DBS problems with SSAGO's new policy allowing guiding DBSs and also from county scouting in providing with a method of getting DBS checks for members who need them.

Our presence at SSAGO events has been increasing, sending three to Dino Rally in Bournemouth, three to Space Rally in Coventry, two for Brexit Rally, and four for Bath Masked ball. SSAGO's ongoing thing this year looks to be Witan policy documents however that may change if the non-watershedded campfire at CTW is discussed.

Great Escape again became the Great Day Escape due to the AAC and Social Sec having exams and not wanting to go because of it. The train was caught to Ely and we walked back to Cambridge following the river. CTW was very successful with eleven people at our busiest. It was held in Hathersage in the Peak District and provided CUSAGC with plenty of ice skating opportunities and lots of mud to transport.

Margaret has continued our links with guiding and we've also continued conversations with the county network commissioner after his speech at annual dinner last year. Hopefully the network relaunch goes well. We've also made links with the newly formed district scout leaders group and hope to keep offering good service events to all in the district.

Overall, the year has been highly successful, as always a push for more membership is needed next year to attempt to match the bumper recruiting under Margaret and Emily and to compensate for our members who will be graduating or soon have completed their PhDs.

I would like to thank the committee for all their hard work this year. I would also like to thank Meghan and Amy for their part in Marathon challenge, even though they managed to escape being on the committee. Finally, I'd like to thank Rod for his continued support of the committee.

To next year!

Treasurer

Emma Crickmore

After taking until October to finally get the accounts remanded people are now able to be reimbursed. I have discovered a problem with HSBC's online forms – you can easily change the address everything is sent to (if your chair keeps his signature constant) but not the name at the top of the address. This led to mail addressed to Mr Cubitt arriving at Newnham! This has now been sorted. I have done the audit for the year, the club is solvent and could probably do with spending some of its money and I might have even got the names and email addresses of the signatories to the Santander accounts!

Social Secretary

Cara Woods

CUSAGC have done many fun things over the last year with at least one person coming to every event. Bowling was a fun start to my time as social secretary, mainly because badges were involved (fact: badges make everything better). The cycle trip to Grantchester in Easter term is also memorable as it was meant to involve a pub stop. However, after realizing that nobody wanted to drink Emma suggested heading to the play park. This was very enjoyable and a great way of relieving stress before the impending exams (fact: swings make everything better).

Garden Party and Punt joust both happened with good attendance at both. Quite a few fogies came to the Garden party and we had some other SSAGOers come to punt joust. Initially it was thought that they were very keen since they were from Plymouth and Cardiff SSAGOs but it turns out that they both live in Cambridge. Ed did a great job with his portable barbeque cooking food to warm everyone up after having had a dip in the Cam.

Highlights of Michaelmas term include bouldering, Board games night (Obama Llama was particularly amusing) and Fire (fact: fire makes everything better). Campfire involved large marshmallows, Margaret's marshmallow toasting fork and CUSAGC trying to write CUSAGC with sparklers (partially successful). During my final term as social sec there are still several fun things to look forward to (as well as FORWARD itself!) and remember to save the date for next year's annual dinner! (Saturday 3rd February 2018)

Secretary

Ed Holt

As always from the secretary, there is very little to report for this or any other Sky Blue. Perhaps my crowning achievement of my time as secretary has been to be one of the few SSAGO clubs to submit their membership on time! I've also taken vaguely competent minutes, even if my spelling has sometimes been called into question by eagle-eyed committee members. Other than that, due to industrial projects I haven't been to too many CUSAGC events, although had a superb time on CTW! Soon to be leaving the committee by nature of finishing my degree, I reflect back on my time with CUSAGC with extreme fondness, and am really looking forward to Rally in Sheffield and Forward in Toft.

My First SSAGO Rally

Emma Crickmore

Back in June a CUSAGC contingent attended Rally for the first time in many years. It was the Dino Rally and was hosted by Southampton in my home area of Bournemouth. Tom, Oli and I went and the exec commented how nice it was to have some proof of our existence other than our club reports.

Friday's night entertainment was a campfire which became decidedly rowdier after midnight. It says something about the STEM dominance of SSAGO



when most people understand a crude lyric involving a pencil Newton Raphson. Saturday morning was spent playing Dino themed games and getting soaked on the obstacle course – thanks Tom. After lunch which included turkey dinosaurs people went off on their booked activities. I went on the Bournemouth treasure hunt which involved following riddle directions, photographing as many things off a list as possible and matching pictures to places on our route. Local knowledge came in handy when I knew that a place called Richmond Hill existed. Oli meanwhile had joined the trip to Brownsea Island while Tom was sampling Bournemouth's pubs.

Back at the campsite the dinosaur food theme continued with Dino shaped biscuits after the barbeque. There was then the traditional ceilidh which is hard work in walking boots on a slightly slippery field. The rest of the evening was spent either watching Jurassic park or at the campfire. On Sunday morning Oli and Tom had to decide who was the most hungover to attend the reps meeting while everyone else played on inflatables. Too soon it was time for the closing ceremony, people to strike camp and depart.

Overall it was an enjoyable experience even if you did have to keep a constant eye out for someone trying to steal Whimsy. I'll definitely try and make it to more SSAGO events in the future.

Marathon 2016

Amy Bland, Meghan Bird, Matt Maltby

The 2016 Marathon challenge was based in Thaxted, in Essex. Centred on Thaxted Church Hall, the usual 26 checkpoints were distributed within a 5km radius and teams were challenged to visit as many of these as possible within a 9-hour period.

Although most of the checkpoints were un-manned, at four of them the teams were greeted by CUSAGCers who set them additional challenges. At base O, there was the traditional first aid base. The quiz again made an appearance, this time at base V, with slightly 2016 themed rounds

(European languages, songs containing America, Cubs and Senior Section badges), and a random round where all the answers were part of the creation account in Genesis 1 (written by our token Arts student, studying theology). Base R was very far away, the furthest in fact from HQ of all of the bases. Here participants had to try and rescue a number of rubber ducks with a range of equipment they were offered, including rope, climbing paraphernalia and a bucket. At Base F, participants had to make a knot in a large rope, whilst blindfolded, without letting go of the rope.



We had 78 participants in 18 teams who all left from, and returned to, Thaxted. The weather was lovely all day. There was thick fog as we drove to Thaxted, but it cleared before the team set off. Dinner was, as usual, Chili con Carne, but this time the meat and veg came from a farm shop, making it extra delicious. At the end of the day, we were very pleased to see all the teams return safely to HQ, if not all on time, and we had no teams who got lost which was great.



Finally we were ready to announce the winners and award trophies. Congratulations to Legacy Explorer Leaders, our overall winners this year; they also took the over-18 trophy. Top of the Explorer teams was Legacy Explorers A who came in 7th place overall, while Framlingham Guides (Leaders) were the highest-scoring all female team. Well done to all the teams who took part - Marathon is designed to be hard and you all put in a great performance, and we hope you enjoyed yourselves too! This year no teams managed to visit all 26 checkpoints, but our course did seem extra difficult.

We would like to thank all the volunteers (who helped with organising and running the event), Thaxted Church Hall, all the local landowners (for putting up with the boot-prints and tents), and last but not least, all the participants for your energy and enthusiasm which makes the event worth running!

Forward 2016

Emma Crickmore, Oli Cubbitt



Forward 2016 was held in Bar Hill Scout Hut on 5th March. The approximately 10 mile route took participants through the villages of Dry Drayton, Childerly, Knapwell, Boxworth and Lolworth. The weather forecast was looking atrocious but luckily it rained less than expected. The mud did make keeping the hut's carpet clean a challenge.

At the activity bases teams had to build a bridge out of spaghetti and marshmallows, send messages in semaphore and Morse code and complete a blindfolded sheep herding exercise. There was also the traditional first aid base and code breaking. The code breaking challenge may have been quite challenging, but since that base had a large event shelter and provided hot drinks, most people were happy just to be in the dry for a few minutes. The participants may have noticed CUSAGC's obsession with ducks as they featured in two of the activity bases. However we do not make the footpath signs so the answer to that observation quiz question was a badger not a duck!

The morning ran smoothly enough apart from an urgent question from control to ask the QM if CUSAGC owned a plunger or any other toilet unblocking equipment! The committee quickly voted to obtain one and a plunger was bought when the order of 175 doughnuts was collected. The Bog Squad got to work and plumbing issues were resolved in time for the returning walkers.

The very muddy walkers were rewarded with hot dogs and doughnuts once they'd returned. A few teams went over their 7 hour limit and had to be picked up but the majority made it back in time. One of the very late teams were slowed down by their decision to try and take an abandoned shopping trolley around with them! The trolley was removed and taken back to the supermarket.

1st Cambridge Guides with 802 points had the highest score overall and win the Guide Trophy. The highest unchaperoned Scout team were Team A from 28th Cambridge with 779 points and they win the Scout Trophy. Some of the chaperoned teams scored highly and came in the top five. Hopefully the experience they have gained this year will allow them to compete for the trophies next year.

We're most grateful to all the teams and their Leaders for their participation, and to all the CUSAGCers, Leaders and others who ensured the event could happen by lending their time and experience. We hope everyone had a good time! We're also grateful for the cooperation of a number of landowners on the route. Our thanks also go to Bar Hill Scout Group who lent us their hut for the day.



CTW 2016

Adam Swinton

CTW, our annual winter hiking trip between Christmas and New Year took us once again to Hathersage Scout Hut in the Peak District. If we are not careful, CTW will become 'Peak District Trip'! We assembled in Hathersage on Wednesday 28th December by rail and road, some of us arriving closer to the 12 o'clock meeting time than others due to debit card malfunctions leading to the payment of our entire food bill in multiple contactless transactions.

Nevertheless, once a significant number of us were present, we headed over to the Scout Hut and began making plans for the afternoon. With our collection of maps we could make a giant collage covering the whole of the Peak District, pretty much from Manchester to Sheffield! The decision was made for a 'short hike' over the hill to Eyam, and then a gentle stroll back along the river. What we didn't quite appreciate at the time was that our 'short hike' was actually 17km, and we ended up walking the return part of the route in the dark, and managed to make it home (after a stop at the pub in Grindleford of course) mainly due to Tim T's excellent night navigation skills.



While we had been out, Ed had arrived at the hut and had been busy preparing pizza dough for us to cover with toppings and then bake for dinner. The next day we got up bright and early for a cooked breakfast, before driving over in convoy to the Edale Valley, and after a bit of complicated logistics involving which cars were going to be left in which car parks, we began our walk. We walked up Jacob's Ladder, before heading to the trig point at the top of Brown Knoll. What would normally have been an extremely muddy path was actually almost frozen over, making traversing it much easier.

We then walked up along to Lord's Seat before stopping for some much needed lunch. After lunch we continued walking east along the ridge, over Mam Tor and Lose Hill, before dropping down into Hope, and of course a well-earned pub break (after finding a pub not too busy to fit us all in!).

We returned to Hathersage and some of us began cooking the evening meal, chicken (or vegetarian) fajitas. These were wolfed down and before long we were outside, enjoying songs round the campfire, with some impressive levels of harmonising from our more musically inclined members! We then returned inside once it got a bit chilly, and played a few board games.

The next morning, after another cooked breakfast we set to work cleaning up the hall ready for the next occupants, after which we drove over to Ladybower for our final day of walking. We began by climbing up onto the ridge, and despite seeing many interesting looking rock formations, our resident geologist had gone home the night before and was unable to enlighten us to their origins. Instead, we climbed on them.



We found some shelter from the wind to have lunch, including (multiple types of) cheese and crackers in true CUSAGC style! We then descended to the north side of the reservoir, upon which we strolled down the edge to get to the visitor centre, whereupon after another successful logistics operation getting all the cars to the correct places, we said our goodbyes and departed our separate ways.



This was my first CTW and I had a fab time, and I will certainly be back next year for more walking, pubs, and cheese and biscuits! Perhaps next time we will move to a new location (or perhaps we will make Hathersage a permanent base!). Thanks go to Tom and Matt for organising, and Ed for his excellent dough-making!

