



How to Run a Patrol

A Handbook for Patrol Leaders
and Scoutmasters

BY

JOHN LEWIS

GLASGOW

BROWN, SON & FERGUSON, LIMITED

Official Publishers to the Boy Scouts Association, London

Reprinted 1939

Printed and Made In Great Britain by
BROWN, SON & FERGUSON, LTD., GLASGOW

To
ALL THE GOOD SCOUTS
I HAVE MET
DURING
TWENTY JOLLY YEARS OF
SCOUTING.

Downloaded from:
“The Dump” at Scoutscan.com
<http://www.thedump.scoutscan.com/>

Thanks to Dennis Trimble for providing this booklet.



Editor's Note:

The reader is reminded that these texts have been written a long time ago. Consequently, they may use some terms or express sentiments which were current at the time, regardless of what we may think of them at the beginning of the 21st century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

If you find them offensive, we ask you to please delete this file from your system.

This and other traditional Scouting texts may be downloaded from The Dump.

FOREWORD.

So often one sees it said of a book, “No parent or politician should be without this volume,” so it is not a very original remark for me to make when I say that no Scout Commissioner, Scoutmaster, or Patrol Leader should be without this book, *How to Run a Patrol*, but I do say it, and from my heart.

The Patrol System is the key to success in Scout training and this little book shows *why* this is so and *how* you carry the idea into practice. I hope it will be found very helpful and that every Patrol Leader will do his best to carry out its ideas and thus make his Patrol second to none.

ROBERT BADEN-POWELL.

April, 1928

PREFACE TO FIFTH EDITION.

THAT there is still an urgent need for advice on how to Scout *in Patrols and in small groups* is plain to see if one moves among Troops.

There is always a tendency for Scouting to degenerate and the cry of “Back to *Scouting for Boys*” must again and again be raised.

I am deeply grateful to the Chief for his kindly Foreword and to the warm encouragement he has always given to these efforts of mine to follow up the trail he has blazed so well.

JOHN LEWIS.

April, 1939.

WARNING!

THERE are lots of other ways of running Patrols than this one. There may be very much better ways. I am sure there are. The genius and capacity of Scoutmasters is an amazing phenomenon. Almost every good Troop has a “method” all its own; and, believe me, copyright. For it is impossible to copy the methods of genius. I begin, then, by allowing a great procession of brilliant Troops to pass on before me, led by pipers in kilts, followed by a Troop with highly polished brass buttons, then innumerable bands, then a Troop a hundred strong, then a Troop of muscular, highly-trained gymnasts bearing seven silver shields! And so on

I bare my head in profound reverence as they pass. All this is beyond me. I cannot pipe! I shudder at the thought of trying to keep brass buttons bright. I blench at the difficulty of organising a gymnasium. I view the possibility of handling a hundred boys with dismay!

I will not try to teach my grandfathers how to suck eggs: mine shall be a much humbler task.

I will gather a little company of Scoutmasters who cannot do all these fine things and ordering ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters, we will ask them if we may run away and play another game, it is not Scouting, which is too difficult for the likes of us, but just scouting, with a small s.

I first read all about it in a funny little book in 3d. parts which came out fortnightly about thirty years ago and which led to a Troop of twelve of us scouting in Croham Hurst Woods, before uniforms were obtainable, in shorts, cricket shirts and the best we could do in slouch hats. I have not found anyone who has read this book for years; I’m sure they can’t have read it, because they have only heard of Scouting, not of scouting. I warn you, then that this little book of mine will tell the odd men who want this kind of thing some ways in which it may be done. We do not ask to be admired, least of all to be thought critical of the really clever Scoutmasters; we ask just to be allowed to play at scouting with a few boys, one Patrol or perhaps two. May we please?

JOHN LEWIS.

CONTENTS

- I. What is a Scout?
- II. “Far from the Madding Crowd”
- III. “The Complete Angler”
- IV. The Crafts
- V. The Arts
- VI. The Patrol and the Troop
- VII. Exploits
- VIII. Camping and Exploring
- IX. Teams
- X. The Scoutmaster

HOW TO RUN A PATROL

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS A SCOUT?

THIS is a thing which we forget about once a week and which many Scouts have not even considered.

“A ‘Peace Scout’ is a frontiersman who goes ahead of civilisation, and lives out in the wilds as a hunter of big game or a trapper for fur pelts, or a pioneer civilising a savage country.”

I think you might read that again. Thank you!

Is that correct?

Is that the kind of vision that your Troop conjures up in the imagination of your boys? Is that the suggestion behind all your Tenderfoot and Second Class work? Is that what the uniform means?

“The joy of the life of a Scout is the living in the woods under the stars. . . , He can find his way by the map in a strange country. . . . He can build his hut or boat or bridge, which means the use of the axe and a knowledge of knots, and of course he can light his fire and cook his grub and make himself generally handy and comfortable.”

Thus wrote the Chief in his first “Scout Yarn” to us, his disciples, over thirty years ago.

These words should be framed and hung up in the clubroom of every Troop.

There is an open secret about Scouting.

It is to capture and hold the spirit of pioneering.

First you must feel for yourself a certain fascination in getting away from civilisation and doing for yourself with a minimum of equipment and a maximum of hard won experience. You must know “the call of the wild.” There is an instinct in every man for exploration, pushing into the unknown and wondering what on earth is going to happen next.

If I were a Mussolini in Scouting I should require of every Scoutmaster that before beginning to think about starting a Troop he should go and be a Scout for himself in a way sufficient to convince one of the Brotherhood that the spark had really kindled in his breast. I wouldn’t care much how he did it. He might be keen on Dartmoor, or a bit dotty on the New Forest, or guilty of an occasional lapse into insanity taking the form of canoeing far up the English rivers, to their very source; or shall we say knocking round our tricky coast in a three-tonner. I wouldn’t be at all particular, but some signs of being fascinated by the “wanderlust” I should have to discover.

Secondly, you must then think of your boys in precisely similar terms. They have it in them to feel that way too. There is a latent instinct waiting to be evoked.

The beginning of Scouting is to kindle the imagination in just this way and to kindle it from your own authentic flame. You have to set yourself deliberately to do this and the successful Scoutmaster “won’t be happy till he gets it.”

Now I defy any man to awaken this spirit in twenty boys at once. An enthusiasm of this sort is communicated by a kind of contagion, like measles, and people must catch it from you one by one. It demands a certain intimacy to convey it to another; you must get close and

you must lower your reserve, for you must let your victim see something very moving and personal deep in your own heart.

Scouts are made one by one and they are made through the indispensable channel of personal friendship. You can only communicate a secret to a pal. This is why you don't really begin Scouting with twenty boys. You may dress twenty boys or two hundred up in Scout uniforms and teach them their knots, but, I am sorry, I must be firm, you are *not* making them Scouts. They do not see. They do not understand.

This is why I am writing a book on the Patrol.

A Patrol is a little group of friends who have all got excited about a fascinating escape from the mechanical routine of civilisation; and it is called Scouting.

Scouting starts with one enthusiast. He converts his chum, who catches his pal and another chap, then the boy over the way hears half a whisper and knows it's the very thing he's been longing for for years; there are five of you and a very nice number for a Patrol too. The Patrols at the first Scout Camp on Brownsea Island were five; we should like to draw the line at five, but no, chaps will come and beg to be allowed to join, so we expand to eight, doubtfully but in the interests of good fellowship, and as Jim sagely remarks, "Often some of us won't be able to come or perhaps one or two won't be much good."

Scouting begins with this Patrol. In the first editions of *Scouting for Boys* and *Scouting Yarns* I see nothing at all about Troops, but a lot about Patrols. The Troop arrives because there are enough boys who take fire to form two or perhaps three groups and because it is possible for three groups to scout in co-operation to their mutual advantage. The Troop is a discovery and an achievement, it is a very fine thing. It is a union of Patrols under one guiding and inspiring personality. In friendly rivalry, in division of labour, in occasional united efforts a higher level of Scouting experience is reached. But when I see a larger Troop than this I am very sceptical and only a blood test will convince me that all those forty odd boys have really caught the glorious contagion of Scouting.

CHAPTER II.

"FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD."

"THE ideal Scout is always he who could exist on a desert island with a penknife and a tomahawk," so wrote Philip Carrington in the *Boy Scouts' Camp Book*, and as he wrote it, in my study, he drew that glorious little sketch of the self-sufficient Scout sitting under his cocoanut tree on a very exiguous island. Now this is the A B C of Scouting. Here beginneth the First Lesson.

The glamour of the backwoods lures you on to severe *tests*. You forsake the path and climb the haunted tor. All right! Now find your way home again! You paddle far up stream and come to the lost island in the marshes. All right! But how about a *dry*, comfortable camp and a good square meal at the end of a perfect day instead of the equally likely anti-climax of a damp, draughty, nobbly night and a dud feed?

It is in this spirit and with such contingencies vividly present in the imagination that one begins to think about the points of the compass, a quarter of a pound of meat and two potatoes and two half-hitches.

The moment the Second Class Test is looked upon as a boring preliminary to a badge, Scouting has died and the Scoutmaster deserves the sack.

Every test must be relevant to an actual situation and the boy must be convinced of it and so feel it imaginatively, that the one thing in the world he must learn to do at once is to pass that test.

Therefore some preliminary explorations and adventures should precede instruction to show the need for it more convincingly than all your verbal explanations. Get yourselves lost, then produce map and compass, hand them to your Tenderfoots, sit down on a stile and let them get on with it. You can begin to teach them on Tuesday evening. They will want to learn. Invent a check of that sort for everything you propose to teach.

It is a great experience to have the opportunity of adventure and then to discover one is a helpless idiot. That is the incentive to Scout training, it is exactly what we mean when we say "Be Prepared."

There is an indefinable something you add to your manhood when you *are* prepared. It rounds off your personality, completes you. Now you are a man, you were not before.

Most people never grow up, never become men, they remain helpless and dependent. They must have trams and gas cookers and umbrellas or perish.

But when you can dispense with these three things you are entitled to put in your claim to be initiated into the ranks of the self-sufficient, the independent, the prepared. You join the secret brotherhood of He-Men.

This is behind Scout enrolment and passing the Second and First Class Badges. It is initiation into completeness of personality; here is a boy who can do without his nurse.

There is a lot behind this. Most civilised people are still on apron strings and so aren't really adults, aren't persons. A machine is a clever thing, but the cleverer it is the more helpless you are if it breaks down. One grain of sand in a carburettor nozzle and where are you? A mouse in the switchboard and all Bermondsey is in darkness for six hours. A candle is not so clever but it's more certain and one mouse can't chew up twenty thousand of them.

The Scout makes himself independent of the complex machine. If one tram is derailed forty or fifty trams pile up behind and civilisation jams.

The Scout learns the forgotten art of walking on two legs from place to place. The Scout finds that the new race of apparently legless men are perforce confined more than ever before to the roads accessible to charabancs and motor cars. That leaves any spot more than one hundred yards from a motor road practically undiscovered by all but Scouty people.

Have you heard the story of the traveller who arrived at the moorland hotel, early in June – an English June remember? Well, I will go on. On May 31st the management always turned off the central heating, it was a rule of theirs. That man was found frozen to death in the morning! His companion, a Scout, fled from that garish hotel; he found a deserted hut, collected sticks, lit a fire and kept himself warm all that chilly night. You can't light a fire with sticks under a radiator in a hotel bedroom. An absurd, incredible and most lying story! Yes, but oh, how true!

Now you are beginning to see what tremendous joy it is to be a Scout. The greatest of all Scout symbols is the fire-stick. You rub sticks together and make a light. You don't of course, you only make a lot of smoke and get out of breath. That doesn't matter, you try it. You aren't a Scout until you have learned to boast to your friends that you are independent of Bryant & May.

I have said enough to reveal the innermost secret of our craft, the hidden way, the mysteries which when in your possession make you initiates.

How do you think that you can, by deeds and jests rather than words, kindle in your Patrol a grim determination to leave the crowd in High Street, and "Lyons" tea shop and the tram and all the rest of it, and stand alone?

CHAPTER III.

“THE COMPLETE ANGLER.”

THAT is the idea. Equipped at every point to catch and then to cook your dinner. Incomplete of course without a habitation as portable as your rod. Incomplete, of course, if you can't swim if you fall in. Incomplete if you can't find your way to a trout pool known only to yourself and another.

It is not sufficient to know one thing, you must know them all. To fail in one essential is to fail in everything, is not to be a Scout.

Our training, then, must be severe and exhaustive. We shall have a tremendous lot to learn and we shall have to work very hard Indeed.

The way to this efficiency must be sought very carefully, to seek to attain it in the wrong way will be fatal. Wherever I go I find Scouts who are submitting to a *method* of training which by its very nature cannot by any possibility make them complete Scouts.

For instance, the supreme nonsense of the massed Troop meeting busy in groups at Tenderfoot or Second Class. What a parody of Scout training! No boy can learn properly except from a master craftsman. Few, if any, Patrol Leaders are master craftsmen. The Scoutmaster must be all that and a bit over, right up to First Class, or he has no business with a Troop.

It is essential then that the Tenderfoot should sit at the feet of his Scoutmaster and master this mystery from “one who knows.” That means small meetings, Patrol meetings, half-Patrol meetings; it means individual instruction. Interruption from fellows rotting about with nothing to do because the Scoutmaster is busy teaching must be strictly precluded. How precluded? Well, by drastic means, either those others must be fully and satisfactorily occupied by themselves or they must *not be there*.

Nearly all Tenderfoot and Second Class work must be taught individually, and with great care and skill. It is the foundation of all Scouting.

The Knots, for instance, must be taught with good long pieces of stout rope, not cheap clothes line, but workmanlike and dignified ROPE. And these knots must be tied this way and that way, and for this purpose and that purpose, cleanly, swiftly, certainly. It takes a first rate man to do that.

Fire-lighting is a great and solemn mystery. You may teach three boys at once, no more. It should take you a whole Saturday afternoon, in the woods; you should do nothing else at all.

The Compass you must teach out of doors to one boy only and you must follow a direction across the fields. Then bury a bottle of pop and give the bearings and set two or three small parties off from different points to find it.

Get quickly on to **Tent Pitching**, again with only two or three boys. Accompany it with instructions on choosing sites. Get quickly on to a week-end camp. Collecting week-end kit and stowing it in haversack or rucksack is a very mysterious art and must be taught very carefully and with much ridicule for slackness, slap-dashness or mollycoddleness.

Now comes **Exploring**. Take not more than three or four boys. There should be, at least, a Castle at the end, or an old Mill, or a Church with a ghost. Prepare for it. Examine the

map. Guess what it's going to be like. Of course you must know all about that Castle, and the ghost. Put some Excitement into the the thing. Some Romance and Mystery.

When you come home draw beautiful maps, illustrated if possible, like the medieval charts which showed mermaids and spouting whales.

“Pioneers 0 Pioneers.” You are hopelessly incomplete and therefore still a rank outsider if you are not a pioneer. So take two boys, one axe, and some rope, and spend three or four Saturday afternoons teaching them to chop wood properly, sharpen an axe, build camp fires, and swing billies, cut tent poles, and lash slaves diagonally and crossways, also to splice both ropes and broken poles. How many Scoutmasters can do these elementary things? All of you, of course, blindfolded!

Now **Nature Lore.** The Scoutmaster who kills a natural curiosity and love for wild life by “teaching” it or pushing it forward as a badge subject ought to be – yes, I would go to that extremity. It is a tricky subject to teach, it must be casual and incidental at first. A question popped in in the middle of something else. “Do you know what this tree is we are cutting down?” First capture attention and observation for flowers, trees and birds which come your way. Then seize your opportunity and start in systematically. Never just the names, of course, always full descriptions of all the special uses various woods and herbs are put to, the legends of flowers and birds, the habits and peculiarities of living things.

About all instruction you must keep up a sense of suppressed excitement. This is initiation, remember. One by one the elements necessary for completion are being revealed, the secrets communicated. Sweep on to your climax, your badge, with a sense of achievement and cheer your man as he comes in over the top.

Notice you can't do this at all in large numbers. Scouting requires work done in small Patrols. Try it any other way and whatever useful and successful thing it is, *it isn't Scouting.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE CRAFTS.

IF men are to live some people must be able to build houses, some people must be able to weave cloth and make clothes and some must hunt and fish and some must be farmers. That is all. Weaving, carpentering, hunting, farming. The four foundation pillars of life. You can do without every other trade in the world, but you can't do without these. In war time you realise it. The great industrial centres collapse. The jack-of-all-trades peasant thrives.

When, as frequently happens, you are wrecked on a desert island you realise it; particularly if you have been brought up to polishing brass knobs, or making chocolate tins on an automatic machine.

Because we can't do these things we are less than men: we are only bits of big machines, cogs and levers, or as a big business man said the other day, “productive units.” But there is an instinctive human hunger to master the essential crafts.

The boy has not had that instinct stamped out. Give him the chance and he'll jump for it. Even his dad has more of it left than most people imagine: see how keen he is on getting an allotment and how energetic and efficient in constructing a henhouse in his back yard.

Now the sense of power and achievement, the sense of self-sufficiency and of being equipped all round for life, the development of all these latent capacities, makes up the consciousness of a fully developed man. That is the richest prize you can give any boy.

Hut Building. – We must learn rough, practical carpentry. Not dove-tailing and fragile brackets but solid halved joints in 3” x 2” quartering, the building of cupboards, bunks, shelves, doors and window frames. Eventually the building of a framed hut. The tools must be few. Finish doesn’t matter. The wood may be rough. Learn to use rough planks, saplings and odd scraps of heavy timber. Finally learn to build a thatched hut for camp or refuge, a warm, *absolutely watertight* hut, thatched like a cottage. (See *How to Run a Scout Camp*).

Observe that you can’t do this with twenty boys. If you try it, fifteen will be rotting about while five work. You can’t provide tools for more than three or four; you can’t instruct and superintend more than that number. If you are out in the woods you can’t build a lot of huts, timber isn’t available and is too expensive; you can’t cut down twenty saplings, you may be able to get hold of three or four. You will be a nuisance if the copse is over-run with a whole Troop; a Patrol is inconspicuous.

After hut building comes bridge building. It may take you six weeks or more to build, and while you are doing it you do nothing else. It is the greatest mistake in the world to let Scouting consist of one interminable round of instruction in Second Class work, games, signalling and parades. Cut all that out and Scout instead.

Weaving. – Our next craft is for winter evenings. It is *weaving*. Begin with basket weaving and make a set of rough baskets for the hut or for camp. It is easy and great fun. But you will probably need an instructor and it will be sheer luck whether you find one. If you do, make it plain that only the simplest skill is required and that immediate results are essential. If you can’t find an instructor buy a book and some pith, and in an evening you can teach yourself. Start with two boys only on small pith baskets for practice and then buy osiers and do something useful.

All material can be obtained from Wm. Nutting, 1 and 2 Smallbrook St., Birmingham.

And the following books are useful.

Useful Cane Work, by Jacot. (Charles & Son.)

Cane Weaving for Children, by Latter. (Pitman.)

Cloth Weaving. – Small looms are obtainable and there is a revival of hand-loom weaving; small looms for weaving woollen scarves can be made or purchased. But my education being shamefully neglected I frankly confess I can do no more than throw out the hint that a Troop loom would be great fun and highly instructive.

Farming. – An allotment is the thing, but if you are not an expert you must find one and if you can’t find a man who will help regularly and patiently better not attempt it. Here again I can only suggest possibilities. If six Scouts could run a hut and a garden between them it would be a great piece of Scouting, but it would take a lot of time.

Hunting and Fishing. – For snaring and hunting consult an expert; I’m no good at it. And I’m no fisherman. But why not save up some Troop funds and engage a fisherman to teach six boys something of the art? This advice is for seaside Troops and Sea Scouts.

CHAPTER V.

THE ARTS.

HAVING built your hut or found your clubroom, furnish it. Have you ever tried painting Scouty designs on the wall in a kind of frieze? Have you tried poker work on stools and cupboards? It's quite easy and you will find ideas in the illustrations to lots of books on Scouting. These can easily be copied and arranged in simple patterns. If you turn the Patrol on to do their best you will get surprisingly good results.

The Record or Log. – Every Troop should have a log book with a highly ornamental cover and illustrations, sketches, maps and photographs supplied by the boys. This should be most carefully and neatly written with the capital letters in red ink and should be a sacred volume to be treated with great reverence.

If you turn boys on to illustrate camp in comic sketches you will nearly always find somebody with unsuspected talent in this direction and the best sketch can be stuck in the Log. Someone can do a nice, neat, coloured map of the camp site or a neat little diagram of all the kit taken to camp (see *How to Run a Scout Camp*) or a drawing of one of the tents or the hut. Draw single objects belonging to the Troop round the margin of the Log in colours.

Every Troop should have a *Magazine*, and this again gives scope for drawing and for reports of hikes and camps and even poems and original articles and stories. Articles should be of the businesslike "How to Make" variety, or definite suggestions with reasons as to what the Troop ought to do, e.g., "Why we should go in for Signalling," "Some Reasons for a Seaside Camp." One copy only is necessary and it may be passed round.

Sing-Songs. – The Patrol will meet, I hope, for a monthly "feast," each boy will bring something, one a jelly, another sardines, another cakes and so on. They may also invite a friendly adult, say one of the instructors, as guest for the evening and the feast will conclude with a sing-song.

Can you play the mouth organ, if not, why not? The Scoutmaster should insist on his boys trying to learn, because there is sure to be at least one in the Patrol with the divine gift. Either you can teach yourself or you can't; it's pure luck, lots of people could, but they have never tried. Anyone showing any aptitude should be encouraged by praise, kicks, bribes or any other means to become proficient. The tin-whistle is almost as good. Both instruments most certainly ought to qualify for the Musician's Badge.

As to singing, you will begin with the *Fellowship Song Book*, or the *Pocket Sing-Song Book* I suppose, but *do please*, learn new ones and learn rounds; they are great fun.

Here are a few suggestions about song books. A piano and a good accompanist will allow a more musical result.

Hackney Song Book. 9d. (words only).

Pocket Sing-Song Book. 1/6 (music and words).

Twice 55 Community Song Book. 6d. (words only).

Sea Songs and Shanties. 2/6 (music and words).

Community Song Book. 4d. (words only). 9d. (vocal part).

Folk Dances. – These are ripping with just one Patrol. Almost all the best dances are for six or eight. In these days the music can be got on gramophone records which is a huge advantage. Dancing is possible in a large room or of course out of doors. It is best to learn from an expert or at any rate to get a start that way. Once the elements have been mastered the books of

instructions will keep you going. The English Folk Dance Society of 2 Regent's Park Road, N.W.I, will tell you the address of the nearest branch, or vigorous enquiries will discover a school teacher who knows enough to teach you. The Morris dance is essentially a men's or boys' dance and is not a girl's dance at all. The sword dances are even more fun; plain iron swords are obtained quite cheaply from the Folk Dance Society.

Scouts quickly learn, thoroughly enjoy the art and it makes an admirable and popular display item. Once again this, like most subjects, is not to be taught to the whole Troop. It is impossible to teach more than a few boys at a time.

In all these arts the group spirit is cultivated, they are not individual arts. Much can be done together where as individuals we should not be clever enough to get much done. The co-operative decoration of the clubroom, or making of the log, gives us each a chance of "creating beauty where beauty was not" which we should never be able to do alone. Nor can we sing or dance alone. Group life both develops the individual and provides a higher level of life for those who partake in it. But this means that the Patrol must not only be a unit for drill, or for instruction, a kind of squad. It must be a self-sufficient social group, a unit with a personality, a loyalty, a Patrol spirit of its own. It must live and scout in a full, rich, varied way on its own. Your Patrol Animal must really be your symbol, your mark, your rallying sign.

The boy is like a chrysalis before he joins a *live* Patrol, but on joining it he comes out and becomes a new and altogether finer sort of animal. But the Patrol must come into being first; it must not merely meet, it must discover itself as a living thing, it must wake up and find itself alive. It is rarely that a boy is capable of creating the Patrol in this sense. It takes a man all his time. This means one Patrol for the S.M. and one for the A.S.M. then? Quite so. But once it is really going a P. L. can keep it going and the S.M. can start a second and *perhaps* a third. But he will have to continue to be the guiding and controlling spirit in each Patrol and he must largely run the Patrol meetings as instructor and leader in all the crafts and training I have described. A P.L. is never much more than an assistant, someone to *carry on* once a programme is planned and everyone knows what to do. Of course *after some years* a P.L. will be capable of far more responsibility, but only if he has had the personal instruction of his Scoutmaster during those years.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PATROL AND THE TROOP.

THAT raises the question of the Patrol and the Troop. The Troop under the Patrol system is a different thing from the Troop which meets as such and only divides into Patrols for instruction.

I am not for a moment undervaluing this type of work, and I know that many fine things can be done with thirty or forty boys altogether and a fine spirit of loyalty and discipline and idealism developed. But "Scouting" is a different thing and there will be far less done *en masse*, and as a Troop.

The Troop will function in two ways.

Firstly as a federation of two or more Patrols, like two regiments in an army, in which what you are proud of is the adding together of what each Patrol is and does and not what you all do together. You are proud to be brothers to those sporting and enterprising fellows the Foxes, and at the same time to those ingenious adventurers the Curlews.

In just this way four or five very efficient Troops in a district might be proud of one another, belong to one another and meet for an occasional brotherly rally.

Secondly, the Troop will function as a unit at Association Rallies and Sports, on Church Parades and special occasions. Just occasionally the Patrol divisions break down and you dissolve into a Troop. In competitions with other Troops and sports like football you draw your team from all Patrols, or you put one of your Patrols as your team against that of another Troop or perhaps the whole Troop is engaged in the conflict. Then each boy and each Patrol pools individual strong points for the good of the whole. There must be sufficient Troop work to make this a permanent possibility. But as a rule the whole will be healthy if the Patrol is healthy and the thing to concentrate on and get right is the Patrol. There are certain dangers however.

1. Rivalry must be friendly rivalry and the Patrol must look for and rejoice in the success of the other Patrols.
2. The ideal then is *a Troop* in which each Patrol is perfect, only then has any one Patrol a right to be satisfied.
3. Each Patrol must be eager to help every other Patrol towards that perfection.

That spirit of helpfulness, recognition and encouragement; the brotherly anxiety of each for the other and pride in the other is the Troop spirit.

Patrol Competitions. – These may or may not be necessary. The better the Troop the less necessary will they be. I regard them as an evil, but the lesser evil of two in the early stages of a Patrol's existence. The other evil is slackness and lack of group loyalty. A competition flogs a Patrol into pulling hard individually and pulling together. I don't think a competition should last more than a month and it may include everything. Attendance, neatness, Patrol drill, badges and special contests in knotting, signalling, etc. The points are awarded for all these items and then added up.

But it is a good thing to have annual contests in Signalling, Morris Dancing, Swimming, etc., with a trophy for each. In the ideal Troop there are no competitions. There are no ideal Troops!

CHAPTER VII.

EXPLOITS.

I THINK, on the other hand, that a much better system than competitions is that of Honours, Exploits or Coups. A list of Scouty, worthwhile achievements is drawn up and each Scout who pulls one off wins an honour for himself and his Patrol; or certain achievements may be for the Patrol as a whole. These exploits are partly a Standard List and partly added as opportunities offer. Each Troop should draw up its own list.

A Standard List would include certain athletic honours, running a mile in so long, jumping so many inches. Then Camp Craft Honours such as camping out so many nights, pitching a tent in three minutes, etc. There could be Nature Honours for stalking and collecting.

Fresh Honours are made up in camp or when the Troop goes in for some special hobbies or stunts. These are described in *How to Run a Scout Camp*. The Honours are recorded by making a deep notch in the Scout staff and painting it red. Every Scout should have a staff or a notch-stick. The latter is carefully cut in the woods and is of an ornamental nature polished up and perhaps carved. I have seen them twelve inches long and used only to record Honours, and I have seen them three feet long, and more like practicable clubs or sticks.

In addition, the Patrol itself must have a Totem, and so that we may not copy the Wolf Cubs this may well be a rude carving of an animal's head, or of some symbolic

design fastened on to the wall. Honours may take the form of pegs stuck in underneath, or round it, and painted various colours.

- (1) Honours in camp are awarded for any original and well executed piece of Scouting done on the initiative of the Patrol itself.
- (2) For any "Challenge" accepted and won.
- (3) For any set piece of Scouting executed thoroughly well.

1. Examples will best explain this: –

- (a) Constructing a timber platform for the Troop at a very muddy washing place.
- (b) Extinguishing a heath fire.
- (c) For contributing especially well to the evening sing-song (awarded at the conclusion of camp.)

2. The Scoutmaster decides what shall constitute a challenge, and may suggest suitable challenges to the Patrol Leaders. Any original suggestions should be encouraged, but the Scoutmaster decides whether they are suitable.

Challenges are made at the evening camp fire and by the Patrol Leaders. They are made to all the rest of the camp, and any other leader may accept them on behalf of his Patrol.

Examples: –

- a) Relay race.
- b) Wrestling, boxing, etc.
- c) Trek cart drill.
- d) Signalling.

3. The Scoutmaster sets up "Lists of Exploits" under various headings.

Pioneering.

Build a hut or bridge.

Fell a tree.

Construct a derrick.

Cooking.

Camp oven.

Roast a joint.

Batch of bread.

Pathfinding.

Map the camping ground.

Discover the nearest Troop to the camp.

There may also be a list of unclassified exploits: –

- Track a river to its source.
- Name fifteen constellations.
- Follow a compass direction two miles across country.
- Bivouac five miles from camp for the night.

Most important is the arrangement of the camp programme to fit the notch system.

Two kinds of periods must be allowed for.

1. On a given morning there may be *Pioneering* time-tabled. Each Patrol Leader then chooses from the list of exploits what he will do in that section.
2. A whole afternoon may be set apart for general exploits, and on that day the Patrol may either do something original or choose from the unclassified list.

A whole afternoon towards the end of a short camp, or two for a week's camp, can be set aside for challenges. But challenges can also be worked off in many odd half-hours, and are invaluable for keeping the whole camp "on the go" with no dull moments.

The examples which have been given are not in the least exhaustive. The whole scheme is most elastic, and should be adapted to the attainments of the boys. An exploit which does well for one Troop will be absurdly easy for another Troop.

Material for exploits can be gleaned from the badge qualifications, but above all things romantic and adventurous exploits must be introduced as well.

In conclusion, the system can also be run at home during ordinary Troop meetings, but a large notebook of possible exploits must then be kept. Here, again, imagination and romance must suggest things above the commonplace or the glamour will fade.

Here is a sample:

Tie the eight knots blindfolded in one minute. It can be done.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAMPING AND EXPLORING.

THE biggest thrills of Scouting are to be got in camp. If the glamour of Scouting is to be maintained and the white hot enthusiasm of all kept up, it can only be through the right sort of camp. What that sort of camp is I have tried to tell you in *How to Run a Scout Camp*.

It is not a canvas house in a field, it is not a romp at the seaside, it is not “mucking about” in the woods. The essential things about it are: –

1. That it is as far from civilisation as possible.
2. In a particularly beautiful and picturesque spot.
3. That there should be opportunities of adventure, nature study, and exploration at hand.
Ponds, lakes, the sea, woods, marshes, castles, ruins, stone circles, caves, Roman remains, etc.

The ideal camp is with a very few boys and of course permission is more readily obtained for a small camp and equipment, and is more easily collected and carried.

Two Patrols can carry all their gear in a trek cart. Three boys can camp for a fortnight carrying their tents and kit on bicycles.

Four or five Scouts can explore lonely moors and lost little villages, pop up their tents on the grassy side of a lane, or just over the hedge at dusk and be off soon after daybreak. They can see more and do more than a crowd; they can get into interesting places where a mob would be unwelcome.

But every Scout in such a pioneering party must be trained and reliable. He must be thoroughly practical in cooking, fire-lighting, tent pitching and map reading, and he must be a keen member of his Patrol, cheerful, willing, loyal. Above all he must by long training be keen on the right things, on romantic country, on wild life, on beautiful and historic buildings.

Week-end camps especially at Easter and Whitsun give special opportunities for training and for exploring. The Troop camp will be a fixed affair, but at a centre from which exciting all day expeditions can be made. The greatest possible care must be taken to find an ideal camping ground.

CHAPTER IX.

TEAMS.

FOR a change let Patrols specialise. Let one Patrol make an Ambulance Team, another a Signalling Team, another a Fire Brigade and so on.

Each team must be found a competent instructor and must equip itself with apparatus; flags, lamps, pads, or splints, stretchers, bandages, etc.

Then each team will learn to work as a unit. There will be division of labour in the Patrol. A special job and place for each Scout. The whole Patrol will pass the Badge Test, but boys will specialise. Then jobs can be shifted round so that everyone has a turn.

A Troop will then consist of three highly trained teams, an Ambulance Patrol, a Signalling Patrol and a Pioneering Patrol, let us say. And thus the Troop as a whole becomes a very efficient unit.

Other subjects in which a whole Patrol can co-operate in this way are: –

1. The Pathfinders – Different boys will collect different information and put it at the disposal of the rest. Between them they can draw and fill in a detailed map. They can go about exploring in twos and threes and heckle one another at home until every boy knows all there is to know inside out.

2. Healthyman's and Public Healthman's.

3. Athlete.

4. Bird Warden.

5. Electrician.

6. Fireman.

7. Forester.

8. Entertainer.

9. Naturalist.

10. Weatherman.

11. Wirelessman,

This raises the question of instructors.

Instructors can often be obtained if it is only for a limited number of weeks. The Patrol should arrange to put everything else on one side and concentrate on a definite series of lessons on one particular subject. The syllabus should be carefully discussed beforehand with the instructor and the various points in which instruction is required set down. If you don't do that you will find that the instructor will tend to be formal and exhaustive, plodding through a big course which will only bore the boys. Therefore *you must use him*; you must pick his brains, force out of him just what *you* want, you mustn't let him swamp you. Tell him just what essentials you must know. The wily Scoutmaster will learn alongside the boys, will learn more quickly than they and will be in the position to take over and continue the class and make use of the instruction when the instructor has finished his course.

Needless to say, such classes should be for four or five lessons only and with a very few boys, not more than half-a-dozen, perhaps only three or four.

CHAPTER X.

THE SCOUTMASTER.

THERE is a good deal left over but it can't be put into instructions because it depends on the Scoutmaster.

The more *Scouting* you do, and the more highly trained and individually trained your Scouts are going to be, the more of an expert must the Scoutmaster be. In fact, to be a successful Scoutmaster is a whole-time job. It will take every moment of your spare time and you will have to work hard.

As a rule, if you start from scratch, you will have to perfect your knowledge of every branch of Scoutcraft by keeping a lesson ahead and learning a bit faster than the boys. The best way to learn is to teach. Swot it up hard, and you will always know more than you teach.

It may even be possible to go to classes yourself, Gilwell of course, but also Folk Dance Classes and Ambulance Classes, etc., etc.

Of one thing I am absolutely certain: the Scoutmaster who masters nothing, who runs his Troop on a minimum of stale routine knowledge of Second Class work, eked out with games, and stunts, football and a third rate camp is ruining the Movement. It takes more than goodwill, organisation and kindness to run a Troop. It takes hard-won knowledge.

Rovers ought to be a great help, and in many cases they are. But it is important that they should realise *how to plan for a Patrol*, to gauge its possibilities and dole out just the ideas and instruction best suited to the boys, to work it systematically and get one thing after another prepared for, done and finished up.

The best training for Assistants is under a competent and strong-minded Scoutmaster who must be loyally obeyed. It is the grind of Troop work year in and year out, the constant handling of boys that makes a useful man. Assistants are so rare that once again I am driven back on myself and a Patrol or two. A bad Assistant can easily wreck a Troop.

The quality of the Troop is ultimately the quality of the Scoutmaster. If a Scoutmaster has no ideas beyond *John Bull* and no culture beyond a smoking concert and a foxtrot, his Troop won't rise beyond a very commonplace level. When you visit a Troop, particularly in camp, you can tell at once what level you are on and often it's a shockingly cheap one. The bad Assistant will pull the Troop down to his level over against the higher level of the Scoutmaster. I don't necessarily mean anything bad, but just a cheap, trashy, third rate rather grubby sort of mentality.

Yet the whole value of Scouting lies in lifting the boys into a world of ideas, customs, standards, values and behaviour that is definitely on a much higher level than that of the lounge and the drifter or even the commonplace street lad.

I am quite sure that a Scoutmaster ought to be an educated and well-read man with high ideals and fine traditions. This is not a question of money; many a poor man is all that. If other kinds of men are to help they must do so as his disciples and subordinates, looking up to him as leader and so helping the boys to do so too.

There should be a steady and persistent effort to level up the boys. Better behaviour, better jokes, better books and pictures and music. Not of course anything priggish and high-brow, but just a big-brotherly effort and concern to do one's best for the boy from a third rate environment. You can't do it quickly, you must be patient and tactful. I was amused at a young Scoutmaster who was shocked at the unscoutlike behaviour of a slum Troop. He thought that from the moment of taking the promise they would really begin keeping the Scout Law. Of course they will not. They will fall and disappoint you and slip back again and again; you can't make them perfect in a day. You must forgive and start again, repeatedly. Put this bit of realism alongside the idealism of the previous paragraph.

The stream is running the wrong way for these boys and they are in it. Scouting is a stream running the other way; it is not a little skylarking as you drift along. It is therefore the heroic and heart-breaking business of breasting the stream.

One powerful influence for good is in books. Good books appeal to the imagination and fill the imagination with its fancies. Imagination is the stuff out of which life's aims and values are made. To control imagination is to control the boy.

I therefore suggest a good Troop library and also reading aloud to the Patrol. If the books chosen are suitable, a fine emotional and imaginative stimulus can be given in this way: for a good book read aloud makes ten times the impression the same book will make read by the individual boy.

Good books, good pictures and good music can always be "got across" with patience, humour and persistence.

We come finally to the most important influence of all: The Scoutmaster's attitude to the individual boy. Here once again we see the value of small numbers: it is hard work to know thoroughly and help individually a dozen boys.

But it is the secret of success. You must know the boy's home and his family. What kind of people his parents and brothers and sisters are. You must study the boy and perhaps write down a character study of him, you must find out his hobbies, his likes and dislikes, his weaknesses and his strength.

You must know his conscience, pricked, protesting but overwhelmed, when he lets you down and know it as well as you know his deeds. You must appeal from "Philip drunk to Philip sober."

You must see the ideal boy growing out of the stunted and twisted embryo before you, you must believe in the boy more than he believes in himself. You must see the boy with a certain God-like pity and mercy; poor chap, he didn't choose his parents, or his instincts or his street.

Ultimately, for some of us, for all who do the really uplifting and redeeming work among boys, it comes to religion: seeing the ideal boy in every boy and seeing every boy as Christ would see him, friendly, forgiving, tolerant, patient.

For Christ the despised man counted, because he counted for God. When we understand that, our boys will count and the boys will know that they count and that is the lever that lifts a chap up.

I only know one way of getting and holding this attitude to each boy which values him and watches over him and forgives and helps and encourages and makes that boy feel that he matters, that he is valued and loved and that way is simply to ponder over the character and possibilities of each boy in your charge.

Correct your own attitude when it gets resentful, contemptuous, impatient, or when it makes favourites. Remember that you are responsible for a better way than that. Discipline yourself for their sakes, keep your thoughts, your reading, your pleasures, your business standards as high and as pure as you would wish those of the boys to be. This means self-examination and self-criticism.

I am not concerned in this book with external religion. That is really a denominational matter, but I am quite certain that whether it is Catholicism or Protestantism it is no use at all unless it means just this personal attitude to the boys. On that foundation the practice of religion must of course arise: the more you think about your boys the more will you need some kind of religion, in order that you may be kept up to scratch and get all the power you need.

My personal opinion is that some of the healthiest Troops are those closely and enthusiastically associated with religious organisations. But School Troops are first rate, too. Isn't this because in both cases the Scoutmaster takes his job really seriously?