

# *The Camp Fire Leader's Book*

*Rex Hazlewood      John Thurman*





This electronic edition  
©2006 Canadian Sea Scouts Homeport — <http://www.seascouts.ca/>

This edition prepared by Karl Pollak.

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

For more historical texts with traditional Scouting topics, visit the The Dump at:

**<http://www.thedump.scoutscan.com/>**

Should you ask me whence these stories?  
 Whence these legends and traditions,  
 With the odours of the forest,  
 With the dew and damp of meadows,  
 With the curling smoke of wigwams,  
 With the rushing of great rivers,  
 With their frequent repetitious,  
 And their wild reverberations  
 As of thunder in the mountains?

LONGFELLOW (Hiawatha).

## DEDICATION

The authors would like to dedicate this book first, to each other (in memory of many years of friendship, and particularly of the days when they must have been the worst A.S.M.s in the Movement); and second, to all their other friends who have sung with them in many times and places.

## Contents

	Foreword	
I	Aim and Purpose of Camp Fires .....	5
II	The Fire .....	8
III	Ceremonial and Good Order .....	15
IV	The Programme .....	20
V	Some Problems of Leadership.....	26
VI	Songs and Singing.....	30
VII	All kinds of Yarns .....	34
VIII	"Spinning the Yarn" .....	37
IX	Stunts and Sketches .....	42
X	Parodies .....	44
XI	Yells .....	46
XII	Games .....	48
XIII	Individual Items. ....	51
XIV	Scout Training at the Camp Fire.....	52
XV	Indoor Camp Fires.....	55
XVI	Cub Camp Fires .....	57
XVII	Your Note-book .....	59
XVIII	Also to Remember .....	60
Appendices:	(i) Selected Bibliography .....	66
	(ii) Wood Values.....	67

## FOREWORD

May we, as the authors of this book, humbly direct your attention to its title? It is the *Camp Fire Leader's Book*, a book, that is, giving advice on how to lead a Camp Fire. It is not a collection of yells and stunts and sketches. We could compile such a book, but we never shall, for we believe that the only possible satisfactory Camp Fire Book of such a nature is one that each Camp Fire Leader compiles for himself. Here we only quote songs or yells and the like to illustrate a theme.

But we have set down in these pages all that the experience of years has taught us about running Camp Fires, what to do and what not to do, about the problems that sometimes arise, about — well, for the rest you must read the book. But it is our belief that the Camp Fire is one of Scouting's most treasured inheritances from the first days of 1908 till now, and that a Camp Fire can become one of the boy's most enduring and precious memories long after he has become a man.

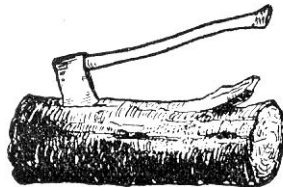
“These are the times we shall dream about,  
and we'll call them the good old days .....

We also believe that the standard of Camp Fire Leadership in our own country ought to be much (very much) higher than it is. We believe, given some personality and imagination, and the true humility which is always prepared to learn, and the enthusiasm which is always prepared to persevere, most of you (dear readers) can become first class Camp Fire Leaders.

We offer our little book in the belief that it can at least help you to start on the way which adds, summer night by summer night, to the happiness of thousands of boys. And "the days that make us happy make us wise.

JOHN THURMAN, *Camp Chief,*  
*Boy Scouts Association.*

REX HAZLEWOOD, *General Editor,*  
*Boy Scouts Association.*



## CHAPTER I

### AIM AND PURPOSE OF CAMP FIRES

*Youth and white paper take any impression.*

— *Proverb.*

When B-P. came to plan "*Scouting for Boys*" as a book, it is really quite obvious that one of his first thoughts must have been about camp fires. No one can write a book until he has planned it and it must, therefore, have been in his mind right from the start that Scouts would and should meet round a camp fire, otherwise he would never have hit on the plan of dividing "*Scouting for Boys*" into Camp Fire Yarns.

It seems to us fair to assume that B-P.'s original conception of a camp fire was only the beginning of what it has come to mean in Scouting through the years. Perhaps his first conception was just of Scouts meeting together in camp at the end of a day's Scouting activity, gathering round the camp fire, discussing all they had done during the day, hearing about the plans made for tomorrow and discussing these, and probably having a short yarn from the Scoutmaster.

We want to begin this book by saying very definitely that all the other things that have come to be included in Camp Fires have their place, as we shall hope to show, but they have that place not as substitutes for the original idea, but as additions to it. The Camp Fire, to hold its proper place in Scouting must continue to make use of the Founder's original conception, and must, in fact, strengthen that conception by the inclusion of the many extra activities that go to build up the perfect Camp Fire, or as near perfect as we can make it.

We want to start, therefore, from "*Scouting for Boys*" and make it clear that Camp Fires, enjoyable and good fun as we hope they are and always will be, are just as much part of the scheme of training Scouts as are activities dealing with First Aid, Signalling or Hiking.

The Scout Camp Fire is part of our training method. Perhaps as well to consider what it is not, or rather what it should not be at the same time. It is not an attempt to recreate the old time or, indeed, the modern time Music Hall in the middle of a field. It is not an attempt to transfer the desk and blackboard of the schoolroom into the open air, but it has its own method, it has its own philosophy really, and used in its true form it always succeeds. It is only when we adulterate it with things that have no place in it that it becomes the deplorable muddle that (we say it in all fairness and all kindness) we have so often had to experience.

So having begun by saying what it is and what it is not let us go on now to examine its purpose. We have already dealt with this in part — its purpose is training, but training for what? Hardly training in the arts of observation, sketching or indeed singing or acting, though all these things may well come into it, but training as in all Scouting for citizenship. Not citizenship in the narrow conception of civics, council meetings, sewage treatment and other delightful pursuits, but an education and an experience in the art of how to enjoy life. Perhaps most of all, training in the art of learning to entertain ourselves rather than coming, as so many people are today, to rely exclusively on the handout graciously bestowed by the film industry and the broadcasting companies.

It is a common practice these days to scoff at the old Edwardian musical evening. We were brought up at the tail end of that sort of thing and we suppose we have scoffed with the others, but rather more mature consideration leads us to believe that it was not by any means all bad. It is true an examination of individual items might lead to this impression — Uncle Tom's appalling forgetfulness with his funny songs, and Aunt Ada's desire to display her elbow rather than her virtuosity as a violinist — these things in detail were bad, but all in all there was merit in the simple fact that here were people taking the trouble

to entertain themselves and each other through their own personal efforts. Here was the culmination of the grim hours of practice. Here was the reason for the painful times spent perched on a fiercely rotating piano stool, facing brass candle-sticks and a silken picture of no place that existed on earth, nor, we trust, in heaven. However bad judged by professional standards performances might have been, how much better it was to try to do than merely to sit and be done! Don't think from this that we feel the Camp Fire is or should be a sort of nostalgic attempt to bring to life the frills, furbelows and fripperies of Edwardian Drawing Rooms, but it is an attempt and, well handled, a successful attempt, to hold on to the good that was in the past and to carry it into the future for the benefit of the present generation.

We shall hope to show you that the value of the small Scout getting up in front of his Troop or even in front of a larger gathering and haltingly reciting "There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight" is not in the quality of the performance, is not even in the enjoyment of those who hear it, though this is often higher than the cynical adult will admit; no! the true virtue lies in the effort the small boy has made — the self-consciousness he has overcome, the real sense of achievement with which he finally sits down. And far far away in the future perhaps the greatest virtue of all, the memory he will look back to and probably treasure for many years. All Scouting in a sense, and especially the Camp Fire, is a means of storing up worthwhile memories that will ultimately serve the boy who is becoming a man. B-P. believed, as all Scouters should believe, that the way to success in Scouting, especially the way to successful good citizenship, lies not merely in being smart and efficient, or in acquiring a miscellany of peculiar knowledge, but lies almost wholly in experiencing the unselfish happiness that the Founder wrote and spoke about so forcibly.

Yes, the Camp Fire is a thing to be enjoyed, and may we just offer you this thought. We hope we shall enjoy any Camp Fire we go to in the future, we hope you, the Scouters will enjoy them too, but that is not their primary purpose. It remains "*Scouting for Boys*": Camp Fires remain within the limits of decency, discipline and order, about which we shall say much, boys' shows. Let us make sure the programme is one they will enjoy and not one they will regard as an additional coated pill thrown to them amongst the many other pills that adults are prone to spread willy-nilly amongst the children of the world. Genuine happiness is a positive quality and happiness to the small boy means enjoyment and good fun. This is not to say that he can't or won't be serious on occasion, but it does mean that the Scouter present at or leading the Camp Fire must think not only in terms of quality of singing, or originality of sketch, but must think all the time "are they enjoying themselves, are they getting out of this occasion something they will remember and something that will be worth remembering?" It will usually be fairly obvious!

There is one other thing to say under "Purpose". Recreation is a word that unfortunately has changed its meaning through the years. If we break it down to its true meaning of recreation we can readily see just where it fits into our Camp Fire. To the finest Scout Troop that ever was, and that might be ours or yours, there comes a time in Troop Room, or in camp, when things go a little awry, when tempers fray and when qualities that we would rather forget become apparent, — when jealousies and bad blood and indeed on occasion deliberate cruelty break out. Of course these things are dealt with by the Scoutmaster: whatever action is necessary is taken. But after any serious operation the future of the patient depends not on the skill of the surgeon but on the care of the nurses, upon the atmosphere in which the patient is allowed to convalesce. This is something the Camp Fire can do for us; it can become an occasion that will nurse the hurts that the harder light of day has seen. After one of those bad occasions which all Troops will from time to time experience, round the Camp Fire we can recreate the true spirit of Scouting which we temporarily lost. Here is balm to the weary, succour to those who need it, and for the Scouter an opportunity of renewing hope, strength and faith.

Some of you may be saying "Yes, this is all right, but how can we do it?" That is what we hope to show you in this book. We want to show you that the apparent magic of the good Camp Fire is no mystery, though there are tricks to it about which we shall try to enlighten you, but the best trick of all is the one that holds good for the Scoutmaster in any sphere of activity, the trick of preparing and thinking, in short, of working. Well, hardly a trick, for it requires as much skill, as much thought, as much detailed research

(and by research we mean thinking back to other Camp Fires, not merely delving into tomes) to run a successful Camp Fire as it does to run a good wide game, to run a good Troop Camp or put on a display or rally. "Well," we hear the slightly disillusioned Scouter saying "I tried it with the Troop but it didn't seem to work" implying either that we were wrong for saying it to him, or else his Troop were wrong for acting in an unexpected way. The truth is much simpler. It was the Scouter who was wrong. He didn't think it out: he didn't know what he was going to do, he was merely trying to copy someone else, and because that someone else appeared to handle the song, the sketch or whatever it was with consummate ease, he was misled and easily misled into thinking that it was easy. It is a generalisation, but we make it with confidence, that most of the things that at a Camp Fire, or indeed anywhere else appear easy, are easy only because the man responsible for them knows how to do them and has practised. And whether it be leading a round at a camp fire or Denis Compton driving through the covers, or Ted Ditchburn picking the ball from the toes of the opposing centre forward, it is the art that is concealing the art and the Scouter will do well to pause and consider this and to remember perhaps Paderewski's reply when Queen Victoria said "Mr. Paderewski, you are a genius." "Thank you, ma'am," he replied, "but before that I was a drudge."

So let us end our first chapter by saying quite definitely that whilst we hope we can, and we shall certainly try to, advise you about almost any Camp Fire situation you are likely to meet, we cannot meet it for you. If you read this book a thousand times and learn it by heart, the need for practice, intelligent thoughtful practice, and above all the willingness to work hard, consistently and faithfully, will remain all the time; indeed, if our experience counts for anything, will tend to grow. For if we have learnt anything ourselves, it is just how much better the Camp Fires we run ought to be!

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRE

*Two poles were driven into the ground about a foot and a half from each other. Each pole had in a side facing the other a socket into which a smooth cross-piece or roller was fitted. The sockets were stuffed with linen, and the two ends of the roller were rammed tightly into the sockets. To make it more inflammable the roller was often coated with tar. A rope was then wound round the roller, and the free ends at both sides were gripped by two or more persons, who by pulling the rope to and fro caused the roller to revolve rapidly, till through the friction the linen in the sockets took fire. The sparks were immediately caught in tow or oakum and waved about in a circle until they burst into a bright glow, when straw was applied to it, and the blazing straw used to kindle the fuel that had been stacked...*

SIR JAMES FRAZER (*The Golden Bough*).

FAR too little attention is given to the construction, lighting and care of the camp fire as a fire. It is important to deal with the make-up, and suitability of the programme, but with the greatest care in the world all your effort will be in vain if the fire itself is unsatisfactory.

Suppose we look at two typical fires — all too typical we are afraid because we have experienced them not once, but several times. First an occasion, a public occasion, when Cubs, Scouts, Scouters, Commissioners, Parents, Friends and indeed Mayor and Corporation are present, with all the attendant panoply of civic dignity. They have been summoned to a “Grand Camp Fire”: we are quoting from the invitation. A Camp Fire to be held in a public park one summer evening. All the necessary permissions have been obtained, great labour has gone into the preparation of the programme, and even more labour — judging by appearances — into the preparation of the fire. For as we come across the quiet grass of the park through the twilight we see a remarkable looking object, a sort of mountain of miscellaneous junk. Somehow it is reminiscent of Guy Fawkes Night. Oh it's not lit yet, it's just a mountain, and peeping out of the mountain we see wood, of course, of various sizes and thicknesses, we see great bales of straw, barrels that at one time contained tar or creosote, old sugar boxes, great bundles of paper, and an old chair poking its head out at the side. Altogether it looks like a sort of clear up in a rag and bone man's yard. Somehow it doesn't seem to fit in to all we've thought and read and seen of Scouting, and yet closer examination makes it clear that a great deal of work has gone into its preparation. However, let's hope.

We are all round now just waiting for the Mayor and the Commissioner to take their places. Here they come, expectant. The Mayor hasn't been to a Camp Fire since he was a small boy in a Troop. The Commissioner is fairly new to Scouting and this is his first experience of a big open air Camp Fire. The Mayor is solemnly handed by the Camp Fire Leader a torch, a well prepared torch, and is asked to thrust it into the heart of the fire. With considerable courage the Mayor approaches the mountain and thrusts his torch into the heart of the fire, and there is no question that he has passed his Second Class Fire lighting with more than flying colours, for almost instantaneously the straw catches, the paper catches, the tar and creosote leak out of the old barrels and before you know where you are the whole enormous edifice is a mass of flame. There is a light breeze blowing across the park and it fans the flame quickly and drives much of it right into the section that we had reserved for parents. They begin to edge back and those in the front wish they had come a little later and could have joined the rather safer promenade behind. But those at the rear are beginning to move away too. Before our Camp Fire has started there is a gap in our circle.

But undaunted the Leader steps forward. We don't know what his opening remarks are for apart from being uncomfortably hot the fire is extremely noisy, but we see his lips moving and then he begins to



wave his arms. Surely he can't be cold? No, he is trying to conduct a song but we haven't heard what it was to be. He has been quite unable to compete with the enormous competition of the camp fire. Sadly the group, and it is a big group of two or three hundred people, decide to abandon the fire. Quietly they slip away to a far corner of the park, sit down beneath a tree and proceed to have that most miserable affair — a Camp Fire with no camp fire. Yes, it has happened but it should not happen, because it is bad Scouting and just plain stupidity.

Another occasion of a similar nature was indeed spectacular and brought out the courage the Leader no doubt possessed, for there he was earnestly trying to conduct a song with the flames literally running between his legs and under his arms, singeing his eyebrows and what was left of his hair. Again the fire had to be abandoned and off we had to go into a quieter place which on this occasion was also a very cold place.

But at least these gargantuan fires had the merit of being spectacular. They are quite useless but there is something to be seen. From afar off they look as if the Fire of London has broken out again or the Blitz has restarted and they will undoubtedly attract people to us — they won't stay with us when they come, but they will come.

Suppose we look, though, at the other end of the scale. The Camp Fire that doesn't. We'd like to give you a single instance. Years ago we'd been asked to come over and visit a Camp Fire and take part in it, and tell a yarn. Now we were delighted to do so. We arrived a few minutes before the advertised time. It was a large camp, a District Camp. There didn't seem to be anyone about until suddenly we heard the strains of Bing Crosby. Ah! we thought, important visitor tonight, we shan't have to do much. But we had some difficulty in tracking down Bing's voice.

At last we found it — a small Scout, rather unwashed, listening to a gramophone record in a tent. We said "Where's the Camp Fire?" He waved an arm in a vague sort of direction and said "Somewhere over there." We went over and found quite a nice little hollow, but there were no signs of life there, and no one about. However, we are not impatient people and we waited. After about five or ten minutes there arrived a Scoutmaster, not hurrying but just sauntering up. He, too, could have done with a wash and brush up but that is rather beside the point. Well, we said "Good evening. When does the Camp Fire start?" And he said, "Oh, yes. Camp Fire. Good things." he stood on top of a mound of earth and blew mightily upon a whistle. There was no answering call, but gradually in ones and twos, some running but most walking, some even slouching, there arrived a considerable number of Scouts, each one bringing his tribute to the camp fire in the shape of a piece of wood, some of the Scouts bringing no more than twigs, others staggering up with great boughs. It appeared to be some sort of tradition in the Troop, because as the Scouts arrived they just plonked their piece of wood, large or small into the centre of the circle, and it was, as we have said, rather a nice circle. Eventually when all the Scouts were gathered together and this rather large mound of somewhat ill-assorted timber was complete, the Scoutmaster proceeded to try to light the fire.

Now there are few things more difficult in Scouting than lighting a fire that hasn't been laid, and this particular wight was no more successful than many others. He used up a remarkable quantity of matches and then he handed it over to a couple of A.S.Ms. and said "You have a go." They arrived with dry leaves — supposedly dry, but they seemed damp to our untutored observation, and they rammed them into the heart of the wood and expended even more matches in the process of trying to light the fire. Then the Scoutmaster had a brilliant idea — ah! paper — that's what we need. From out of his hip pocket he drew some sheets of paper, thrust them into the fire and lit them. They burnt very well and then went out. Thereupon he said, "Well, never mind about the fire let's get on with the sing song" — a reasonable decision to make in the circumstances. He said "I've got a programme here" and put his hand into the same hip pocket and drew forth no more than blank astonishment.

Where had it gone?

He did have it!

What had happened to it? An approaching A.S.M. whispered in his ear, and he said "Bother!" or words to that effect, "we've burnt it up. Well, never mind, let's sing 'Clementine'."

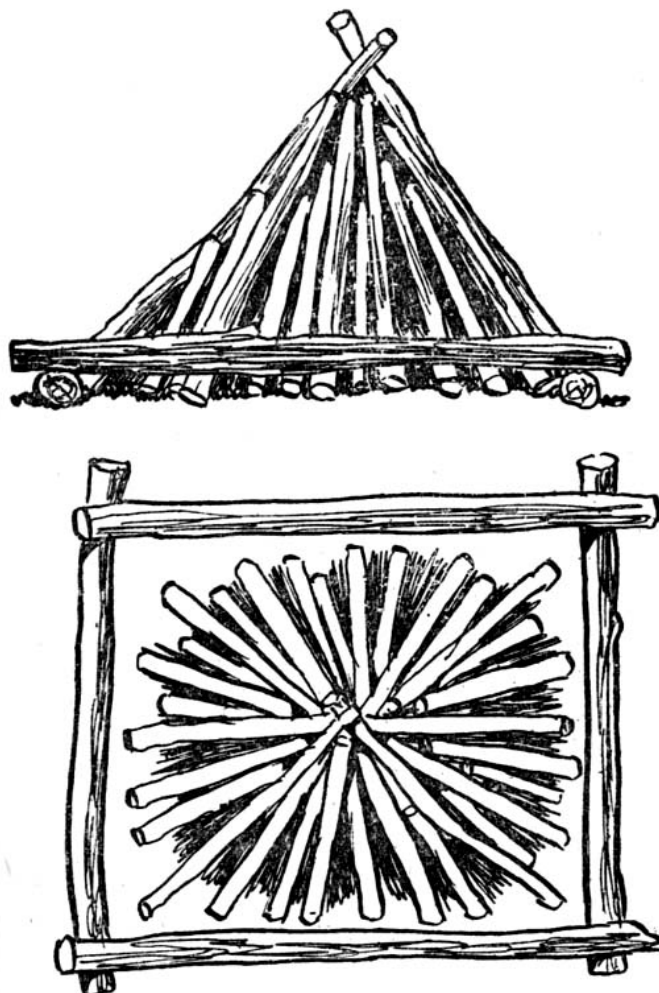
Well this had all taken rather more time than we had bargained for. It was late, we had another engagement that evening. Regretfully, for it was an interesting occasion, we had to take our leave. And as we made our way out of the field we did wonder "Is this the sort of thing that the Old Chief wrote about? Have we been doing it all wrong, or is it that we don't understand?"

Now, the fire that was so preposterously large that no one could get near it, and the fire that ultimately just wasn't were really tragedies, because many of the boys at those Camp Fires had looked forward to the occasion, read about it in "*Scouting for Boys*," and talked about Camp Fires to other Scouts. And here was their experience, a complete travesty of all they had come to believe. These are the sort of reasons that make boys leave Scouts, and may we say very firmly, how right they are to leave a show that's as rotten as that.

Now how could all this have been prevented? Well, let's consider the camp fire, how we are going to build it, what we are going to build it of and who is going to do it. There are two main types and there is something to be said for each. First there is the method of building up a pyramid with the logs going from ground to the top of the fire. But in the heart of this pyramid, (or shall we say wigwam, for that is the kind of shape it presents) is carefully built an ordinary fire of kindling wood, light twigs and light branches which will catch quickly. Now when this type of fire is lit it usually catches very well if carefully made; the fire spreads gradually from the heart outwards to the main timbers. All very satisfactory so far, but there comes a time — and usually all too soon — when the main timbers begin to burn through and then over goes the fire. For a brief moment it is glorious, sparks fly all over the place, into our hair and on to our blankets, the flames leap even higher and then quickly it dulls out, because the fire has no real heart. So except perhaps for a very short Camp Fire of not more than half an hour this wigwam-type is not really to be advocated. It has the merit that it is very easy to make and simple to construct.

But the type of fire we like to see is the true pyramid.

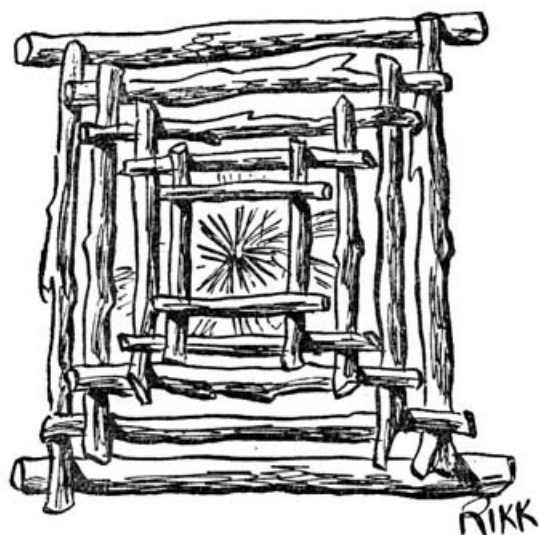
Yes, we know it takes a long time to prepare, but why not? Why shouldn't we take the time and the trouble to do



CONE FIRE

RIKK

something properly? Here, for this pyramid fire, we must cut our logs to size, with axe or saw, saw for preference because we waste less wood. We shall lay out a base, almost a true square of good thick logs. On top of those we shall pile rather thinner, rather shorter, logs. Then the next four logs will be still thinner and still shorter, so that we are gradually building up to a pyramid. But we don't go right to the top. We achieve eventually a pyramid with its top cut off (a truncated pyramid, say the mathematicians!). There will be an opening at the top of about eighteen inches square, built up from an opening at the



PYRAMID  
FIRE

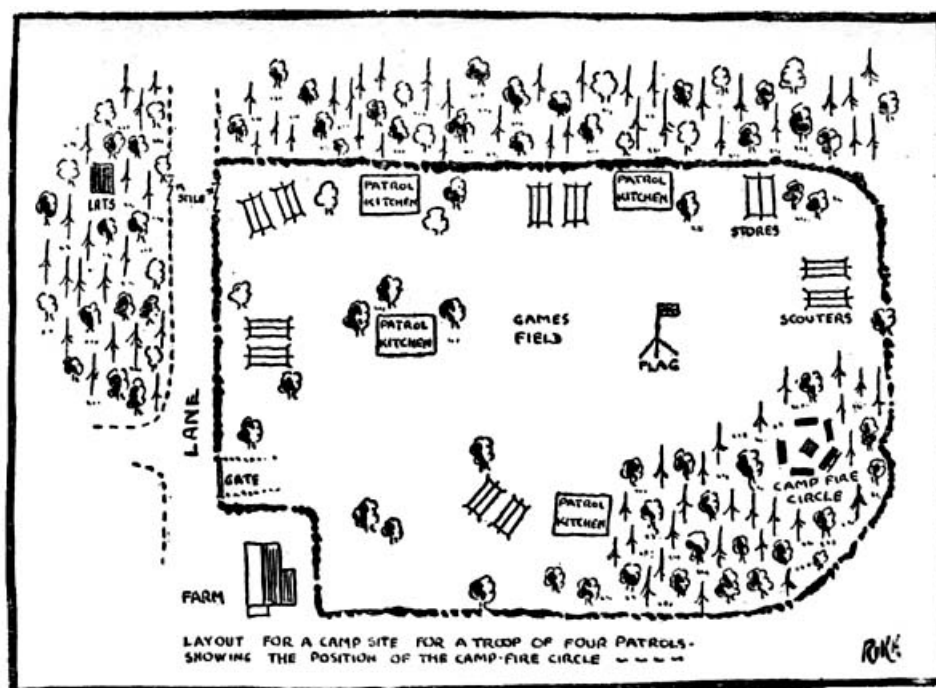
bottom of about five feet square. But into the heart of our pyramid again we build a fire with great care of dry kindling, of light twigs and thin branches, so that there will be enough to start the fire, enough to generate it to catch the main logs of the pyramid. Now there are several overwhelming advantages about this method. In the first place, the very form of the fire will act as a chimney, it will draw the smoke and the flame upwards and will cast the smoke away over the heads of the Scouts who sit round the circle, and that is in itself a very good thing. So many camp fires have been ruined by great wafts of acrid smoke. And then as the main logs catch and burn, they won't fall outwards. As they burn they will fall inwards, into the heart of the fire, adding more coals to the part of the fire that needs them. And this fire, carefully planned, skilfully built will see us through a delightful evening. It will never be a worry but will always be a true centre of attraction.

So we come down very heavily on the side of the pyramid fire. But it's not just enough to know how to build the fire, we need to know what woods we are going to use. Just any old wood won't do. For example, elm and elder will burn — anything will burn if you get enough heat — but they are unpleasant because they will give off the most horrible bitter smoke

imaginable. They will be a bane to all those who are trying to sing. You can't sing if your lungs are full of strong smoke, and your eyes continually running. We've tried and we know! So we avoid woods of that kind and go for the better class woods, the ash, the oak, the beech. However, soft woods are excellent too. They will burn well and will give a lot of flame, but they have one peculiar disadvantage. The trouble with woods like the larch, and scotch fir, is that they will throw off lumps of red hot resin, and throw it some distance, but in the main we'll confine ourselves to the common hard woods, oak, ash, hornbeam, beech, with a few thinner branches of the soft woods to get things going — larch and the pine and so on. There are other woods, and occasionally we may be lucky enough to get some for our use. Particularly the fruit tree woods. There may be an old hulk of an apple tree. There is at Gilwell still an old hulk of mulberry. A delightful sweetsmelling wood, and just a few logs thrown on to the camp fire give it a rather special kind of scent that does help. We don't want to despise this sense of smell. We all know the smells we don't like, but when we think of that oft quoted rhyme of Kipling's "Who hath smelt wood smoke at twilight" he was obviously thinking of wood smoke that was worth smelling. Anyone who has smelt wet elm or old elder at twilight will have no desire whatever to experience the same smell again.

Now all this about using the right kind of woods presupposes that our Scouts have been trained to recognise them. It is no part of this book to deal with a thing of that sort, but we have included a list of woods and their different values in regard to camp fires; however, remember: woods vary between one part of the country and another, due to the kind of conditions they grow in, particularly the soil. And what may be a hopelessly bad wood in Kent might be an excellent wood in Westmorland. We can only guide you in general terms. You by experience can find out what is best for you.

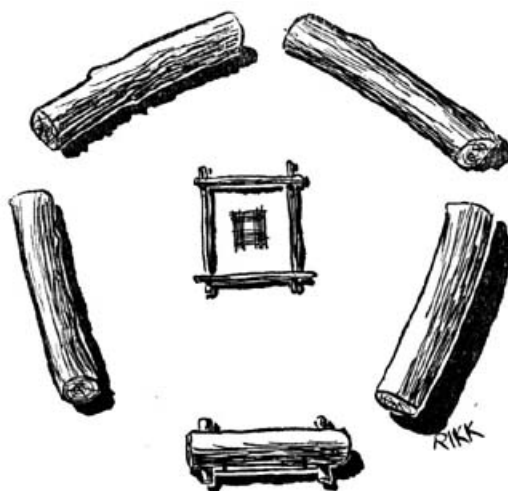
Next we come to siting the camp fire. That means just where we are going to place it in relation to the camp. Most plans showing camp site lay-outs seem to show the camp fire circle bang in front and under the flag pole. We think that is a pity. In the first place, that area in front of the flag you ought to have clear for parades, inspections, prayers and things of that sort. It is a parade ground. And a little away from that is the kind of area you want for your camp games, cricket, football, lacrosse, whatever it is. But to sit down in the middle of the most level part of your camp and arrange a large assortment of logs, really seems most thoughtless and unfortunate. We know that some of you will be thinking "But that's where you have them at Gilwell." Well, that's true, but Gilwell isn't supposed to be typical in that kind of way.



We have our Council Circle — you note we say "Council Circle" — in the centre of the camp because from the nature of the things we do we have to use it a great deal for sessions and the like, and it is useful for the work of Training Courses to have it where it is. But, when it comes to Camp Fires, apart from a few very special occasions, we don't use that circle at all. No, we go to the kind of place that we suggest you should find. We go off into a corner of the woodland. A place that we never use during the rest of the day — and that's really the trick of the whole thing. If your camp fire siting is going to be effective and right you must choose somewhere that is a little different. You want atmosphere. We know it is a very over used word, but it is still a good word, and in Scouting it is always tremendously important. Your camp fire set in a copse, in an odd strip of woodland, a little way away from the camp so that you have to go to the camp fire — that's the vital thing. You go to it, don't just arrive at it. The Patrols fix a time, go off under their own Leaders to the camp fire. In a very small sense it is almost a pilgrimage. There is another reason, a very practical one for choosing a woodland site, and that is that singing in the middle of an open field, sing as well as you may, won't really be effective. Singing needs background — the background of trees is an ideal one in the open air. And the closer grow the trees and the shrubs around

the clearing where we have our circle, the better, because it will provide both atmosphere and the physical background which we really need.

Well, we've been talking (a little loosely perhaps), about Camp Fire circles, but that is not what they ought to be. What we really want is a horseshoe. A rather exaggerated horseshoe, with the points bent round rather more than they would be in a real one. Between the points of the horseshoe we have the seats for the Camp Fire Leader and any special guests. And there is another practical advantage in this. You must leave a space so that the Scouts who are going to put on Patrol items have an entry and an exit. It's no use just their coming out of the horseshoe and doing their stuff. They want to come from outside the horseshoe and make a proper entrance, so that all the Scouts present know there is something on, and are able, as well as ready, to see and hear it.



Now normally one would try to arrange that Scouts perform facing their Scouters, but at the Camp Fire we question whether that is possible. We want to provide the greatest opportunity for the greatest number, and we think that the best place for the stage — not a word we would like to use but a fair word — is backing on to the Scouters. Always excepting the occasion when we have guests present from outside when a different kind of arrangement will have to be made.

What else is there to say about siting? — just this. If you can find a natural hollow so that the Scouts can be a little above the fire, that really is ideal. You won't always be able to. We can remember too a camp fire that was on an island. The only approach was across a log bridge. It was perfect, perhaps too perfect to repeat. But still it is an aim, but we offer it to you because if the aim is right you will know the kind of situation to look for.

We are not quite done yet with this subject. Who is going to look after the fire? Let us be quite definite and say that no man can run a Camp Fire and at the same time look after the fire itself. There is a very necessary and important job at the Camp Fire, that of fire mender, fire minder, fire guard, whatever you like to call him. His job is first of all to have built the fire, to make quite sure that when it is lit it will light and, incidentally, that it will last the requisite time. That means he must have reserves of fuel of various sorts, because there comes a time when the flame dies down and a Patrol item is announced, which is something we want to see as well as hear. It may indeed be a mime when there is nothing to hear and only our sense of sight will be of any use. It's a bit disappointing for the Camp Fire, particularly for the Patrol, if nothing can be seen. That's where the fire minder comes in. He will work very closely with the Leader. He'll know when the Owls' item is announced that we want light. How often have we seen the torches switched on, and how equally have we felt the atmosphere cut and ruined by those self-same torches (flashlights). We have no use for them. They belong not to the Camp Fire at all, and indeed should not be permitted. No, the campfire minder hears the announcement and he has by small bundles of kindling: a

couple of those thrust into the embers of the fire, and in a matter of seconds the whole circle is flooded again with light from the camp fire. This business of co-ordinating the work is very vital. Leading a Camp Fire, like any other job, is a skilled job, and the fireminder plays a very important part indeed.



A well laid out Camp Fire Circle in an attractive setting

So now we come to the time when the Scouts have gone away quietly. What impression have they got? Was it an uplifting impression? Was it an occasion that had some real spiritual value perhaps? Have they gone off quietly to their tents a little thoughtfully? Or has their last impression been an assault upon their nostrils caused by water thrown upon burnt wood? There are few less pleasant smells in the world. The campfireminder may, when the Leader has said his last good night, have thought "Well, that's that for tonight," lifted up his buckets of water and tossed them on to the fire. What a tragedy! what a ruined opportunity! The campfireminder should have gone away with the other Scouts quietly and thoughtfully. Later, fifteen or twenty minutes later he will come back, perhaps with someone to help him, and then he will make sure the fire is safely out. He is not finished even now, for early, very early, in the morning, he will be round at the camp fire again, clearing up all traces of the night before, giving the whole horseshoe, especially the fireplace, a fresh clean appearance, so that any Scout who visits the circle will not be faced with half burnt logs and the general disarray which will help again to break all that last night's affair built up. These things may seem small points, but they are the things with which dreams are made, or more truly they are the things which shatter the dreams which small Scouts may have dreamt.

An attention to these details is really a most vital part of all that we are trying to tell you.

## CHAPTER III

### CEREMONIAL AND GOOD ORDER

*"They don't seem to have any rules in particular;  
at least, if there are, nobody attends to them."*

LEWIS CARROLL (Alice in Wonderland).

"Boys are great ritualists," said that wise Headmaster of Eton, Dr. C. A. Alington, and indeed right from the earliest days of Scouting B-P. showed that he knew that. And at the Camp Fire, a certain amount of ceremonial, and the discipline it implies, is not only valuable in itself but helps to establish the essential atmosphere. The Troop's Camp Fire ritual however simple should become one of its most beloved and proud traditions. And we would like to add that in our opinion this "good order" plays a not insignificant part in the building of character.

The time for Camp Fire approaches. Over the darkening meadow the Scouts in laughing groups are making their way towards that part of the encampment where the golden flames are already dancing. The Patrols settle into their accustomed places, and observing it all and directing where necessary and in charge of the assembly is the Troop Leader. He it is who hurries the laggards, who keeps his eye on his watch, who looks for the blanketed figure of the Camp Fire Leader with his attendants (probably the Scoutmaster with his two A.S.Ms.) coming slowly across at one minute before zero. They walk with quiet dignity to the circle's edge; the attendants slip into their places (and if they have a guest with them, indicate his honourable place); the Troop Leader calls "Troop Alert" and the Camp Fire Leader walks slowly into the circle, lets his glance pass over the faces of his young friends standing silent and still in the firelight, moves to the fire, holds his hand making the Scout sign over it, and speaks the opening words, perhaps:

*From the North,  
From the South,  
From the East,  
And from the West:  
May Good Luck come to you.*

But whatever opening words he may use, he will at their end say "Brother Scouts, the Camp Fire is open." The stillness ceases, there is a rustle and chatter as the boys sit down and then at once the Camp Fire Leader has begun his programme.

This simple ritual has become traditional in our Movement: it is used at the great Gilwell Whitsuntide Camp Fires when some 2,000 Scouts will be there: it should become equally a tradition rigidly adhered to in the smallest Troop.



Carved seat backs at Gilwell Park

This is (we say again) not a Camp Fire Song Book, but we feel such a book as this — the Camp Fire Leader's Book — should contain all the well known and more or less familiar opening sentences and verses. We also offer you a few of our own discovery or contrivance in the hope that you will use them (for as one or two openings become well known to the boys, they lose their power to inspire) and will yourselves seek diligently for others, and share them with us as we have shared ours with you!

### SOME CAMP FIRE OPENINGS

(The good Camp Fire Leader will have one or two ready for each occasion. It would be unfortunate, for example, if he had decided on "As the flames point upward.. ." and arrived at a fire which only imagination could distinguish from a careful pyramid of dim dark logs!)

*To be used rarely, on red letter days.*

As the flames point upward —  
So be our aims;  
As the red logs glow —  
So be our sympathies;  
As the grey ash fades —  
So be our errors;  
As the campfire warms the circle —  
So may the Scout ideal warm the world.

(GENERAL GODFREY FATUSSETT)

*After a difficult day.*

A little bit of kindness to each other now and then,  
A little bit of blindness to the faults of other men,  
A little bit of happiness, a lively Boy Scout smile  
And then as on through life we go, we'll find its all worth while.

(J.T.)

Sweet are the pleasures that to us belong:  
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song.

(J.T.)

*Preferably when visitors are present.*

Scouts of the world ! — where'ere you be  
God shed His blessed grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea.

(J.T.)

Who hath smelt wood smoke by twilight?  
Who hath heard the birch log burning?  
Who is quick to read the noises of the night?  
Let him follow with the others:  
For the young men's feet are turning  
To the camps of proved desire and known delight.

(KIPLING)

*After a day of rain.*



It ain't no use to grumble and complain;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice;  
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain —  
W'y, rain's my choice.

(J. W. RILEY)

No breathless hush in the close tonight,  
It's wind on the heath and in tent withal,  
It's cold, and it's damp so we'll pack in tight,  
So our heart shall keep warm whate'er befall.

(J.T.)

*Miscellaneous*

At Scouting to succeed we all aspire  
Lighting our little torches at your fire.

(J.T.)

Here is an emblem: sparks that upward fly —  
So may our hearts be young and spirits high.

(R.H.)

Here soon they will be ashes that once were trees.  
In spring they gave us delight,  
In summer, shade,  
In autumn the colours of their falling leaves,  
In winter the beauty of their bare branches.  
May our lives like theirs be lives of service.

(R.H.)

Life is sweet, brother; there's day and night, brother, both sweet things, sun, moon and stars, brother, all sweet things.. There's likewise a wind on the heath .

(GEORGE BORROW)

Jog on, jog on the footpath way  
And merrily bent the stile-a  
Your merry heart goes all the day  
Your sad heart tires in a mile-a.

(SHAKESPEARE)

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find  
Hours, days and years, slide soft away  
In health of body, peace of mind, Quiet by day  
Sound sleep by night.

(POPE)

Let my voice ring out and over the earth,  
Through all the grief and strife,  
With a golden joy in a silver mirth:  
Thank God for life!

(JAMES THOMSON)

*For the last evening in camp.*

Comes the last day of many days  
The last Camp Fire of all too few,  
Last — but not lost. In the years ahead  
These times our memories shall renew.

(J.T.)

Now as we come to our last Camp Fire  
Let's pause for a moment and praise  
The Almighty God who saw fit to inspire  
Our Founder who gave us these days.

(J.T.)

Now the Camp Fire Leader has begun his programme: we have spoken elsewhere of the fire minding, the applause (in itself containing perhaps some hint of ritual) and so on. For a moment we would like to turn to a point of discipline. Occasionally, especially in the larger Camp Fires a small group will (either from a mistaken sense of humour, an obstinate belief that they are right, or in complete unawareness) disregard the conducting of the Leader and either drag behind or, more often, race ahead of the rest of the singers, or even try to sing different words from the ones the leader has indicated should be used. The Camp Fire Leader must not condone this for a single verse. He gives the "wash out" sign (hands, palms downwards, moving horizontally backwards and forwards) and faces the "rebel" group. Usually it is enough to say "There can only be one Leader and I must set the time. Try and keep with me." (Or "it will be pleasanter for us all if we sing the same words and it is the Leader's privilege to decide which.") "Now all together, once again." It depends, of course, on how well one knows the boys concerned: if they are among one's young friends we have found it enough to say something gently rebuking like "Now, now, now!" But unfortunately (it may arise from the restless, undisciplined times we live in) occasionally at larger Camp Fires one gets a few Scouts who have been brought up in some ghastly so-called Troop where presumably the Camp Fire has been considered the appropriate occasion for smart-alec ragging and beer garden behaviour. With these young louts the Camp Fire Leader will recall to himself that a Scout is obedient and insist on it. If after a kindly warning they continue to misbehave, he will be justified in telling them either to keep silent and endeavour to behave like Scouts or to leave the Camp Fire circle. A single rebel of this nature can sometimes be dealt with by inviting him to come and lead the song himself. If he comes and fails, ridicule silences him; if he comes and succeeds, then a word of congratulation from the Leader and perhaps a suggestion to sit near by and help with another song later will have converted a rebel into an ally. The general rule is that the intransigence of the few must never be allowed to mar the happiness of the many: what is bad for the swarm cannot be good for the bee!



A picturesque Camp Fire robe.

One other small (but annoying) interruption may occur — Scouts leaving early. This, by the way, is not a Troop Camp problem, but is apt to occur at large camps or District Winter Camp Fires. In the latter case buses must be caught: but this should be considered when the event is being organised and it should be made quite clear to the poor unfortunates who must leave early that appropriate intervals will be arranged so that they can leave in comfort and without annoyance to others or embarrassment to themselves. Indeed the Camp Fire Leader will say something like this: "Brother Scouts, the Sheafiey Scouts have got to dash off now and catch their buses. But we're so glad they came, let's sing them a good night song

before they go. Stand up Sheafiey!” And the Leader bows to Sheafley who bow back (traditional conduct with this song established by one of us long ago and an excellent training in Scout courtesy) and he leads the rest of the Camp Fire, to the tune of “Goodnight Ladies in

“Good night, Sheafiey, good night, Sheafley,  
“Good night, Sheafley, you’re going to leave us now.

*Chorus:* “Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along,  
“Merrily we roll along, o’er the deep blue sea.”

The verse is sung quite softly, the chorus louder and faster.

But we are more concerned with the boys who, knowing for example that cocoa is going to be served after the Camp Fire, try to steal an unfair advantage by drifting off before the camp fire’s end (ignoring both the thoughtfulness for others and the courtesy of true Scouts) so as to be first in the queue. When this occurs at Gilwell (and we commend it with such variations as local practice may demand) such boys find themselves welcomed at the Providore by a polite Rover Scout who helps them to queue up all ready. But they find eventually when the other Scouts come gaily across with their mugs that the queue they have been so solicitously formed into is the very last to be served. And when their time comes there comes also a little kindly word of reminder about Scout behaviour from a Scouter. They need only the one experience.

As to the closing ceremony, we must emphasize how the exuberance of the Camp Fire should diminish as the end approaches. A quiet song or two and the Leader will say “Camp Prayers.”

All stand quietly while whoever is leading the prayers gives, perhaps, a little theme for their prayers arising from the yarn at the Camp Fire or some incident of the day, a prayer for courage or unselfishness, or of thanks for the joy of the day that is ending. He will have prepared the prayers with as much care and thought — with more if that be possible — as his songs and yells and jokes. He will, if he is using a book such as the “Prayers for use in the Brotherhood of Scouts,” have the places marked with easily seen slips of paper; he will have his torch ready. A little gadget we commend (especially for windy nights) is a small lamp fixed to the facing of the Leader’s Camp Fire blanket near the shoulder, and worked from a pocket battery. This is switched on at the appropriate moment, will shine downwards on to the prayer book, and will leave the hands free. Two or three simple prayers are enough and all should join in the Prayer which our Lord Himself taught us. A moment’s silence — and then “Good night, Scouts. Sleep well,” and all begin to drift quietly away across the misty field to their tents.

Small variations are, of course, possible. Before prayers two verses of a chapter from the Bible might be read by the Troop Leader; a verse of a well loved hymn (Abide with me, or Glory to Thee my God this night) can be softly sung. Sometimes a verse of the National Anthem might be sung. (If you have a boy with a really good voice he can sing solo the first three lines, followed by all the Camp Fire — led in by the Leader — singing the same lines; the second three lines are then sung much in the same way. It is a very moving experience).

One small reminder: you may have some notices to give out. These should be given about three songs from the end — before, that is, the “final phase” of the Camp Fire (to which you will have given much thought) is entered upon. Nothing must be announced after camp prayers except for that quiet “Good night” to comrades sharing the roof of the sky.

We shall long remember with agony the occasion on which a particularly successful Camp Fire had ended on a note of real inspiration, and all was utterly destroyed by an over-eager Troop Leader calling out as thoughtful and happy boys turned to disperse “If any of you want a dose of depth charge come to the Medical Tent now!” Alas!

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROGRAMME

*The test of a vocation is the love of the drudgery it involves.*

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

*(Afterthoughts).*

And now you are going to construct your programme for a particular Camp Fire, and whether it is for your Troop of four, five or six Patrols, or for a District Camp Fire of two or three hundred Scouts, the *method* and *general principles* involved are the same.

You will need (a) Your Camp Fire note-book (about which we will talk later, which will contain your memoranda of songs and yells and stunts — and it is almost incredible unless you have experienced it how blank one's mind becomes when a programme is to be constructed unless you have such a note-book at hand); (b) One or two postcards — for these are of a most convenient size and stiffness.

But before writing anything down at all you must ask yourself this: what is the theme or purpose of this particular Camp Fire? And how long is it to last?

Yes, you do need a theme almost as much as anything else. It is not a bit of use just producing programmes weeks or months in advance and hoping to catch the mood on a particular evening. Except, of course, in regard to a large Camp Fire where you have to prepare well in advance and where a theme can well be far broader and less well defined. But with the Troop the real question to ask yourself is “What do I hope to achieve tonight, what am I going to try to give my Scouts?” Now only you can decide that because you know your Troop: we only know of it so that we can do no more than offer you suggestions to start you thinking.

Let us suppose a situation: the Patrol system is not really working, the P.Ls. are rather slack and relying on the Scouters far too much. Right — Camp Fire tonight at weekend camp, they'll all be there. Programme — more rounds than usual, three Patrols — three-part rounds; four Patrols — four part rounds, five Patrols — four part and a Patrol resting. Two items from each Patrol, one from them, one suggested by the Scouters (see chapter on Stunts and Sketches).

Or suppose the obverse of this situation, then reverse the process; no rounds, no Patrol items: part songs and chorus songs in their place.

In either case some thought to the content of your yarn to draw attention to the defect in the life of the Troop.

One more example should suffice: the situation — no work along Scout Test and badge lines — a common enough occurrence — good spirit but no progress. At Camp Fire suitable yarn again and perhaps also a short yarn about some aspects of Second or First Class. This is making the Camp Fire work for you as Scoutmaster. Have we said enough? Well, go on thinking.

As to duration, that will depend on many things: what the rest of the day's programme has been, whether the camp is a week-end camp or a summer's fortnight, whether you are hiking on the morrow and so on. Perhaps we can offer just a general principle: that too short is better than too long, and the Camp Fire should come to an end while the enthusiasm for more still remains. An hour is a pleasant and satisfying period.

Now any Camp Fire Programme should be considered divided (like Gaul) into three parts (1) The opening items; (2) The closing items; (3) The in-between — *and in that order*. The success of the Camp Fire, in

achieving your purpose and bringing happiness to the Scouts depend very largely on (1) and (2). Let's consider these first.

(1) You have the opening items to get the Camp Fire going, i.e. to attain what can only be inadequately described (but is at once in practice recognisable) as the true spirit of a Camp Fire, to have everyone singing to their heart's content and to get everyone happy and confident.

Obviously, then, you *won't* choose

New songs; *or*

Long songs; *or*

Songs that need a deal of peering at vaguely seen pages.

What you *will* choose is:

- (a) One of the recognised "Opening" choruses, e.g.,  
The more we camp together .  
Hello, hello, hello, hello .  
Ding, dong, ding, dong...  
Camp Fire burning...

*or* The traditional song of the site or Troop or District (e.g., at Gilwell, "Back to Gilwell").

*or* A rousing song with a good tune that lends itself both to harmonious singing and plenty of exuberance:

e.g., She'll be coming round the mountain.

And having chosen your first item you will follow it with

- (b) One or two of the happy amusing little songs (which one could perhaps classify as Scout — Traditional):  
e.g., One little thumb keeps moving,  
or The Johnson boys.

This gets us as far as item (4) or (5) which could be:

- (c) A round or split song,

e.g., Man's life's a vapour (3 part round), or Ging gang goo (split song).

So far you see nothing new or too difficult and all singing. Now think about the Camp Fire drawing peacefully to its close and we are using that phrase advisedly. At the Camp Fire's end there will be prayers, perhaps a little thought for the morrow or the coming week. Nearly all the value of this will be lost if the item immediately preceding is e.g., What's the use of wearing braces or The Goat Dance! So your last four items (say) should diminish in volume and vigour. Perhaps we can illustrate this best by examples of possible last items:

- (A) (i) Over the sea to Skye.  
(ii) Poor old Joe.  
(iii) Swing Low, sweet chariot.  
(iv) Mac's Goodnight Song.
- (B) (i) She was so good and so kind to me.  
(ii) All through the night.  
(iii) Were you there when they crucified my Lord.  
(iv) "Taps."

- (C) (i) Ten green bottles (with humming and whistling variations).  
(ii) The Trek-cart song.  
(iii) Old Folks at home.  
(iv) Old Choruses — If you were the only girl in the world — Long Long Trail.

Now you have started well and ended well. In between you will merely list *more items than you need* so that from these you can select those most suited to the MOOD of the Camp Fire, always maintaining a proper BALANCE and VARIETY and not forgetting the HIGHLIGHT of the evening if there is one.

Let us examine for a moment some of these terms we have used.

**MOOD:** All experienced Camp Fire Leaders know that Camp Fires — or rather the magic circle of boys — have moods. One evening certain songs and games will lift the sky: another evening those same songs and games will fall as flat as Rebecca who slammed doors and perished miserably in Mr. Belloc's poem. Boys are human beings as changeable and as temperamental as the rest of us: sometimes they feel quiet and a bit sentimental, sometimes they are full of mischief and merriment. Much will depend on what they have done during the day — even on the weather, or whether it's the beginning or the end of camp, or of some incident that has recently dismayed or thrilled them.



In the light of the Camp Fire . . .

In planning your programme try and forecast to yourself whether the boys (considering the wide game they have played that afternoon, or the wet afternoon, or yesterday's late evening hike) will be weary or elated — and choose your items accordingly. But more important still try to assess early on the mood of the Camp Fire and change your programme to suit it. *Mood must be obeyed* or you're heading for failure.

**BALANCE and VARIETY:** You are able for your "middle section" to choose from such a list as this:

National and folk songs  
Shanties and spirituals  
Yells  
Camp Fire Games  
Rounds  
Patrol items  
Stunts of various kinds  
A yarn

A Camp Fire Leader tries to select from several of such groups — not too many yells, not too many or too lengthy Patrol items (it isn't, for example, necessary for every Patrol to perform every evening); there must be time for a yarn, there must be two or three songs of recognised beauty that can be well sung. How

often have we groaned in spirit as a young Camp Fire Leader tries to teach four new rounds in succession! We don't think it necessary to say more: build up your Camp Fire programme ringing the changes on the serious and the frivolous, the good song well sung, the good yell admirably performed — and plan with the same intelligence that we hope (and believe) you bring to your Troop programmes.

**HIGHLIGHT:** At one large camp we were associated with, boys who came from various parts of Great Britain were encouraged to bring musical instruments if they played any. Rather an optimistic idea? Well, three squeeze boxes, two violins, two banjuleles, a trombone and a set of drums arrived! A camp band was formed, a camp song composed and rehearsed. During the last week-end a distinguished guest was expected at the Camp Fire. A special chair was constructed for him, and in the woodland dell at the bottom of a hill was our Brother Fire, around which as in a small amphitheatre we all sat. The band sat behind our guest, having secreted their instruments beforehand. Now this is the point we are trying to make. This highlight — this what we hoped would be (and was) a pleasant surprise to our guest — was placed about three quarters of the way through the programme. And this is the ideal place for your *highlight* — the distinguished yarnspinner or whoever or whatever you hope to have.

Perhaps we might conclude with two “model” programmes not to be copied by you (dear readers) item for item, but to illustrate that balance and variety we have been trying to emphasise, and a third “model” consisting of items which will probably be new to nearly all of you.

*District or Large Camp Fire Programme (150 to 200 Scouts).*

1. Opening song and yell: Ding, dong.  
(Presentation by Duty Patrol of Details of Patrol items).
2. Chorus: She'll be coming round the mountain.
3. Cumulative chorus: A poor old man was crossing the road.
4. Chorus with actions: My bonny.
5. Two split yells: There ain't no flies on us.  
Want a fight?
6. and 7 chosen \* from: Red River Valley.  
Shenandoah (Solo with chorus).  
Boney was a warrior.  
Early one morning.
8. Patrol or Troop item.
9. Chorus: The Orderly Song.
10. Three-part round: Great Tom is cast.
11. Patrol or Troop item.
12. Solo and chorus: Ain't you comin' out ma Juliet?
13. and 14 chosen \* from: My old Kentucky Home.  
Off to Philadelphia.  
Cock Robin — solo and chorus.  
Old Father Thames.
15. Individual item.
16. Yell: Guillotine.
17. Yarn.

18. Old Time choruses:    My old man.  
                                    Any old iron  
                                    My old Dutch.  
                                    Just a song at twilight.
19. We'll be going down the valley.
20. When you come to the end of a perfect day.  
    Camp Prayers

*Troop Camp Fire Programme (4 to 6 Patrols).*

1. Opening song: Hello, hello.  
(Presentation by Duty Patrol of Details of Patrol items).
2. Solo and chorus: I am a Music Man.
3. Four-part round: Sweetly sings the donkey.
4. Chorus: Upidee.
5. Patrol item.
6. and 7 chosen \* from:    Passing By.  
                                    Who is Sylvia?  
                                    Over the sea to Skye.
8. Round sung by four solo voices: Rose, rose.
9. Chorus: Riding down to Bangor (possibly mimed by one Patrol).
10. Patrol Item.
11. and 12 chosen\* from:    Cockles and Mussels.  
                                    The Maresfield Road.  
                                    The Walking Song.
13. Camp games: Ring on the rope.  
    Football match.
14. Cumulative chorus: The tree in the wood.
15. Solo and chorus: Home on the Range.
16. Chorus: These are the times.
17. The Good Night song ("Goodnight, Cuckoos", etc.) Camp Prayers

*Troop Camp Fire Programme*  
*(Of items which will be new to many)*

1. Opening song: How do you do?
2. Round (four part): All things shall perish from under the sky.
3. Crazy action songs:  
    My mother brought me as she was able; *or*  
    I'm a little teapot; *or*



- The Frog Song; *or*  
The Spaniel Song.
4. French Chorus song:  
Son petit chapeau sous son bras; *or*  
Lundi matin L'Empereur Sa Femme; *or*  
Jean Baptiste.
  5. Two very musical songs:  
Shon Campbell (with humming accompaniment).  
There's a little wheel a-turning.
  6. A game:  
Rhyming Definitions; *or*  
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
  7. Chorus song:  
The Elephant Battery; *or*  
A Cumulative Song: The first day of Christmas my true love sent to me.
  8. Action song:  
My High Silk Hat; *or*  
My hat has three corners.
  9. Two yells:  
Gi' us a lick;  
Fishing.
  10. A difficult round:  
Where is John.
  11. A cheerful chorus song:  
We want the sunshine; *or*  
O la la tiria.
  12. A conversational yarn.
  13. Good night songs:  
Round: Gone to bed is the setting sun;  
Hymn: Saviour, again to thy dear name we raise.

*Patrol items included at intervals*

*\* according to "Mood" and "Time": the two groups are interchangeable. The word "chorus" is used to indicate the singing of a song by all present.*

## CHAPTER V

### SOME PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP

*If you think leadership easy, try standing on a  
fence with one ear to the ground.*

*Anon.*

*The Law is the true embodiment  
Of everything that's excellent  
It has no kind of fault or flaw  
And I, My Lords, embody the Law.*

*GILBERT AND SULLIVAN (Iolanthe).*

The general level of Camp Fire Leaders in this country is not high, partly because of a mistaken belief that anyone can be a Camp Fire Leader and that one can become one overnight. Both these beliefs are entirely erroneous! A Camp Fire Leader must possess sympathy, friendliness, wit, firmness, unselfishness, patience, tolerance, and humility, in addition, of course, to having a reasonably good singing voice (a light baritone is probably the most suitable) a sense of pitch and rhythm and a musical ear. And he must be prepared to devote a fair amount of time to learning by heart, and be of such a disposition that he is always prepared to observe and learn from others. Our purpose is to try to help all who are willing to train themselves in what is as definitely a technical job as, say, forestry or first aid.

This chapter considers one or two problems and can best be dealt with, we think, by considering some of the qualities enumerated above.

Sympathy and tolerance and patience may be considered together for they sum up what must be the attitude of the Leader to his circle. Sympathy with their likes and dislikes which may not be his, with the efforts of the singers and players which may fall far below even the lowest standard he has imagined — at first anyway, patience as he sings the old songs that are new songs for another generation of boys, as he calls up the same vivid enthusiasm for the yells he has led so many times, as he watches the old, old sketches performed by actors to whom all things seem indeed new!

Friendliness, for the discipline of Scouting is not a military sergeant-major discipline but arises out of comradeship. Irritation or crossness on the Leader's part will destroy the atmosphere at once — and that evening anyway he will never recapture it.

Wit of course — kindly wit, sometimes prepared for the occasion, but more often impromptu — in introducing the songs and the sketches. Wit is the leaven without which the whole proceedings remain heavy and pedestrian.

Firmness, because a Camp Fire Circle must be always, however unobtrusively, under control: the reins must never slip out of his hand although they must remain invisible. And, (as indicated elsewhere in this book) he must be a strong enough personality to deal at once with any of those small breaches of discipline which do now and then arise.

May we here give a little guidance on a small problem which any Camp Fire Leader will occasionally meet — that of the un-Scoutlike song or sketch or joke? To some extent the Leader may be himself to blame, for he should discover beforehand what is the theme of any sketch or song that a Patrol is giving. But we realise this isn't always possible — but when possible it is an excellent precaution to take. However, supposing a Patrol put on a sketch offensive against the spirit of the 10th Scout Law. It may be that it doesn't register: then a quiet talk with the Patrol afterwards — infinitely sympathetic and kindly — should be sufficient. But it is a rather more serious matter if the offensive song or sketch meets with

approval, cheers and laughter. Again, we consider it best to say nothing at the time and in hot blood, so to speak. We suggest the best solution is as follows:

- (a) A talk with the Patrol, as before.
- (b) A reorientation of the Scouts' Own which may often happen the day after, and if not should be arranged a day or two later. Here reading and prayers will be chosen on the theme of the 10th Law and in his Talk the Scouter will make these points:
  - (i) we must carry the 10th Scout Law into every part of our lives — work and play, games and Camp Fires;
  - (ii) a regrettable sketch or song was presented at Camp Fire the other evening. The Patrol concerned broke the 10th Scout Law — but so did all those of you who cheered and approved Approval of evil is often worse than the evil itself.

We have chosen a fairly serious offence, but there will be some lesser degrees offending against the Scout spirit. We feel that a like treatment proportionate to the offence — it may be no more than a prayer offered without comment, or a lesson read, or a yarn told — is the Scout way of meeting this particular emergency. If it is merely a matter, for example, of a small boy in the excitement of a dramatic moment letting slip a “bloody” or the like, take no notice, but have a quiet word with the youngster at some convenient time the next day. But we must return to the Camp Fire Leader's qualities and there remain (and enough you may think) unselfishness and humility.

The Camp Fire Leader should never be an exhibitionist, a one man band, sole performer, the whole bag of tricks. He will of course, be expected to do perhaps the major share of leading yells and songs, or do his own particular well loved turn, whether it be leading the Goat Dance, or giving his famous imitation of a caterpillar, or presenting some rope spinning! But he is the leader of a team — a team consisting not only perhaps of an A.S.M. or two, and a Troop Leader, but of the Patrol Leaders and their Patrols, particularly of any individual performers therein. Particularly should he see that other members of what might be called the Camp staff be given opportunities to lead a song or a yell or give a turn. Almost all of us have one small talent.

Or it may be that he xviii have a considerable “staff” to help him, as in the case of a larger than Troop camp, and then self-abnegation must be the rule. And he must be prepared to encourage. We can best, we feel, illustrate what we are saying by the experience of one of us not very long ago. It was his happy good fortune to be Camp Fire Leader at a camp of some one hundred and fifty Senior Scouts from all over the country at a training camp of a fortnight's duration. To aid him he had five Scouter friends and some eight or ten ‘junior staff,’ capable and intelligent young men of sixteen to twenty. Two of his Scouter friends were first class Camp Fire Leaders in their own right, another was one of the finest yarn tellers in the Movement. A fourth could lead the gayest of songs incomparably and was a magnificent clown; the fifth, a beloved and avuncular personality, after some encouragement displayed a gift for witty and topical parodies — rhyming histories of the day's events. So the Camp Fire Leader would say to one “Ten minutes this evening near the beginning — anything you like”; to a second “A couple of songs mid-way”; to the third “a longish yarn” and so on. So that having initiated the Camp Fire and led a couple of brief songs he had but to sit down and lift an eyebrow, and one of his team, warned and prepared, leapt up and carried on.

Perhaps as this sharing is so important we may go on to say something of the “Junior Staff” at this camp. All these excellent young men were in the beginning very shy at appearing alone in the Camp Fire Circle, partly because of their natural humility and partly because of the standards they were familiar with. But two of the shyest were encouraged each to lead a half of the circle against the other in “There ain't no flies on us,” and from this they were encouraged to lead a yell by themselves — and then a well known chorus. And this of course, inspired the others.

There should be no question of forcing anyone to take part against their will or to try and discover a talent they do not possess. But Scouting is a team game and the Camp Fire Leader is merely the Captain of the team who will no doubt bowl or bat a little himself but will see that all his other batsmen and bowlers and even his fielders get their chance: he will even occasionally be content to put himself in Number ii, knowing that long before his time comes, the hour will have declared the innings closed! The Camp Fire Leader's reward must never be a complacent self-satisfaction at his own personal success, but a glowing contentment arising from the success of the Camp Fire as a whole — and the more who have (under his unobtrusive leadership) helped to achieve it the better.

One further small problem of leadership remains — the question of applause. We have already intimated that we consider that this in the Camp Fire Circle is not without its ritual content. In other words, it must to some extent be formalised. The applause must be for the effort as well as for the achievement, for the heights they attempted to scale (not musically we hasten to add) rather than the eminence they did in fact gain. We suggest:

1. That the applause should be led by a cheer leader who is *not* the Camp Fire Leader. This could well be the job of a Troop Leader or a young A.S.M. who perhaps cannot perform in any other way. Such an appointment and recognised procedure will prevent those awful moments when three or four different yells of applause begin at the same time and can amount almost to discourtesy. We have tried this and earnestly recommend it.
2. That there be about four grades of applause, for example
  - (a) when the whole Camp Fire wants to applaud itself — as spontaneously it does after a song well sung — simple clapping.
  - (b) as a normal token of thanks and appreciation for the ordinary solo or Patrol effort:  
*Either:* B. . R. . A.. V.. 0, Bravo!  
*or* the Brrrrrrr sweeping right round the circle ending with a staccato Bravo!
  - (c) as a token of thanks for a very fine achievement:  
*Either:* Good! Good! Good!  
VERY Good!  
PHE - nominal!!!  
*or* the singing of:  
Bravo, bravo, jolly well done  
Bravo bravissimo  
Bravo bravissimo  
Bravo bravissimo  
Jolly well done.
  - (d) For an achievement of the highest level the Troop yell, formally led by the Cheer Leader.

Never permit the derisive cheer or yell or anything approaching a boo. These are absolutely foreign to the Scout spirit and should never be tolerated for an instant. Any such attempt should be silenced by the Camp Fire Leader who should utter a definite rebuke, giving the reason we have given. Such yells as “What a rotten song” come under this category, and all such betray the very slight progress the Troop or Patrol concerned have made along the Scout path.

Even the worst Patrol effort (all other Patrols will forgive us for calling it that) which both of us on one occasion saw — yobbish, foolish, unprepared, unfortunate, and pitiful in every way — was just received in silence and a quiet “Thank you” by the Camp Fire Leader (who, however, saw those young men the

next day and gave them some food for thought — but that was in private and is part of the job of training). Let us leave public derision to any outside the Scout Movement who care to use it: we do not.

Here is one last point: what is to follow that superb item that occasionally blesses (in the truest sense of the word) our Camp Fires. We remember the singing by a young A.S.M. with a beautiful voice of “Where’er you walk”: we remember the perfect miming of a parable. To follow something of such high achievement with any hope of success is almost impossible: so whatever the programme says, the Camp Fire Leader himself goes on — a transition to give the next item a chance. This self-abnegation, this readiness to sacrifice oneself is the real test of the true Leader.

## CHAPTER VI

### SONGS AND SINGING

*My catalogue is long,  
Through every passion ranging  
And to your humour changing  
I tune my subtle song.*

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN (*The Mikado*).

“Bright is the ring of words when the right man rings them,  
Fair the fall of songs when the singer sings them,”  
wrote Robert Louis Stevenson.

And we mean singing. There are few sounds lovelier than the voices of boys and men singing in part or in unison, and singing time is singing time and not bawling, yelling or shouting time. In her book *Chestnuts in her Lap* the distinguished film critic Caroline Lejeune says: “‘Every man,’ Hilaire Belloc once wrote, ‘who has written a song can be certain that he has done good; any man who has continually sung them can be certain that he has lived and communicated life to others.’ He doesn’t say canoodled them, or gargled them, or moaned them, or caterwauled them or turned handsprings to them, but *sung* them.”

And let us say this: that once Scouts have sung fine songs and have sung them well, they will sing good songs for ever after.

The true Camp Fire Leader will do all he can to encourage his Scouts to win for themselves this joy which lasts a life time: *this leading of song is his chief duty*. On occasion he must be a wit, even (briefly, oh briefly!) a comedian; in his time he may play other parts but *his chief duty* . . . Well, don’t forget it!

And so to three reminders (A) about leading the singing; and (B) about teaching the tune.

(A) (1) Start on a note which suits the majority of the voices present and the range of the song.

When you have settled the songs you hope to sing, just consider them a moment and make a mental or other note of any songs that have a large range of notes or are predominantly high or low in the scale.

(2) You are not a conductor of an orchestra. You will get better results by indicating with your gestures the rhythm of the song rather than the strict musical beat.

(3) Use simple definite sings. We have found the following of value and if they could be adopted by you all it would be of great advantage to the Movement:

Louder: hands forward, palms upward, slight upward motion of arms.

Softer: hands forward, palms downward, slight downward motion of arms.

Cut off abruptly: right hand horizontal cutting off motion in front of body.

Hold on: arms outspread.

End of “hold on”: bring arms together in front of body.

(B) (1) The easiest way to teach a simple tune of a few lines (e.g.,) *She was so good and so kind to me, or Oh me taters, or a simple round*, is for the leader to go on singing it through for several times, having first indicated to the Camp Fire that they should join in as soon as they can. A word or two of encouragement (“Now come along, help me out”) after the third or fourth time will help and in any teaching we should use (2) as follows:

(2) In teaching a new tune the leader should indicate the comparative height of each note with his hand. This sort of tonic sol-fa in action gives confidence to the boys and is a continuous aide-memoire as well.

(3) With an elaborate song, don't try to teach words and tune at the same time and as a corollary, don't permit boys to try and peer at their songbooks or the like, struggling to fit unfamiliar words to a tune they don't know — and, this way, are unlikely to learn with any success or happiness. For even the learning of new songs should to many be a kind of adventure; it should always be a happy adventure.

We have already suggested that you will find a classification of some sort (not ours necessarily) will be of help to you in building up your programmes. But we would like to suggest a few classes that you should contrive neither to ignore nor to forget: we shall not do more than indicate, for this isn't a song book.

(a) Folk Songs:

Few countries have such a multitude of melodious folk songs as the English and few countries so consistently neglect them. (We say the English, not the British, for our Scots brothers usually are well acquainted with many of their haunting airs). May we suggest that the Leaders in every County do a little research and choose three or four of the simplest and loveliest of their County songs and teach them to the Scouts for the delight of all. Don't, we pray, be content with some one obvious hackneyed oversung County "anthem" which can well be left to the crowds at football matches.

(b) Sea Shanties:

The salt sea flows in our veins! — so please don't leave unplundered the great treasure of the songs that once were sung by the men going down to the sea in ships. Many of these shanties are best sung with a singer and a chorus. The Scouts will easily learn many of the choruses quickly: it is the Leader's pleasant task to learn the verses. We suggest half-a-dozen you might begin with:

Rio Grande  
Shenandoah  
Blow the man down  
Boney was a warrior  
Tom's gone to Hilo  
What shall we do with the drunken sailor

But don't stop at these!

By the way, before singing your shanty tell a brief yarn about their history and when and why they were sung. And there is no reason why the simple actions of the sailors should not accompany the songs.

(c) Spirituals:

These lovely moving songs should become part of the heritage of all our Scouts. Again, often a soloist and a chorus suits them best, and again spin a brief yarn about how these songs grew up among peoples enslaved, songs which those peoples, now free, share with us all. We suggest to start you on your way again:

I've got shoes  
Deep River  
Short'ning Bread  
I ain't a goin' to grieve  
Steal Away

d) Action Songs:

Apart from the variety they bring, action songs help to rouse enthusiasm, help to counteract the hard ground or a cold night (or both!) and gives rein to that bubbling good humour or gay madness which should never be too far away from Scouting activities.

- e.g. Perfect Posture  
The Grand Old Duke of York  
Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes  
The Frog Song  
Alouette  
The flames went up and up and up

Here is also a sub-group of Action Songs we might call “Cut-off diminishers,” where in each succeeding verse we substitute a word by an action. These are excellent songs for helping to establish control.

- e.g. Three blind mice  
John Brown's Body  
Under the Spreading Chestnut (*Scout version*!).

(e) Rounds:

We would like to make three points:

- (i) With a Troop, try whenever possible to sing rounds whose number of parts coincide with the number of Patrols. (Always use the Patrol system when you can).
- (ii) Don't confine yourself to the humorous round or the action round, though they have their place. The serious round well sung gives infinite pleasure to the singers. We humbly suggest that all Scouts should on any occasion be able to bear their parts manfully in Great Tom is Cast.
- (iii) A four (or three) part round sung by four (or three) soloists makes a lovely Camp Fire item. This will especially be a chance for boys with good voices — and there are many more than we discover — who have too often to concur in the necessarily lowest Common Denominator singing of the Troop as a whole.

(f) Split Songs:

We find this a convenient term for songs where the Camp Fire is divided into halves — we would instance such songs as “Went to the Animal's Fair” and “Ging, gang, goo.” (Such songs in the smaller Troops are often a useful and confidence-producing prelude to rounds.)

(g) Unsuitable Songs:

We do not mean un-Scoutlike songs which we mention elsewhere but songs whose range, compass or difficulty may be beyond normal boys. There are also songs that are written with a particularly integrated accompaniment without which they are almost impossible to sing. (In our opinion, e.g. Danny Boy, Jerusalem and In Cellar Cool are of this class, as are many of the Gang Show songs, which after all were written for stage productions.)

(h) Gilbert and Sullivan:

Forgive us, but we are both enthusiasts and we believe many of you are. Here is an opportunity to introduce your Scouts to a world of melody and one which they will never again wish to leave. Many of the songs are suitable for the whole Camp Fire. (We suggest you might like to start with “For he is an Englishman” from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, “Of this there is no possible doubt” from the *Gondoliers* or “The Policeman's Song” from the *Pirates of Penzance*.) Others again can be sung with soloist and chorus (e.g., “I am the captain of the Pinafore,” or “I have a song to sing o” from *The Yeoman of the Guard*). And there are others that can be learnt and sung in parts by the real vocalists.



Finally, dear brothers, remember

- (a) You cannot teach a song of which you yourself do not absolutely know the words and tune.
- (b) Don't try and teach too many new songs at once: infiltration rather than invasion.
- (c) Always and ever: *songs should be sung*.

## CHAPTER VII

### ALL KINDS OF YARNS

*And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover.  
MASEFIELD ("Sea Fever").*

"I wish I could tell yarns like you do." How often have I we heard some such remark as this? Perhaps as well to pause and examine the question and see if it has any significance. Any Scouter who ever says "I wish I could do something like so and so" is really denying the purpose of his own leadership. Leading in any sphere and especially in Scouting is not a matter of imitation, it must always be an expression of personality. One of the great strengths of Scouting is that it leaves room for personal leadership to work. At no stage is it so cut and dried, so hidebound that the leader is merely a kind of rerecording of something that has gone before.

Let us begin this chapter on yarns by realising that we are not going to suggest for a single instant that you tell yarns as we do — you will probably be very much better at it. What we are going to do, however, is to offer you some advice about the selection, purpose, and use of yarns and a few tips on how to tell them, but remember the essential fact that it is you who are going to tell them and it must be your personality through which the yarn is expressed.

Why should we tell them? One reason is that "*Scouting for Boys*" lays great stress on the value of yarns, but that was forty years ago. Does it still hold good? As a matter of hard fact it holds good much more today than at any time in the history of Scouting, and for this one reason that there is a paucity of good yarns for boys today and the art of telling yarns both in and out of Scouting has all too often been lost and the yarn has become something of a rarity. We know from talking with very many Scouters that the Scouter who with any degree of regularity tells a yarn to Scouts either at the Troop meeting or at Camp Fire is something of a rarity, arid in a sense this very shortage of yarns, like other shortages, has created an increased demand from the customer. So we can be quite certain the demand is there, that the boy of Scout age, (and also, of course, of Cub age), does want yarns and if they are reasonably well told, his appetite, just as for cream buns, will amaze the adult. But merely satisfying a demand is not necessarily a good thing. Scouters should be certain that the demand is one which, if we fulfil it, will be making a contribution to the training of the boy.

We would just ask you to think back to your own childhood, and unless you are a very unusual person we are prepared to wager that the high spots of your memory are nearly always linked with yarns of some sort or another. We have done this ourselves and are agreed that we remember very much more readily the yarns we heard in our youth than we remember the substance of the many admirable and excellent sermons and addresses we have heard in later year. There is, in fact, something about a yarn that sticks; even a yarn that is not very well told has something about it that remains with us.

Now, to generalise is difficult and dangerous, but it is necessary sometimes, and we want to suggest to you that unless we can bring a boy to remember something he is told, it certainly cannot have any effect on him. All our experience, and the experience of thousands of men, proves conclusively that the yarn stands a far better chance of being remembered than any other form of words offered to the child. This means that our immediate aim in telling a yarn must be to create interest, because it is through interest that memory will function. As a long term policy there may well be hidden in the yarn something, the significance of which will not dawn upon the boy until many years later. This tends to show that moralising for the present is of questionable value, but moralising for a fairly long term future is of tremendous significance.

We might now look at yarns in relation to Cubs and Boy Scouts. All that has been said so far applies equally to both, but the type of yarn we tell, and indeed in some measure the way we tell it, must evolve from Pack to Troop and evolve still more as we get on to the higher age groups.

The Cub lives in a world of romance and make-believe in the main, and therefore the yarns need to fit into that background which he understands and enjoys and which we, perhaps, as adults, have lost. It means, in a sentence, that looked at from the adult point of view the yarn for the small boy can verge on the extravagant, but when we come to the Troop, the world of make-believe tends to give way to the world of hero worship and the wish of the boy to identify himself with heroes, and it is an admirable trait in boyhood that they do want to identify themselves with heroes and not with villains. If you have ever listened to boys planning a game you will have noticed that inevitably the argument breaks out as to who is going to be saddled with the villain's part. Nobody really wants it and there is usually an inadequacy about the villains of the Scout game because the parts have been given to the least strong characters. The boy, quite naturally, wants to identify himself with good. He knows instinctively that right will triumph and therefore he wants to be the hero, to come out on top. As the age range grows higher the boy, in some measure, loses the sense of hero worship, but is still prepared to accept the inspiration of the hero, not in identifying himself personally with the hero, but by seeking to emulate his acts.

To sum up this part of the chapter, then, we really come to this, that the Cub demands the romantic tale — not the namby-pamby fairy story by any means, but the story that is completely creative and in many respects is highly improbable. For the Boy Scout we come to the yarn which may be highly improbable but to the boy himself at least just possible; and for the Senior Scout and Rover we come to the stage of realism, stories from actual life.

We would like to offer you some suggestions, too, about dividing yarns into various groups. It will be of convenience to you in keeping a record and will help you to see that with your Troop or Pack you do offer a balanced picture. Four groups are about enough.

First, the "Yarn Good Fun." Now there is no hidden virtue in this yarn except the immense virtue of getting boys to laugh with you. The "Yarn Good Fun" contains no stories of great physical feats, or of courage, but it is the custard pie of the yarn world, it is the story we tell because it is good fun and because we know that our heroes will laugh with us. Never let us despise the value of this, which is the kind of yarn to tell on a wet day in camp, or perhaps when the Pack have missed a train and have three-quarters of an hour to wait for the next. Their spirits have drooped a bit and they need reviving. The best medicine is laughter and the dose the "Yarn Good Fun."

Our second type is the "Yarn Instructive." This includes the nature yarn, or a yarn dealing in some measure with one or other of the Scout or Cub tests. A yarn to be used sparingly, but to be used. Perhaps this requires more experience and art on the part of the teller than the other types of yarn because there will be some suspicion on the part of the listeners that here is just another adult pill thrust down their protesting gullets, but it has its use and it has its place. One danger about it is the danger of sentimentality. The boy's approach to the world of nature in particular needs to be an approach founded on enjoyment and not founded on whimsicality, and still less on attributing to animals a number of qualities which the youngest Cub can tell you from observation that they do not possess.

And so to our third class, the "Yarn Adventurous." Here the field is very wide and with Cubs and Scouts themselves perhaps the type we shall use most often. The yarn adventurous where things happen, where action is the key note, right triumphs, where there is movement, excitement, daring; in fact the "Yarn Adventurous" has for generations been the basis of most of the best stories for boys.

This type of yarn leads naturally enough into our fourth class, the "Yarn Inspirational." Now by this we don't mean some "pi" story which will nauseate the hearer and should nauseate the teller, but we do mean the yarn which quite simply and dispassionately told, tells a story of some occasion, some human occasion, when some man or woman lifted themselves above the common ruck and in achieving whatever

they did achieve set an example that is worth hearing about. The obvious type of example is the stories of the great explorers and pioneers, of Scott and Mallory, Wingate and Grenfell. Yes, those are obvious and we should use them and make much of them, but do not let us shut our eyes to the fact that the boy of today, indeed of any age, has heroes who are not necessarily concerned with mountains and snow and ice. The great cricketer or footballer is very much the boy's hero of today, and it is a foolish adult who denies it, and a more foolish one who tries to turn the boy away from this type of hero worship. We should never in our yarns, nor indeed in any part of our Scouting, deny to the boy what is a natural approach to life. From the adult point of view unquestionably the explorer is doing a far greater work for mankind than the man who scores a century at Lord's, but to the boy himself this is by no means apparent, and used with skill the yarn that makes use of the boy's ordinary everyday heroes has much to commend it. We do not pretend that this is easy, but we do know it is possible from trying to do it ourselves.

After all, if we are seeking to inspire a boy we must delve and experiment until we find the approach to life that does inspire him, and it may not be the things that inspire us that inspire him. That is the kind of mistake that adults make so frequently.

## CHAPTER VIII

### “SPINNING THE YARN”

*And they said, “O, good Iago,  
Tell us now a tale of wonder,  
Tell us of some strange adventure  
That the feast may be more joyous,  
That the time may pass more gaily,  
And our guests be more contented!”*

*LONGFELLOW (Hiawatha).*

We come now to the question of how to tell yarns. Well, no one ever told a story successfully that they did not themselves enjoy. We had better get that quite clear before we go any further. You cannot treat telling a yarn as just another job. You cannot treat telling a yarn as just another activity in Scouting. As an example, we have both taught signalling through the years and we still find it extremely dull and a rather pointless activity, but we have been able to do it. But the yarn is different.

The yarn, first and foremost, must appeal to the teller. In some measure he must be able to identify himself with it. It must come naturally from him. So enjoy your story above all else.

As to the actual telling: while we cannot hope to teach you how to tell yarns, we can tell you how to learn to tell them. This means that in effect you must again grasp the nettle firmly and realise that here is an art that can be learnt through attention to detail, through hard work and through practice. There may be born yarn tellers, but their number is so few that we can just dismiss them as the favoured exceptions they are. Most of us will have to learn the hard way by practice and attention to detail. We will come back later to where to get good yarns from, but for the moment let us deal with the technicalities of telling a yarn. You have found your story: you have read it through: you have enjoyed it. How are you going to tell it? In the first place telling a yarn is not a matter of learning a story out of the book word-perfect and reciting it. (Although there are one or two exceptions to this, like the Just So Stories.) In that way you fail completely to express your own personality and the yarn becomes, what indeed it is, a sort of set piece that probably lacks colour, that lacks warmth, that lacks humanity. No, you read the yarn and you attempt to get into your mind the characters and the sequence of events. It is necessary when you are telling the story that the characters should have distinctive names. It is impossible to tell a story about a man called “Smith” and another called “Smythe”; about “Brown” without an “e” and the next character “Browne” with an “e” Names of characters are important and they need to be distinctive so that they immediately make a reaction upon the audience.

Then we must be consistent. If a man gets into a taxi he must get out of a taxi and not out of a train. If we have left our hero tied to a post surrounded by lions, it will not satisfy the boys if the rescuing party come and shoot all the leopards; and if the heroine was a blonde in part one, it would never do if she is a brunette by the end — however true to life this may be! Boys especially are very swift to spot inconsistency, and if you stumble over these small details they will dismiss the whole of your yarn as absurd. You can be as far fetched as you like and place your hero in the most impossible situations from the adult point of view, but which to the boy will be quite feasible; what you cannot do is place your hero in a situation and then get him out of a different one!

Now two or three tips. You must know exactly how you are going to begin your yarn, a couple of sentences learnt by heart will get you going. Equally you must know how to end. There is no worse sight on the face of the earth than the speaker who tells a story but is groping for a finish. Remember the story of the young American who had just been elected to high office and duly made his maiden speech. At the

end he went across to his old mother, feeling that he had done very well and said to her, "Well, Mother, how did I get on?" and she said, "Well, not bad, son, but you must make more of your opportunities." The boy was taken aback and said "What opportunities did I miss?" and the old lady's very wise reply was "You had three previous chances to sit down."

The Scout Movement is riddled with people who don't know when to stop either with boys or with adults. They go on and on and the inspiration that at one time they had in their yarn they have translated into boredom through their own stupidity. Brevity is the soul of wit, equally it is the basis of interest and inspiration. Here we are writing in Essex, and in Essex they have a saying which every teller of yarns should get into his head — "Don't keep all on keeping on." Most people who fall into the error of going on too long do it because they have not prepared their end, so know your beginning and know your end, the middle will take care of itself. But here again, don't allow your middle to acquire a middle-aged spread!

One other thing we should like to suggest, though. Must you always practise on the boys? Boys are grand folk who put up with a lot — too much perhaps. Couldn't we practise our yarns on each other? Why don't we include the yarn in our meetings of Scouters occasionally? Wouldn't it perhaps be more useful to let the Scoutmaster of the 33rd try out a yarn on the other Scouters in place, perhaps, of the monthly wrangle about conditions for the "Useless" Cup? Can't we use these opportunities of the Scouters' Meeting to help train ourselves and one another? A Cub Pack or Scout Troop is not a laboratory. When we give them our yarn we need to be reasonably proficient. We might perhaps, some of us, try out our yarns on our families. They probably think we are crazy anyway by now, and a little more will not make any difference. As a last resort, if neither your Scouters nor your family will put up with you, we are assured on good authority that telling oneself a yarn in the bath is considered a slightly less obnoxious activity than singing. But quite seriously, all this points to the fact that at some stage you will need to get used to hearing your own voice, but let us repeat the danger is that you will get too fond of it.

Now what about the actual telling? Trying to describe the character by using dialects and different voices can be done, but let us face it, it is very difficult and unless it can be well done it is better not done. And a straight narrative anyway the boy will quickly translate in his own mind and thoughts.

Well, there it is — practice, attention to detail, sincerity, consistency; those are the things that matter.

Now, where are you going to find your yarns? We don't know, we never know, but we are always looking. You must read, of course. You must read and read and read. The Scouter who does not read cannot hope to get any new ideas coming in to him. The world of books is a wonderful thing and it is there at a very little cost for all to take advantage of. Reading alone is not quite enough. When you have found something that appeals to you and which you think will make a good yarn for your Pack or Troop, do remember to make a note of it — where you found it, the name of the story and a rough outline of what it was about so that you can look it up when you need it.

May we warn you of two pitfalls that are not really very obvious. The first is — beware of good literature! What a shocking thing to say — but a very necessary one. You see, some of the greatest writers this country has ever known were masters of the art of literature, but when you come to retell the story that they told you will find there is hardly any story at all. But their great art had concealed the fact. Some of Kipling's work comes under this head — not the Jungle Books of course, but some other work. Beautiful writing with an extremely flimsy story that in the hands of any but a master would be over in about a minute and a half, and this is too brief even for us! So do be sure that there is a story before you try to tell it.

Then there are those whom we cannot classify as "great" literature — P. G. Wodehouse for example. Now we are not concerned whether you think he is a very funny writer or not, but most boys think so, yet it is very difficult to retell his stories, because his art lies in coining extraordinary words and astonishing

phrases, and when you drop from the story these words and phrases, sometimes there is very little left to retell.

All this really amounts to is making sure the yarn you are going to retell can be retold in your own words. In other words, is it a story? Is there a plot, if you like. Is there something we can take hold of, put into our own thoughts and express in our own words and be effective, and so it is necessary in reading to approach anything we read with this purpose of getting yarns in mind, to approach it from an angle of some suspicion. With experience one learns quickly to distinguish the good story, the good plot, from the good writing, and equally, of course, one can look at it the other way round. One can go to what one might call poor literature and in it find plots that differently clothed, differently expressed, are superb.

May we just say a word in passing about ghost stories?

Ever since we can remember in books and on Training Courses, the mention of the ghost story has brought looks of horror into the faces of the pundits and they have looked ghost-like themselves in the thought that anyone should be so foolish as to suggest telling boys a ghost story. Perhaps we have been unusual, but whenever we ask the Scouts of story they would like, the answer is almost invariably "a ghost story." Well, whom must we accept? The pundit or the boy? Let us be original for once and accept the boy, but having said that it is perhaps not quite fair to the pundits. Let us go on a stage further. There are a variety of ghosts that are entertainment and good fun and not perhaps too realistic. He comes into our yarn well and we should make room for him, but the appalling ghost, the horror of Edgar Allan Poe, he indeed is no fellow to introduce last thing at night before the Scouts return to their tents. We really want our ghosts to have some shreds of humanity left in them and then they are good value and good fun and Scouts will clamour for them.

We mentioned fairy stories a while back. Well we have really not a lot of use for fairies in relation to Cubs and Scouts — though we thoroughly enjoy them ourselves — but apart from the fairies there are some grand yarns in Grimm and Hans Andersen and the rest. They need a little modernising and that is not difficult to do. Cut out the superfluous heroines and cut off the 18th century tresses of golden hair from the heroine, in fact modernise the story a little and you will find some first rate material.

Now we have said "read," but we have not really said what to read. Well, we read widely, all sorts of different things. We have found W. W. Jacobs, Lord Dunsany, Montague James, Jack London, Kipling, Bensusan, Saki, Grey Owl, Sir Charles Roberts, the Blackwood collections, all helpful — but wander round Libraries, have a chat with the Librarian, discuss it at your Scouters' Meetings (how interesting Scouters' Meetings could become if we would let them), try old bound volumes of The Wide World and Strand Magazines. And last, but not least, the old penny blood (threepence now!). Some grand stuff, there, discreetly used.

There are two other types of yarns that used with discretion are worth considering. The serial story. When we were young the cinema supplied a great spate of astonishing films as serials to which we went regularly to see how Pearl White got out of whatever danger she had got into. She always did. The serial story can help to keep the attendance stable in Pack or Troop. The great art of the serial story is, of course, to leave it at an exciting point. This also has the advantage of giving you a week to get yourself out of the mess you have got into! Personally we think that any serial story that runs for more than six weeks is beginning to overdo it, but try them sometimes.

That leads on to the composite yarn. Here you, one of the Scouters, starts the story. You have a minute or two minutes to get it going, then on to the next Scout who has to put in his minute's worth. The only rule is that the characters must remain constant, but what they do and where they do it does not matter. It is a grand game this at the Camp Fire (or at Troop or Pack meeting, but with Cubs it is perhaps better that every third one brings in one of the Old Wolves).

Now for conversational yarns.

This type of yarn is by no means easy and can only be attempted where two people are able to think and work very closely with each other, but how effective it can be and what grand fun for the tellers. (Little do you know the sacrifice we are making in committing this to print!)

At first some rehearsal is essential, and the beginning and sequence of events need to be agreed well before the yarn is told something like this:

R.H. "Well, I know you have all been expecting a yarn, and this evening we are very fortunate that John is here too because we can tell you for a change of an actually true experience that happened to us when we were young Scouters. How many years ago, John, will it be ?"

J.T. "Well, Rex, are you talking about the camp we had together at Gloucester ?"

R.H. "Yes, that's the one."

J.T. "Oh, that must be the best part of twenty-five years ago now, but I certainly shall never forget it."

R.H. "I suppose it must be all that time ago; we shouldn't have mentioned that! Anyway, it's perfectly true and it happened like this. We went off for a quiet camp by ourselves and.. ."

J.T. "Yes, we'd run a Troop Camp and had decided to have an easy time after it."

R.H. "We always decided that, but we seldom got a break !"

J.T. "I believe it was the year we let young Tinker take the Troop home. He was a good boy."

R.H. "That's it. It's coming back now. And we took a couple of hike tents and off we went. We went to Gloucester because there was a cousin of a friend of ours who had a nice farm house."

J.T. "Do you remember they told us it was on the very highest point ?"

R.H. "Yes, of course it was! It you crossed the road from the house you went through a wood and round a sort of corner in the wood and when you came out you could see far below the Severn curving off to Wales."

J.T. "I remember how surprised I was to find a pond so high up. There were some lovely old carp in it, too, but they were double-cunning and neither of us got one, though we had our near misses."

R.H. "In fact, we were having a lovely, lazy time. We cooked when we wanted to and sometimes had breakfast at lunch time."

J.T. "And it was good weather! We did a lot of sleeping and we did a lot of yarning. In fact, we planned the life of the old Troop for about three years ahead that camp. Wasn't that when we first hit on the idea of Senior Patrols ?"

R.H. "Yes, that would be about it. A lot has happened since then — it didn't work too badly either."

J.T. "However, we mustn't reminisce too much. We must get on with this story."

R.H. "We mentioned the friend, didn't we? Well, she liked music. She used to ask us to the house for coffee and to listen to music and she used to say it was company for her, too."

J.T. "Very fine gramophone she had, wasn't it ?"

R.H. "A lovely one. But the real point about the story was this. When she was chatting that first evening she said, 'This is a lovely old house. It's haunted, of course, but we've got used to it.' We laughed politely, but didn't believe it."

J.T. "Well I certainly didn't! I'd never met a ghost and had no use for them, but she was a nice old lady and I know we thought we ought to humour her. She must have laughed when she looked back afterwards. Anyway, how did the thing start, do you remember ?"



R.H. "Well, it started with you, not me — which was a reward for your disbelief. I at least wondered, because I'd had a very odd experience when I was a small boy; but that's another story. That evening I was cooking something for dinner: we always had it at night so that we didn't have to bother during the day..

J.T. "Sometimes quite late, too."

R.H. "It was getting dusky and it was a pleasant summer evening."

J.T. "I said I would go up to see the old lady and you told me not to be more than three-quarters of an hour because you were cooking something very special that night. Anyway, I left you poring over the pots and pans and strolled up the lane and across the orchard that led to the farm house. It was a very lovely orchard and now, in early autumn, with the fruit just beginning to ripen and the last rays of the sun shining on it, it really was a picture you can't find anywhere except in England. I was walking quite slowly when suddenly, out of the attic window of the farm, came first a scream and then a bright, flashing light, and then, as far as I could tell — and I was not in a fit state by then to tell anything — something that looked like a face. Somehow it was not a human face and yet it was not an animal. Well, I suppose I ought to have stopped to investigate, but I was on holiday. All I remember was that when I came to I was by your side."

R.H. "And very out of breath !"

J.T. "I didn't know quite how I got there, but was I glad to be there !"

R.H. "You couldn't explain very much as to what it was all about, and then, you remember, something rather odd happened to me next day."

J.T. "Yes, that was..

R.H. "It was like this . .

But have a shot at finishing the story for yourself!

## CHAPTER IX

### STUNTS AND SKETCHES

*Did nothing in particular  
and did it very well.*

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN (*Iolanthe*).

*My dear Sir, I have read your play.  
O my dear Sir! Yours faithfully,*

HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE.

“The Cuckoos will now put on their sketch,” said the Camp Fire Leader. Everyone looked up expectantly, the Cuckoos’ reputation was well known. The A.S.M. turned to the Troop Leader and said, “Well, this ought to be funny! remember what they did last week ?” Well, the Cuckoos duly arrived and presented their sketch. There was no doubt they thought it was funny, but somehow nobody laughed. The reason? Simple ! — it wasn’t funny.

We would like to suggest to you that perhaps we try to be funny too often. While a great many stunts and sketches at Camp Fire should be amusing, there is also room for perfectly serious portrayals of something. Of what, you ask? Well, there is history ancient or modern: John and Magna Carta, or Thomas a Beckett, or Wingate or Gibson. Scenes from the lives of great men, the pioneers and the heroes, provide excellent material for Camp Fire sketches. Scott, Grenfell, Mallory, all come to mind readily, and incidentally, don’t be content with just the ordinary events that are so well known. Delve a little into the history of these men and see if you cannot provide something more out of the ordinary. We have seen some of the other pioneers too, in some first rate Camp Fire sketches. The Bible can be considered in this way, especially the Old Testament. There are some grand action stories that are very easily adapted for presentation at the Camp Fire. No bad thing to bring the Old Testament back into the lives of our Scouts. Few more effective ways of doing this than asking them to portray some scene or other from it. Shakespeare? They will probably know him at school and probably dislike him. The Camp Fire may help them to like him, who remains our premier poet and our greatest playwright, and is in fact part of our English heritage. In fact, there are so many worthwhile parts of literature and of lives of men, that can very suitably be put on at the Camp Fire, so let us resolve not to be always funny. Remember, too, that being funny is difficult, and not, as so many people think, the easiest thing in the world.

But when we come to our amusing sketches, do let us try to be original and seek variety. Old songs and new stunts is no bad motto for any Camp Fire or for any Patrol that is going to put on something at that Camp Fire. We think it is time “Hot News” had a rest, and, along with it, couldn’t we rest “The Man on the Park Bench”? We think it is a pity he ever arose, but there it is. He has been with us some years and, truth to tell, we are a little tired of him. The same applies to many of the old chestnuts. Give them a rest (don’t forget about them, keep them alive in your notebook), and try and encourage your Patrols to be original.

How to do it? Well, offer them a suggestion the day beforehand. The Owls — a scene from history; the Peckers — something from last week’s news; the Pigeons — a Bible story; the Cuckoos — one of the Scout Laws; the Ravens something quite different — a passage out of a book that perhaps they have been reading, and so on. Or perhaps an order like: “Patrol Items tonight to be something original, invented, devised and produced by the Patrol.” Offer your Patrols something to work on, so that they have something to get their teeth into. Never a Patrol yet that doesn’t react to a suggestion, and after you have made the suggestion they will produce the ideas themselves. But you as in all things, must lead them in the first place.

Well, what other type of stunt and sketch can we talk about? The mime. All too little used, and it can be so very attractive. There are really two types. There is the mime that is just a mime. Apart from knowing the theme, the audience is left to deduce from the actions of those taking part the rest of the story and what it means. Difficult, but it's good stuff and can be very effective. Then there is the mime where, alongside the performance of the players, some Scout either reads from a book or recites the narrative, and they suit their actions to his words. With a little practice, this can be delightful.

It is no bad thing on occasion to mime a song — for example “Riding down to Bangor” — a number of Scouts singing and the rest acting it as the song goes on.

All these things make for variety, and what is more important, they bring out the rather different qualities in the Scouts that are taking part. We must not get into a rut with our sketches, nor indeed with any of our activities. Variety is vital and it is really the Scoutmaster who thinks about it and gives a lead.

And what about dressing up? If at Headquarters you have a dressing up box, it is the kind of thing that ought to go along to summer camp. We don't need expensive clothes, but we do need a selection of hats, coats, costumes, and discarded equipment, all will find its place in our box where it is available to be used again and again in a variety of guises. The Scouts like dressing up and we ought to give them the chance to do so.

So we come to a rather different sort of stunt. The one we are going to call the “practical joke stunt.” It is a little difficult to guide you here, for it needs dealing with very carefully. It can be amusing for some stunts to culminate in half a mug of cold water being swept over some unsuspecting Scout. We think it questionable whether he will think it funny to receive the full weight of a whole two-gallon bucket of water as a culmination of a stunt. In other words, these practical joke stunts, of which there are a great variety, and a regrettably increasing preponderance of them in our Camp Fires, do need handling firmly. There should be a tradition as to what it is reasonable to do; how far a Patrol may be permitted to go. The Scoutmaster must decide when that point is reached and be very firm if they overstep the mark.

It is no part of Scouting to have a kind of inquisition of dreadful tortures and unfriendly experience. A very little, in good fun and taken in good part, is all very well, but once we go over that dividing line we find maliciousness, and the practical joke becomes a menace. So watch these things carefully, and if the District Commissioner or some visitor is to be the target of a practical joke, a word of warning is both courteous to him and helpful to us. Some of them take it well, but some of them object, and they have a right to object. It is not their job to be a butt for our laughter and we should have their full co-operation in this as indeed in any other events.

Other things to consider under the heading of “Stunts and Sketches” are Charades, both dumb and spoken. Do not let them go on too long, don't let them get too complex, but they can be well worth while. They get the Scouts thinking, they get the audience taking part, and that is part of the trick of running any Camp Fire successfully.

The Sketch that goes on and on is a menace we have all met. The problem is best dealt with before Camp Fire when the Scoutmaster at a short Court of Honour Meeting says:

“Patrol Items tonight from Cuckoos, Owls and Pigeons — not more than three minutes each.”

So many problems need not arise if we think of them before they happen!

## CHAPTER X

### PARODIES

*"Don't ye remember now, Humphry Pump, that night when I sang  
ye no less than seventeen songs of me own composition?"*

*G. K. CHESTERTON (The Flying Inn).*

Parodies rarely have any permanence. In the early days of the Movement, Camp Fire Song Books were published consisting almost entirely of not particularly inspired or inspiring parodies — they have much to answer for! We say "rarely" for such parodies as the "War Song of the Ancient Britons" have quite rightly become classics. The best will survive on their real merits: we need not be concerned with bothering to collect the rest in an endeavour to give them an immortality they do not deserve.

In the main, parodies should be personal and peculiar to the Troop or sometimes to the Patrol; dealing with each Troop's gay eccentricities, with the inevitable incidents that decorate any camp's progress, and their production should be not much less immediate than the thunder following the lightning.

Ideally parodies should take over the verse part of a suitable melody, which will be sung by the inventor or his delegate, while the original chorus will be sung with appreciative gusto by the rest of the Camp Fire circle. The metre will often perhaps be a little rough and ready, e.g.,

Solo: Today Skip while out soliloquising  
Met a grease pit of Nicky's devising  
He with exquisite grace  
Fell in up to his face  
Oh Skipper, how truly tantalising

Chorus: That was a neat little rhyme,  
Sing us another one do, do, do, do.

There is no reason why a certain tune should not be selected beforehand and each evening any of the Staff or Patrols be free to offer a verse which shall (if up to standard) become part of the official "Tale of the Camp" for that year. Many suitable tunes will occur to you: Old John Braddlum, Tarpaulin Jacket, Boddy Shafto, Early in the Morning. But it is worthwhile meditating a little and finding one, equally suitable but a little less usual, for yourself. We remember a wonderful effort parodying "The Two Gendarmes."

With older boys there is something to be said for using a tune of the moment. May we quote you an example that was sung for our delight a year or two ago when "Thanks for the Memory" haunted us all, happily or not according to taste. It will be appreciated by all Wood-Badgers everywhere and all those who have met what are ironically called S.T.As. (or Spare Time Activities):

Thanks for the memory,  
Of Gilwell's lovely park,  
The Camp Fire after dark,  
Of happy days in Scouting ways  
That firmly leave their mark — How lovely it was.

Many's the time that we feasted  
And many's the time that we fasted,  
But it was fun while it lasted  
And shine or rain  
We'll come again..

Thanks for the memory  
Developing our sight,  
And S.T.As. at night  
And scribbling notes while other blokes  
Snored with all their might — How lovely it was!

By day we dampered and twisted  
By night the bed-boards resisted  
But we could sleep unassisted;  
We've done our hike  
Without a bike. So...

Thanks for the memory  
Of Gilwell's lovely park,  
The Camp Fire after dark,  
Of happy days in Scouting ways  
That firmly leave their mark — How lovely it was.

And that parody always illustrates what must be remembered — that humour need not always predominate throughout. On the last night at camp perhaps all the contributions should be of thankfulness picking out the happiest memories the better to preserve them.

## CHAPTER XI

### YELLS

*And such a yell was there  
Of sudden and portentous birth  
As if men fought upon the earth  
And fiends in upper air.*

SIR WALTER SCOTT (*Marmion*).

We have both often said (and shall always believe) that all Scouts are mad ! — just a little of course, and in the nicest way. Certainly all the best Scouters we have known have had at least a touch (on occasion) of the higher lunacy. And suddenly there comes to our mind again that reference to B-P. in *The Club of Queer Trades*: “Suppose you went out into the moonlight. Suppose you passed through silent silvery streets and squares until you came into an open and deserted space, set with a few monuments, and you beheld one dressed as a ballet girl dancing in the argent glimmer. And suppose you looked and saw it was a man disguised. And suppose you looked again, and saw it was Lord Kitchener. What would you think? . . . You could not adopt the ordinary explanation — with Baden Powell, say, it might be a bet — but not with Kitchener.”

Yes, dear B-P. had in him that strain of gay uninhibited high spirits that goes with Scout yells.

But we must be brief. First, why do we have them? Well, they have grown up with Scouting from the first edition of *Scouting for Boys*; they make for variety in the Camp Fire programme; they enable the new youngsters and those who have no gift for song to become an integral part of the Camp Fire; and — oh, need we go on? Let us confess that they are great fun and everybody enjoys them.

They should, of course, not be overdone. Two groups of a pair, or one group of three or perhaps two simple ones are enough — though much depends on the boys and the occasion. With youngsters mostly newcomers to Scouting there is much to be said for teaching a dozen or so of the old familiar ones very quickly. It gives these young Tender~ foots roots: they have become a real part. Older more sophisticated circles will welcome occasionally an old friend or be glad to make acquaintance with a new one, but that perhaps will be enough.

Perhaps we should make it clear that under “Yells in building up his programme the Camp Fire Leader should include all the following classes:

- (a) National, formal ceremonial yells (like those given by the never-to-be-forgotten New Zealand Jamboree contingent of 1947).
- (b) Narrative yells, i.e., yells which illustrate an anecdote (e.g., Dahn a bit): these normally need a few words of explanatory introduction.
- (c) Nonsense yells, i.e., permutations and combinations of curious sounds invented usually by ambitious Patrol Leaders at the time of the full moon (e.g., Rick, tick, Ricka tick tick, ipsa, ipsa, oy!).
- (d) Troop or Patrol yells, sometimes (regrettably) indistinguishable from (c) but usually based on the name, reputation or self-opinions of the Troop or the Patrol emblem.
- (e) Non-vocal yells, i.e., those in which noises are made with the hands and/or by chest thumping, etc. (e.g., the Japanese Thank You).

- (f) Action yells, those in which actions are an integral rather than an incidental part (e.g., We're out for gore).
- (g) Split yells which need two sides (e.g., There ain't no flies on us).

Some of these may occasionally overlap.

This is not an anthology; you must get together your own collection of yells as we did (a) by noting them when we heard them, (b) by inventing them ourselves.

How do you invent yells? Well, here are two useful pieces of advice: (i) Use short positive syllables; (2) Build a yell in three lines or in a line repeated thrice. (That doesn't mean that all good yells obey this dictum, but most do.)

You can often contrive a yell from an anecdote you have read or an incident you have seen. For example, let us take our favourite subject after Scouting — cricket! A cricket yell . . . One moment, while we confer. Here you are, a split yell, i.e., the camp fire divided into halves one against the other.

1st Half (conversationally): "How's that ?"  
2nd Half ( ' ' ): "Not out."  
1st Half (sternly staccato): "How's that ?"  
2nd Half (even more sternly staccato): "Not — out."  
1st Half (a demented yell): "How's that ?"  
2nd Half (frantic): "Not out !"  
1st Half (dolefully): "Bother. . .

There you are.

Now make up one on swimming for yourself. Don't forget in forty years more or less anonymous geniuses in our Movement have invented or had revealed to them many grand amusing yells. Try and get together for yourself a full collection of these so that your youngsters too may share the fun.

## CHAPTER XII

### GAMES

*"It's this passion for games," I said, waking up suddenly, "which has made us Englishmen what we are."*

A. A. MILNE (*The Day's Play*).

Games are, of course, one of the most important ingredients of any Scouting activity, and for many years their use at Camp Fires has been advocated, but our experience shows that it is on extremely rare occasions when they are in fact used. We think this is something of a pity because they have their place and, let us face it, they fill the need of one or two boys, for while the majority will enjoy singing and yells and the like, games are an outlet for the mental energy and knowledge of all, and it may be just the thing that will encourage the minority to take a fuller part in the other activities from which they have been rather holding back.

Of course we must be clear right from the start that we are not talking about relay races and British Bulldog and things like that. We are thinking of games which will make some contribution to training the Scout in various ways and adding to the fun of the Camp Fire.

As an example take "Tommy the Tenderfoot went to Camp," a memory game, a kind of Kim's game. One starts off round the horseshoe by saying "Tommy the Tenderfoot went to camp and took a tent." The second Scout repeats "Tommy the Tenderfoot went to camp and took a tent," adding "and a groundsheet." Number three says "Tommy the Tenderfoot went to camp and took a tent, a groundsheet and a toothbrush" and so on until we get on to about number ten when we have a list saying he took "a tent, a groundsheet, a toothbrush, shaving stick, bucket with a hole in it, an old razor blade, two saucepans, a Venturer's proficiency badge, a hair from an elephant's tail, a map of Curacao, the left stirrup from a Mexican horseman and one of Stanley Matthews' football boots." By the time we have reached number twenty it becomes no mean feat of memory to get it right and in the right order, and any Scout who falls down on the list just drops out. Don't play the game to an ultimate winner as it will take too long, and games with too many Scouts out are not good. Games of this sort — there are many variations, e.g., "My Grandmother went to Paris" — are good fun and good training. There is one variety in which we use actions instead of words, and this is a game for a colder evening when it is necessary to keep the camp fire moving about. For example, the Scouter starts: "My grandmother went to Paris." Number two says: "What did she buy?" The first one replies "A cigarette," and suits the action to the words. The second Scout then says to number three: "My grandmother went to Paris." Number three asks "What did she buy?" to which number two replies "A cigarette and . . . and so on, and the ultimate answer may be "a cigarette, a pair of scissors, a bicycle, a rocking chair, a fan, a knife machine," each one mimed in its turn. All the answers must involve an action until you have got the whole camp fire bobbing up and down in the most extraordinary way.

Then there are trick games, but these can be used seldom and only when we have new boys in the Troop. One of these we call "Passing the Scissors crossed." Number one has a pair of scissors and he passes them to number two saying "I pass the scissors crossed." Number two takes them and passes them to number three saying, "I pass the scissors crossed" or "I pass the scissors uncrossed." Those in the know cry either "Yes, yes, yes, yes" or "No, no, no, no," according to whether the right actions are made. The "crossing" and "uncrossing" has nothing to do with the scissors but refers to the position of the feet. If they are crossed one over the other you are passing the scissors crossed," if not, then you are passing the scissors uncrossed." Carry on until all present have tumbled to the game.



A similar game is "My grandmother does not like tea." Number one says "My grandmother does not like tea." Number two asks "Well what does she like?" and number one, if he knows the game says "Sausages." Number two then turns to number three and repeats the statement "My grandmother doesn't like tea." Number three asks "What does she like?" Number two may reply "Stew" or "Tomatoes" or "Toad in the Hole," but in fact any reply which contains the letter "T" is wrong and any reply that does not contain the letter "T" is right.

Another game we have played is "Living Noughts and Crosses." Mark out your board somewhere in the circle, four ropes will do it perfectly well. One Patrol is noughts, another crosses, with the Patrol Leaders giving directions. The noughts when put in place stand upright and the crosses sit down. This game is best played where the Patrol Leader is not watching the board. He stands with his back to it and directs his Scouts into the appropriate squares. Obviously you must agree on how the squares are to be numbered before you start. This type of thing, with variations, comes easily to mind and has a great deal to commend it, and we think every camp fire at Troop level ought to contain a game. On cold nights we have also tried team games, passing a football or a plate round the circle, or passing an orange from chin to chin — no easy feat especially if your Troop contains a number of chinless wonders!

By and large you want games where people don't have to go anywhere as with The Priest of the Parish or Twenty questions. Or movements should be confined to their places in the camp fire as in Matthew, Mark. It is not a good thing to go charging round the camp fire as one would have to for a relay race, for there is a danger and there have been too many instances of boys stumbling and falling into the fire.

Well, up to this point in this chapter we have given you things you may know, or more likely you did know and had forgotten. Now a couple of things that are probably new to most of you. You may have heard on the B.B.C. in recent years a little item called "Author's choice" when an author was handed a sealed box containing three or four articles and was asked to tell a yarn bringing in these particular objects. Well we make so bold as to claim that we invented this, although we did not use a bag or a box. You have a sack containing six or seven articles, and you select the same number of Scouts. In turn each Scout is given one minute to plunge his hand into the sack and bring out an article and start the story, introducing his article. At the end of a minute the Leader says "Change" and number two must carry on with the same story from where number one left off and he must introduce the article he has been lucky enough to get out of the sack, and so on to number six or seven, who must introduce his article and also complete the story. A good game and we get some surprisingly good results from it.

As an advance it is a good thing to put into a bag articles with which the Scouts are not familiar. At Gilwell this is easy because we get so many gifts of strange and lovely things from other countries, but a rake round the kitchen at home will probably provide you with articles that will fox most Scouts even though they are things they should be familiar with, and are not. Or, mix a few well-known articles with others not so well-known.

Secondly, we have tried with fair results a similar sort of thing with old hats. Collect some old hats together: old hats of a postman, policeman, dustman, fireman, soldier, sailor, airman, Chelsea Pensioner, Girl Guide, etc. Stick these in a bag. Then one by one the Scouts put their hands in, draw out a hat and for one minute have to act in the character of the hat they have withdrawn. This is an early stage of the game. The next thing is for the whole Patrol to take out hats simultaneously from the bag and then to put on a sketch introducing all the characters shown by the hats!

And speaking of hats, one of our greatest successes has been musical hats. Musical chairs we know and don't mind, musical bumps we know and detest. Musical hats we rhapsodize over. You don't need a gramophone — you may have an instrumentalist, or you may sing a song. The Leader starts the beat and you all sing, and while the song is going on a great variety of hats of every conceivable size and shape are going round, and whenever a Scout receives a hat he puts it on his head, takes it off and passes it to the next Scout. We have one fewer hat than there are Scouts and when the music stops the Scout without a hat drops out, and so it goes on. Simple enough, but hilarious fun.

We can go a stage further if you like and get a bag full of old clothes. When the music stops, the unfortunate fellow holding the bag plunges his hand in, takes out whatever garment comes and puts it on. To take some care as to the type of article that goes into the bag is, we hope, an unnecessary warning!

By and large this matter of games is one that has been very badly neglected. So many elements in the old fashioned party are worth remembering and holding on to, and we do advocate looking, not at the modern sophisticated hooks on parties which seem to deal mostly with undrinkable cocktails and unedible dainties, and to leave out the games which are really the basis of a good party, but look at the older books still in the libraries, and see if you can get ideas for some adaptations of games which will be suitable at the camp fire.

Yes, the game is part of it and especially at Troop level a very valuable part. At the bigger Camp Fires, say at District or County level, games are apt to take too long and become too involved. Too few get a chance on these occasions and so at large gatherings, but then only, they ought to be left out.

Finally, remember that the Scouts themselves have ideas, as well as the Leaders. It is no bad thing to say to a Patrol Leader some good time before Camp Fire, "You will be responsible for introducing a game at Camp Fire tonight. You must work it out, you must explain it, you must lead it." Don't be afraid of doing this sometimes, as I am sure you will find it will work. Patrol Leaders are not meant to be followers: they are leaders, and a leader must create if he is to lead effectively.

## CHAPTER XIII

### INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

*I took my harp to the party  
But nobody asked me to play.  
(20th Century Song.)*

The importance of this chapter is in inverse ratio to its brevity. For what in Scouting do we set out to achieve? To develop the personality of each Scout so that he grows to God-fearing self-reliant manhood. And the boy who has, standing alone before his friends and fellows, sung or played or recited or danced at a Camp Fire, has grown in stature even as the few trembling minutes passed.

We remember a little Patrol Leader for the honour of his Patrol singing in a voice which, starting as a low baritone, grew verse by verse into a baser bass, an interminable Victorian comic song — but we remember him with pride. We remember a Cockney Kid (many years ago) reciting the “Green Eye of the Little Yellow God” with a fervour that no doubt was at least akin to Keats’ when he travelled in the realms of gold. We remember a slight Hungarian boy dancing a lovely lonely shepherd’s dance to a companion flute while hundreds of Scouts sat entranced and more than one blinked away the tears and didn’t know why. We remember a Czech Scout reciting a French poem. We remember a boy who was a fine half-miler singing western songs to his own guitar with skilful ease. We remember a fifteen year old miming the Parable of the Prodigal Son — taking three parts, an incredible performance. We remember a squeeze box played with a delicate disregard for tune or harmony.

All that we ask is that every encouragement should be given to the individual to display his small (or, who knows, his considerable) talent, playing recorder, or viola, or banjolele (or the not to be despised mouth organ), reciting, dancing (if not alone perhaps with a pal or two for our country has its own delightful dances), singing a song or, if nothing else, leading a yell of his own contriving.

Try and make it a Troop tradition to encourage the individual Scout to entertain his fellows. And let our applause be for the effort and for friendship’s sake as much as for the achievement. We are as a nation in danger of becoming a nation of listeners, of switchers on of canned music. Well, there is pleasure to be had from that sort of listening, but there is pleasure (and character training too) in amusing oneself and one’s friends with our own perhaps humble talents: “Better a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therein.”

It is a pleasant tradition for a Troop to establish that at least once in a summer camp every Scout will contribute something, out of himself and by himself, however small. From such endeavours men are made.

For we enjoy most that which we each one help to create.

Think on these things.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SCOUT TRAINING AT THE CAMP FIRE

*If all the year were playing holidays  
To sport would be as tedious as to work.*

*SHAKESPEARE (Henry IV, I).*

We have already on several occasions referred to the fact that a Camp Fire is just as much part of the training scheme of Scouting as any other activity in which we indulge. The purpose of the Camp Fire from the Scoutmaster's point of view must be to try to train boys. That is, to make them better citizens by implanting in them values that will be permanent in that they will remain in them long after they have left active Scouting, and have gone their several ways in the diverse walks of life that they choose. But here in this chapter we want to deal with some specific things that have a detailed training value, because there is an opportunity at the Camp Fire to give training in some of the other subjects of Scouting. All that we have said in a general sense, of course, holds good, but here we want to deal with two particular training methods, — methods that will be implemented largely through games or through yarns about both of which we have said something already.

Now, the need for games at Camp Fire we hope we have made apparent to you. They make a change, and change is a good thing particularly when dealing with boys. They are a great help to the Camp Fire Leader who finds some of the other forms of Camp Fire activity difficult, and they will provide a means of checking up on past Scout work, and of giving a lead in to the future.

Suppose we take a fairly difficult example. Observation is one of the basic qualities of the trained Scout, and yet all too many Scouts are decidedly unobservant. We are using observation in its widest context, embracing the use of all the senses mankind is endowed with. Well, we have in Kim's Game one of the most effective means of observation training, but all too often Kim's Game is handled by Scouters in a dull unimaginative way. Any Scout will be bored with constantly having to observe and remember an ill-assorted collection of things that come out of a drawer. He will do it once or twice and like it, but ultimately he asks for something a little better. He will become bored even with examining the contents of his Scoutmaster's pockets, interesting though they may be on the first few occasions. Here at the Camp Fire we can introduce him to Kim's game in a variety of forms. Remember we are concerned not only with the sense of sight, but also with the sense of touch and of hearing and the others too. But observing through seeing we can do at the Camp Fire in rather a special way. From a box full of assorted articles, the Scoutmaster lifts up one in the light of the Camp Fire — just sufficient light to see — and then after just a few seconds he puts it away, and so on with twenty or twenty four articles. The Scouts try to decide what the articles are (to observe them that is), to remember them, and later by Patrols or as individuals, to reel off the list back to the Scoutmaster. It is not easy, but well worth doing. Or by touch: the Scouts pass the articles round the back of the circle, identifying them by feeling them. Touch observation using the feet too, although it is by no means easy and calls for some reasonable collection of articles — drawing pins and bent nails should obviously be omitted!

We have found, too, it is not easy in a Camp Fire circle in the woods to distinguish small unnatural sounds which are made a few yards away from the circle from the many natural sounds that will be going on all around, but a very important part of Scout training is to be able to do this. A couple of A.S.M.s a little way away from the circle armed with matches, keys, money, an axe, a jug of water, and all the ordinary things of camp and everyday life, make the sounds and the Scouts listen, identifying them and writing them down. It is one thing to do this sort of thing in daylight — you have probably all done it, but

very different in the rather eerie stillness, which is indeed no stillness, of the night. Then of course, there is the staging of incidents.

A visitor may arrive at the Camp Fire, not necessarily extravagantly dressed (if you introduce a large red-headed man with a grey beard, a wooden leg and a parrot on his shoulder most Scouts will notice him), but if just an ordinary person comes in quite casually, sits down, listens for a bit and goes away, then he may not even have been seen by some. Or it may be an accident you stage. An A.S.M., primed beforehand, gets up to lead a song, and is suddenly overcome and faints. Well, do they deal with it? Do the Scouts know what to do? Or do they leave it to the Scoutmaster? This latter incident did, in fact, happen only a few months ago. A Scouter rose to give a yarn and was overcome by the heat of the fire and collapsed, but the Scouts did deal with it very well indeed. They did not know that this was a perfectly genuine affair: it might equally well have been one prepared for them. Now think about this kind of thing at Camp Fire, for when you are staging some sort of incident the time, the place is all-important. Don't allow such incidents to disrupt the atmosphere of the Camp Fire that you have taken so much trouble to build up: use them with discretion, but occasionally do use them.

And so we come to the yarn. We have said a great deal about yarns already, but use the opportunity for a short yarn — a brief lecture if you like — on some aspect of Scout training. It may be the way the birds who are nesting round our Camp live; it may be something about the weather — we'll come back to that in a moment; it may be something on trees, something we would suggest that the Scouts can look at tomorrow and check up on. Camp Fire is no place to talk about signalling or swimming, but the things that we can go and do or see tomorrow, those are the things we talk about round the Camp Fire.

What about the stars? Is there any better place to study the stars than by sitting round the Camp Fire at night looking through the kind of telescope that a circle of trees makes? It is a picture that has much of spiritual value in it. It is also one that has very definite practical training values — to sit and watch. Someone, one of the Scouters, points out one or two stars or formations. This is far better than charts in the Troop room, which are all of very secondary importance.

Let's go to nature when we are trying to teach nature, and at the Camp Fire there are so many occasions when the stars are at their very best and our Scouts will be ready to hear about them.

What about the weather? There is nothing that affects a camp quite so much as weather. We can't all become met, prophets and experts — but we can get pretty good. Why not at each Camp Fire at your summer camp try to notice the natural signs that there are about. The way the birds are flying, the cloud formations, the appearance of the moon, the way and the colour in which the sun sets, the wind direction, whether it is veering or backing. They are all a matter of observation. The Camp Fire is the place where you can discuss them, but try to decide what they are going to mean. Tomorrow you will know. The sign will have given place to the actual weather condition. So each evening and each mid-day you can forecast and check. This is a far better way of learning about weather than almost any other. And you will find that Scouts will be tremendously interested in a thing that is brought home so closely to them. You will find too that they will want to get their Weatherman and their Meteorologist Badges because through the Camp Fire you have awakened their interest in the whole matter.

Well, we have taken just two particular subjects — Stars and Weather, but what we have said applies in some degree to many other aspects of Scouting. The Camp Fire is the place where you can go on training.

One other thing and this chapter is done. The Troop in Council. Well, good Troops, most Troops, we suppose, use the Court of Honour. In some Troops the Patrol-in-Council operates, but if our observation and our listening is at all accurate, all too few Troops use the Troop in Council, and yet that was the basis of the original Camp Fire thought. A Troop in Council means the whole Troop sitting round the fire at the end of the day, discussing what they had done, planning for tomorrow, listening to the words of advice of the Scouters, and every single boy in the Troop able to make his contribution. This Camp Fire, during summer camp, is the place to plan the whole of your next six months' activities. Don't just leave it to the

Court of Honour, and don't leave it until the atmosphere is cold. Cash in on the warmth of the Camp Fire atmosphere. Round the Camp Fire is the place where ideas are born, in our experience, more than anywhere else in Scouting — ideas that don't always come from the Scouters or the Patrol Leaders, but come from the Scouts themselves. Give them a chance to say something. Give them an opportunity now and then just for talking, and lead them in by an outline of what you propose for tomorrow, commenting on what has happened today, and then: "Any ideas, chaps? What do you want to do?" We can remember the birth of the best Troop show we ever had, which took place round the Camp Fire at summer camp. It was many months before the show was actually put on, but it was at the Camp Fire that it was born, it was at the Camp Fire that the Troop in Council produced the bones of the programme, and once you have the bones, providing the flesh becomes merely a matter of hard work.

Yes, the Troop in Council is a very vital part of the whole show. Don't forget about it. Don't feel that only Scouters or Patrol Leaders have any ideas. That is a piece of most absolute nonsense. Some of the brighter ideas spring from the Scouts. There are more of them, anyway, and the reason we don't profit from their ideas is because we don't provide the opportunity for them to give the ideas to us.

So, to conclude, do, with discretion, make use of the chance that the Camp Fire provides to give specific training to Scouts, and at the same time to let them give training to you.

## CHAPTER XV

### INDOOR CAMP FIRES

*I have had a wonderful evening, but this was not it.*

*GROUCHO MARX.*

We would like to offer one or two thoughts about Indoor Camp Fires. These will be either at Troop level or concerned with some Conference (of P.L.s. for instance) or may in fact be a District Camp Fire in its own right. So first of all

#### **The Troop Indoor Camp Fire:**

All indoor Scouting should be looked on as a preparation for outdoor Scouting. If our little book achieves no more than to establish this in the hearts, minds and action of our readers, it will have justified its appearance. And especially as a corollary, if it persuades all Scouters to finish all their Troop programmes with a Council Fire. Which means that with twenty or so minutes to go the Skipper waves the Scouts round into a semi-circle, gives the squat sign and the whole Troop is a family gathered together to consider the evening (or the week past), to sing an old song, learn a new song, hear a brief yarn or see a brief Patrol effort (a charade perhaps or a dramatisation of a proverb or well-known catchword the rest must guess) — and so to prayers, goodnight.

There should be none of the formal ceremonies of the Camp Fire proper (please don't recite "As the flames point upward" over an electric light bulb shrouded in red paper): just a quiet assembling together, the singing of an old favourite (each Patrol in turn perhaps making a choice) — and the learning of a new song, for this is when you prepare your repertoire which amazes everyone!

But seriously, boys gain a pride in knowing all the likely songs they will hear and wish to sing — however great may be the assembly of Scouts. And a large repertoire leads to much greater possible variety in the summer programmes, in much more fun and interest.

And the time to learn your songs (we repeat) is in the last happy moments of every autumn and winter Troop meeting.

Three suggestions for you:

- (1) Discuss with the Court of Honour the two or three songs you hope to get across each month. Their support will be the greater if they themselves (however subtly directed by yourself, but therein lies the secret of leading boys) have chosen the songs.
- (2) Don't try and learn tune and words necessarily together. Don't despise "dah, dah, dah, dah, dab, dab, dab, dab, dab," as they get the hang of the tune: later on it can be transmuted to "These are the times we shall dream about."
- (3) The words thrown on a screen by an epidiascope (or something similar) has the advantage that the boys are looking upwards and not huddling over a piece of paper or a shared book, a habit which makes reasonable singing impossible.

Finally, may we make a plea that you bring back to the present generation of Scouts the joy we used to know in singing such songs as The Orderly Song, and Boy Be Prepared, and A Walking Song (Weekes and Co.: it appeared in the Scouter of May, 1945) and many others of some length and delightful vigorous tunes. Don't in fact be content with a repertoire of snippets only!

And now to the

## Conference or District Indoor Camp Fire:

All the general points we have made hold good. The same careful thought should be given to the programme, to the shape of the “circle” and the arrangement of the chairs (never, we beseech you, never be content with rows of chairs like a political meeting), to the lighting, which should be subdued — you cannot get the atmosphere you hope for either in darkness plus a red glow from a small “made up” fire, or in the white glare of many lamps. In choosing your programme you should for these occasions remember your limitations. Nothing should be included that requires more than a minimum of movement — the exhilarating action song is best left for the wide open spaces. On the other hand the singing will not be dispersed and scattered as it is apt to be on a breezy night in August under the stars. In fact it will sound amazingly good — so that songs that have fine tunes worth singing will lend themselves to some of that delicious (if incorrect) harmonising beloved of all true Scouts.

Not too many stunts! They are difficult to get over to a very large audience: the amount of space required for “stage” (though you will have considered this and done your best) is seldom available, and there is nothing more certain and quick to tear the atmosphere and inspiration of such an occasion to shreds than a sketch which is invisible to many and more or less inaudible to all. Don't be afraid of a well played squeeze box to accompany a couple of songs — but only a couple! The squeeze box must fit into the programme: the programme must not defer to that or any other musical instrument.

Finally, three points:

- (1) On these occasions simple ceremonial is not only not out of place but is an essential. Some Districts (we remember Lincoln and Hackney) have contrived their own traditional opening ceremonies for their District Camp Fires. But at Conferences, too, the District or County Camp Fire Leader should have already devised an opening (and perhaps a closing) ceremony which can be quickly understood, rehearsed and presented.
- (2) A teller of yarns is essential for these occasions: he should be the top of the bill — and put him, as we have already said, some three-quarters of the way through your programme. You will obviously get the best speaker or story teller you can — remembering to select him with an eye to his suitability for the audience — for we have in mind in this chapter all types of Scout Conference as well as District Get Togethers.
- (3) The District Camp Fire is one of those occasions, rather rarer than some would believe when co-operation with our Sister Movement can be considered and Guides and Rangers invited to laugh and sing with us. The Guides can and will bring many attractive songs to add to our repertoire.



## CHAPTER XVI

### CUB CAMP FIRES

*Heard the whispering of the pine trees,  
Heard the lapping of the waters  
Sounds of music, words of wonder.*

*LONGFELLOW (Hiawatha).*

The Camp Fire can play a small part in the life of the Pack but never to the extent that it ought to play in the life of the Troop. There should never be any attempt by Akela to parallel the methods of the Camp Fire Leader, or to be too grasping of what should remain for the most part a Scout activity. In a sense, therefore, this chapter itself is an interloper! But to prevent Akelas from considering the other chapters to be wholly theirs we offer them these brief notes for their own.

*The Opening: Ritual* and ceremony must wait until the Cub becomes a Scout. The Pack should be brought to the Alert and Akela, already in the Circle, will recite a few lines from the Jungle Book such as:

Wood and water, wind and tree,  
Jungle favour go with thee.

Troop Camp Fire openings must never be used.

*Programme:* Akela can do a great service to the Troop (and indeed to the whole Movement) by teaching the Cubs to sing sweetly and not to shout, which they will at first be inclined to do.

Again the Pack should try not to trespass on the song property of the Troop. The Group Council should chat this over together. The Pack will not need many songs. We suggest the following songs might very well be a deed of gift to the Pack: Today is Monday; Animal Fair; Dashing away with the smoothing iron; O Jemina; She sailed away; Imsey, wimsey Spinder; We push the damper in; If you ever see a whale; The bear went over the mountain; John Brown's Farm. One or two (such as Daisy, Daisy, or What's the use of wearing braces) might be shared but these should be few and anyway definitely agreed at the Group Council.

This does not mean that the Scouts may not occasionally wish to recall these songs (and a few others like them) at their own Camp Fires. May we also remind Akela of the songs about Christopher Robin? In the same way the Pack should be content with one or two simple rounds such as London's Burning, and White Sands and Grey Sands. Akela, in fact, must do nothing to take away the rapture and excitement that should be the boy's when he attends his first Scout Camp Fire.

Similarly, too, with yells. Many are not anyway suitable for Cubs who will be quite happy with three or four such as a Rocket, a Sneeze, a Train yell and Mosquito.

*The Pack does not need a large repertoire.*

The balance and content, too, of a Pack Camp Fire is quite different. It should essentially lead up to the high light of the Camp Fire which without exception should always be the telling of a story. And this be at once followed by prayers. The whole Camp Fire should not last much longer than half an hour and never more than forty minutes. Perhaps a programme might be constructed something like this: Chorus, action song, yell or round, camp fire game, chorus, acting or guessing game, chorus, chorus, story, prayers.

We feel sure that it is not necessary to add that all material including games and stories must be suited to the Cub age (never, for example, tell Cubs a ghost story). Akelas who have delicious memories of adult

Camp Fires at Gilwell or on other Wood Badge Courses must resist the temptation to use material which was never intended for little boys of nine and ten!

## CHAPTER XVII

### YOUR NOTE-BOOK

*In summer when the days are long,  
Perhaps you'll understand the song:  
In autumn when the leaves are brown  
Take pen and ink and write it down.*

LEWIS CARROLL (*Through the Looking Glass*).

"The horror of that moment," the King went on, "I shall never never forget." "You will, though," the Queen said, "if you don't make a memorandum of it."

And indeed you will! — and you'll have the horrors like poor old Ben Gunn when suddenly your mind goes blank and not a single song or yell can you think of.

But with a loose leaf note-book (the pages nicely headed) in your hip pocket, you are prepared for any Camp Fire eventuality. And all know how, having heard a grand chorus, a witty anecdote, a new yell, we have been confident that they would remain in our memories. And we know, too, how when some time after we have needed them, they were gone.

Making your collection, too, becomes an absorbing interest, it gives you confidence, it makes you more efficient. You will no doubt think out a series of headings most suitable to yourself. We suggest for those who have never yet kept their own Camp Fire Book:

Opening phrases and verses.

Rounds (sub-divided into 2-part, 3-part, 4-part).

Yells.

Solo-with-chorus songs.

Action Songs.

Traditional Scout Songs.

Shanties, Spirituals, Folk Songs.

Songs of other Nations.

Choruses from stage and music hail.

Stunts.

Yarns (in skeleton form with note of source).

Prayers.

(a) Some "shorthand" method of your own devising will help you to memorise a newly-heard tune (if, that is, you can't use musical notation).

(b) A note of the time each yarn takes is often helpful in planning your programme.

Lastly, perhaps, some of you may like to consider keeping, as we do, two separate note-books. In one we keep lists so that we need only a small size book easily portable. In the other, a bigger hook of the scrap-book type, we keep the full libretto and scores of the songs, etc., we want to remember. We advocate this full record because as a nation we half-know so many songs — perhaps only one verse and a chorus instead of the complete song. Think of some of the grand songs so many of us nearly know: Twanky-dillo, The Keeper, The Ash Grove. (We've heard even Clementine get into difficulties never dreamed of by the composer.)

So, two note-books?

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ALSO TO REMEMBER

*"You should have said," the Queen went on in a tone of grave reproof, "It's extremely kind of you to tell me all this."*

*LEWIS CARROLL (Through the Looking Glass).*

In this chapter we want to deal with a number of points, I and let us say at the outset that because we have crowded a number of points into one chapter in no sense does this mean that they are unimportant in themselves, but only that there is not enough to say about any of them to warrant a separate chapter. In fact, our first subject is one of the most important things of all, and that is the matter of:

#### *Guests*

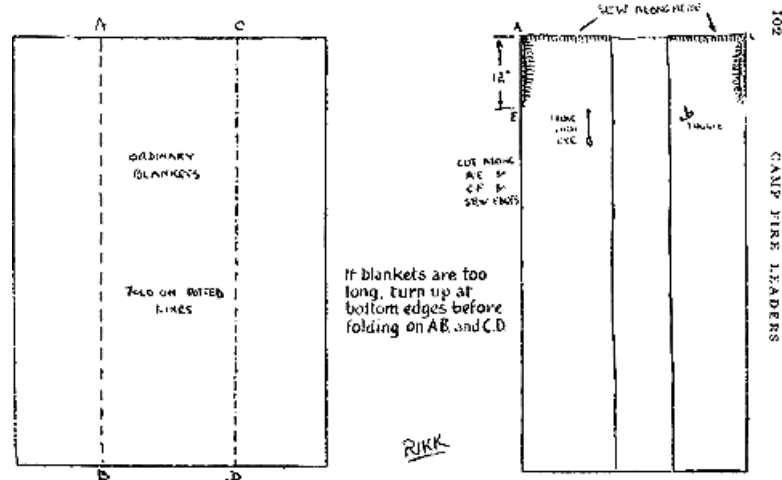
We are always faced in Scouting with the problem of doing a number of things privately and in secret; literally in secret because it was one of B-P.'s original ideas that many parts of Scouting would appeal to the boy's love of secret societies. That, on the one hand, is necessary, but on the other hand it is equally necessary to bring boys into contact with other people. We are trying to train Scouts to take their place in the world and must not let them be content only with a private world of their own. Here, at the Camp Fire, is one of the occasions when we can, should and, indeed, must invite other people to take part.

There are obvious groups of people to invite to our Camp Fires; other members of the Movement must rank high, Commissioners and other Troops who may be camping or meeting nearby. A combined Camp Fire of two or more Troops is a grand thing, but these are the obvious cases. What is not so obvious is the courtesy of inviting parents and the various committees. They will enjoy it immensely and, indeed, we shall enjoy having them. Also there are our hosts, the owner of the camp site, the farmer and his wife and family. Invite them along towards the end of the camp and if they have been particularly helpful here is the occasion to present the Thanks Badge. Don't wait until you get home and send it by the post, but give it to him in front of the Scouts. And don't forget the postman, the grocer, the butcher — and the Vicar.

Whilst your guests are there we must remember two things. When we have guests present at a Camp Fire it is, no time for the private joke or the private stunt, or the topical songs that mean a lot to the Troop but will mean nothing whatever to other people. We must construct our programme, bearing in mind that the visitors will not know much about us, but that they will know a great deal about many of the songs, perhaps more than we do. Try to choose items that will appeal to them and at the community level at which they can join. The Troop will, of course, have their yells and stunts, but it is the avoidance of the private joke that is so important when guests are present. It is rather like whispering in public, rude, discourteous and a thing to avoid.

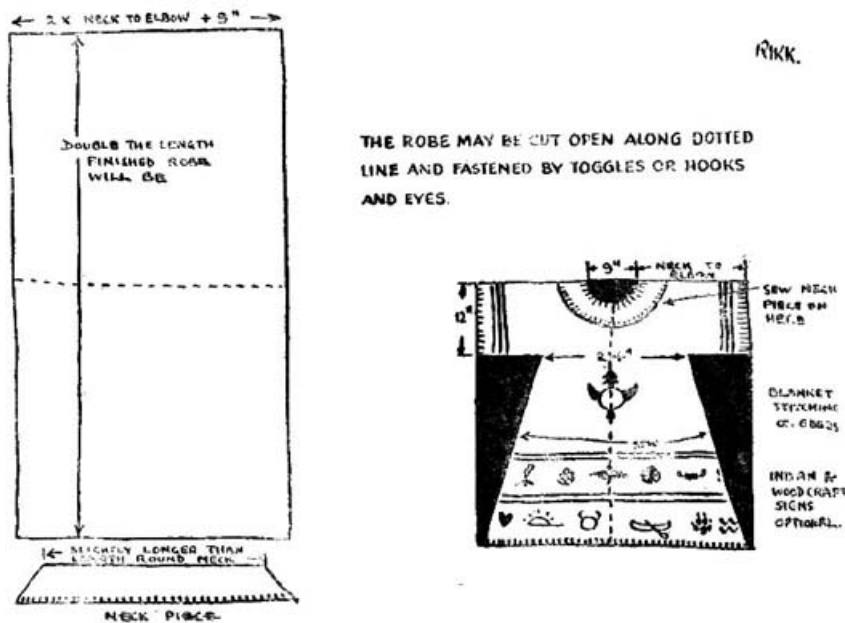
The other thing we can do with our guests is to use them. Take the case of the farmer who has just completed his harvest and perhaps the Troop has been helping. He is probably not a good speaker, but he will be none the worse for that. He might very well take the place of the yarn you were going to give. He need only speak for ten minutes, telling the Scouts of his life as a farmer, what he is trying to do and what he hopes to achieve, of his problems and the way in which the townsman can help. Or the owner who perhaps has a large estate might talk of the forests he is replanting. It would be interesting to learn of the precautions he takes to avoid having his trees damaged; to learn what he plants and how he plants and what he does with the wood. Or the sportsman; perhaps we have helped him to build a salmon pool or clear an awkward part of his trout stream. Let him talk to us at Camp Fire. It may be that the land owner is an observant countryman who can tell us things about our camp site that we did not know, things about the trees and flowers that grow there and the birds and animals that live there. The local man always has

special knowledge and at the Camp Fire we can so often ask him to give some of that special knowledge to us.



It is a good thing, too, of course, to end a Camp Fire of this sort with a mug of cocoa and a bun each. Already we have mentioned the need to provide good seating accommodation for the guests. They will not mind sitting on a log, but don't choose a particularly knobbly one, still less the one that contains beneath a thin veneer of bark an ants' nest or a hive of wood lice or a wasps' nest. A little thought in making sure your guests are going to be comfortable is no more than any host should offer on any occasion, and in our camp we, not just the Scouters, but all the Troop, are the hosts. Our behaviour and the treatment of our guests might make all the difference as to how those guests feel in regard to the Scout Movement. It may, indeed, determine whether or not they open their land to other camps or help the local Troop.

Guests are of great importance; make them welcome, make them feel at home and use their special knowledge for the benefit of your Scouts.



Now something quite different:

### Camp Fire Attire.

Thirty, or forty, or a hundred Scouts gathered round a camp fire look warm, but they will not be warm unless there is something to warm their backs as the fire warms their fronts. Obviously we cannot have two fires, which in some ways would be ideal — a central fire and a circular fire round the outside! — but we can encourage Scouts to have suitable attire.

Every Scout ought to have a Camp Fire blanket. We have

included suggestions for some but, if we can exhibit a preference, we think it would be for the one with a hood, a Camp Fire robe of blanket material, made by the Scout himself and adorned to show his history in Scouting. We are not very taken with the Camp Fire blanket decorated with dozens of miscellaneous badges, the First Class Badge, the Isle of Man County Badge, the Copenhagen Jamboree Badge and the East Riding of Yorkshire County Badge, (unless the wearer of the blanket has been to these places).

We have seen some very weird blankets containing Girl Guides Badges, badges from the Wembley Speedway, "Please do not touch" and things meaningless. A blanket treated with pride and decorated with the badges we have won is a visual history of which any boy should be proud, and the Scouter will do much here by setting an example himself. If the Scouter's own blanket shows his history in the Movement, no more and no less, then it is easy to lead his Scouts to do likewise.

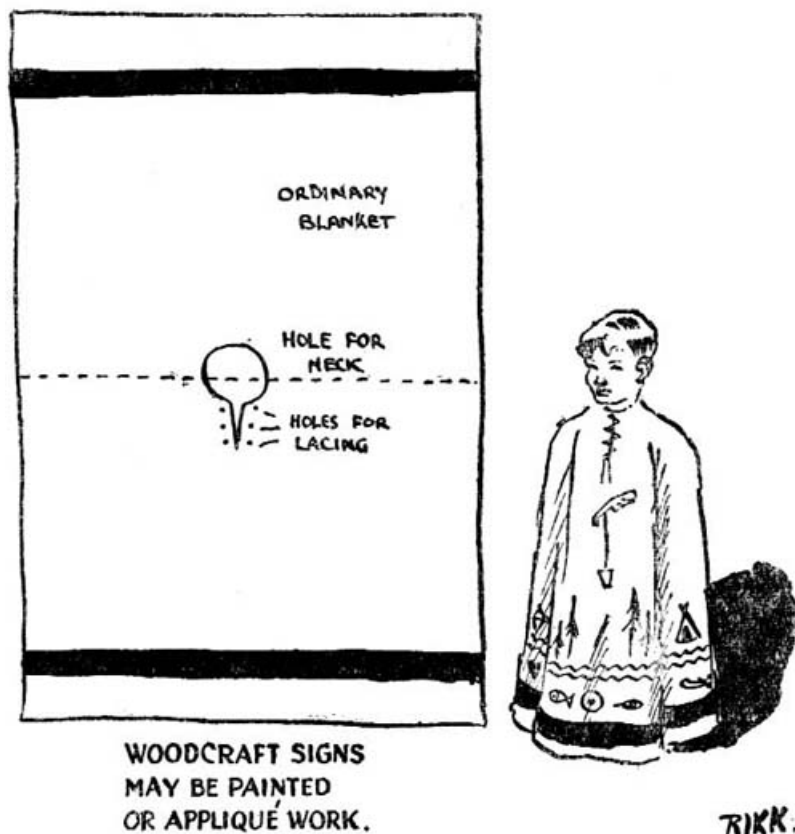
The Camp Fire blanket, apart from keeping us warm, and being picturesque, can really help the tradition of the Troop and can inspire the new boy to work and earn the right to have a blanket like the one the Troop Leader is proudly wearing.

One other point about Camp Fire attire. The Camp Fire blanket should be a separate article and not the one in which we go to bed. It may on a cold night be used as a separate extra covering as ours are often used, but it must not be the blanket you wrap around yourself because, even on a fine evening, there is moisture in the air, dew, mist and, who knows, a shower of rain. We can carry on our Camp Fire in light rain providing we have not to go to bed in the things we are wearing. This leads to another point. So often in the early evening there is a shower of rain and the Camp Fire circle becomes wet and the seats are damp. Are we going to slip into a tent, or are we going to put covers on the seats — ground sheets, tarpaulins, etc. — and sit in the open in what has become a fine evening?

Camp Fire attire leads us naturally to our next heading:

### *Fancy Dress and Disguises.*

Not too often but certainly once in a summer camp the order goes out in the morning, "All Scouts to come to Camp Fire disguised." It is no easy thing in camp to disguise yourself, but it can be done. We do not advocate such things as the Scout we remember who came beautifully disguised as a bramble bush only to find sitting had lost its charm, but fancy dress will bring out the ingenuity of your Scouts and sometimes a whole Patrol will come disguised. We well remember the Patrol who were dressed as an Indian Wedding; it was a good disguise and the free use of cocoa helped them tremendously.





1. Jacob's Staff
2. Sign of the Keen Eye
3. Sign of the Sharp Ear
4. Motif of geometrical design (Bronze Age)
5. Aquarius — Water Carrier
6. Pisces — Fishes
7. Aries — Ram
8. Taurus — Bull
9. Gemini — Twins
10. Cancer — Crab
11. Leo — Lion
12. Virgo — Virgin
13. Libra — Scales
14. Scorpio — Scorpion

15. Sagittarius — Archer
16. Capricornus — Goat
17. Same as above
18. Wearer has killed enemy and was first to attack
19. Wearer has killed enemy and was fourth to attack
20. Wearer has many wounds
21. Wearer has taken scalp
22. Sacred Bull from which letter "A" was derived
23. Lone Pine
24. Sign of Tom-tom Beater
25. Sign of the Fisher

(Nos. 5 to 16 are Signs of the Zodiac)

So to our next item:

### *The Impromptu.*

There is not much to say about this, except that we ought to leave room in our camp fire programme for the chap who suddenly says, "Sir, I have an idea!" A Scout who perhaps has shown no inclination to do anything at all suddenly is inspired by what the other Scouts have been doing and wants to have a shot himself. Out of a hidden corner of his memory he produces a song or a recitation and it is surprising how often this impromptu item proves the high spot of the programme. But not more than two such items in any evening is a sound rule.

Sometimes you will find the Camp Fire is not going well despite all your care and attention; the ideas seem to have dried up and you call on the Owls to give their stunt and back comes the answer, "Sorry, sir, nothing tonight." Yet, cannot we make the Owls do something? This is where the prepared Scouter will get up and tell a short story and, as he tells it, allot the parts to the members of the Owl Patrol. When he has finished they will act it. Whether they use words or dumb show matters not the least, they will have

done something and the black mark for the Patrol has been avoided through the thoughtfulness of the Scoutmaster.

Our next point is in some ways a peculiar one, but it needs mentioning:

*"To drink or not to drink."*

Earlier in this chapter we mentioned cocoa. We have seen so many Camp Fires wrecked by cocoa; wrecked in spirit and atmosphere. Let us give you a very positive "don't." Don't ever allow any form of cooking to take place on the camp fire. To do that debases the whole thing and all your efforts to build up a real impression of something of spiritual value will come to nought. Cook in the kitchen and do all your cooking there. There are occasions on a cold night when a hot drink of cocoa or soup half way through the Camp Fire will help a lot. A couple of Scouts will have prepared it away on the camp site and they should bring it in quietly (repeat, quietly!) at the appropriate moment. It is far better that all the mugs should have been assembled before Camp Fire started. There are few more distracting things than the dropping of mugs, and when thirty Scouts are holding mugs you can reckon that fifteen will be dropped sometime during the evening. If you have a hot drink during the Camp Fire don't try to carry on with the programme whilst they are drinking, but have a definite break and then clear away all the mugs and pots and pans and start up again. So we come to:

#### *Dances*

There are not really many dances which are suitable for Camp Fire, and let us be clear that we are talking about dances as one might talk about war dances, and not ballroom dances. What there are, are grand for a cold night. The Goat Dance must be familiar to many Scouters by now and there are others with simple movements that gradually bring in the whole Camp Fire. Such dances are a good activity and thoroughly enjoyable.

#### *Programmes*

To help a Camp Fire to get away to a good start, it is not a bad thing if, after the opening sentences have been spoken and the opening song has been sung, the Duty Patrol for the day presents to the Leader of the Camp Fire in, we suggest, as original a form as possible, the programme. It will, of course, contain only the items to be provided by the Patrols and individual members of the Troop. The Leader will have his own programme of combined operations.

We hope that you will encourage your Scouts to be really original in the way they present the programmes. The examples we give are ones we have experienced at various times, and all have been delightful in their own way:

The programme inscribed on the sooty back of a frying pan; the programme presented by a Scout in Town Crier's regalia; the programme in verse or song; the Tenderfoot led in, unrobed, and presented, back to the Scoutmaster, with the programme suitably inscribed on the skin of his back! The programme dropped from above. Naturally it was a Patrol that sports a totem of one of the birds. (A Scout concealed in a tree dropping eggs inscribed with the various items. We might add in passing that this Scout also dropped many of his personal belongings by mistake, which the Camp Fire Leader found a little confusing!) The programme that came from a hole at the Leader's feet. The programme inscribed minutely on a piece of birch bark, or gargantuanly on half a tree. All these and scores more have helped to establish a happy atmosphere right at the start and we think they have their place in the scheme of Camp Fires.

So we move on to a particular occasion at Summer Camp:

#### *The Prize Presentation*

Something we have always associated with the last Camp Fire of our Camp, when practically every Scout in the Troop, and preferably every one, is suitably rewarded for his efforts in camp. Where we have conferred degrees — B.Lat. (Eng.); M.Lat. (Edin.), and on one occasion which was unique in our



experience we were able to award a "Doctorate of Lats" to a Welsh genius. In fact it is a pleasant custom to confer degrees which can consist of medallions suitably carved or just made up for the occasion out of sliced mangel-wurzels, or illuminated addresses. We have even used addresses that were literally illuminated and burst into flames as they were presented.

Degrees and awards for all kinds of services to the Troop well performed! It might even be that the Troop will wish to present the Scoutmaster with some degree, and what pleasant memories they recall when we come across them in the darker days of winter.

There may, too, have been sports, swimming or athletics, of one form or another in camp. Well, the Camp Fire is the obvious place to have the prizes handed out. The more pomp and ceremony we bring into it, the more likely is it to go into that reticule of memories.

We ought to emphasise that we are not advocating a rag. This kind of thing is really *only effective if done seriously*. It is, in fact, really "serious good fun" and not a piece of stupid nonsense. If you doubt the value of it, will you just take our word for it that it is appreciated, and that these are the kind of things talked about when we meet with our Old Scouts.

We don't ask you to copy what we have done—in fact we hope you won't — but we do ask you to think along the lines we have suggested and see if you cannot establish in your own Troop traditions as valuable as we have proved ours to have been over the years.

And so finally to:

#### *Sundays and Holy Days*

We have no objection in principle in camp to Sunday evening Camp Fires, indeed, they can become a gracious ending to the day. The programme, simple and informal, should consist of suitable songs, that is, melodious, mellow, traditional songs, not raucous, comic or boisterous, and a quiet, thought-provoking yarn. There should be no stunts and sketches or yells; this is the time for peace and contentment and quiet, happy singing in the firelight. The yarn on such occasions offers a wonderful opportunity which the wise Scoutmaster will grasp with a grateful heart.

There remains Good Friday. Here we are faced with a conflict between our personal beliefs in right conduct on that day, and the reality with which, in this decade of the twentieth century, we are faced. Hundreds of Scouts will normally be in camp on Good Friday, especially if Eastertide falls late and the weather promises well. In the circumstance, we suggest that these Scouts might be worse employed than in sitting quietly together as friends in the glow of the evening Camp Fire. The yarn will be a tale of heroism — "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend"; there is no reason why the boys should not be reminded of what the day is called and what it is. A few songs — "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" come at once to mind — a few hymns, a quiet yarn or even two, and so to prayers, and sleep.

*And the culminating pleasure  
That we treasure beyond measure  
Is the gratifying feeling  
That our duty has been done.*

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN (*The Gondoliers*).

*"In that case," said the Dodo solemnly,  
rising to its feet, "I move that the meeting adjourns,  
for the immediate adoption of  
more energetic remedies."*

LEWIS CARROLL (*Alice in Wonderland*).

## APPENDIX I

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Scout Song Book (Boy Scouts Association, 2/6d.).
- The Scottish Students' Song Book (Bailey and Ferguson).
- The New Fellowship Song Book: ed. Walford Davies (Novello & Co., 3/6d.).
- Collected Folk Songs, arr. Cecil Sharp: Vol. 1 & Vol. 2. (Novello & Co., each 3/-).
- Pulling and Capstan Chanteys (Novello & Co., voice parts only 4d. each).
- A Camping Song and A Walking Song by Matheson and Gallatly (Weekes & Co., 3d. each).
- Standard Rounds and Catches (Weekes & Co., 6d.).
- Seven Seas Shanty Book (Boosey & Hawkes, 7/6d.).
- The New National Song Book (Boosey & Hawkes, 3/9d.).
- The Club Song Book for Boys (Boosey & Hawkes, 3/9d.).
- Twice 55 Community Songs (Boosey & Hawkes, 1/3d.).
- Twice 44 Sociable Songs (Boosey & Hawkes, 1/3d.).
- Twice 33 Carols (Boosey & Hawkes, 3/9d.).
- The Hackney Scout Song Book (1/6d.).
- The Norfolk Scout Song Book (1/3d.).

## APPENDIX II

### SOME NOTES ON THE BURNING PROPERTIES OF WOODS

- ALDER. — NOT good except when very well seasoned. Hard to chop or split.
- ASH. — The best wood of all. Easy to split. Burns well green or seasoned. Pleasant smell.
- BEECH. — Nearly, but not quite as good as Ash. Burns best seasoned. Easy to split.
- BIRCH. — Burns brightly but rather quickly. Very easy to split.
- CHERRY. — Burns brightly. Gives fierce heat. Best when seasoned. Pleasant smell. Easy to split.
- CEDAR. — BURNS well with good flame and heat. Easy to chop. Gives pleasant smell, but spits.
- ELM. — Several varieties. Burns well on good fire when well seasoned. Very poor when green, giving acrid smoke.
- ELDER. — Burns quickly and unpleasantly. Little heat and very acrid smell.
- FIRS. — All burn brightly, but spit quite long distances. Very easy to split.
- FRUIT TREES. — Nearly all very sweet smelling, but difficult to split.
- HAZEL. — A very satisfactory wood. Burns steadily. Easy to split.
- HAWTHORNE. — Difficult to handle, but burns very well when mixed with quicker firing woods.
- HORNBEAM. — A sound, reliable, slow-burning wood. Very hard on the axe. Gives great heat.
- HORSE CHESTNUT. — MORE or less useless. Won't burn in less than furnace heat.
- HOLM OAK. — Very hard to work and difficult to burn.
- HOLLY. — Burns very well — green or seasoned. Easy to split and pleasant smell.
- LIME. — Not much use except with other Woods. Little flame. Hard to light.
- LARCH. — Burns very quickly, but spits very avidly.
- MAPLE. — A reliable solid wood. Hard to split.
- OAK. — Too valuable for Camp Fire, and too slow burning. Smoulders except when mixed. Hard to work.
- POPLAR. — SPLITS easily, burns poorly and smells terribly.
- SWEET CHESTNUT — Not much use for fires.
- SYCAMORE. Can be mixed, but no good alone. Easy to work.
- SPRUCE. — Burns quickly, but spits a bit.
- WILLOW. — Burn very moderately when well seasoned Easy to split.
- YEW. — Excellent if you want the fire to last the whole camp! Very hard on the axe.

