Best of the Best

by Ian Mitchell

Well, it's that time of year again – when we try to pass on a few of the tried and true activities that can be used during summer camp. I have found some activities that will satisfy a number of different conditions you may encounter: rainy day activity, individual field activity or quiet challenge.

Rainy Day Activity

Burnt Match Craft – With quite a lot of patience it is possible to develop beautiful wall decorations from a large number of spent wooden matches. Here is a sample of a spectacular cross and star design. This type of craft was popular a few years back. It is easy to complete because any design can be used and will look good. As a bonus all you need for this craft is clear-drying glue, a lot of matches and some heavy paper or cardboard.

What to do: Begin by preparing the matches. This can be done by the Scouts themselves lighting and blowing out each match although you will need to keep a very close watch on them. Cut a piece of card stock or cardboard 30 cm wide and 42 cm long. With a pencil, mark the starting point 16 cm from the top and 15 cm from the side. With the burnt ends in, begin with an "X" design glued on the start point made with the pencil. Now, with burnt end in, glue a match to the point of each angle formed by the first four matches. From here it is a matter of gluing down matches, burnt end in, along the arms of the cross formed, following the angles of the first four matches. The result is a central star pattern.

From here, glue down a vertical row of matches, burnt end in, following the angle at the top of the star. Then, three rows follow the angle at the bottom of the star. To complete, glue down a single row of matches following the angles on the sides (burnt end in of course).

Remember, this is but one suggestion for the pattern used. Let Scouts try others if they wish. Send us pictures of the finished products.

Individual Field Activity

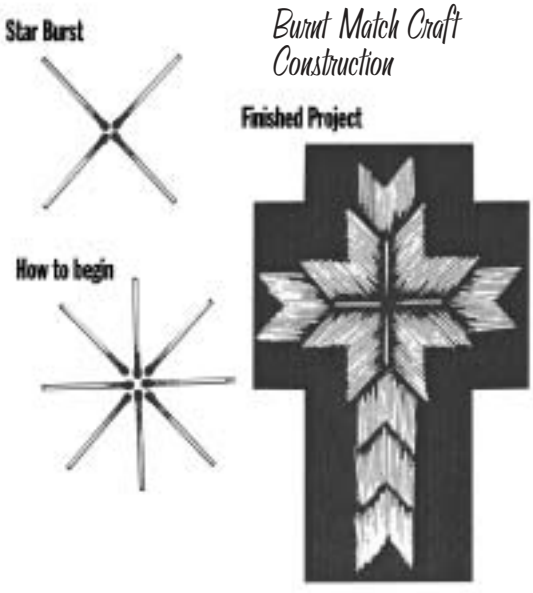
What you need:

- ☐ graph paper
- ☐ corrugated cardboard
- ☐ quick-drying household glue
- ☐ duct tape
- ☐ a length of fishing line or fine string
- ☐ one 6 inch nail
- ☐ a discarded thread spool
- ☐ four foot garden cane
- ☐ exacto knife and material to cut on
- ☐ straight-edge

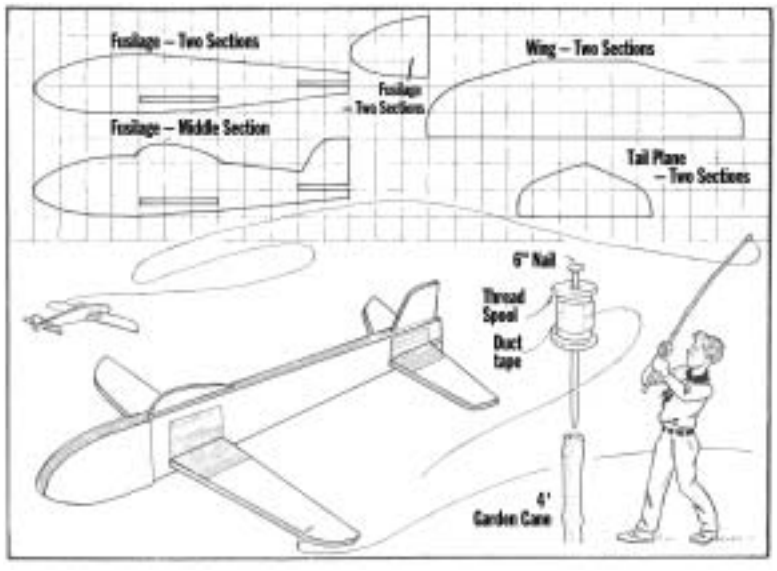
What to do: Draw enlarged copies of the plane sections on graph paper and transfer the outlines to corrugated cardboard. Where several sections are to be glued together (for instance, to make the fuselage), it will greatly increase the strength of the unit if the corrugations run in different directions, some along the length of the section, some at right-angles, others diagonally. Do make sure that tabletops or benches are adequately protected by your cutting material before you begin using your exacto knife to cut out the sections.

For the wing and tailplane you will need two thicknesses of cardboard

Rainy Day Activity



Individual Field Activity



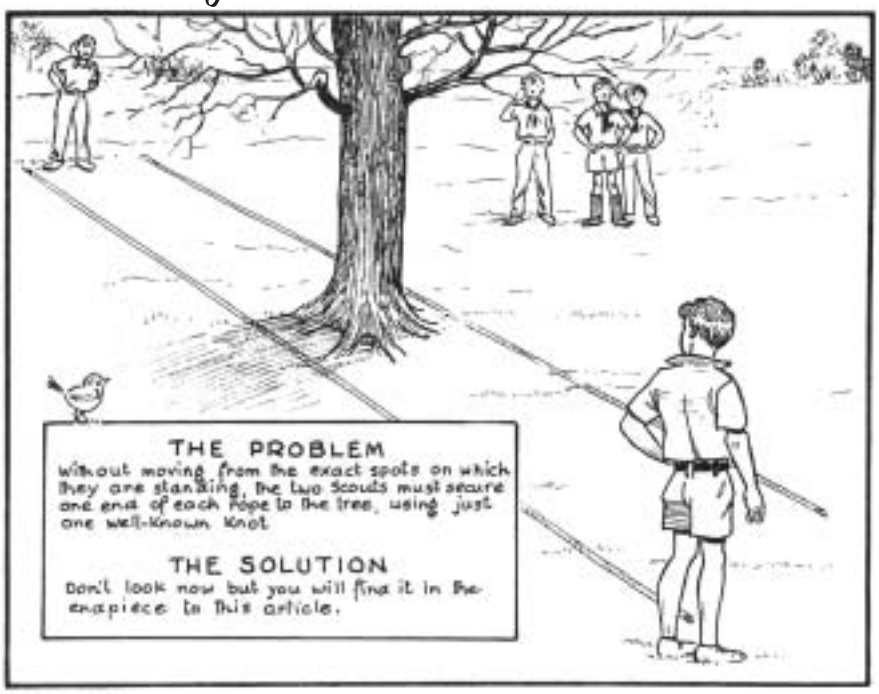
glued together. The fuselage will consist of four thicknesses. Notice on the diagram that the middle two thicknesses incorporate the canopy and tail-fin and that the cone section has been reinforced with an extra thickness at each side.

The most difficult task will be to cut slots in the fuselage to take the wing and tailplane. This is best done one thickness of cardboard at a time, before all four are glued together, and it need hardly be said that the slots must correspond exactly so that the wing and tailplane fit firmly into the slots and are in perfect balance. All joints at right-angles should be strongly reinforced by several thickness of duct tape, since unscheduled crash landings are bound to occur before you become expert in controlling this flying object and the jointed sections will be the first to suffer.

The control rod consists of a garden cane with an empty thread spool turning freely on a six inch nail inserted in the thicker end. You will find it a good idea to make the point of the nail red-hot over a gas flame (protective gloves are recommended!) so that it *burns* its way tightly into the cane without splitting the end. The free end of a 12 foot length of fishing line or thin string is then tied and taped to the cotton reel, and the other end tied to the left hand wing-tip about an inch or so from the leading edge. I'm told that a coat of clear varnish will not only give your "flying object" a smart appearance, but will also help to protect it from possible damage.

When the plane is ready for take-off, lay it on the ground in the direction of line of flight and launch it with a whip-like flick of the cane so that it becomes airborne *at speed*. Keep it flying in circles at a good height from the ground. The cotton reel will turn on the nail and prevent the line from wrapping itself around the can, which is always a nuisance. Spectators should be kept out of the flying zone and the navigator should practise bringing his aircraft to a smooth, three-point landing before attempting any aerobatics.

Quiet Challenge



Here is an activity that can be done outside, or inside if you have enough room. It can also make a great Patrol challenge.

The Problem - Without moving from the exact spots indicated in the diagram, the two Scouts must secure one end of each rope to the tree or post, using just one well-known knot.

The Answer – As if you didn't know, the well-known knot is the fisherman's. The Scouts each make a single overhand knot around the rope on their left with the end of the rope on their right. They then draw the two slip knots together in unison so that they both lock round the tree at the same time.

Have a go at these at your next camp, and enjoy your summer.

– Ian Mitchell is always up for a challenge as Director of Scouts, Venturers and Rovers.