



IDEAS FOR ROVER SCOUTS

By
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Editor's Note:

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

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CONTENTS

	<i>Pages</i>
PREFACE	4
I. THE ROVER SCOUT SPIRIT	5
II. THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF ROVER SCOUTING	6
III. THE CREW AND ITS FRAMEWORK. .	8
IV. THE ROVER LEADER	10
V. THE ROVER MATE	11
VI. CREW JOBS	12
VII. CREW ROUTINE	14
VIII. DENS AND DEN DECORATION	15
IX. NAMES FOR CREWS	16
X. ROVER – RANGER CO – OPERATION ..	17
XI. THE ROVER SQUIRE	19
xii. THE SPONSOR'S DUTY	23
XIII. THE VIGIL	25
XIV. THE PRESENTATION FOR INVESTITURE ..	26
XV. THE LIFE OF THE CREW	30
XVI. APPROACH TO QUESTING	45
XVII. THE PERSONAL QUEST	46
XVIII. THE CREW QUEST	53
XIX. THE DISTRICT QUEST	57
XX. THE SPIRIT OF ROVER SCOUTING ..	63

PREFACE

This book tries to tell, simply, a tale of Rover Scouting – the work of the senior branch of the Scout Movement, and it is concerned mainly with youths and young men between the ages of 17½ and 23.

It is not intended to replace such excellent books as Gilcraft's *Rover Scouts*, or other works on Rover Scouting, but tries to interpret Rover Scouting from the viewpoint of an individual Rover Scout between the ages of 17½ and 23 who tries to live up to the magnificent way of life opened up by the late Chief Scout, Lord Robert Baden – Powell, in *Scouting for Boys* and *Rovering to Success*.

If it has a unique feature then it may be the lack of theoretical ideas on Rover Scouting – everything suggested or described here has been done by ordinary Rover Scouts between the ages of 17½ and 23 in ordinary Rover Crews. Thus it is meant deliberately to be practical and to be a help to Rover Scouts and Rover Crews anywhere. If this book helps anyone along the trail of *Rovering to Success* it will have served its purpose.

You will not find practical Scout work in it that has already been admirably dealt with by others – signalling, First Aid practice, backwoodsmanship, pioneering, knotting, and so on. But they come into practical Rover Scouting, of course.

You will find a tale of plain, honest, straightforward Rover Scouting told with two main thoughts in mind: –

First of all, that Rover Scouting has ideals and a fundamental structure based on the Spiritual basis of Scouting, the Scout Law and Promise and the Scout Spirit.

Secondly, that Rover Scouting must be essentially practical in its Scout training so that Rover Scouts shall be efficient *Scouts*.

Pressure of space has prevented me from dealing with all the aspects of Rover Scouting I should have liked to tackle in this book. In a later volume, I hope, therefore, to deal with Rover Scouting and National Service; Rover Scouting and the B. – P. Guild of Old Scouts; The Wider Field of International Understanding as it affects the Individual Rover Scout, Rover Crew and Rover District; District Rover Organisation; County Rover Organisation; City Rover Organisation and Wide Games for Rover Scouts.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE ROVER SCOUT SPIRIT

No Scouting can be called Good Scouting unless it is imbued with that mysterious something which in the Scout Movement we call the Scout Spirit. For the very reason that it is indefinable it is no easy task to write about this Scout Spirit. But experience shows that Rover Scouting must be just as full of the ideal of the Scout Spirit as any other branch of Scouting. Scouting in the Crew, like that in the troop and the Pack, depends on team work for its ultimate success. From this point some thoughts on the Rover Scout Spirit may be elaborated.

Successful team work demands unselfishness on the part of every member of the team. In a Rover Crew, composed as it is of individuals with highly differing trends and inclinations, ideas and viewpoints, a sense of give and take, and an unselfish attitude is needed. It is this realisation and practice of “give and take” by members of a Crew that leads to the development of Crew camaraderie; a curious carefree feeling in the air, a song in the heart and a zest for Rovering soon tell the tale of the Scout Spirit to the old hand.

Some call the Scout Spirit nothing more than Enthusiasm. But a Rover Scout can be enthusiastic about getting things done without having the Scout Spirit in his heart. In fact enthusiasm needs to be tempered again with that elusive sense of give and take, from which point it is easy to approach a true appreciation of the Scout Spirit.

Enthusiasm often gets a nasty jolt or two. In Scouting we have to be prepared for minor disappointments from time to time and they may upset the young Rover. But in reality these disappointments are hurdles on the track meant to be cleared in fine style. Probably there are more disappointments to be had in the Rover Section than in any other branch of Scouting. This is undoubtedly due to the uncertainty of youth between 17 and 21: every young Rover is an adolescent, subject to all the problems of the teenage years. Scouters know the feelings of despair that come after a poor troop or pack meeting, and he or she knows that these little setbacks are often the result of simple human errors. So often the fault, to adapt our Shakespeare, lies not in Scouting but in ourselves that we are dull. A determination to get the most out of what Scouting has to offer us sooner or later brings us to the viewpoint that if we are to get anything of value out of Scouting it depends on exactly how much we are prepared to put into it.

Determination . . . the Founder, so typically and so admirably, had a better word, “stickability” – is a prime virtue for Rover Scouts. It is the Crew which has weathered the storms as well as the good sailing weather which gets the most out of Rover Scouting.

If other qualities are looked for in this approach of the Rover Scout to his Rover Scouting then courage and a sense of humour may well be in the forefront. He can accomplish a great deal with these. Courage is required to face up to the “kicks” – a Rover Scout who lets his Crew down; a squire who fails dismally to stay the pace; armchair critics who sit back with a pipe and a pleasant fire and find it easy to condemn the energetic efforts of other brother Rovers. Any Rover Leader could recall similar instances. It needs some courage to stick it at times – probably that’s why Good Scouting does grip. It requires effort to achieve Good Scouting and, when we have it, the memory of the effort required and made will make us hold dear to our Scouting.

A sense of humour can relieve the awkward situation. It can help to breed in no uncertain sense the Scout Spirit. A little harmless legpulling can do more good with some Rover Scouts than a month’s meticulous solemn probing into character analysis. Scouting is a supremely happy and cheerful way of life. Scouting is never dull or dismal. If you enjoy something, you get a thrill from it. A young chap should not remain a Rover Scout, or indeed a Scout at all, if he does not get a thrill out of Scouting.

Moreover, a happy Rover Scout has the knack of spreading his happiness round and about him. One cheery Rover Scout with the Scout Spirit in his heart can spread joy to dozens of others. A disgruntled Rover Scout can damp the ardour of dozens in the same way. So if you want to know something about Rover Scouting in Practice you must place a realisation of the Scout Spirit as the first essential for any Rover Scout.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF ROVER SCOUTING

“Nothing very much matters save the great Spirit of Strength which supports the world and Love which guides and directs it. I mean God, our Wonderful, all – pervading Scout Friend. He is with Scouting and Scouting comes from Him. Scouts then have nothing to fear. Service, Sacrifice and Victory is theirs, and all is well with them now and for ever.”

Roland Philipps (from France, 1916)

ROLAND PHILIPPS knew the vital factor that makes Scouting a means of finding the way of Life – the appreciation and understanding of the spiritual basis of Scouting.

Rover Scouting asks that a Rover Scout shall think all this out for himself until he has arrived at the point where he is completely sure of his ground, when he can see the extent of the demands that will be made on him as a Rover Scout, because of this spiritual implication.

The Rover Scout realises for himself that the Scout Law and the Scout Promise are more than a Creed held up as an example for him to follow. They are an example – the Glorious Example. When our Founder, Lord Baden-Powell, gave us the Scout Promise he did not lightly place duty to God as a Scout’s first duty. He conceived the Scout way as a way to Peace, for Scouting knows no ties of denomination, caste, race, colour or prejudice. We are all brothers, of one blood, and with one Father.

The Rover Scout comes to realise this from a man’s point of view. He keeps his duty to God constantly before him – he tries to develop within his own life such Christ-like qualities as Faith, Truth, Courage, Cheerfulness, Unselfishness, Cleanliness, the Readiness to do a Good Turn at any and all times, and all that is meant by Brotherhood among men. These qualities are not necessarily learned or even absorbed from others. They come naturally to the true Scout, who appreciates the basis of the way of life he is following.

The keen Rover radiates the Scout Spirit round and about him. By his personal example he sets such a standard of Christian manhood that even the casual observer will realise that there is something deeply spiritual about the Ideals of Scouting.

The late Roland Philipps wrote of the Spirit of Scouting in this vein ...

“Unless the boys have the Love of God in their hearts – and without that no true Service can be done for one’s fellows – I know of no way in which Scouting can grip a boy after he is seventeen or eighteen. If, however, Scouting means to a boy, not swimming, or boxing, or signalling, or camping, but the grandest of all ways of living in order to serve one’s country, then the Scout Spirit carries him right away through life, and no change of age or profession or locality, can ever drive it away.”

A realisation of the ideals of Rover Scouting will not necessarily bring a Rover to the conclusion that he must go and run troops and packs in the East End, as Roland Philipps did. That is only one branch of the work that is being done by Rover Scouts who have felt and understood and known the call to serve others. There are many more quests of Service.

No Rover Scout is invested until he has had the serious talk with himself that we call The

Vigil. He makes sure of his principles, chats with his Rover Leader about Duty to God and the Scout Law and he will see the vision of Rover Scouting painted for him.

There is inspiration for all of us in the relationship of Our Lord and His Twelve Disciples. We can think of them as the very first Rover Crew – a typical Rover Crew, full of all kinds of men.

Think of Christ as the Perfect Scout. Carlos had it when he painted “The Pathfinder.” For Christ *was* The Pathfinder. He showed us the Way. He was The Example.

We Rover Scouts have to realise the form of this for ourselves. If we do not realise the spiritual force of Rover Scouting we have not the slightest right to call ourselves either Rover Scouts or Scouts.

While the Squire may be influenced by his Rover Leader or sponsor(s) it is he himself who decides on what lines he is going to develop his Rover Scouting.

He seeks to develop and broaden his own spiritual life and to understand something of the Spirit of God. He attends his own Church regularly and has no difficulties when it comes to week-end camping. As far as any Church duties he may have allows him he camps at week-ends, taking Holy Communion and attending Divine Service at some church near his site. It is not dignified to wrangle with the clergy over “the choir!” Rather the clergy are firm friends of the Crew, are conceivably in the Crew and take part in its activities. It is a good thing for Rover Scouting when the Crew Chaplain (if you have one) can go on hike or camp with the Crew and have the time of his life.

The Rover Scout knows too that the Scout’s Own and the Rover’s Own are fine experiences in Scouting, but these simple, undenominational and usually outdoor services for those within Scouting do not replace the practice of regular Church worship. They are a most useful supplement to a Rover Scout’s spiritual life, for they show him how Rover Scouts of all creeds and denominations can worship together on a common basis in a Cathedral of their own choice.

The common basis is the fact that all Rovers have taken the same Promise and undertook to try and keep the same Ten Points of the Scout Law.

We are always trying to live up to that Law and Promise, and we fail on many occasions, but the harder we try the more we gain in the way of character development.

One really great object in Scouting is the fact that it seeks to develop character within the individual. A Rover Scout’s Way of Life as a Scout is anchored firmly to an Ideal based on God, and a firm faith. The Rover Scout knows the value of Prayer at all times in his daily life. “Prayer,” said Sir Oliver Lodge, “is the Great Engine of Achievement.” If the Rover Scout considers what has been accomplished by prayer, he will give it up after half-an-hour and marvel at what a spiritual faith can do.

We have to count among Scouting’s major achievements the fact that we have brought men of all creeds, religions and conditions of life to live together in camp on a common footing, sharing the simple things of life. Every World Jamboree, every World Rover Moot, is in itself a living testimony to the Glory of God.

Scouting has accomplished what skilled diplomacy and statecraft have failed to do, and that is to bring peace and harmony and concord and happiness to men of different nations. It has done so because it has placed duty to God in the forefront of the demands it makes upon those who would be Scouts. What an accomplishment! It is an honour to be a Rover Scout, but again, a responsibility.

The Rover Scout, as a member of the senior branch of the Scout Movement, keeps his Scout Law and Promise, always to the best of his ability, from the point of view of a man and an adult. There is no need for sentimentality, or sloppiness, but we need as many Christian men of good

faith, good cheer and wide outlook as we can get in the world. Rover Scouting can supply steadily increasing numbers of such men. With this thought in mind we can pray that God will give us strength of mind, strength of purpose and strength of character so carry out our Scout Promise, as Rover Scouts, at all times.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CREW AND ITS FRAMEWORK

A SIMPLE framework in the Crew will help to develop camaraderie and the wise Rover Leader will see that every Rover as far as possible has a job, and what is more essential, is doing that job properly in his Crew.

Let us have a look at the problem of Crew jobs as it affects both the brand-new Crew and the established Crew.

Two characteristics are often seen in these Crews. The brand-new Crew is full of stark, blatant enthusiasm, with a capital E, while the established Crew tends on occasion to develop a blasé attitude. A good spring-cleaning, a good look at ourselves as we are and not as we like to think we are, is worth time and trouble.

What is the essential framework of a Rover Crew?

The “average” Rover Crew, if anyone has ever met such an elusive body, consists of about a dozen young men of ages ranging from 17½ to 23 or thereabouts. Many Rover Crews have the good fortune to have a Rover Scout Leader. Many have not but get on, or struggle along, as best they can without one.

The relations between those dozen odd fellows will make or mar their fellowship as a Crew. The framework of this Crew is therefore pliable and elastic to meet the requirements of those dozen or more, or less, fellows, whose idiosyncracies, characters and personalities may be in bewildering variety. At the same time, some simple plan is necessary. The simpler the better.

You want a Rover Scout Leader, and after a while when you know your fellows, an elected Rover Mate. After a bit Crew jobs come along naturally, and you will find the man for the job required because you know your own fellows intimately.

Do not lay great stress on a set framework in the Crew. So long as you have your Rovers, an elected Rover Mate and (sooner or later) a Rover Leader, then your Crew has all the essentials for good Rover Scouting.

But the Rover Crew wants a home and the first duty of a brand-new Crew is to get its own den. No Crew can do real Rover Scouting without a home of its own.

The advantage of getting a den immediately lies in the fact that the Crew can grow up in it. So Crew tradition is developed, and the den comes to mean something to every member of the Crew. Originality in the choice of dens is already a marked feature of Rover Crews. Long may it continue!

THE SMALLER THE DEN THE BETTER.

Lack of space makes for cosiness granted, but it more aptly reminds Rovers (perhaps uncomfortably on the raw evening) that most of their Rover Scouting time as Rover Scouts should be spent *outside* that den. For has the Founder not told us that Rover Scouting is a brotherhood of the open air? He never intended that Rover Scouts should spend all their time in their den, however cosy it might be.

No great “capital” is required to start a Rover Crew, and in most cases it will lead on naturally from the Senior Scout troop. The brand-new Crew starts with a few young men getting together, who for one reason or another may already meet each other a great deal,

and deciding to form a Crew. Thus does the Crew expand, with its own den and Rover Scout Leader and Rover Mate, gradually gaining and losing members as the years roll on. Most Crews, of course, are the senior section of a Scout Group and recruit their members regularly through the Senior Scout troop.

The test of a good Crew lies in its ability to gain members, and lose them even. If two years from now your Crew has exactly the same personnel as it has to-day, then something is wrong. Our greatest assets in Rover Scouting are the young squires of 17 or 18 who come to us as fine raw material from the troop, eager for the new experience of Rover Scouting. There may be a constant stream of them passing into the Crew – even if the stream is but one or two a year.

Some Crews seem to manage with the same old faces year in and year out. While they may be enjoying it themselves, and getting a good deal out of it personally in the way of fellowship and even Scout training, *the measure of success and efficiency in a Rover Crew lies in the number of trained Rover Scouts it produces regularly from Rover Squires.*

The elastic nature of Rover Scouting, moulded as it was by the Founder to suit individuality and tricks of personality, makes it comparatively easy for a Rover Crew to slide into a static state. Then it *is* easy to keep the old gang together through the years . . . 21, 22, 23, 24, 25! How we grow up! An old-type Crew with an average age of 25 finds it hard tack to get its Rover Squires when it does consider the problem of new blood within its ranks.

This “static” state is a thing to be avoided like poison by every Crew in its framework – it usually develops with constant indoor meetings, a perennial social club atmosphere and a disinclination to take part in the more strenuous outdoor side of Rover Scouting. After a time some members of the Crew may wonder why attendances droop, why fellows just don’t come along, why it lacks enthusiasm? Good Rovering depends on personal effort entirely. In the strength of effort you sink or swim as a Rover Scout.

So let’s have a simple framework within the Crew . . .

Leadership through the Rover Scout Leader and the Rover Mate.

Crew jobs.

Planned Programmes.

Complete Avoidance of anything “Static.”

Appreciation of the Other Fellow and the Other Fellow’s Point of View.

A genuine desire on the part of every one in the Crew to see something for his Rover Scouting; to play a full part in the spiritual and idealistic aims of Rover Scouting, and a strong self-determination on the part of every Rover to become a trained Rover Scout, and useful citizen.

The Crew meets regularly in a den of its own, erected (possibly) and maintained by the sweat of the Crew’s own brow.

With these thoughts in mind we can get down to the job of interpreting Rover Scouting in Practice.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROVER LEADER

THE hardest man to find in Rover Scouting – the one who has every justification for getting discouraged the quickest – the man we love and respect—the man we don’t always appreciate as much as we ought – in short, brother Rovers, it’s just about time we banged hats on our thumbsticks and threw them high for the Rover Leader!

This code of questions was once asked of Rovers . . .

Are you completely loyal to your Rover Scout Leader?

Do you back him up through thick or thin?

Do you make him work like fury for your sakes?

What do you do when everyone else is criticising him because things have gone wrong?

If everyone else seems to find something wrong with him or with the way he does things – well, why not recollect that he is a good Rugger referee, that he spends much time with his family or that he sang a perfectly good *basso profundo* solo in the choir last Sunday because no one else would. Scouting is a voluntary youth movement. We just can’t choose our own material – we have to mould and develop and use what we’ve got. Sometimes we do not make the best use of what material we have got.

The “average” Rover Scout Leader is putting in a lot of work for the sake of a few exuberant and sometimes ungrateful young men. Have a care in the gay moments of Scouting ecstasy and do not criticise your Rover Leader too hastily. Instead do all you can to help him.

The first thing a Rover Scout Leader needs is undoubted loyalty on the part of his Crew. Loyalty of a sterling and reliable type is the finest tonic for any Rover Scout Leader.

The Rover Scout Leader’s position as leader of a Crew must be unchallenged as such because the Crew *choose* him as their leader. Every Rover Crew needs a leader – those without a warranted Rover Scout Leader develop a natural leader just as a patrol of Scouts do in the troop.

A Rover Scout Leader is a leader with an unchallenged position in the Crew. He’s older than anyone else in the Crew – perhaps 10, 15 or 20 years. He is a friend of every Rover and Rover Squire in the Crew and treats them all alike – on equal terms and an equal manly footing.

But he does make a special friend of his Rover Mate because between them they have got the Crew leadership to think about, and there are sometimes so many problems in the Rover Crew that it warrants frequent meetings of the Rover Scout Leader and Rover Mate.

At Crew Meetings the Rover Scout Leader rarely assumes any dogmatic tone nor is he heard greatly when argument is in the air. But you might get a considered remark or a witty wisecrack from behind a cloud of tobacco smoke, which prove the worth of having an experienced (in the Life sense) and older man in the Crew.

If he is not already one before he gets his warrant, a Rover Scout Leader quickly becomes a keen and shrewd judge of character. His is no easy task, for every Rover in the Crew presents an individual and personal problem to the Rover Scout Leader.

So the Rover Scout Leader, with his breadth of wisdom and greater experience of the world, studies his Rovers. He knows them intimately because he lives with them in camp and goes on hikes with them; he sees them at home and understands their home life (always a clue to character study). He is intensely interested in their everyday life and their job. He also meets their girls frequently, goes to church regularly himself and sets an example of how a Rover should set about his job of Rover Scouting.

When a Rover Scout Leader knows and understands his fellows he gains their confidence. No Rover Scout Leader is worth his salt if his Rover Crew do not admire and respect him, and in their own minds seek to be something like him. In fact, the Rover Scout Leader by his example and practice largely determines what sort of a Rover Crew he is going to have.

A good Rover Scout Leader too does not always get the Crew he deserves. But determination to get the best out of his Rovers and the setting of a high personal example will help greatly towards having a good Crew.

Because a Crew is a band of individualists the study of the young men within the Crew becomes a fascinating interest to every Rover Scout Leader. He may keep a personal data notebook about his Rovers in which he jots down all sorts of personal details about his Rovers that come to him at all sorts of times. In camp, on hike, in the den, or in other ways the Rover Scout Leader finds some new angles on the character of his Rovers. In that notebook go jottings about good turns, hikes, Christmas toy schemes, breakfasts for aged people or orphan children on Christmas morning, countless Crew meetings, service jobs within the framework of the church. It is a mine of valuable detail. Nor does the Rover Scout Leader forget to invite his Rovers round to his own home, when over some coffee and a pipe, and casual conversation about books and sport and music and television he may often learn some entirely unexpected new angle on a Rover's character.

When a Rover Scout Leader knows his Crew he can help them and give them the material in their Crew programmes that they want. But it is not his job to do the physical *work* of running the Crew. He takes a Rover Wood Badge Course at Gilwell or elsewhere. He also mixes as much as he can with other Rovers, and other Rover Scout Leaders in particular, at Rover Moots and Conferences. In short, the Rover Scout Leader is a Leader in practice as well as theory. But it is a quiet efficient leadership – a leadership that can say “I don't expect my Rovers to be miracles but I'm going to try and do something with them.” Usually he does *do* something when he talks like that.

Rover Scout Leaders are in short supply. One successful way of getting the right man is to find him first; wherever he might be, and then to approach him *en masse* asking if he will be your Leader. B.-P. said that in the early days of Scouting boys often found their own Scoutmasters in this way. It still seems a very fine idea for Rovers to adopt for finding their own leader, always providing that one does not exist already in the Crew.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROVER MATE

THE Rover Mate is to his Rover Crew what the Patrol Leader is to a patrol of Scouts. His position is a privileged one in that he is elected to the job of Mate by the rest of the Crew in the belief that he is, by experience, example and practice, the most able Rover in the Crew. Personality, ability to lead, and reliability are all features of the Rover Mate – and the right man for the job of Rover Mate must be evident in any Crew.

The Rover Mate does not assume any vastly superior position within the Crew although he may be called upon to undertake the duties of the Rover Scout Leader in his absence. Rather he has the job of binding the Crew together into a team. He knows the Rovers perhaps even better than the Rover Scout Leader, for he is of their own age, and is on an equal footing with every one else in the Crew. Warranted Scouters and young Squires are all Rover Scouts together in the Crew. The Rover Mate's example, like that of the Rover Scout Leader, is a bright, understanding and thoroughly cheerful one.

Often the Rover Mate is called upon to make sacrifices. Time and money may be spent by the Mate in helping squires, and the Rovers in the Crew who are sponsoring them, in planning fresh, adventurous and energetic Crew programmes, in doing his best for the Crew as a whole. The Rover Mate and the Rover Scout Leader are good friends, so much so that they have the Crew pulse constantly under their fingers, and know at a touch how things are going.

The Rover Mate knows, too, that he has to keep at least two moves ahead of anyone else in the Crew so that he is never at a loss for something to do next. If he is a wise Rover Mate he will keep a look-out for other possible Rover Mates within the Crew, and after he has done the job efficiently, say, for two or three years or so, he can well stand down and give others their chance of Crew leadership. *We have to remember that the Rover Mate of to-day should be the Rover Scout Leader of to-morrow.* Much potential Crew leadership is lost in the average Rover Crew because the right fellows never get a chance. We should frequently be able to find the right men for Rover Scout Leaders within our own ranks.

Scouting is a voluntary youth movement with the development of character in the individual as its main object. Leadership, especially Crew leadership, demands that strength of character, and our potential Rover Scout Leaders are often there within our own Crews if we take the trouble to look for them. The Rover Mate then will be a practical individual, a Rover Scout of experience who knows really well the scheme of practical Training outlined in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*. By his own personal effort he makes himself efficient for the sake of the Crew. But the Rover Mate will watch his position carefully – he will never assume a position that places him *above* any other member of the Crew. The two red stripes on his left shirt pocket are a charge of responsibility, not necessarily an indication of superiority of rank.

But it is a weak Crew if the Rover Mate has to do *all* the work. Again a determination on the part of every member of the Crew to be loyal to his Rover Mate and Rover Scout Leader will result in a Crew habit of sharing jobs – whether they be jobs of service, distributing Christmas parcels, helping in the pack and troop, or arranging the Crew training. I have written these notes from my own experience, but Rule 260 in P.O.R. recommends the *Annual* election of the Rover Mate and “one Mate to every four to six Rovers.”

CHAPTER SIX

CREW JOBS

THE word “routine” suggests the static idea of doing the same things in the same old way. The Rover Crew’s routine is not so dogmatic that it ever means doing “the same things” in “the same old way.” The Rover Scout’s conception of his Crew routine is such that he never really knows what exactly is coming next on the programme. But he must know his particular job in the Crew and have a clear idea in his mind of how the Crew is run.

Crews vary so widely that it is not possible to give more than a general line to work on, in the hope that any Crew reading this book will realise that it may adapt (if it so wishes!) according to its own conditions of working.

The Crew has a Rover Scout Leader and an elected Rover Mate – and it is probable that if the Crew is fairly new the Rover Crew itself first approached its Rover Scout Leader and persuaded him to be their leader.

Let us run through the Crew jobs.

The Rover Mate does not do any other job than that of Rover Mate – he has enough to do seeing to the smooth running of the Crew, helping the Rover Scout Leader and the squires and thinking about Crew programmes.

Two important jobs come next. The first one is looking after the Crew's money – the Pursekeeper – and the second looking after the Crew's correspondence and records – the Scribe. Jobs become irksome only when the men doing them have no real or live interest in them. For that reason a Pursekeeper is chosen because he likes dealing with money – perhaps there is an accountant, or one in the making, in the Crew, or a bank clerk – but really the simple requirements are: –

- (a) an ability to set apart the Crew's money and deal with it in the best way he can.
- (b) an ability to keep neat, clear and simple cash records, and to know the art of when it is and is not the right moment to spend Crew money.
- (c) an ability to keep the fact that the Crew must be independent as far as money goes constantly before the Crew – but not so constantly that they are heartily sick of the sight of the Crew treasurer!

The Pursekeeper's job is not a difficult one, but it needs doing well.

The question of subscriptions seems to worry some Rover Crews unduly. This is one good idea – every Rover agrees to pay an annual subscription to the Crew funds according to his individual means, and he arranges personally with the Pursekeeper in what manner he shall pay it. Joe might give 10/- a year in four instalments of 2/6d.; Michael, in much better circumstances, can possibly afford two guineas in one instalment; while young Bill, just up from the troop, finds it best for him to pay 2d. a week. Every Rover arranges with the Pursekeeper how much he shall pay in subscriptions and how he is going to pay it. Simple and easy.

The Pursekeeper then sees to it that he does his part and it is not necessary to divulge the amounts paid. He knows exactly how much he can expect from Crew subscriptions in any one year and can budget accordingly. Also the Crew's finances do not suffer if Bill has to go and work away from home for four months, or if a Rover who is also a Scouter finds that extra rehearsals for the troop's Pantomime take him away from Crew meetings for a month.

The Pursekeeper's main idea is to see that the Crew, by its subscriptions and money-raising efforts, manages to support itself entirely, and also possibly has enough money to spare for such extras as Good Turns, a reserve fund or No. 2 account, which need not be at all large but is there for emergency if ever it should arise, donations to Scout and other charities and so on. Most Crews have very little money to spare these days, however!

The Scribe's job requires ability to deal with all correspondence in a satisfactory and efficient manner. He also keeps the Crew's records – details of the Rover Scout training scheme, when which parts were passed and so on; and a careful record of the training progress of every Rover in the Crew, just as a Scoutmaster would in the troop. The Scribe, too, takes delight in keeping the Crew Log, which is a simple, cheery record of Crew Life, but he does not forget that he also is responsible for saying how many Crew camps Joe has been to, what Alf did in the troop, the date of issue of Michael and Hippo's warrants as Troop Scouters, and for bringing to the notice of everyone in the Crew a letter from the County Rover Secretary about a Rover Moot. How many of us are going? The keen Scribe will try to see that everyone available does so. The Scribe's job is a grand one, but can be very grim for all concerned if the right man is not doing it.

Other jobs come naturally. Barney is a joiner and the Crew always give him a job of looking after the den and Crew property, seeing that all is well with the down spouts and the hinges on the door, and the Crew furniture. Barney keeps a most careful eye on the den's exterior, having possibly long and fierce arguments with the Pursekeeper about the exact date for starting the repainting.

Bill is a quiet but very keen Rover, who looks after tents and ropes and camp gear. His job is Quartermaster.

Tiny works at the local public library and there's no need to worry why the den's bookshelves look so tidy (or well stocked?) or why the Crew's special map library with the glass doors is a sight fit for the gods to see.

"Skipper," as the Rover Scout Leader is affectionately (but not sloppily) called by his Crew, looks after the Crew's ash trays and coffee cups himself, being a past master in the art of knowing that the route to a Rover's heart lies in the simple things of life.

Crews usually find jobs of one kind or another for all their members, but there are one or two extra ones that you might never have heard about.

The Hike Master is a member of the Crew who has specialised on the all-important job of arranging and mapping out the Crew hikes, which take place *all the year round* and need much careful thought. In co-operation with the Rover Mate and Rover Scout Leader, and in deference to the majority wish of the Crew, he plans these regular hikes. He does not necessarily *lead* them as well – every Rover in the Crew takes turns in leading Crew Hikes. The Hike Master and the Librarian, who looks after the Crew's maps and books, have much in common with each other. In a small Crew they are conceivably one and the same person.

The Cheermaster runs the crew's camp-fires, always knows a snappy song to put over to the Crew, has been possibly in a couple of Gang Shows or more, and is frequently the Crew's wise-cracking, fun-making and most cheerful member.

Another Rover has the responsibility of looking after the Sanctuary – a place set apart for a simple Cross and Altar and where Rover Scouts may think quietly at any time, and Rover Squires can undergo their vigil.

Now you can imagine what sort of a job the Rover Mate has – seeing to it that every fellow with a job is doing it as well and sincerely as he is able.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CREW ROUTINE

THE main asset in Crew routine is elasticity – so that meetings may never be conventional or in any way what a Scout Troop call "samey."

This is how it is done.

First of all the Crew must have regular meetings. Whether you run these weekly, fortnightly or monthly is your own Crew's decision. Night meetings are certainly the most popular but some Crews meet on Sunday mornings at various times, and others have more unconventional times of meeting (a University Rover Crew to my knowledge met regularly at midnight once a week for two years). Evening classes often play havoc with evening meetings, but these obstacles are meant to be overcome.

Meetings are started promptly and open with a simple prayer. If the Scribe has anything to bring forward – business letters and so on – he either gets it off his chest right away or waits for the coffee if the meeting is entirely indoors. (How often does that happen?)

Formality is thrown to the winds – fellows can sit on the piano (a very small piano!), on the floor or anywhere, so long as they are comfortable. The smokers of the Crew lose no time in making the den a paradise of their own.

Minutes of meetings are absolutely unknown. All records of the Crew Life appear in the Crew Log. This is based on a loose leaf system so that the Scribe can give sheets to anyone in

the Crew. In this way every Rover is a contributor to the Crew Log, and the Log itself is more of a Crew effort than if it was written and kept by one member.

It is clear, then, that a regular Crew meeting is essential for every Crew – even if only two or three are there, it is worth it – and every Rover in the Crew knows his special job. While the wearing of uniform is optional at Crew meetings it rapidly becomes “a done thing” in the Crew. In this respect personal example means much and the persistent wearing of smart uniform at all Crew meetings, where possible, helps members of a Rover Crew to appreciate the fact that they are Rover *Scouts* and not just Rovers. We are also apt to overlook the fact that keen Scouts in smart uniform, as important for Rover Scouts as any other section of the movement, are the finest possible advertisement for Scouting. So the Crew wears its Scout uniform regularly and is proud of it.

A large Crew may find it needs a Court of Honour like the troop, and a very good idea that is. In general the Crew itself can deal with all business matters and the planning of Crew programmes and activities, without having any elaborate business procedure. The wise Crew knows how many valuable minutes and hours are spent in wrangling over trivial matters of business. Get rid of business quickly as it crops up. Too much “business” is a menace to live, active Rover Scouting at all times.

The planning of programmes implies that the Crew has ideas about Achievement in the Crew. The Rover Scout rules in *P.O.R.* give a clear and set programme for something concrete to do, and this plan may be followed closely. The established Crew can now adopt its programme so that it gets through the training outlined as soon as possible, while the new Crew can find a complete programme. *The policy for all Crews now is to take the Rover rules in P.O.R. in their stride, for there is sufficient sound Scout training in them to completely supply the answer to a question we used to hear a lot in Rover Scouting – “What can we do?” Happily that problem is now “a Thing of the Past,” and no longer with us.*

The Crew itself decides *how* the programme is planned. The Crew has a talk about it and leaves it to the Rover Scout Leader and Rover Mate to work out how they are going to accomplish what they set out to do.

Little things like den cleaning duty come along and are dealt with cheerfully and quickly at all times. Strict attention to detail marks the work of the good Crew – but need we emphasise team spirit any more?

Above all, elasticity and adaptability are the high notes of Crew routine. Any sudden “stunt” or idea or programme that means a complete revolution in the routine of an “ordinary” Crew meeting (whatever that may be!) fits in easily because of this elasticity and adaptability.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DENS AND DEN DECORATION

THE Crew *must* have a permanent house of its own and the acquiring of “The Den,” as the Crew’s home is affectionately known, is probably one of the major efforts in the Crew Log. Getting its own den is the first big job of the new Crew – the decoration and upkeep of the den will occupy the Crew then for ever, for there is always something new to put up, and always something to replace.

One of the strongest features of modern Rover Scouting should be the high standard of Crew dens. Rover Scouts should have a sense of personal and proud ownership when it comes to Crew dens.

Striking originality frequently marks the efforts of Crews to get and acquire a home of their own – old stables, disused boat-houses, cellars, and garages are recent ideas seen in practice.

Once the Crew has its den it can set about the all-absorbing task of furnishing and decorating it. One Rover brings along a couple of well-worn but nevertheless very acceptable fire-side chairs from home. They look incongruous with the rest of the Crew's rustic furniture – logs to sit on, a tree table, notice board, a piano (a very small piano!) On the walls appear, like magic, framed pictures of the Crew in all its glory – in camp, in the den, in the troop, anywhere. Framed photos of B.-P., Lord Somers and Lord Rowallan, our present Chief, one of Skipper, one or two prints of Carlos paintings and also some of the work of the Crew artist whose black and white work is a feature of the Crew Log. There are birch bark candlesticks in the Sanctuary, but not too many carpets about anywhere. Racks for hats and thumbsticks, and a roomy storage place for tents and camping gear can be added and there are plenty of maps, old and new, and other original ideas in den decoration.

Round the walls of the den can appear small shields, each a model of careful thought and craftsmanship, all the same size, which tell in symbolic story the achievements of every individual Rover. These shields improve the den remarkably. The idea came from the Crew's joiner in a good Crew. He originally made shields from light ¼ inch figured oak, and gave them to each member of the Crew, and told them to think hard about the decoration of them, also providing copious hints and much good advice on oil painting and how to decorate the shields. The result was excellent in every way.

Now for some other ideas.

Every Crew ought to know its maps exceptionally well. The Popular one-inch edition of Ordnance Survey maps are hung up or pinned on the walls to satisfy the Crew's all-powerful curiosity about maps, while sections of the six-inch edition covering the Crew's local area are there as permanent features on the walls – pasted flat on drawing boards, or 5-ply cut to size. Many of these are marked with coloured inks and tell inspiring stories of the Crew's expeditions into the unknown. The map library, too, contains all there is to know about maps, while Crew hikes on the Continent are possibly responsible for a collection of intriguing foreign maps in the corner.

Although there might be some set scheme in the Crew den's decoration, every Rover is encouraged to give of his personal best in Crew den decoration. *Somewhere in the den is something of every member of the Crew.* So the den takes on an air of originality because it is the home of a Rover Crew who have put all their thoughts and efforts into it. It breathes the open-air life and the stranger who comes into the den is impressed immediately with the Crew and its den certainly, but also with the wider and fascinating thought that there must be something in this Rover Scouting after all. Which, after all, is a very sound impression!

CHAPTER NINE

NAMES FOR CREWS

Naming Rover Crews is a good thing. It helps a great deal in fostering invisible ties of tradition and Crew spirit to name your Crew after someone whose life or work you greatly admire.

In Britain it is quite common to name a Crew after a person – there must be a good many Shackleton and Grenfell and Scott Crews about, and an increasing number named after men like Lord Somers, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Gino Watkins, Roland Philipps and so on. There are Crews who have named themselves after someone personal to themselves – perhaps a

Rover Scout who gave his life for his country. Service Crews connected with training centres and permanent camps invariably take the name of the camp.

In New England, a pre-1939 Crew of older Scouts called themselves the Diamond-O Crew. If you think it had anything to do with steers and lariats and Buck Jones in a ten-gallon hat saving Pearl White from a burning ranch you would be entirely wrong! It was chosen this way. Have you ever used a pack-frame? They were very popular in America and consisted of a framework of light wood, usually cane, ingeniously arranged so that the frame did not touch your back when you lashed your “duffle” on to it. “Duffle” is an apt phrase for a parcel of all your gear packed tightly in a groundsheet.

This is what happened then, according to the Rover Mate: “One afternoon in the camp the R.S.L. and myself were sitting around trying to dope out a good name for the Crew. We thought of quite a bunch, but none of them were just what we wanted. A pack-frame was sitting there and all of a sudden one of the Crew came up and said, ‘Why not call it the Diamond-O Crew?’ ... all of us have gotten them. We sprung it on the Crew and it took right away.”

Which wisely proves that appearances deceive, and shows how the Diamond-O did get its own name!

When a Crew is named they tend to specialise on certain branches of Rover Scouting. One expects an Everest or a Mallory Crew to be keen on mountaineering, a Grenfell Crew to specialise on service to the community, a Schweitzer Crew to know something about missionary work and Bach. But the naming of a Crew involves a good deal of responsibility in upholding the prestige connected with the name. It is not a charge to be accepted lightly. Think carefully when you name your Crew, and see if you can’t get something original. But don’t spend hours and hours wrangling over a name for the Crew, for you could spend the time much more profitably. A name for the Crew is a fine idea and can mean a lot. If it is *just* a name ...

CHAPTER TEN

ROVER-RANGER CO-OPERATION

T is high time that Scouting and Guiding did work more together, for, after all we are members of one and the same Voluntary Youth Movement.

In general it seems that Rover Ranger Co-operation can be of benefit to both sections along two main lines –

- (1) Joint Activities.
- (2) Joint Service.

In the ordinary Crew a Rover’s girl is accepted and she is usually very useful to the Crew as well, at Crew dances, at the orphan kiddies’ treat, or at the Group’s annual show. Some of them are Guides and Rangers. Some are lady workers in Scouting and some are just ordinary sporting girls who appreciate their boy friends all the more because they are Rovers, and because they know Rover Scouting means something. It is a good thing when the Crew’s girl friends are strong supporters of the Crew and its activities.

There may be occasional joint hikes, taking place on a Sunday or Bank Holiday and it is understood clearly that the whole Crew and all who are going on a Sunday hike are given the opportunity of attending the service of a church of their own denomination.

One Midlands Crew have been experimenting a good deal with other activities in the form of games . . . the most successful of these were night games, based on observation training. These can be readily arranged for autumn and winter Sunday nights.

They mixed up a Rover Crew and a Ranger Company and set them loose tracking down a mysterious international figure known as “The Baron” – who in disguise took delight in wandering around a city suburb on a Sunday night between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. You may think it is completely ridiculous to play observation training games on a Sunday night after Church – but you can play Scout training games without anyone being aware of the fact. The Scouting skill of these particular games lay in the fact that none of the general public dreamt that twenty young men and fifteen young ladies were busily engaged in a life and death hunt on a Sunday night in winter! Don’t misunderstand this idea – there was no aimless running about.

Make good use of all the opportunities you get to develop Rover-Ranger Co-operation. Autumn and winter Sunday nights are only one opportunity.

Another Crew tried a Signalling Spelling Bee. One Rover Crew or District challenged another to a Scout spelling bee (Morse or Semaphore) and had six in each team.

These signalling spelling bees can be very popular, but the best ones are those which do not specify the signalling system to be used. Here a Rover or Ranger may be asked on the spur of the moment to spell a word in either Semaphore or Morse. The Rangers of one district can challenge the Rovers to a spelling bee of any kind they like to name, and ask that the signalling system shall be left until the unfortunate Rover or Ranger gets up. One advantage of using Morse is that you do it from afar . . . one London Crew with a separate den established Morse connection between the den and the Troop-room. This idea makes a Morse spelling bee most exciting. But beware of the Rangers when it comes to signalling!

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Along Service lines there are some encouraging signs. Rovers and Rangers have co-operated on service work at hospital galas and garden fetes, on Christmas Service ideas among orphans, crippled children and old people, while a splendid idea has been the introduction and maintenance of a hospital library service.

For some years one district ran a Hospital Library Service with good results. The hospital generously provided them with a spare room in the hospital for their library, and the Rovers were always adding to this with gifts from their friends. Altogether they had something like 500 volumes in their library room, even when the hospital was “nationalised.”

On a certain night each week the Rovers went round the men’s wards, exchanging books, and chatting here and there with patients. The idea is not new, for our friends in Toc H have made a speciality of hospital library services.

These Rovers thought they would like to extend the service to the Women’s wards of the hospital also, and asked their Rangers if they would come and help in this way. The Rangers said “Yes” and soon were doing the same thing for the women’s wards.

The best opportunities for joint service, though, seem to lie within the Church.

Rovers and Rangers are co-operating in such practical ideas as caring for Church gardens, assisting in Sunday School work, and distributing the parish Magazine.

In general, the basis of Rover-Ranger Co-operation can lie along lines of co-operation and helpfulness, and appreciation by both Rovers and Rangers of the work the other is doing individually within Scouting and Guiding. Once we have that co-operation, who can tell where it may lead? In Huddersfield, for instance, large-scale conferences of Rovers and Rangers have been held with great success.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE ROVER SQUIRE

ONE point is quite clear—*the Rover Squire is the most important person in Rover Scouting.*

Why? Because Rover Squires mean that new men are coming into Rover Scouting and that more and more trained Rover Scouts are going into the world after they have reached the age of 23 or so.

So there can be a steady influx of new Rover Squires passing through the Crew's training to the distinguished rank of *trained* Rover Scouts, and the word "trained" is most important.

Where do the Squires come from?

Raw material for the Crew – which is what Rover Squires really are – comes from two main sources. First there's the Senior Scout up from the Troop. Secondly, there's the Youth who comes in from "outside" – in the sense that he has never been in Scouting before, or he may possibly even be an Old Scout.

Let's look at them separately and before we do so, let us read again Gilcraft's excellent little pamphlet on *The Rover Squire* which you can get from the Scout Shop, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

First of all there's the boy of 17 or so up from the Senior Scout Troop.

The age at which he arrives is largely determined by the troop he's been in – and as troops vary so greatly in their methods and schemes of putting over Scout training (based on the individualistic "finding out for yourself" idea of Scouting) it is impossible to generalise.

Now here's one new Squire, Bill – aged 17½. Look at him. He's had a good time in the troop, been a good Patrol Leader, possibly is able to camp anywhere at any time in the best of camping company, and he expects a good deal from Rover Scouting. We are not sure, but possibly he doesn't think much of some Rovers he has seen – but if he didn't want to be a Rover he would not come into Rover Scouting at all surely? Perhaps he secretly expects a lot from Rover Scouting.

Bill is an adolescent and at an impetuous stage when he wants the world at his feet quickly. In the troop he's been used to leading a patrol of Scouts, and has been accustomed to boy-leadership. Imagine his reactions on getting in the Crew! In the first place he can make things unpleasant for himself and the Crew if he puts on airs, a "superiority complex," or tries and shows the Rovers how to do things. At that rate he will probably be dissatisfied with the Crew inside a month, and may feel that the good old days, the speed of doing things and the full life of the troop – meant ever so much more to him. He doesn't like the wrench of leaving the troop – with a boy like that you'll find that inside six months he'll be one of your best Squires, and easily the outstanding candidate for the job of A.S.M. when it comes along.

But how are we going to get him keen on Rovering? The problem devolves on his sponsor(s) – whose particular job will be discussed later. The Rover Scout Leader sees to it that the sponsor(s) for the fellows up from the troop will be old boys of the troop themselves – Rovers who know the good times of the troop as well as those of the Crew, who can show the young Squire the right approach to Rover Scouting through advanced Scout Training. They (or he) can show him how the wider field of Rover Scouting will enable him to put all he has learnt in the troop into practice in the Crew.

So the sponsor (s) will try and put the squire from the troop on his feet in the Crew. They already know him well possibly through invitations sent out from the Crew to Senior Scouts and Patrol Leaders and 17-year-olds from time to time to take part in Crew hikes – through

many joint troop “do’s,” and in the many ways in which the Rover Crew can cross trails with the troop.

Now it has been said by those high in authority within our midst that fellows up from the troop do in fact make the best and most reliable Rover Scouts.

The Squire who comes straight from the troop starts with a great advantage. He has a fund of practical Scouting knowledge and ability which is a distinct asset. *That* is his great advantage. What he may not know, appreciate or understand is the meaning of training for citizenship and the spiritual basis of Rover Scouting, which he will come to realise, with its even greater personal demands upon him, as his life in the Crew develops. His sponsor(s) show him how much more Rover Scouting depends upon *individual* effort for its success than ever his life in the troop did. In the Crew it is not possible to measure the degree of personal success as easily as in the troop, for Rovers must try and understand and appreciate all the other fellows in the Crew – each with his own characteristics. A Rover sees the worth of his brother Rover Scouts through this personal touch – he soon finds that it is not so easy to judge a Crew by first impressions, although it is invariably easy to tell a good Scout troop on sight – by their smartness, efficiency, and sheer enthusiasm. In the Crew a Rover has to sense the more mature fellowship of Crew life. He is frequently glad to know the Crew’s depth of friendship, but he must learn to take his place, to learn these things gradually, to give and take and not to assume that because he’s been a Queen’s Scout and was a capable Patrol Leader that he necessarily knows all about Rover Scouting at once.

The full responsibility for bridging successfully this important gap between the troop and the Crew lies again with the Sponsor(s). In fact it is no easy job either to sponsor an eager 17-year-old boy who has had many great days in a good troop, or one who has failed to be inspired by the times he had in an indifferent troop. But a Rover of 20 or 21 or 22 who has had this job of sponsoring four or five squires during his Crew life will tell you that he really enjoyed it, and gained much from it himself.

What does an ordinary 17-year-old Scout coming into the Crew from the troop expect of Rover Scouting? This is what a boy of 17 wrote down for me on the day he became a Squire:–

WHAT I EXPECT FROM ROVERING

I think that all my expectations can be summed up and expressed in one picture. That picture is on the cover of *Rovering to Success*.

To me there is nothing which creates a bigger urge than the sight of that stout canoe surmounting all waves of difficulty, being guided by the firm hand of experience.

Yet just above it all can be seen, as a mirage, the suggestion of a happy Hunting Ground. It will be a struggle to get there and the odds may be overwhelming, but what a joy of conquest at the journey’s end.

In the Pack I was given my first understanding of myself, what I was capable of doing and attaining. When I became too old for the Pack I was led down a path to the edge of the forest and shown a beautiful lake – the lake of Scouting.

I left the forest behind, and took to the water. I was guided by the older fellow. I was shown how I could be of use to others. I learned how to look after myself.

Many times did I leave the water for the land, and take part in never-to-be-forgotten camps.

An unknown current was dragging me now into the middle of the mere. I began to feel the weight of responsibility.

I became aware that many well-known faces had disappeared and I thought it over in my heart.

The current was pulling stronger now but a new beat of life – blood was coursing through my veins. I threw cold fear to the four winds. What did I care. I could manage my canoe single-handed. I had won CONFIDENCE.

A gradually increasing roar played on my eardrums. I recognised it as the turmoil of the Outer World. It seemed now that a thousand demons were whisking my craft through the water.

Of a sudden came a familiar scene. Had I dreamt of this, or how did it strike so familiar a note?

Stretching in front of me was a torrent, full of jagged rocks, into which I was being swept.

Then I thought of what I had been told as a Scout. “There is something after your time as a Scout. There is Rovering to Success!”

Rovering to Success! The very words told of inspiration and confidence. Rovering – TO SUCCESS! What more than that?

As a Senior Scout I knew the urge of wanderlust. But I’m at that stage now of transition. I’m growing up it seems. When in the troop I was told that I was too young to tackle the big jobs.

I hope that in the Crew I will be given tough jobs to tackle. I will most likely fail on some jobs, but I’ve learned confidence in the Troop, and I can look after myself.

In short, I want to tackle the jobs for which I’ve BEEN PREPARED.

You chaps in the Crew may look on me as one of those “troublesome Scouts.” But please show me where I can find adventure good and proper.

I’ve told you what I expect. Are you going to disappoint me?

It is interesting to watch the reaction that the change of uniform from Boy Scout to Rover Scout brings about in the Squire. From a possibly resplendent display of badges and cords he descends to a rather plain and humdrum shirt! The effect is to impress on the Rover that effort and achievement will not be measured from now on by badge tokens. The great things are the aims and objects of Rover Scouting itself.

Now for the Brand-New Squire – the fellow who comes new to Scouting. He has probably arrived with a personal introduction from a friend who is already in the Crew. Or possibly through a stray glimpse of Rover Scouting seen in some odd way – perhaps he was attracted by Camping or had a feeling to go and do likewise when he saw a Crew coming over the hill-top on a hike with a lusty glow in their cheeks and a song in their hearts, and on their lips. Or perhaps he was attracted by seeing a Rover Scout doing a Good Turn, or by going to a County Moot or Conference. *In any case something has attracted him.* It is up to the Crew to develop that attraction into a genuine and deep-rooted love for Rover Scouting.

How? . . . The answer is by no means easy, for every individual requires different treatment. This type of Rover Squire sometimes comes with uncertainty in his mind, a suspicion that after all Rover Scouts may be rather odd people parading around in shorts and doing mad things. Better still is the commonsense which tells him not to take too much for granted, and to learn *something for himself* about Rover Scouting.

The job of teaching a new chap the ropes, showing him what everything in the den and about the den means, instructing him in simple Scout training and the Rover Scout’s interpretation of the Scout Law as a man – all this is the sponsor’s duty, though the sponsor will

wisely leave the meaning of Rover Scouting, and a man's interpretation of the Promise and Law to a private chat between the new chap and the Rover Scout Leader.

The Crew's duty to a brand-new Rover Squire is to give him a cheery welcome – to show him right away, and then for all time, that there is something solid and worthwhile about Rover Scouting, that Rover Scouting is based on rock-like ideals and that the new recruit is expected to anchor on to them. The Crew may impress him with their enthusiasm for Scouting, their never-failing cheerfulness, their zeal for a job on hand, their respect for their Rover Scout Leader, and Rover Mate, their appreciation of one another and their variety of character. If the Crew *impresses* the new comer Scouting has got him and it shouldn't be long before he's in the thick of it all.

But never take any Squire for granted. He's got to prove his worth and show the Crew that he's determined to make good as a Rover Scout. So the Squire is not "judged" until he has been to two or three Crew Camps, has been in the Crew for six months or more, and has worthily proved himself on hike and in the Crew Meeting.

Every Rover Scout Leader will know the problems that arise in training Squires – but every Crew is different, no two men are alike, and if we come up against disappointment and reverse, as we all do in Scouting at times, it is up to us to meet it in a cheerful Scout way, not to be too disappointed if we fail with a Squire but to go and look for another one. (Let us remember, and as Scouts we are not always very good at doing so, that Scouting does *not* appeal to all people, for, possibly, many varied reasons). When you are on the look-out for Squires it does mean you're making progress. *Squires are the most important people in Rover Scouting.*

The Squires adjust themselves to Crew routine, each according to his experience, but at heart they all have very similar problems. Getting a job and holding it down, the art of dealing satisfactorily with one's own earned money, girls, sex problems, smoking, sport, gambling, the approach to a compulsory period in the Services, and all the other personal problems so well known to all Rover Scout Leaders, and so well dealt with by B.-P. in *Rovering to Success*.

The Squires learn above all to see the Scout Law and Promise from a man's and not a boy's point of view. They learn the importance of clean, honest and brave manhood, and are not ashamed of the most vital fact in their Rover Scouting – that they must serve God, not because *all* Rovers have that obligation, but because it is their own first duty as Rover Scouts. This duty they can realise for themselves long before their Investiture – but *realised* with a tremendous *personal* feeling that duty to God is the promise we have all made and that all Rover Scouting is void of any purpose without it. If a Squire at the end of six months in a Christian Crew does not feel that the Crew is living and practising real live Christianity . . . has not realised what the Christian fellowship of Rover Scouting means to him in shaping his own way of life . . . then it is better that he did not become a Rover Scout at all, or delayed his presentation for investiture until he was *sure*. *There can be no compromise about this realization – Duty to God is a Rover Scouts fast and foremost duty.*

With this thought we can leave the young Squire in the capable hands of his sponsor (s), but in our notebook we put one or two jottings. These are reminders to read *Rovering to Success* over again, and to read Gilcraft's work on Rover Squires in *Rover Scouts* as well as his booklet on *The Rover Squire*. I dare say you will have all your own problems with your Squires, for no two Crews are alike.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE SPONSOR'S DUTY

EVERY Squire coming into the Crew ought to have at least one, and not more than two, “sponsors” – the sponsor being the invested Rover Scout responsible for training the Rover Squire through the period of his entry into the Crew until the time comes for his presentation for the Vigil and Investiture. The Rover Scout Leader and the Mate, acting in accordance with the wishes of the Crew, decide who the sponsor(s) shall be for a Squire. They keep such practical points before them as appointing as sponsor the Rover Scout who introduced a Squire to the Crew; or giving Scout Squires a sponsor who knows the troop, and the difference between the troop and Crew interpretation of the Scout Law and Promise. They also know that every invested Rover Scout should have this experience of sponsorship at least once in his career as a Rover Scout.

My personal opinion is in favour of *one* sponsor only for a Rover Squire, though many Crews advocate and use two successfully. With one sponsor I believe you get better results and it certainly is an easier job for one sponsor to look after one Squire, adopting him, showing him the ropes and so on. A “difficult” Squire may need two sponsors . . . the Rover Scout Leader will know from his experience when to discriminate, but he also makes it quite clear to the Crew at all times that the sponsor’s job *is* important, for it may mean all the difference between a man gained and a man lost to Scouting. So the Crew – the invested Rover Scouts of the Crew – take their duties as sponsors seriously. It is no easy task they have undertaken.

A Squire comes into the Crew and after some little time, finds himself “bedded down.” To wait a while for the bedding-down process is essential, for a man cannot be a Squire when he doesn’t know the first thing about Rover Scouting. When he is “in,” then the Crew can decide to recognise him as a Squire.

The period of service as a Rover Squire varies with the Crew, the individual and individual circumstances – with the “average” Rover three to six months may be found to be a good period of probation, preferably nearer six than three months. Before 1939 I knew one Crew which set twelve months’ probation and another which had eighteen months, and they were both very fine Crews and had good results.

During the period of probation the sponsor has many weighty responsibilities. If necessary he has to teach the Squire his Tenderfoot Tests so well that he could train a boy of Scout age himself in them. He must tell him of the implicit demands made on a Rover Scout by the Promise – of the fundamentals implied by taking that *Scout* promise.

He urges him to think out duty to God, and the Queen, for himself (let us be quite clear that a comma does exist in this phrase for to speak, parrot-like and in one breath, of “God and the Queen” is absurd).

He makes it quite clear to the Squire that he is first and foremost a *Scout*. There *must* be no half-measures about that. As a Scout he takes the Scout Promise and Law, lives up to the Scout ideals (always striving to do so in his daily life), and tries to set an example to others both within and without the Movement. (See Rule 266 in P.O.R.)

The sponsor places the importance of self-dependence upon the Squire – shows him that his job means everything to him, for by concentrating on the fact that he *must* consolidate himself in Life he will learn stickability, confidence and determination – and, even more important, he will not be a burden on his family, friends, or the State.

The sponsor lets the Rover Scout Leader handle more intimate chats about personal problems, but he does make certain that he sees his Squire at home as well as in the den.

He meets his family, learns about his hobbies, takes him to see a Rugger or Soccer match, or they go and play in one together. They may have a week-end camp with other sponsors and squires. They certainly hike together, and meet each other's girls (if any!) and maybe go to a dance or theatre together – in short, they get to know each other thoroughly as Rover Scouts should, and above all, they are friends.

The kind of treatment needed by the Squire varies with the individual and in the case of a Squire who has been in the troop and knows his Camping, hiking and knotting, the sponsor's job will be to amplify, clarify and make for smooth going.

Scouting, says Gilcraft, is caught and not taught. So the sponsor does not assume any "superior" feeling in his relations with the Squire. They are on an equal footing in the Crew – the sponsor naturally being the more experienced. The sponsor who "talks down" to a squire just doesn't make a success of his job.

Lastly, the sponsor prepares the way for the Presentation for Investiture. When the Squire is satisfied in his own mind that he is ready to undergo the Vigil he tells his sponsor and the Rover Scout Leader – and they inform the Crew. This is naturally a time of joy, for the Squire is on the way to becoming a trained Rover Scout.

The sponsor then arranges for the Squire to take his Vigil – entirely according to the Squire's wishes (this will be discussed in the next chapter) and after the Vigil arranges the time, date and place of Investiture. He explains the ceremony in detail, again allowing for the Squire's wishes and stands as sponsor for him. I believe every sponsor can feel a great sense of pride when he stands at the ceremony of Investiture, beside a Squire he has sponsored.

When the Squire has become an invested Rover Scout, and has recovered from the celebration hot-pot or "smoker" which the Crew hold in his honour – even then the sponsor's job is not finished.

In the many happy days to come the Squire will again seek the help and guidance of the Rover Scout who stood as his sponsor. There is a firm friendship between them. Rover Scout friendships in the Crew are like that – there's nothing sloppy or sentimental about them, but they're solid, sure and above all, strong clean manly friendships based on mutual understanding, tolerance and appreciation. The common link is that of *men* who have taken the same Scout Promise, undertaken to keep the Scout Law to the best of their ability, and who are determined to live their lives along a certain pattern – the Scout way.

The Rover Scout who has been a sponsor benefits considerably from the experience. He gets a more mature outlook on Rover Scouting, appreciates Rover Scouting all the more for this experience, and above all, becomes a *better* Rover Scout.

So, Sponsors, yours is a fine task – a difficult one at times, a grand job at times – at others a hopeless one. But the difficulties disappear if approached in the spirit of determination, that is the Rover Scout way. The would-be sponsor may find more difficulties in his vital job of service than in anything else he tackles in Rover Scouting. When he sees those green tabs on the shoulders of *his* Squire, the Squire that *he* has sponsored, he'll thank God for the opportunity of guiding another young man along the Scout way, with service to others and fellowship for his fellow men in the forefront.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE VIGIL

HOW much does the Vigil mean to the Squire who is about to undergo this searching process of self-examination? I'm optimistic enough to say "Everything," for I think all real Rover Scouts at heart are anxious to know for themselves the fundamental spirit and requirements of Rover Scouting and it is in the Vigil that they consider those fundamentals.

The Vigil comes immediately before the Investiture. If a Squire is going to be invested on, say, a Sunday morning by his Rover Scout Leader in the presence of the Crew he takes his Vigil on the previous evening, when, where and how he himself chooses.

He knows that in the Vigil he is expected to sit alone in a silent place and think of his way of life in the past, his present way, and the way he intends to follow as a Rover Scout after Investiture. He asks himself questions – personal searching questions such as the Founder outlined as a guide in *Rovering to Success* – and tries to answer them himself. He sees his good points and his bad points, and he knows where his weaknesses lie, and what his strong points are.

Briefly, the Vigil can do more to bring a Rover to appreciate the finer points of the Ideals of Scouting, than anything else. The chat he has with the Rover Scout Leader and his sponsor(s) before it helps him greatly.

Old Tim's Vigil – in the long ago – lasted nearly two hours during which time he sat alone in the den on a cold and cheerless night. Bill took his Vigil in his own bedroom the night before his Investiture, and I think that he was on his knees in prayer for most of the 45 minutes it lasted.

Dennis, to whom Church work means a great deal, took his Vigil on the morning of his Investiture. He went quietly into his usual pew an hour before Communion for his Vigil – then took Holy Communion, and two hours later was the proud owner of a pair of green shoulder straps, and receiving the handshakes of his sponsor, and the Crew.

On the other hand, Hippo did his Vigil one night at Easter Camp after the campfire and was invested at sunrise in a quiet corner of a larch wood. If you ask Hippo what his Vigil meant to him, he'll tell you that he remembers the clear piping fall-melody of a willow wren in the birds' dawn chorus as Skipper laved his hands. A princely spring morning, and a princely Investiture.

So the method of taking the Vigil depends entirely upon the individual. Above all, he himself chooses that method – the length – the time – the place.

But two things are quite clear. It's very easy to get unduly sentimental over the Vigil and Investiture and, as Rover Scouts, we are *never* sloppy. But we must be *serious* about it all. We *can* be serious about our Vigil and Investiture without being either sentimental or sloppy.

The important point is that the Vigil is intended to bring the Squire face to face with two self-pictures. Firstly, a picture of himself as he is, and, secondly, a picture of the man he wants to be when he is an invested Rover Scout. When he is *sure* he can see the difference between those two self-pictures he is ready to take his Investiture.

We can re-read the story of the ancient Knights of the Round Table and probably gain some inspiration, too, from the painting of "The Vigil" by Carlos.

If a Rover squire cannot gain, above all, INSPIRATION, and an insight into the ideals of Rover Scouting as a direct result of the Vigil, then why take a Vigil? Why be invested as a Rover Scout? Why be a Rover Scout at all?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE PRESENTATION FOR INVESTITURE

THERE is not much new ground to be covered here, for both B.-P. and Gilcraft have given us splendid leads in their writings.

After the Vigil comes the Investiture, immediately, or as soon as practicable. Here again the wishes of the Squire are respected and, while there is no official ruling on the matter, it is neither desirable nor necessary to make the investiture into a public ceremony.

The Investiture is simply a homely, intimate ceremony within the Crew. It means a Squire has come through his testing time as a Squire and is ready to take his Scout Law and Promise as a man, and then to prove himself in a fellowship of men who have taken the same Promise. Because the Investiture ceremony is essentially homely, intimate and domestic, it is not made a public spectacle. Public Rover Scout Investitures at, say, a Church Service or a Scouts' Own lose their point for the Rover and Crew concerned – the domestic touch is lost entirely.

So the Squire may choose his own place of Investiture – a Church (if he likes) or the den, or at Camp, or in an open-air Scout Chapel at a training Camp, are only a few suggestions. The degree of importance attached to the Investiture is emphasised by the fact that the whole Crew is there to a man, in uniform, ready to congratulate and wish happy, healthy Rover Scouting to the new Rover Scout.

Quiet simplicity is the keynote to the ceremony of Investiture – with the leading figures being the Squire to be invested, the Rover Scout Leader, and the Sponsor.

Crews may find they have their own little variations in the form of the ceremony, but this is a typical ceremony: –

The Ceremony of Investiture of a Rover Scout:

At the time appointed the candidate may be brought by his sponsors to the place where the Ceremony of Investiture is to take place.

Here the remainder of the Crew may be assembled in a semi-circle facing the Table, covered with the flag of St. George (or Union Jack) upon which should be placed the Sword of St. George (a Rover symbol of service) a basin of water with napkin, and Rover badges to be presented during the Investiture.

The Rover Commissioner, if present, can take the Ceremony. But it is usually performed by the Rover Leader.

The Candidate, being in Scout's uniform, will be placed facing the table, with the Sponsors on either side of him.

(Any part of this Ceremony can be omitted to suit the desire of candidate or crew.

The Ceremony should always be learnt by heart, and never read from the paper).

The Presentation

Sponsor: I present to you..... who comes with a desire to be admitted to the Rover Scout Brotherhood and to receive initiation at your hands.

Rover Leader: Is he worthy?

Sponsor: He is worthy – for he knows his weakness and trusts not in his own strength, but seeks the help of Almighty God and the fellowship of his brother Rover Scouts.

Leader:(To Candidate). Are you determined to do your best to lead a clean life; to be honourable, truthful and straight in all your dealings, clean in all your thoughts, words and deeds?

Candidate : I am.

Leader: Who is the Patron Saint of true Rover Scouts?

Candidate : * St. George.

Leader: What is the Motto of all Rover Scouts?

Candidate : * "Be prepared for Service."

Leader: What do you mean by Service?

Candidate : * By Service, I mean the help and kindness that I owe to all my neighbours.

Leader: Are you prepared and willing to give such Service as and when opportunity occurs?

Candidate : I am.

* *These parts to be learned by the Candidate before the Ceremony.*

The Laving

Leader: In ancient times it was the custom of those about to become Knights to be laved with water in token of the washing-away of past misdeeds and as a sign that they were determined to start afresh with a clean page.

Are you willing to give such a sign here in the presence of us all?

Candidate : I am.

(The SPONSOR will here present a basin of water, into which the Candidate places his fingers together and wipes them with the napkin).

The Promise

Leader : You will now make (or renew) your Scout Promise, bearing in mind that you are expected to look at it no longer from a boy's point of view, but from that of a man. Here is the Sword of St. George, the symbol of chivalry. You will draw it and, holding it aloft, make your promise. *(The LEADER here holds the hilt towards the CANDIDATE across the table).*

(The CANDIDATE can hold it high in his right hand, or, if preferred, reverse it and hold it with both hands by the blade in front of the body, in the form of a cross).

Leader : Do you promise on your honour that you will do your best to do your duty to God, and the Queen ?

Candidate : * I will do my best to do my duty to God, and the Queen.

Leader: Do you promise to help other people at all times?

Candidate : * I promise to help other people at all times.

Leader: Do you promise to obey the Scout Law?

Candidate: * I promise to obey the Scout Law.

Leader: Take witness, all.

Rovers: We are witnesses.

Leader: That sword is the symbol to all Rover Scouts of their ideals of chivalry and unselfish service. As a pledge of your fidelity and to render this a solemn promise, will you seal it with your lips on the hilt and blade, kneeling on one knee.

The LEADER, having received the Sword again, replaces it on the table and proceeds with

The Vesting

Leader: (Pinning the knot to the left shoulder strap of the new Rover). During the vesting of a Knight in olden times it was customary to pin a white ribbon to the shoulder as a sign of what had been undertaken. Let this threefold knot remind you, therefore, of your loyalty to the three divisions of the Brotherhood to which you belong – the YELLOW for the Wolf Cub; the GREEN for the Boy Scout; and the RED for the Rover Scout.

N.B. The remainder of the Rover badges may be presented by the Rover Leader at the end of the Ceremony.

The Buffet

The LEADER now takes the Rover by the left hand and gives him a buffet on the back of the neck with his right hand, saying: –

Leader: I trust you on your honour to keep this promise and give you the Buffet which the Knights of old received, to remind you, as it did them, that you have one tender point – namely, your honour; nothing should be more quickly felt, or longer retained, than an imputation against your honour. (Here the Rover Leader touches the left shoulder of Candidate with the blade of the sword, saying): Be strong and of a good courage. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee wheresoever thou goest.

The Prayer

(All standing).

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as. thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will.

Amen.

The Presentation

The ROVER LEADER presents the new Rover to his brother Rovers, saying: –

Leader: Brother Rovers, I present to you this, your comrade, whom I have received on your behalf into our Brotherhood of Rover Scouts.

Welcome him into your fellowship!

Aid and speed him on his course!

(Here all the Rovers may give him a welcome). (If the Crew uses the Round Table method of meeting, it is appropriate, while saying the above words, to take the new Rover to the Round Table, where the other Rovers are assembled to receive him).

The following Charge and Explanation of the Symbolism of Sword and Round Table may be given by the Commissioner or others appointed by him:–

The Charge

It is your duty as a Rover to imitate in your daily life the example of the Knights Errant of old; to seek at all times to serve your fellows in the spirit of Him Who was the Master Rover and Who came amongst us as "One who serveth."

You will seek every opportunity of giving help and kindness to those in need around you.

The Scout Law (which is also the law of the Rover Scout) is the law of love. To love is to find happiness, not in thine own, but in another's gain.

Remember the words of Him Who made the only truly perfect service for others; "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The Explanation of the Symbolism of the Sword

The Sword of St. George will no doubt become for you, as for your brother Rovers, a symbol of your ideals of chivalry and unselfish service.

The sword symbolises those knightly virtues which a Rover Scout should strive to possess and exercise in the spiritual warfare "for the establishment of the Kingdom of *God* on earth."

The blade within the scabbard, which must always be kept shining bright, signifies the soul or spiritual part of a Rover Knight. The scabbard, which should be kept continually clean, signifies his material part.

The blade and handle, which together are an emblem of the Cross of Christ, represent his faith; and the pommel (by which he is able to control the sword) signifies that humility which is necessary to use his faith to the best advantage.

The point of the sword speaks of obedience, and the two-edged blade reminds him of his two-fold duty toward God and his neighbour.

The whole represents that spiritual power which a Rover Scout must possess for the due performance of the quests of service which it may be his privilege to undertake.

The Round Table

The Rover Round Table symbolises those quests of service which a Rover Scout today is privileged to take up.

Around it the Crew of Rover Scouts meet to discuss and organise their corporate work together.

The Table represents to them the application of their ten Scout Laws to various forms of service, all of which point to the central figure of the Table, which is: –

The Scout Sign for "Higher Service."

The Symbol of the Holy Grail of Arthurian legend.

One of the ancient Symbols used to indicate Infinite Deity manifesting in the world.

The Rover Round Table is: –

A Table of Fellowship, because here the Rovers meet to help and encourage each other and to speak and act as brothers engaged in a great venture.

A Table of Service, for from this table the Rovers go out into the world to carry the spirit and practice of Scouting.

It SHOWS FORTH God at the heart of all human endeavour; the Scout Law as the radiations of divine compassion and activity in the world; and it *defines* the plan of campaign adopted by Rover Scouts to help forward the Kingdom of God.

Responsibilities at INVESTITURE include: –

- 1) The Sponsor(s) must be absolutely certain that the Squire is *ready* for the Vigil and Investiture.
- 2) The Rover Scout Leader keeps a special eye on the actual form of the Ceremony and keeps the Crew alive to its keen sense of responsibility when an Investiture is to take place, reminding them of the unique plane the Investiture has in Crew Life.
- 3) The Rover Mate, as a personal task, may care to see to advance preparations for an Investiture . . . he gets the den ready, sees to the ewer of water, the napkin and the Sword (emblem of Service) on a table, covered with a St. George Flag or Union Jack.

When the Squire is no longer a Squire and has become a full-blooded Rover Scout, the Crew may wish to celebrate with, say, a Crew Hot-Pot or a theatre party in his honour. This is a simple cheery idea to break the ice. The leg of the new Rover Scout may be pulled severely – but he can take it, and he has to reply to toasts. The Crew make it plain that they are giving him a royal welcome into the fuller life of the Crew. The Squire is no longer a squire. He is a Rover Scout on equal terms with themselves. So the brotherhood of Rover Scouting grows.

The Rover Scout Leader (being a wise man) may give the new Rover Scout some little memento as a souvenir of the occasion – something that he will grow to cherish in the years to come. It marks the Investiture as something very personal in a Rover Scout's life. I would especially refer readers to the excellent chapters XI and XII of Gilcraft's *Rover Scouts* which deal with the training of the Rover Squire and Self-Examination and Investiture.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE LIFE OF THE CREW

A COMPLETE scheme of training for all Rover Scouts after Investiture is to be found in *P.O.R.* and all wise Crews are now using this Plan intensively.

This makes it quite clear that a Rover Scout has a definite plan to work to after Investiture – a system that places in the forefront two aspects of Rover Scout training . . .

- 1) The insistence on the progressive development of the individual Rover within the framework of the Crew in World Affairs, National Affairs, Cultural Subjects, Scoutcraft, Handcrafts, Hobbies and Sports.

- 2) The sound and carefully thought-out scheme of training now available in *P.O.R.* means that Rover Scouts are expected to be efficient and practical Scouts.

Rover Scout training *must be practical*, and the nature of this training, together with the insistence on ideals, means that a Rover Scout, in addition to improving himself as a man physically, mentally and spiritually, learns to think things out for himself. He learns to rely upon himself... to do things for himself. . . and in short realises that to be a Rover Scout is a personal responsibility.

Above all, the Rover Scout learns his Rovering through good times in the fellowship of the Crew with his brother Scouts. I should like to quote a few of these “Good Times” from which you may glean some glimpses of the work done in ordinary Rover Crews by ordinary Rover Scouts carrying out a definite plan to make themselves efficient trained Rover Scouts.

It is difficult to try and put on paper something of the spirit which pervades the Crew in all its activities. But we'll take a few activities and incidents at random from Crew Logs and see if something of the Crew traditions can be captured. It may be a bit of a lucky bag, but all of them are true. But here goes ...

CAMP FIRE

The Mate sucked thoughtfully at his pipe before turning in for the night.

It was a clear cold night in April, with just that "bite" in the air that seems to make Easter an unique event in the camping season. The camp fire had been a good one. Like all good things it had come and gone, and the Crew had turned in before the church in the valley tolled its twelve long chimes to herald midnight.

Not so the Mate. He sat there on the log before the fire – now a glowing mass of wood ash – thinking and thinking, as he so often loved to do at camp when the silence of the night and the atmosphere seemed to put him in a mood he never knew elsewhere.

He thought of the Crew and its varied personalities and looked proudly at the seven little tents in the glade, two or three of which were still alight. Then the Skipper – a rare man! Every succeeding month seemed to bind the twelve closer together, into a comradeship that had unbreakable links. None knew better than the Mate how much of that spirit was due to the quiet leadership of the Skipper. Yes, he would probably be well away now – tired of waiting for his bed companion who would stick by the fire all night if he could.

The Mate yawned and looked across the valley, where the massed conifers reared themselves in almost menacing fashion against the pale moonlight. He knew the owls would wake him again in the early morning – and then there were all those curious little white spots on the camp site which were really primroses, millions of them it seemed. Great country, these Yorkshire dales.

Ah, yes! There was the lean-to made by the Visitor. He would be sound asleep long ago. Rum bloke, that hiker from the moorlands with the look of an outdoor man and that queer far-away expression in the eyes that he had often seen with his Deep Sea Pals when on leave. What had he said now? Stumbled in by chance in the afternoon and the Skipper had invited him to stay the rest of the time. Went camping with no gear beyond a good knife! Made his own tent like a true woodcrafter, caught and made his own "grub," prepared and ate it, and could tell you lots about the birds and the weather and all kinds of odd people. Had he not demonstrated all his skill? Even to the extent of snaring a rabbit, cleaning it and preparing the tasty meal on a fire which he made with a couple of dry sticks and friction. The Crew had sat up to that!

Then at camp fire when talk had veered round to emergencies and the Skipper, in his usual way, had given out a deal of hoss-sense over a pipe or so, coupled with his own experiences, the Visitor had opened out again. No doubt the chaps had been sceptical of him at first, but then the blighters would, even though he did wear a uniform which, judging by its well-worn state could tell a few tales of the open air man inside it. And he ran a Troop on similar lines in a tiny village out there, though, as he said so simply, he was only a modest "carder" by occupation and things were not so good now in the wool trade. His experience of emergencies was almost as startling as Skip's wartime tales. The yarns of funny things on the moors and hills had sent the chaps to bed with the feeling that they had at last come across a true outdoor Rover. Was not Rovering "a brotherhood of the open air," and wasn't this a wonderful chance to get an insight into the mysteries of pioneering and good camping, the Skipper had told the chaps at teatime? So the visitor stayed, but even then he made the lean-to for his night's sleep and nothing would induce him to leave it.

The Mate was obviously dozing very badly. Funny he should start thinking of Barney, a good man, reliable but slow, and the obstinate one in the Crew. He could see him now making that porridge in a determined kind of fashion and how annoyed he would be if it got burnt! Then his contemptuous denunciations of the others' sleeping bags and kit. The Mate grinned as he thought of the Crew's most famous argument! To-night he had, as always, entered his little hike tent and meticulously fastened it up as tight as he could. The Mate, from long experience, knew that he would plant a candle on a tobacco tin and wind and pin himself round and round in his blankets until he was like a trussed mummy-mummy-mum-Gosh! he was practically asleep – what on earth were mummies to do with visitors and hiking and Rovering? Heavens! Was that a yell? The Mate recovered in a second or so and felt himself go cold and break into a sweat as he turned towards the glade. Then he almost reeled with horror at the sight. Against the now inky blackness of the trees sharp tongues of flame were dancing skywards. Barney's tent was on fire and his scream was unearthly in those surroundings!

But even as the Mate stumbled forward with the grip of terror on him a lithe figure was racing across the space from the lean-to. A ripping sound of knife on canvas and the heaving of a prostrate body like a sack of coals from the blazing tent. Then a rolling over and over of the burning blankets and the hysterical Barney in the damp grass. The Mate and the lightly clad Skipper had by now reached the scene and kicking the other pole away were averting the danger. The Visitor had done his stuff!

A badly frightened Crew tended the burns of the victim by the aid of a powerful torch. "Thank Heaven," said the Skipper quietly. "Nothing very serious beyond shock." The Mate gripped the hand of the Visitor hard. "Wonderful! What an emergency, old man! Did . . ."

"I suppose so, but camp fire can mean a couple of things, you know, and one of them is mighty dangerous."

The ghost of a smile played on the face of the Visitor in the high moonlight as he turned to stub a piece of smouldering cloth out of existence.

That incident did happen in one Crew.

And now we'll search for something to do . . . most Rovers who are also Scouters will groan with anguish for we've drawn *S.T.A's for ROVER SCOUTS*.

If you are a Rover Scout, and have never heard about S.T.A's you deserve to be hung, drawn and quartered. If you are a Troop Scouter as well as a Rover you probably know to your sorrow what they are all about. S.T.A. is shorthand for *Spare Time Activity*. These features of Scout training come from Gilwell Wood Badge Courses. It was a common thing to put the fear of death into a Scouter going to Gilwell to take his course. The story ran that after you had settled down and thought everything was going fine, the Camp Chief or one of his deputies would suddenly pounce, thrust a Gilwell hand-axe into one hand and a lump of wood into the other, dig you in the chest and shout nastily "Produce a collar stud for me within twenty-four hours." That is an S.T.A.

Anyway, S.T.A's are a good thing for the Crew. Just imagine, Rover Leaders, the consternation you would cause if at the end of the Crew Meeting you got up and said, "I want everyone to produce something useful for next meeting, based on a common or garden cork." That would be the Crew's S.T.A. work for the week, and after convincing them that you are really in earnest, sit back and wait for the fun.

Take this common cork. These are some of the things one Crew produced. Squib punched holes in a cigarette tin, put four corks on the bottom to act as feet, and we had a fine soap rack for Camp. Les made an emergency compass that really worked from a cork, and

young Barney produced a whole series of emergency toggles for hike tents. Lawrence, whose father kept poultry, brought along a Sex Indicator! A needle was put in a cork and carefully threaded with about two feet of thread. If this is correctly suspended over a hatching egg it swings round and round if the chick is going to be a cockerel, and from side to side if it is a pullet – or perhaps it is the other way round! A good deal of suspicion surrounds that gadget. Cookie brought a bottle to fit his cork – he said that was what corks were intended for, anyway. Someone else fitted out his house with cork door stoppers.

Any small thing like a cork will do – a hairpin, a cotton reel, a length of cord, even a twig, and so on. Try and make something useful and, if you wish, rig up a small shelf or two in the den so that works of art can have a place of honour.

A useful little gadget for camp for instance is a hussif made from cotton reels. Obtain four old cotton reels of the same type and size – the kind with the deep flange. These are joined together tightly and firmly with small dowelling pins of wood, above and below the central hole of the cotton reel. You now have a long divided reel with one long central hole. At one end plug the hole tightly with a piece of shaped wood, securing at the same time two lengths of thin leather bootlace or cobbler's wax thread. These are to keep your spare buttons on – one for trousers, coat and uniform buttons and the other for shirt or underwear buttons. Now make a stopper or cork for the other end of the hole, and you can keep your needles and pins, not forgetting a good darning needle, snugly in the hole without fear of losing them. You can make the hussif still more useful. Round the first reel keep your spare white thread, round the second black thread, round the third your darning wool for stockings, and round the last one a spare shoelace for emergency. So we have a useful addition to your rucksack pocket.

* * *

Why shouldn't Rover Scouts have to do a First Class Journey?

The Mate heard a young Rover laying down the law stiffly – “Every Rover should do the Scout's First Class Journey Test . . .”

It started him thinking hard of Rover training, when a Squire butted in truculently.

“I bet you haven't done it yourself.”

“I have. I was a King's Scout.”

And four Rover Squires almost collapsed.

“Come on, then, what have you got to do?”

To the Mate's intense delight a copy of *P.O.R.* – slightly soiled, but of 1952 vintage – appeared, and four young men studied it with care, especially Rule 266 (4).

The Rover Scout said it was easy meat and they ought to do it.

Spike said it was all right talking, but Easter was early and it was sure to be darn cold.

Bill said it was no good if you had bad feet and they ran in his family.

Joe said he was game enough if the grub was going to be good.

Alex said he had a tent and the Crew had one and Rovers never did anything at Easter anyway and he was going to take plenty of sweaters and bedsocks and wrap up well and sleep a lot...

“This is an excellent plan,” said the Mate, just to show he was there. “Do we intend to become real Rovers in future?”

“Yes, if you give them sealed instructions like we had in the Troop,” said the Rover.

Four Squires glared and insisted that Rovers should be made to re-pass (the word is theirs) Scout tests on becoming Rovers.

The Mate avoided the agonised stare of the Rover, and said: “Yes, they ought to do so.”

This drew sundry wild whoops of joy from the Squires ...

* * *

An Easter morn. Fine – clear – sunny, but cold, and a little later two pairs of Rover Scouts, protesting about everything, but doing it all the same, were opening sealed instructions and trying to understand them.

Read the first pair, Spike and Bill:

A County Jamboree is going to be held in our district next year. It will be a week-end camp for 5,000 people. You have been appointed Quartermaster and have to explore food possibilities on your route, details of which are enclosed. For instance, you will want plenty of fresh vegetables. Are they available through local farmers, market gardeners, etc.? Can you get supplies of lettuce, potatoes, cabbage and so on easily? Then there is the milk problem. Don't worry about provisions at this stage. Keep your eyes open for a really good Jamboree site. Remember, too, that your report must be the one you make on the journey. Even if in pencil, done on your knee in the tent it is better than a magnificent drawing office effort done in the luxury of home conditions from "rough notes." Good Camping!

Read the second pair, Joe and Alec:

Some people say that modern advertising methods have completely spoilt the enjoyment of hiking. For instance, on your route, the details of which are enclosed, you are almost certain to come across lots of petrol pumps and Old -World Tea Shoppes (A.D.1934) and signs like "Come to Breezy Blackgate," "This way to the Ruined Castle" and "Take Foul Pills to Make you Slim." You know the thing! On your map, which is a six-inch one prepared in sections, I want you to mark and place them accurately as you come across them. When you have time discuss this effect of advertising on the countryside and find out how far your marks coincide or not with arterial roads. Work out an alternate route to your camp site where the hiker will miss most of these things. Make out the report on the journey. Even if in pencil . . . and so on like the other instructions.

Simple and effective. Both pairs had an object selected with a view to the capabilities of the chaps themselves, with instructions and a map.

Can you imagine what Easter was like that year – the cold, the snow, the rough camping conditions ? Well, those young Squires stuck it through a blizzard (apologies to Canada, a British blizzard), and camped well. The reports were dirty, travel-stained, perhaps a little grimy and even done in pencil. But they *were* reports done on the hike.

Send your own Squires – and your Rovers, too – with "iron" rations on the Journey Test outlined in P.O.R. Rule 266 (4). You will find it good, sound training. The total mileage aimed at is not less than eighteen miles, carrying all kit and sleeping out for not less than one night.

The Crew know that, while they are keen on camping in the back-woods, camping at all times and all seasons, and hiking in all its many forms, there are other kindred spirits on the Outdoor trail and it does us good to rub shoulders with them. Youth Hostellers, Members of Cycling Clubs, Hiking Clubs, Rambling Clubs. The Rover Scout has a place for them all in his outlook, for a healthy camaraderie with others who seek the Open Air Life, can do much to enhance the prestige and good name of Rover Scouting.

So the Crew may have a Happy Week-end on these lines ...

HAPPY WEEK – END!

(In the words – exactly as written – of a
21-year-old Rover Scout).

Sometimes I feel we tend to get in a rut with week-end camping. Not only camping – Scouting itself very often. You know, doing the same old things in the same old way – lacking dash and sparkle.

Some Crews go camping mechanically now. Hop off here, hop off there. Back again – then in a fortnight or so, the same routine.

It does one good to see what the other outdoor people are doing. I believe in getting the right perspective by co-operating with them rather than thinking that Scouting is something apart. The Camping Club – cycling clubs, rambling fellowships – we can get some good and fresh points of view from them. Last but by no means least – the Youth Hostel Association, and the latter gave the Crew their happy week-ends.

Let us have a change from camping. Do us all a world of good. (Hear! Hear!) Well, during the winter there had been surveying. I don't mean the stuff they do in town halls and draughtsman's offices.

We *learnt* things properly – how to map the ground, find heights, positions and prepare surveys of fields. By sheer good fortune we managed the loan of a theodolite. We already had a chain and prismatic compasses and gear for sighting. It wasn't much use just sticking in the Den all through the winter learning in theory how to do it all. Practice was essential.

It would be rather awkward to combine this practice in an ordinary camp. Why not use the Yo Ho's? We could manage a long week-end fairly soon – a Friday to Monday one. It is possible to do a great deal in that time. We planned things out on these lines. Harrington Hall in Derbyshire was an excellent rendezvous in Dovedale. You know, a real old-fashioned place. Oak-paneled rooms, stone floors, leaded windows, a haunted room and a Prince Charlie room, a wealth of daffodils and a fine situation.

We meant to do some theodolite work, make a chain traverse near the hostel and then finish with a compass traverse hike down the Dove. Good way to see the country too, Keep a Rover busy, he's a far better man then.

Expense, did you say? We were all cyclists in that Crew. Cycling is a fine healthy sport, and works in well with Scouting. The gear was taken there by car – admit we were lucky. Must have a little luck – helps success a lot.

The warden was a sport. Benevolent, helpful, got the right sort of outlook for modern youth. Because there was a party of us he gave them special terms in the hostel. For each Rover he offered the usual accommodation, sleeping and conveniences of the hostel together with a massive breakfast, a packed lunch to take out and an equally massive late dinner. The cost for the week-end was not excessive. The Y.H.A. will do a lot for a small party if you go the right way about it – we slept there three successive nights, you will see.

Most of the Crew arrived there by lunch time on the Friday. The afternoon was spent with a theodolite near Harrington. We found two likely hills which were renamed after members of the party – Owen's Folly and Knockold's Knob! Measured a base line and worked out triangles – took lots of wrong readings and then cheerfully made a few right ones, to the disgust of the Chief Surveyor.

Clambered up hills and down again and had the time of our life. Realised what a wonderful thing our Ordnance Survey is, found our weak points and corrected them.

On Saturday we spent most of the time making chain surveys of fields adjoining the Dove. These plotted out most successfully. The fields came out right, the meanders came out better. It was a great piece of work.

On Sunday, we hiked down the Dove, making a compass traverse. There's some glorious scenery down there and we thoroughly enjoyed it. Arriving home fairly early we managed to

see Hartington Church with its well-preserved architecture and were allowed later to climb up a tiny little stone staircase to the top of the tower.

Someone said he actually felt tired on Sunday night! We spent the latter part of the evenings in the hostel, checking up results and working out details of the day's work, planning to-morrow and then joining in with the Common-room Sing-Song.

We exchanged experiences with regular Y.H.A. users, told them all about Rover Scouting, and put some in touch with Association Secretaries. Try and get a fresh Rover every new place you go to ... it's good fun. Disappointing, sometimes. Never mind, carry on.

The chaps were happy after that week-end. Why? Because we had done something new. Been in a new environment, met new people, done new and exciting things. Not too new, though. They were quite ordinary activities done in a fresh kind of way.

Why not have a shot at it yourself?

* * *

Blowing away the cob-webs isn't always an easy matter. But it's much easier than you expected ... At the end of the winter season, when we've all got a headache as a result of, perhaps, too many cosy indoor meetings in the den, we'll get rid of some of them with a highly practical session of spring cleaning. Did not B.-P. say that Rover Scouting was "a brotherhood of the open air"?

SPRING CLEANING

(In the words of the Crew Scribe).

Spring is the tune of the year when we gaze round in horror at the dirty den and its even dirtier paintwork. We begin by criticising severely the existing State of Things. Then, once on the run, we continue joyfully with our analysis only to find an amazing number of Other Things Wrong also. In this disturbing frame of mind we are apt even to consign Rovering itself to the Four Winds ... which is a pity, for it's much more useful on terra firma.

All this boils down to the fact that ourselves, our Crew as well as the Den can do with a good spring cleaning.

Someone said round the coffee that the place needed a spot of paint on the outside. He thought it looked untidy from any angle and it was about time ... "Come on, give us a second cup, Tim, and don't keep all the sugar, you can!"

Someone also said it was all right talking about it before a jolly good fire, with coffee thrown in (no, not the fire, you ass!) and raining cats and dogs outside. Gosh! he's a philosopher, all right. But his musings were soon swallowed in biscuit crumbs.

Someone else said – in a rash moment, I know, but still, he said it – "What time's most convenient for everyone?" and then they found there wasn't a common time for everyone, and it was precious near the end of the second cup.

The Artist of the Crew found that interior decoration could do with a clean broom and it was about time Joe took his Bergan home and the tents could do with airing and there's all those flags and bunting from the garden fete want sorting out. *And* the floor needed scrubbing. So what?

Well, well, said the Brains of the Crew, *let's set a week end apart, sleep in the Den and get all the jobs that want doing done.* Strong protests came from the Crew's sportsmen, and two rugger men paled beneath their winter tan. As usual, these protests faded when due provision was made for Saturday "afternooners" and events like Saturday night dates – whatever those mysterious things might be, though most Rovers seem to have them.

So the Crew had a week-end "At Home," and what a week-end! Rovers drifted in at all hours on the Saturday, from early afternoon to late evening and were given jobs to do by an

energetic Rover Mate. They tried to do most of the outside work on the Saturday – things like clearing gutters, painting wood and iron work, having a look at gates and railings.

Each Rover brought his sleeping kit and food for the week-end, and it was a change from Crew routine. On Saturday night – believe it or not – they washed woodwork, painted, scrubbed, dusted, and so on.

On the Saturday night, when the Den looked like Tut-ankh-Amen's Tomb, with Rovers sleeping on the floor in their "fleabags," they realised what a good idea it is to have bunks in the Den if there is room. Not only do they come in useful when Rovers wish to spend a night in the Den, but the Crew can entertain visitors from other Crews in other parts of the country. (Perhaps that small Crew in the country village where you had such a fine camp last Whitsun – give them a week-end in the town Den).

I have seen a Crew who had – by means known only to themselves – procured some old ship's bunks from a shipping company and fitted them up in their Den.

Use them when you have your week – end cleaning – up "At Home." So get busy with brushes, hot water and soap at least once a year. Yes – now!! It will put everyone in the right mood for the start of the camping season.

* * *

If the Crew is keen on intelligent games, they can try

KIM'S COMPASS

One of the most pleasing things about Scout training is the delightful way tests lend themselves to individual resource and ingenuity. For instance, Kim's Game can be played in a thousand and one ways, according to the Scouter's ingenuity and adaptability. But Kim's Game can be made more difficult as the years roll on and there's a good way to combine it with the compass test. I admit it requires some mental effort to get through it, but it is good practice in visual memory training for Rover Scouts.

Draw two large concentric circles in chalk on your den or Troop headquarters floor. Divide these circles up into the compass sectors as normally used. You can if you wish use rope or even neckerchiefs to make your circles with Scout staffs or thumbsticks for the straight lines. Put one compass direction – North – on a point of the outer circle only. The outer circle is called Circle One and the inner Circle Two. It is thus possible to locate any compass point on either circle very easily. For example, North 1, North 2, South East 2, West South West 1, South South East 2, and North West 2. Thus there are thirty-two known points, each of which can easily be referred to in this manner.

Having got this clear, Kim's Game enters into it. Place an ordinary article on every one of the thirty-two points, just as we do in Kim's Game. You now have thirty-two articles on thirty-two compass points, and if you name any compass point on either circle there is an article on it – or should be!

The rest of the instructions are simple. Let all the players have a long look at the circles and then blindfold them. It might be advisable in the first place to have only one circle and then to use both circles when you have more experience.

The Rover in charge of Kim's Compass, shouts out compass point, *i.e.*, "North 2," "South West 1," "East South East 2." The first Rover to call out the correct article on that compass point gets two points for himself. Usually you have to wait a minute or so for the correct answer!

When you have mastered this, you can go on to three circles with forty-eight compass points. In this it is best to have similar articles on the three compass points, *e.g.*, put a Scout

hat on No. 1, a hatband on No. 2, a P.L.'s hat badge on No. 3 or a pair of stockings on South West 1, a garter on South West 2, a pair of garter tabs on South West 3. You will find it comparatively easy to remember forty-eight articles in that way.

Kim's Compass can be made just as easy or difficult as you like and the wise games leader will grade the game over a period of time. It can also, like all our Scout tests, be played in camp easily. One word though: play it with Scouters and/or Rovers before you try it on boys. And I'll wager the boys are better at it.

* * *

THE SLEEPLESS ERRAND

"Look at the stars! Look, look up at the skies!

O look at all the fire – folk sitting in the air!

The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!

. . . Ah well! it is all a purchase ..."

Gerard Manley Hopkins (*The Starlight Night*)

Every good Crew in its time tries Night Hiking – and there can be no doubt that the "Sleepless Errand" has great possibilities in it for the Rover Scout's training. There's the novelty of night work, the skill in making night observations, learning about stars and tracking, the chance to see the night life of the woods . . . in short, the mystery that nightfall brings with it. Observation, opportunity, excitement, adventure ... what a field of exploration for the Rover Mate!

There are just a few tips which are worth passing on.

Those who get the most fun from the Sleepless Errand don't wander aimlessly about all the night.

They set off about 11 p.m. armed with torches (though only the Leader and the rear man use them for the most part), compasses, maps, warm clothing, scarves, thumb-sticks, hiking boots or shoes, towel and soap (a wash when you're tired and in reach of a stream is a marvellous refresher), plenty of substantial food and Thermos flasks of really *hot* coffee. There *is* a Hike Leader . . . it is his job to say what and when and where and how. Any relevant criticism is left to a later Crew meeting for all members of the Crew are Hike Leaders. All Rovers are given the job of Leadership, whether they do it well or make a ghastly mess of it.

The night hikes last until about 3 to 4 *a.m.* at the most. 2.30 a.m. is, in fact, quite late enough. This enables the Crew to get some rest, for there is nothing more dispiriting than an over-tired, bog-eyed, straggling retreat from Moscow which can with difficulty be identified as the Crew arriving home about 7 to 8 a.m. in a state of semi-collapse! Disillusionment about night hiking and distaste for the sport come when you realise that you are cold, hungry and dead-tired, when your feet ache and are weary and 5.45 a.m. makes you loathe even the birds' dawn chorus. You then hate Night Hiking and wish you were in bed.

There is a way out. Start your Night Hikes about 11 p.m. and finish at 2.30 a.m. Make them short, snappy and pointed affairs – *do something* on them . . . have a game, a bit of exploring – but get back home or to your tents before the dawn comes.

In this way I believe you'll enjoy *occasional* night prowls and hikes. Don't have them too regular or else you'll go stale, but make certain that you have two or three good ones in any one year. You'll find real Adventure on your sleepless errands . . . the Crew may grow to *love* them. Night hiking is practical training.

Best of all, try one during the Crew camp. Have a quiet day and evening, a camp fire, gossip . . . then your hike.

Now let me tell you a yarn about a Night Hike in North Wales – a true story.

NIGHT HIKE

“Yes,” said the Skipper, as he blew a cloud of smoke to the heavens, “I think night hiking’s a grand thing, providing the moon is full and clear.”

“There doesn’t seem to be much fun in it if the night is dark,” put in the mate, raising a shower of sparks from the fire with another log.

“And you must be well clad.”

“And well fed, I may say,” said old Burgin, from the solid comfort of his fourteen stone and a gigantic lumber-jacket.

“Tony used to be very keen about night hiking, didn’t he, Skip?” The Mate turned to his Rover Leader.

Tony had gone to work in London, and the Crew’s loss had turned out to be a find in a thousand for a struggling Group in the jungle of Greater London.

“Yes, he was – it was his idea for the Crew Camp years ago. Did I never tell you about the Anglesey hike?”

Vague grunts signified that the younger members of the Crew did not know, and the older ones wanted to hear it again, so the Skipper began.

“We really had wanted something different for that camp. It had been our habit to go away camping together, perhaps six or seven of the Crew, in the summer holidays. Several years we had done camping, perhaps varied with cycling, and the previous year there had been a glorious climb in Scotland. But that year Tony had suggested island camping. Tony’s ideas usually had some meat in them, and before long we fell in with his plan.

“There is something very different about island camping. You know I am very fond of it. To the South rose the mountains of Snowdonia – must we call *all* our British peaks hills? – a blue-grey over the chop and sparkle of a lazy green sea. Before us lay the beautiful sandy beach – deserted, there were no trippers. It was the stretch of heather leading down to the beach that I enjoyed most – the springy turf, the ever-changing little coves, the crunch of gravel and the blown sand on one’s hair. I loved the island. I loved the people at the farm ... it was a magnificent spot, we all felt that way about it.

“Towards the end of the week Tony sprung on us his new idea for a night hike. ‘Have you ever done any night hiking?’ he said. ‘It’s great fun.’ We became most excited about the whole thing. I had done one, only a small one, once before, in the Peak District.”

“Tony grouped us all in twos and threes and told us the fun would begin at about eleven, though much depended on the moon, I knew. We were only allowed a compass, a torch and map each. Oh, and there were plenty of good beef sandwiches – we had beef then! – and a Thermos of hot coffee for each group before we started. Nothing like having the inner man well fortified. Tony loves grub! Our usual kit, plus a scarf, completed the outfit and there we were, ready for any adventure that might come along. We stood and watched the full moon roll slowly round the clouds just before eleven.”

The Skipper paused for a moment to attend to his pipe.

“The idea was that we were to separate at once and make for a certain rendezvous, known as Rostor Bridge, to the North, using various routes. We should reach there about three or four – it might be ten miles away, I judged – and then we would return together as a party for an early breakfast. It sounded good. It would be good, I was certain of it. Smith went off first, he’s S.M. of the 16th now, then Thackerey and then Heywood. Tony and I were the last pair to leave camp. We planned to keep more or less to the coast and then work round to Rostor Bridge. The going was not too easy by night and we had to cross several dangerous stretches – a little bog on the N.E. side.”

“We had been going about two hours when we suddenly came upon a narrow lane of the kind we usually found in Anglesey. It was running more or less parallel with the coast, so we followed it for some little time. The high banks on either side cast deep shadows on our path in the high moonlight. Now and then we had to cleave the darkness with our torch to find the way, for the lane had been very neglected. The wind was getting up a little now and the moon did not appear quite so bright as when we started. In our ears was the ever-present crash of the sea, now rising, now falling.”

“I had just opened a five-barred iron gate that blocked the lane at this point when Tony said sharply, ‘Did you hear that, Skip?’

“‘What?’ I replied. ‘I heard nothing.’

“We stayed there like mice for the next few minutes.

“‘Listen,’ said Tony. ‘There it is again!’

“This time even I heard The Noise above the sea, scarcely twenty yards or so to the West. It was a queer row. *Plash! Plash! Plash!* it went, and there was a noise like the rattle of harness, just like a real Ghost story except it wasn’t Christmas. *Plash! Plash!* There it was again.

“Up the bank we clambered, collecting a number of thorns in the process. Over the top we saw the dim outlines of a stretch of water – it might have been a young lake – with the moon reflected in the silver surface. The Noise had gone. We stood there looking across the dipping field to the lake.

“As I expected, it was a small tarn. We expected to find a gentle cow, or horse, or something, but no luck. Over to the East were the faint shapes of farm buildings. Then The Noise came again, much louder this time – it was in the lake but we could see nothing at all. *Plash! Plash! Plash!* and that metallic rumble. I must say I felt rather odd, and Tony was quite excited about it all.

“‘Let’s try and get in the field,’ he said.

“There was a nasty tangle of barbed wire at the top of the bank. Tony went down first, and then I don’t quite know what happened – there was a scurry and a crash through bushes. He had missed his footing and I heard him come up sharp against the gate, which rattled almost fiercely.

“‘Skip,’ I heard him say in a faint whisper.

“‘Coming, old man,’ I shouted and picked my way down carefully – I had the torch, you see. I reached the firm surface of the lane with nothing worse than a couple of tears in my jacket and nearly fell over the prostrate body of Tony.

“The most extraordinary thing had happened and even now neither he nor I can explain it. He had fallen almost head first through the tangled undergrowth of the bank down to the gate post. It had been left open and the impact must have set it swinging back. The bottom of the gate had passed over his head but had stayed at that, so that Tony was wedged as neatly as you could imagine on the ground. There he was with the gate on his neck. In five minutes he was as right as rain once more, though as he admitted, and Tony was a man of experience remember, he felt very shaken.

“We carried on and enjoyed the rest of that hike but kept the queer experience we had had to ourselves. We slept immediately after breakfast until somewhere about lunch time when Tony and I went up to the farm for our milk and eggs.

“We talked casually with old Gwilym Roberts about the night hike and mentioned that we had gone by way of the derelect farm on the coast. That was where we had the gate business.

“‘Good Heavens!’ said Old Gwilym, ‘It’s a madman’s trick to go that way late at night.’ He was quite sincere about it but Tony only laughed and asked him the reason.

“‘Years ago,’ he replied, ‘a very queer thing happened at Ponty Farm and these island people give the place a very wide berth, I can tell you. The land had just been cindered and the little boy from the farm was playing at ‘Swingers’ on the heavy gate there. Having rides on it, as you can guess. Somehow or other he slipped and was trapped by the gate swinging back. It held him like a vice by the neck and a farm hand found the poor little man dead – strangled, several hours later –!’

“I looked at Tony.

“‘Oh, it didn’t finish at that,’ went on old Gwilym, ‘it was a real black day. The same afternoon the farm cart drawn by a very good horse, so it is told, with the farmer himself driving, was reeding along the lake side, collecting bulrushes to thatch the little barn. Suddenly as they were driving in shallow water the whole outfit just went. Disappeared entirely, and much later they found the trouble – a subsidence pit in the lake. Cart, horse and man were drowned like rats in a trap! It was a nasty business that day and it shook us all up. They do say that the cart can be heard to this day along the lake side in the dead of night – but I must be getting on, sir. Take my advice and leave the place well alone.’ And old Gwilym went off with his milk pails.

“‘Country superstition?’ I queried at Tony as his eyes met mine. I knew he was thinking hard, like myself.

“‘Not so certain,’ he replied, ‘but there’s one thing, Skip. We’re going to come down here again and explore this place thoroughly next year.’

“I agreed but couldn’t help seeing him finger an angry-looking graze on the side of his neck. And that’s a perfectly true story.”

There was silence for a few minutes. “A jolly good yarn, though,” said Smithson. “I could just see Tony doing all that. Did you ever go and explore the place again?”

“Well, no,” replied Skipper. “Tony went to London a few months later and he’s not camped with the Crew since. But I thought we might try a Camp there again this year. He said he would come with us if we went. We could take up occasional Night Hiking as part of our training. Let’s keep on the lookout for thrills and adventures again.”

And, as you might imagine, they all agreed.

* * *

And here’s another true story of Night Hiking.

NIGHTMARE!

Pine Trails Camp had what you might call an atmosphere.

Most people who used this District Scout Camp regularly would make the same remark sooner or later and Graham Barclay was no exception to the rule. At the height of summer even there was something different about Pine Trails. Your memory carried away with it the tall guardian pines and firs with that crunch! crunch! under one’s feet and the splendid contrast of snug little hike tents in clearings against the trees. Then you heard again the hum and buzz of a few lazy insects on the warm breeze and the constant *cree! cree!* and again *cree-ee!* of the gulls on the other side. Yes, there was an atmosphere about Pine Trails that told of aloofness from everyday life, of the spirit of the wild and free, of Good Scouting.

Graham had often approached the camp like this late on a Saturday night. As he strode down the lane leading to the entrance with a thumbstick and a bergan on his back and a pipe that went well, he just had to stop to admire the beauty of Pine Trails by night.

A full moon hung in an endless stretch of purple velvet that was the night sky and a million pinpricks of silver light winked their welcome at him with never a moment’s rest. This

inky black mass that was Pine Trails Camp seemed again mysterious and yet inviting – calling out every bit of romance and adventure in a young man. Graham loved the queer jagged line that the pines made against the high moonlight. Odd how you noticed things like that at night. As he carried on and opened the little latch gate that led to the special Rover site a stray branch of a young silver birch snapped him in the face and laughed at him. But it served the purpose of bringing him back to reality – and thoughts of supper!

Graham brought his torch out and the thin hard beam stabbed the darkness, throwing into relief the path between the trees. He reassured himself that it was ever so much better to come at night like this. Graham worked in a city store and finished late on Saturdays. It said a great deal for him that he never missed a Crew week-end camp on that score. A hot meal when he arrived, and a cheery welcome! What more could a fellow want?

This Rover site was on a grassy slope, well above the trees and very secluded. You could camp in comfort there.

At the top end was a stout hawthorn hedge and a gate which led into the precincts of Pine Trails Dairy Farm. They supplied the camp, and indeed most of the surrounding district, with fresh milk, new-laid eggs, honey and all manner of tempting delicacies. Dolly, the general utility horse, was usually to be found gazing placidly over the gate each week-end at all those jolly Scouts, and doing her best to merit an illicit lump of sugar.

I suppose Graham must have been pretty tired. As usual he yawned a bit and yawned a great deal more and finally turned in with his particular pal, Tom Beasley, a rather keen type of Rover, very practical and sincere.

About three in the morning Graham awoke slowly. I say slowly – you probably know that queer feeling. Something was hammering, hammer, hammer! clump, clump! hammer, clump! Suddenly Graham sat up in his tent, still a little fogged, and then realised that something *was* going on – *on the Rover site. Hammer, hammer, hammer* – there it was again!

Graham dug a protesting Tom in the ribs, slipped out of his sleeping bag and put his shoes on. He crawled out of his tent. Everything seemed so oddly obscure. The moon had gone in. Even the trees only seemed a dim and elusive darker patch of black somewhere in the background. The hammer, hammer, hammer faded away and then came back again with a louder insistency.

“Quick, Tom, the torch!” he shouted and dashed out. He might just be in time to divert her – of course, that’s what it *must* be! The clump, clump, was the row made by Dolly’s hooves as she chased round and round the Rover site. Graham was just able to save the situation by waving a ground sheet wildly. Dolly avoided a tent with a couple of Rovers sleeping in it by some miracle and then went smash! right through the grub tent and on up the field. Most of the camp sat up and took notice after that.

“Good night!” groaned Tom, who wasn’t quite so sleepy now. “Come on, let’s get her out before she does any more damage.” He rescued the torch from a revolting mess of torn tent and apricot jam, broken poles and squashed sausage, and within a few minutes a chastened Dolly was back in her proper quarters with the gate locked.

In the morning Graham went up to the farm for the milk but found Tom already there. Graphically he was describing to Farmer Giles the delinquencies of Dolly – what she had done, the turmoil she had caused during the night, not to mention the grub tent or the jam or the fact that she had just missed planking one of her big hooves right on the enamel mug containing the skipper’s false teeth!

“Get away with you,” said the farmer who obviously didn’t believe a word of Tom’s hectic yarn and turning to greet Graham coming up the path, “I’ll wager it was nothing more than a dream, a nightmare if you like. That’s what you’ve had!”

“A night-mare!” replied Graham grinning. He grinned just a little more as new light dawned on him. “Well, I suppose old Dolly was,” he carried on.

He just had to laugh at the expression on Tom’s face.

* * *

Your Crew can go and have much more exciting adventures than these on your own night hikes. I may be wrong – but it seems there’s a great need for Adventure in Rover Scouting. Adventure just steps out and hits you when there’s a cheese of a moon behind spiky pines, and the call of an owl is strident in your ears and the whing of a bat across your face gives you the thrill of your life. A broken twig under your feet, a scurry in the undergrowth . . . that utter feeling of joy in simple things . . . you hold your breath even as you watch a hedgehog in the grass . . .

Yes, there’s Adventure by the ton. As Rovers it’s our job to make the most of that. I’m willing to stake a claim that Night Hiking is one simple route to Adventure. But *don’t overdo it*.

SURPRISE STUNTS

Surprise Stunts are always useful in Rover Scout training and here’s an original one that a Rover of eighteen brought to a Crew meeting one evening. He gave each member of the Crew a typed sheet of paper, which read: –

Just before the Summer Camp, the Rover Scout Leader wins the First Prize in a newspaper fashion contest (do not ask me why!) and as a result the Crew has a holiday cruise in the Pacific. During a tropical hurricane news of a ship in distress comes in, and the Rover Leader and Rover Mate go to the rescue manfully in a life-boat. They are swept away (Cheers from the Crew!) and eventually are blown through shark-infested seas and blue lagoons to a desert islet, far from home, Crew and human beings. (More cheers!).

Holding a Scout palaver, the sum total of their wealth and resources is as follows: –

One life-boat, a sheath knife, rifle and ammunition, a wireless set, a box of matches, stamped envelope, small keg of water, bottle of castor oil, a Gilwell axe, a roll of tarpaulin cloth, three studs, one thumbstick, a mirror, two diaries, 1/7½d. in cash, a tin of boot polish, one “Manchester Guardian,” a ball of string, a safety pin and a Troop Log.

On the isle they find a small lake with fish in it, some coconut palms, and, using their commonsense, judge that animals are present.

Select from the number of articles mentioned, the five most important (in your estimation) to the Crew.

You must back up your choice with sound arguments. Gifts of tobacco awarded according to the ingenuity of the selections.

* * *

Surprise stunts should not be held so often that all element of surprise is lost. But they can be based on these fundamentals.

- 1) There is no time for Parlour Scouting in a good Rover Scout Crew.
- 2) All our activities should have some breath of the Open Air Life about them, for first and foremost we are, as the old Chief said, “a brotherhood of the open air.” We remember that.
- 3) We believe intensely in Good Camping. Our standards cannot be too high.

Have you tried Backwoods Camping with its essentially *Scout* training . . . making lean-to’s and living in them, forgetting pressure stoves and lightweight tents and progressing from a

delicious kabob made over a fire of hot embers to a fish that has been “planked” (*i.e.*, grilled on a flat board) before the same fire with the most luscious baked potatoes?

The Rover Scout himself, as an individual Scout, can try wilderness camping and backwoods technique. He can go to a variety of Scout Camping and training grounds to improve his knowledge of bird-life, trees, axemanship, pioneering, stalking, tracking, plaster casting, for all this is Scouting.

In short, the Rover Scout is first and foremost a Scout.

That’s why a Rover Crew lives in a small den – so that there is at least one incentive for it to get in the open air as much as possible.

* * *

The Rover Scout believes in trekking and hiking and the honour of being able to wear the Rover Progress and Rambler’s Badges. He prides himself on the way he goes about his Hiking, for he knows full well that *everyone* hikes to-day, and Rover Scouts must do it better. His logs are models of concise, clear information, enlivened by sketches, pen and ink drawings, photographs and much intelligent observation, deduction and even wit and humour.

The Crew is punctilious about uniform. They know that to-day the only way you can be certain that a Scout *is* a Scout is by his beret or Scout hat and neat scarf. The Crew is never ashamed, or too proud, or too obstinate, to wear its Scout hat whenever the Crew is in full uniform, as, for instance, at a Church parade. They do not turn themselves into Christmas trees.

They wear smart Scout hats with stiff brims, clean shorts, shirt and stockings, and an ironed scarf with the woggle at the correct position – neither “choky-throat” nor “breastbone” in style!

Tabs, County badges and shoulder knots are smart; plain stockings are worn in preference to golf apparel; thumbsticks are the order of the day, and the Crew is not unwilling to discard its sports jackets or gabardines on occasion! Lumber jackets, fancy clothing, flash flashes on stockings, the “no-hat boys,” smoking in uniform in public . . . all these tend to cheapen Rover Scouting. Smartness, in a neat, clean and quiet way, can be the impression created on the public when they see a Rover Scout. The Crew must be careful about uniform, and how it is worn.

* * *

In this glimpse of some of the “Good Times Together” in the Crew I have glossed over more depressing days. Every Crew has its moments of (apparently) dismal failure – it would not be a typical Crew if it did not. But the Crew takes them in its stride, and starts all over again if need be, remembering that “Stickability” is a Rover virtue. Service is there to be done at all times by all Crews as the opportunity occurs . . . the Crew tackles service jobs cheerfully, willingly and gladly. No one need talk much about Rover Service, though every Crew is proud of its service done at all times. Successful Crews are usually the hardest-working if Service jobs were ever counted up.

Good Rover Scouting demands that much valiant and valuable Service work is done by hundreds of Crews every week and the world knows nothing of it. No true Scout talks of the Good Turns he does. No Rover Crew preaches of its Service Rendered. But every Rover Scout is glad when he sees an opportunity to do his Good Turn, his Job of Service. He just does it.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

APPROACH TO QUESTING

QUESTING can be called advanced Rover Scouting in that it may be undertaken by an invested Rover Scout when he has finally decided along what lines his Revering shall run.

Questing is interpreting Revering from the standpoint of searching or “questing” in citizenship. Questing represents sound, practical Revering, or better, Rover Scouting; whatever we do, we must never drop the Scouting part of it.

The secret of Questing lies in its delightful scope for originality. There comes a time in the life of a Rover Scout – it depends on his outlook and the chances he has had in the way of education and so on – when he feels he wants some definite and practical job in Rover Scouting. Not all Rovers are like that. Some are quite content to carry on without a personal Quest. But the Rover who takes his Rovering seriously may sooner or later want something. What he does want, and he does not always get it, is a Rover Quest.

Here we are treading on difficult ground, for we have to distinguish between Questing – and by that I mean seeking, searching, chasing, rooting out, pursuing, a definite and continuous task; and doing specific jobs of service.

A favourite recreation done in a Rover’s spare time may be a hobby, but it can only be a quest if it is going to be profitable from our Rover Scouting point of view. One cannot imagine a Quest of Rugby Football. But what about sport as part of a Quest of Physical Education? Arts and Crafts: T.V. and radio: air-mindedness: are interests that could be Quests. We must distinguish between the personal hobby in which you, and you alone, are continually getting everything out of it, and a quest where you *and others* are getting a great deal of enjoyment and recreation. To save a lot of bother, have both a quest and a hobby – if you have the time!

Take jobs of service. Isolated jobs of service are definitely not quests. But we have to distinguish between a continuous job of service extending over a period of time; that can be Questing. If you weeded the Church gardens one day you would have no right to talk about your “Quest.” If you went along to your Minister or Vicar, and said that you would be responsible for seeing that the Church gardens were always kept in order, and you kept to it and did the job properly, as I know you would do if you had made up your mind, then you would have something to talk about. You would be questing, you would be carrying out Rover Scouting. There are many first-class practical quests of this type. Above all, remember that the Personal Quest is the main thing – it comes before anything else – the Crew Meeting even, the dance, the bridge party – everything like that.

“What do you consider important quests?” Rovers have asked me. It depends on the individual, but some are more “important” than others. What about your own job, your design for living – the quest of Vocational Efficiency? – that is one of the most important of all. What about that Troop or Pack you run – the Quest of the Younger Brother? Or perhaps you run a Troop for the same reason that I tried to do – because I enjoyed it and got a kick out of it, and because it was a form of thanks for the jolly good times I had as a Cub and Scout, and which meant everything to me as a youngster. We need leaders so desperately to-day that this is the most valuable service a Rover Scout could do – running a Pack or Troop. Do consider this very carefully, indeed.

This brings me to the point – I interpret Questing from the Personal point of view every time, but Questing can be extended to the Crew and the District. *Crew Questing can “make” a Crew.* Go and write a town or village history and find out for yourself. *District Questing can “make” a Local Association,* but you must work out ideas that appeal particularly to your

Rovers. Running camps for those in need of holidays happened to be one idea of a District Quest. Your ideas may be entirely different, but I hope you can appreciate this conception of Crew and District Questing.

Soon you realise that good Questing is fun – but the fun and spirit that come from achievement and progress. The spirit resulting from sound Crew or District Questing has long ago convinced me, for instance, that Rover Scouting *can* be very successful.

Questing can improve your work as a Rover Scout, your Crew and your Association. It makes for better Rover Scouting.

Sir Norman Angell once told a good story. At a certain festival in Burgundy, the priest asked everyone in the village to pour a bottle of his own wine into a communal barrel. Every villager did as he was told. Then the great day came, and the priest opened the stop tap and – out flowed water! He demanded a reason. “Well,” said the villager, “if only everyone else had done their part and put wine in, mine would never have been noticed – an odd bottle of water!” But everybody had put water in.

Rover Scouting is like that – you have got to put good wine into the barrel in order to get good wine out – water is simply no use at all.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE PERSONAL QUEST

THE late Dr. Griffin published a little pamphlet on *Rover Quests in Practice*, which, while it proved an excellent guide to many Rovers before 1939, was obviously never intended to cover the whole of the subject. According to Dr. Griffin a Quest was an activity for a Rover Scout or *Crew* (note this point) which was carried on continuously, and could be a continuous study or a job which was to be finished within a definite period. His excellent pamphlet based a series of ten Quests on the ten Scout Laws, interpreting the Scout Law from the point of view of a man and a Rover.

Now before you take up the Quest there are several questions to be decided. Questing is serious Rovering. Take it in the proper spirit. A practical job may have to be done and will not be accomplished by wasting time. Make your mind up to ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING. From the individual's point of view come the questions: “Am I sufficiently keen on Rovering to take up a Quest?” and “Has the practical training and moral development which I have received in the Crew so helped me that I now feel I am ready to try the greater job of a Personal Quest?” This period when one is feeling in the air, as it were, is important. During the period of uncertainty the value of the Rover Leader is seen, not as a glorified schoolmaster who doles out Quests like impositions, but as the personal adviser. The Rover may follow his own inclinations keeping the ideas of INDIVIDUALITY and ORIGINALITY before him. So the Quest grows and grows.

Much obviously depends on a Rover Scout's outlook and personal likes and dislikes in selecting the Personal Quest. He may be keen on the great game of Scouting, and by taking up the Quest of the Younger Brother (becoming a warranted Scout Leader and taking a Wood Badge Course) accomplish one of the most valuable jobs within the Movement. Not all Rovers have the aptitude or inclination to lead boys, valuable as this is to-day, but there are many other fields awaiting: fields as wide apart as International Understanding, Archaeology and Physical Education. You can have a Quest of Personal Adventure quite easily – an intensive study of maps followed by hikes or a camp, with perhaps some mountainering and rock climbing. Using a bicycle or a canoe or a folbot or your legs – there are endless possibilities! Some Rovers do excellent service jobs within the church, such as Organist and Choir Leader,

Missionary Secretary or Youth Club Leader. Some Rovers have done valiant service as Post Scouters (helping handicapped Scouts by post) and there are blood donor schemes and hospital libraries – but I could fill a book in this way. All these have developed into worthwhile quests.

So far you will see I have been dealing with the idea of Questing as a whole and its interpretation from a personal point of view.

Now here are some specific quests for the individual Rover:

THE QUEST OF EXPLORATION

Action and physical vigour are attributes worth having in any Rover Crew anywhere. That is one reason why the Founder wanted Rover Scouting to be a brotherhood of the open air, so that all the natural healthy vigour and high spirits of the growing young man could be utilised to the greatest extent in the Rover Crew.

The Quest of Exploration, as practised by the individual Rover or the discriminating Rover Crew, combines both action and physical vigour in a healthy open-air setting. It becomes something more than just something to do. It is a quest that demands real effort and an appreciation of the ideals of Rover Scouting. More than one Rover has come to appreciate the spiritual and Christian basis of Rover Scouting through a personal quest of exploration.

True Questing, as distinct from the idea of just doing something for the time being, does demand this appreciation and then understanding of the spiritual basis of Rover Scouting. Without it all Scouting becomes devoid of purpose. The individual Rover may realise it with the progress and ultimate success of his quest. Questing, then, depends on personal effort, and no quest more so than this absorbing one of exploration.

Reading as a means of acquiring background for the quest is recommended. The value of it will be twofold if some of it is done in camp, or if a slim and well-loved volume (or two) is slipped into the ruck-sack for use during the odd rest hour. Personal taste matters here, but every Crew can benefit from an intensive study of the life and work of the late Gino Watkins, one of our most modern and intrepid explorers (and his companion, F. Spencer Chapman, D.S.O.). In the same way every Crew and every Rover can study the continuous assault on Everest.

Mountaineering and rock climbing, which have especial value in character training, are undoubtedly for the mature Crew. The Crew that has laid its spirit and traditions through countless hikes, camps, Good Turns, Rovers' Owns and other milestones of progress, can enjoy glorious, even if unsuccessful, mountain climbing. The sheer joy of trying is well worth capturing. H. W. Tilman, too, had the gift of showing a Rover Scout how to tackle a job, and get it done. Read his writings.

Now, while exploration must appeal to all Rover Scouts who value their status as such and appreciate its ideals of adventure into the unknown and development of self-reliance, self-control and the instinct of self-preservation, it needs to be developed carefully. Every Rover Scout camp is a sufficiently good reason for exploration into the unknown. Every hike becomes an exploration, every Rover becomes an explorer, and it is his own fault if he gets no farther than the base camp.

Practice may take place all the year round, and the first requirement is an intimate and accurate knowledge of the country round one's home and Rover Den. This comes from an intelligent study of maps, and an equally intelligent application of that study to work in the field. As soon as the mastery of maps is complete – when the Rover knows how to use one-inch and six-inch maps of the Ordnance Survey, knows enough technicalities to make them really live, knows how to reproduce and draw reasonable and simple maps for himself and can

read a map like a book, then this knowledge can be put into practice, or should I say, to the test!

A Rover Leader with a car, a little time and some patience can then send his Rovers out in pairs, on a dark and stormy night, to some remote spot say ten to fifteen miles away from the den. Armed with O.S. maps and a torch and no money, the Rovers, in pairs, for all good Crews use the “buddy” system, must go to named places about three to four miles away where the Rover Leader will pick them up again. No Rover is expected to ask the way. Quite a simple idea but try it on the dirtiest, darkest winter night you can get for a Crew meeting. Many Rovers have come to grief under such a simple test. (Any Rover Leader can think of a thousand and one similar spurs to activity).

The Rover, now determined to make good at all costs, does an even more intensive study of his maps, especially the six-inch variety, and looks up *P.O.R.* to find out what boys are supposed to know and do for the Explorer Badge. He takes the gentle hints outlined there as a guide, and then decides that, as a Rover Scout, a much higher standard is expected of him. So he seeks for a man’s interpretation of that badge.

Taking the Rover den as his focus the Rover soon finds that long and systematic walks with his dog or pal, or bicycle rides if more ground is to be covered, are quite the best way to get to know his district well. He takes someone with him if possible, for more work is done when arguments and problems are in the air. Tennyson, whom you may only know as a writer of remote and romantic Victorian verse, was fond of taking long walks in the Lincolnshire countryside, getting to know his own district well and making friends with farmers and workers on the land. Every exploring Rover can do that for himself, even if he can’t write poetry.

Observations need no more permanent home than a simple notebook with jottings in pencil. Notes in Indian and coloured inks can be made on engraved outline O.S. maps at the Rover’s leisure. Taking the Explorer Badge again, there is a strange fascination in keeping a monthly or quarterly check on the footpaths and streams in a three or four mile radius of the den. On streams the Rover notices the havoc of February fill-dyke and March winds, the ravages made by the school cross-country race, the growth of water-plants and the condition of sewer pipes, the rude theft of water for canals and mill races. Footpaths reveal equally surprising changes. The overhanging hawthorns differ according to the season, that nasty hole in the bridle path in the S.W. corner of B.7 seems to grow bigger than ever, the bridge in B.8 which needed repairing so long, is at last being done. How long was it since you first noticed that “gammy” woodwork? Fifteen months! And then the gate by the 9th hole on the golf links has at long last lost its upper hinge. Been expecting that for six months? Well, it’s happened.

Then there’s hideous advertising on hoardings, ribbon building, cycle paths and a thousand and more things on which to keep careful check. The notebook will become a valuable possession, and a mine of information. A complete library of the Crew notebooks would astonish any corporation surveyor or town council.

Thus exploration begins at home. In camp comes the great opportunity to practise it still further. That hill a mile or so off may prove a haven of delight. The Rover uses it as a basis for yet more journeys into the unknown, and more than once climbs it in the lazy evening sun to get the thrill of the die-away at dusk and the afterglow. And he will plan more hikes, more explorations, with his pals on the way down again. A still greater testing time comes when the continental camp or hike is arranged. The intricacies of continental maps will require some study and the exploring Rover realises the worth of his quest of personal exploration when he is in strange country among the forbidding Jura, or the fascinating Bernese Oberland, or the French river valleys and forests.

Personal exploration becomes a quest of beauty and understanding. With Gerard Manley Hopkins the Rover has:

*“... such a sudden zest
Of summertime joys,
That he hies to a pool neighbouring; sees it is the best
There; sweetest, freshest, shadowiest;
Fairyland; silk-beech, scrolled ash, packed
sycamore, wild wychelm, hornbeam ...”*

The Rover sees, and understands greatly. For the quest of exploration has taught him to appreciate in no small measure the world in which he lives.

COAST TRAMPING

It is a long time now since the old tag “Island camping is the best of all camping” was proved. But do you know the best way to enjoy island camping itself? You may have your own ideas, but coast tramping wants some beating, either on your own, or with a pal, or the Crew.

The idea is very simple, really – namely, you attempt to explore thoroughly the coast of an island or as much of it as you can in the time available. An excellent plan is to resolve to keep to the shore-line and wander all round the island at sea level. Whether you have a central rendezvous as your camp or take the tent and have a separate home each night is your own concern. There is a great deal to be said for the central camp idea and daily exploring.

Your most valuable assets will be a six-inch map or maps and a pencil and compass. The use of the plain, uncoloured six-inch O.S. map in all Rover expeditions is all too rare. It can be part of your essential outfit. The one-inch map is splendid for general hiking and direction finding purposes, but for exploring and recording your own observations, the six-inch is without peer.

Aimless coast-wandering isn't much use unless you have something to do. There is so much to do if you set out to look for it on the coast. Some Rovers prefer the Scottish isles, with high rocky coasts and teeming bird life. Others prefer the study of sea plants and I have seen a country Rover collecting seaweeds every week-end! Another good idea is to search for marine deposits, sediments and signs of denudation. You could explore this subject very thoroughly, say, in Anglesey.

This island shows some amazing features on its coast and, of course, the most excellent camp sites. Long ago an ice sheet scraped across it very heavily, leaving a mantle of drift soils in parts, and elsewhere large stretches of almost barren rock. The extent of the rock cover can be seen in summer in the fields of growing oats. When the rock comes close to the surface the crops are always stunted, and commons on the western coast are due to poor soils again.

Now the beauty of an island lies in its irregular coastline and Anglesey has a remarkably irregular coast. The feature would be even more pronounced if we could strip the island of its drift soil deposits, which have imposed, as you may imagine, an artificial regularity on the coastline in certain parts. On Holy Island there is practically no beach at all, save where silting of the old tidal strait behind Trearddur Bay has joined what were once two separate parts of the island.

Everywhere you can find signs of sea encroachment. Old tracks and roads end apparently at the water's edge, but reappear again on the other side of the inlet. Out comes the map and pencil and down goes a note! And then, by talking casually with the farmers and using your own powers of observation, you can map in detail all those old coastal roads which can only be used with safety at low tide. One summer I watched a Birmingham Crew testing their maps out by using kayaks to explore inlets and tidal creeks. But whether you coast tramp or coast kayak you get just as wet!

Nor is this all you can find to do on the coast. There are small coastal lakes formed by blown sand blocking up former arms of the sea; there are tidal lagoons made by shingle

ridges raised during storms. In Anglesey you can map low cliffs of glacial drift which are now a mile or so so farther inland than at the beginning of historic times. Finding things out on a changing coastline is one of the most exciting things to do.

On the other hand, if you are not very keen about the extent of wave attack, or arguing about subsidences, and landslips, and estuaries, and fish, you can turn to the human side, and explore what the local Welsh people call *porthau*. These are little inlets and bays which would be excellent landing places for small boats in good weather. The map marks them in Gothic type as *Cytiauu'r Gwyddelod* ("the Irishmen's landing place") and you can scramble, very wet and happy, in and out of the most fascinating places, with gulls screaming round your head. But do make a waterproof cover for your map.

Then, in the comfort of your tent, with a good meal safely tucked away inside, you can read all about mysterious Irishmen, fantastic legends and invasions by Scandinavian sea-robbers, with the crash of the sea and whine of the westerly breeze for company. As you oil your boots for to-morrow all this will remind you that there is a lot to be said for coast tramping.

RUNNING A STANDING GAMP

Bill Smith, Rover Scout, had one of his bright ideas last summer. It appears that Bill had been writing to Scouts in the New England area of U.S.A. for quite a long while. In these letters his American friends gave graphic accounts of what they did at their standing camps in the summer time. Everybody in America has about three months' holiday in the year, it seems. I'm a bit doubtful about it, but Bill says they do. He writes there. He ought to know. If you doubt it you ought to start writing to someone there.

Bill is a university student and one of those lucky people with quite a long summer holiday. He has an implicit faith in Scouting, which is essential for all Scout Leaders. He is a travelling advertisement for Scouting. He also helps to run a good Troop, which requires a great deal of personal effort.

So how could Bill's long holiday and Bill's Troop and Bill's pals – who weren't Scouts – and Bill's enthusiasm, be worked into an idea? He got it in a flash from his New England pen-pal. He ran a standing camp and it was such a success that I have persuaded Bill to let me tell you all about it.

Well, he started off before Christmas by getting flat refusals from his non-Scout pals when he suggested they should become Scouts or Rovers or Scouters. Bill thought hard about it. Many of them would make very good Scouts. There were good footballers, cricketers, swimmers, artisans and scholars among them. "I've got to get them somehow," he said, and brought a clenched fist down hard – crash! – like that on the table. So he went to get them.

He asked his pals why they refused to come into Scouting. At first they were vague. Bill kept at them. Their reasons crumpled up like a house of cards. There was one reason which seemed to be bigger than others. The non-Scout felt that he would be such a silly-ass tenderfoot if he did come in. Bill knew all about it, but it might take years for them to get up to Bill's standard. Anyway, it seemed technical, and we don't want to look such fools, and so on at great length. It is a fault with Scout folk that they can seem shockingly technical to outsiders, with all their D.S.N's and A.D.G's and P.L's and Troops and the Association and I.H.Q., and all the rest of it. Bewildering at times to the outsider and liable to put him off. So be simple in his presence and show him the spirit of Scouting rather than the technical side of it – at least for a start.

So Bill told his non-Scout blokes that camping was the best side of Scouting, and would they come to camp with him if he made all the arrangements. The camp would be run on Scouty lines but the name "Scouting" would never be mentioned. It would not be a Scout camp. There

would be no Commissioners, green forms, hat plumes, uniforms or anything. It would be Bill's own camp – Bill's Camp! Would they come? After a great deal of indecision some of Bill's pals – all of Rover age – said they would come. Bill went home in the seventh heaven of delight. The big obstacle was overcome, for the fellows would come to camp. Grand, grand! I believe Bill sang to himself as he turned in that night. At least the people next door said so.

Bill's Troop – splendid kids, all of them, even the 'ornery ones who cut up rough at times – were his accomplices. They were sworn to secrecy and between them they persuaded twenty other youngsters who would be good material for a Scout camp to come along too. All told, there must have been fifty would-be campers for Bill's camp, including Bill and his Troop.

Bill knew an excellent farm on the west coast of an island that was off the map and yet a good site in every way. Bill's long holiday was going to be spent usefully. He knew the Scouting value of that camp site – the isolation, the heather and common, the beach and miles of sand, the good "grub" at the farm. And the farmer helped him, giving him every facility.

Bill's camp ran for six weeks, and every week was run separately. Bill's pals acted as his assistants and Bill was the camp leader. The youngsters all worked in patrols of six. Very few of them stayed the full six weeks. It was never intended they should do so. Some stayed a fortnight, some a month, some three weeks. Every Saturday some boys went home and others came in, so that it was a standing camp. The only stipulation was that you paid your train fare, joined in all that was going on, and stayed at least a fortnight, and paid for your "grub." Bill's Troop supplied all the tents.

The six weeks were planned carefully. The first week was spent under canvas as an ordinary Troop Camp, except that the name Scouting was never used, and no visiting Commissioners came. It was not a Scout camp, but it was in everything but name.

Patrols did Patrol cooking, wide games were played in the heather, daily sea bathing was the rule, and there was cricket, boating, fishing, exploring and a day's full hike each week. Knotting, splicing, card and box games were part of the wet day's programme. It was a strenuous yet thoroughly enjoyable week's camp. Bill could see his pals were enjoying themselves. And he always sang to himself at night!

At the end of the first week he changed all his tactics. Camp was struck; the tents were packed away and the party left its camp site, and went into what was known as The Loft. The farm was a very modern dairy farm and had a great big barn, the top floor of which was known as The Loft. This was Bill's province – the farmer helped him, as I said.

Bill laid the wooden floor out with straw mattresses and palliasses and the chaps laid their groundsheet on top and then slept on them. All cooking that week was done on pressure stoves, as the weather was bad. A similar outdoor programme was followed through the week. Bill said it was the hostel type of camp and provided a complete contrast to the canvas camp. It was novel fun in The Loft.

In the third week Bill ran another canvas camp, as there were many new fellows in, though the weather was not too good. But he used an entirely different site about three fields away from his first one. Still the camp carried on its cheery way. There were minor incidents, such as the 'ornery one potting all the rival patrol's enamel plates with his air gun (which had been strictly prohibited) from the security of his own hike tent. Then there were accidents – a cricket ball in the eye for young Fred. And there was trespassing and gates left open on at least one occasion. But it was still a darn good camp. Scouting was still unmentioned.

The fourth week Bill went back to The Loft as before, and in the fifth week he held another canvas camp on another different site. The sixth and last week he ran the third camp in The Loft, and then they all went home. In the six weeks of Bill's long holiday he had run three different canvas camps and three camps in The Loft. It was a remarkable experience.

There were never more than thirty in camp at any one time, and, all told, about fifty to sixty chaps went to Bill's camp. About half of them were Scouts already, chiefly from Bill's Troop.

Bill then asked his pals again if they could come into Scouting. The word had not been mentioned until then. "You have seen what we do, and what Scouting is," he told them. The standing camp on the island – Bill's camp – was a Scout camp in disguise! It was full of real adventure, good turns, hikes, building bridges, haymaking, feeding poultry, driving cattle, playing games, getting wet, bathing and boating, cooking your own food and eating it, camp fires, petty grumbles and quarrels, cleaning out pigsties – it was Scouting. Great, grand, glorious Scouting! Bill's pals said that if Bill's camp was Scouting, then they were going to come into it as soon as they jolly well could. The youngsters felt the same way about it. Only two people refused Bill's invitation a second time – one was leaving the district and the other had parents who objected to khaki uniform.

And that is the tale of how Bill Smith, Rover Scout, got twenty-eight new men and boys into Scouting. Seven of them were Rovers and Scouters, twenty-one were Scouts. Mind you, they didn't all join Bill's Troop. Two founded Troops of their own. Half the youngsters went into Bill's Troop and the others to a Troop run by Bill's pal, who was at the camp and in the conspiracy.

Bill was very modest and said it was just an idea. Granted he got the brainwave from America and had a University vacation and a good Troop to help him, and other pals who tolerated, yet appreciated, him. But Bill's enthusiasm put the whole thing over, and Bill's camp I regard as a Scouting achievement.

How can we get new men of the right type as leaders into Scouting?

Bill's camp provides one way of tackling the problem.

SEARCH FOR OLD BUILDINGS

In the course of his hikes John found he was doing some things fairly regularly – he was cycling a good deal, at week-ends and holidays chiefly, and doing it all the year round as all good cyclists do. At the same time he was photographing old buildings a lot.

There came a time in his career as a Rover Scout when he was looking for a personal quest. His Rover Leader, who, like all good Rover Leaders, knew his Rovers individually, and well, hinted wisely that cycling and photography and old buildings might well be linked up together. He said no more, but the Rover took the hint and developed a quest of his own which is one of the most valuable bits of service to the community I have seen. I am going to suggest it as a subject for a personal or Crew quest.

This, briefly, was his idea. He got in touch with his local town and county authorities and asked them to keep him informed of all buildings and so on that were going to be demolished. At the same time he was able to make a very extensive list of all existing old buildings by personal exploration, and other devious methods. These he plotted on his maps, one-inch and six-inch usually.

He lived on the borders of a rather large market town, and found it easy to ride about his county on his bicycle. As a matter of fact, he is a very good cyclist, though to look at him you wouldn't think so. Cycling may not be my "forte," but I admire Rovers who cycle and look happy about it.

The Town Council were doing a lot of pulling down to make way for new roads and petrol pumps and other modern "improvements." Little did they know that they were giving one Rover something to do.

As soon as the Rover heard that a building was being demolished he would be high-tailing it there at the first opportunity to get a good picture.

In this way he formed a valuable library. Old buildings were not coming down every week or every month, of course. But in a few years this Rover had secured pictures of over three dozen subjects round and about his county. They included camera studies of old cottages – these were the most frequent pictures – two old barns, a grain store, a public house, an old bridge, a length of wall, a very ancient oak that blocked a footpath badly, a canal towing path before it was closed, stables and even a stile. One bright series of photos showed a Cambridge archaeologist attending to and renovating an ancient monument with a crane and a gang of men. That was a holiday scoop, but at the same time a lively bit of work for the Rover.

Though he specialised on old buildings that had to be demolished, he photographed anything that was old for his library. This was filed and catalogued carefully.

The Rover was happy because he found that he was seeing something for his Rovering. I never thought that a Rover, a bike, a camera, and old buildings would combine so well. But they did, and still do. And the Rovers found that his quest was appreciated by town and county councils who gave him all the help they could.

Rovers like John can do much for the goodwill and prestige of the Scout Movement in a quiet and inconspicuous way. During the Whitsun holidays he hared off on a twenty-five mile bike ride just to see some road-widening scheme, in case there *was* something . . .

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE CREW QUEST

IT has often been said that Scouting is essentially a team game. Just as the well-chosen team of sound rather than outstanding players will often prove better than the team with one or two brilliant individuals at rugby, soccer and cricket, so with Scouting. This factor is, perhaps, the hallmark of Good Rovering in particular. A team of seven to twelve keen chaps is going to be far more successful as a Crew than the one with the odd enthusiast. You will not find a better sphere than Questing to test your team spirit and, before I suggest a method and procedure, let me urge you to have everybody in the Crew Quest, not the three or four in a small group, *but the Crew as a whole*. It will bind you together more and more as a Crew.

Questing as a Crew is quite a different job from Questing as individuals. You are well away with your personal Quest. Doubtless you will have discovered that you can do a great deal in spare moments – the odd ten minutes now and then, reading in the train and so on. This is preferable to long stretches in the evening, for the simple reason that it is much duller when done all at once. Far better to give half an hour a day to your personal Quest than two or three hours on an occasional evening. Continuity matters a great deal. Not only do you pick up the threads more easily, but it becomes a habit. Even if there is no practical work, or reading-up to be done, merely thinking hard for a quarter of an hour about your Quest can be most useful.

In Crew Questing there can be a set time for the study and discussion that will be involved. You have, of course, many things to do and are very busy – most “live” Rovers are, strangely enough! – so that it is going to be something like a fortnightly meet for the Crew Quest, or perhaps even a longer interval. Subjects for Crew Questing are more difficult to find than for the individual, with his personal inclinations, and it is wise to make a list of the activities that seem to appeal to the Crew *as a whole*. If you do much Crew hiking, then, naturally, you will find an outdoor topic, while there are several indoor possibilities, according to the tastes and abilities of the Crew. But no good Crew will want to do much indoor work.

Now for a little yarn. A certain old gentleman of means was very interested in his small town and had spent many years of his life collecting material concerning its history. This led him

into all kinds of delightful excursions, faithfully recorded in special notebooks. Copies of museum antiquities and rubbings of brasses were added to the collection, while there were tracings of old maps and plans of old houses as well as much correspondence, personal data, notes and so on. The gentleman naturally acquired a reputation as an authority on his town. In time he died and the records passed into the hands of his family.

About this time, by the strangest quirk of fate (or malice aforethought, as you will!) the Librarian of the town gave a yarn to a keen Rover Scout Crew on the need for some kind of chronicle of local history that would be of immense value for future generations. The Librarian offered to help, having duly dropped the hint, and the Rover Leader recollected the work of his old friend.

Can you imagine what happened? The material available for the compiling of a local history was all there. All the documents (loaned to the Crew and treated with the greatest respect) required careful and systematic cataloguing. Many were incomplete and needed finishing – others needed verification and checking – old buildings were fast being replaced and the photographic section became very busy. There seemed to be thousands of small tasks to do. That was a Crew Quest. The Crew were at it for about five years. They felt that they were doing something well worth while. Remember it needs effort to quest as a Crew. Eventually that Crew's work was presented to the town, and became a permanent record of what Rover Scouts can do.

Such an idea may appeal to you and perhaps there is a similar field in your own town. On the other hand, you may not have any natural leaning to these things, and prefer a wholly outdoor job. Well, you can be voluntary Countryside Wardens. You can do much good work for the new National Parks.

What about compiling a list of tried and true Camp Sites for your local Scout Association, which can prove a boon to harassed Scouters? Sites may be required in certain areas. Go and find them and make detailed reports that will be of benefit to all local troops. I often wish that the system adopted by our good friends, the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland, with regard to camp sites were a feature of Scouting. Members of the Camping Club make detailed reports on sites solely for the benefit of other campers. It's a very sound plan.

Then there's Hiking. Have a good think about Senior Scouts who are going to be Rovers. Why not be ready to supply any Troop Scouter with First Class Journey Hikes when needed? He will be pleased and, as you know, there should be a strong link (shall we say liaison) between the Crew and those Senior Scouts. Ever thought of taking them on a hike sometime – a long one, adventurous, trekking, following Roman roads and walls? It's good fun and open-air, practical Rovering.

You can run a week-end Camp for parties of boys who are not Scouts; hospital library services, physical culture classes, swimming instruction, visiting and training handicapped Scouts, and so on. There are many, many opportunities for the Crew that wants to be *active*. If you are going Questing as a Crew you need determination, courage, originality, enthusiasm and "*stickability*" as B.-P. said – all essential for success.

Above all, *give it a fair trial*.

* * *

Here are a few specific ideas for the Crew:

MAPPING A CITY SMOKE SCREEN

Fog is one of the most pressing problems confronting large cities. Experts argue among themselves as to the best means to combat this menace to traffic, health, and all that goes to make up the well-being of a city.

They want to know why London fog differs from Manchester fog, and how the traffic can be regulated. Motorists argue as to the merits or demerits of yellow headlights. But most people are agreed that the smoke screen has a great deal to do with the fog problem. In Manchester an official map of the city smoke screen was made. Several outdoor organisations helped, such as rambling and cycling clubs, and students' societies, as well as individual Rovers. It is of especial interest from our point of view. Voluntary help is always ready for such a survey – remember the Land Utilisation Survey map scheme, for instance, when such help was a great factor in the success and completion of the scheme.

I visited a large room in Manchester when the city smoke screen was being made. The walls were covered with six-inch and twenty-five inch maps of the city. Some were mounted on five ply-wood, and had then been clear-varnished. They make a very good den decoration, especially if you can mark all your local camp sites, doctors, fire stations and so on in coloured inks.

These wall maps were covered with green crosses, lines and shading. There were comments, field notes and directions on the margin. The finished ones had a bold red line on them marking the extent of the smoke screen. Under a lamp on the bench, several Rovers were completing other maps.

On a wide table in the middle of the room were hundreds of match boxes and small board boxes fitted with glass tops, the sort of thing they use for butterflies and geological specimens. Apparently most of them seemed full of green fungi and all were labelled with A's and B's and other more significant data. The fungi were lichens and this is how the smoke screen was mapped.

Botanists, geographers and so on had been experimenting and they believed that a certain plant, the common lichen, was highly susceptible to smoke. "Lichens won't grow in a smoke-laden atmosphere," was the thesis.

They said it was possible to form a rough idea of what the city smoke screen was like – how far it extended, its intensity, and so on. How? By finding specimens of lichens in the city and its immediate hinterland, getting them identified by the Museum authorities, and then marking on a six-inch map where they were found. Where lichens were found the smoke was not effective. Where there were none the smoke was most effective. It is undoubtedly so, as anyone living in Manchester will testify.

So if it was possible to draw a dividing line between the two, this would mark the smoke screen's extent. If they could go all round Manchester like that a most important map might be prepared, which could be used in research about fog, or smoke pollution, or public health.

Lichens are for the most part grey-green, mossy plants, a dual plant that is really a fungus. You can't mistake them easily. The learned ones said they lived symbiotically, which is a sort of friendly arrangement among lichens, helping each other out in all sorts of ways. But the specimens must be identified by an expert. The whole survey was very fortunate in that respect. The plants are to be found growing on old walls and round old churches, on tree trunks and other plants. Some of the first lichens used as specimens in this survey were discovered by two young Rovers at Forest Scout Camp, Delamere, Cheshire.

Now you see why voluntary help was required, because a young army of "hunters" were necessary. These "hunters" worked in pairs, each pair with the six-inch map of his particular district, lots and lots of empty match boxes labelled in order, a penknife, and magnifying glass. When a likely lichen was discovered it was removed carefully, placed in the match box "A" as a place of safe repose and right away the spot was marked "A" on the six-inch map, together with any necessary comments.

Rovers and other outdoor lovers went off on their bikes with maps and match boxes. There were lots of disappointments and problems. The biggest were on the new housing estates where there was not a lichen to be found anywhere. But the map progressed slowly but surely.

You may feel you would like to go to your Museum and learn something about mosses and lichens for yourself. If it has given you an idea for something to tackle, I'm delighted.

LOGGIN' ABOUT

A Crew asked me along to one of their Loggin' About afternoons not so long ago. Loggin' About – doesn't it sound exciting? I thought so too.

"Everyone here?" said the R.L.

They were. Then I heard him give a few directions about roads and houses, and every Rover seemed to know exactly what to do – there was an opening of lockers and grating of carborundum stones, a smell of oily rags and sacking. About half a dozen Rovers brought sharp felling axes, and a couple had cross-cut saws with a hand axe or two and a few knives.

All these were carefully masked and within a few minutes the Crew were off.

"Last year we were getting to the end of our Talks scheme," the Rover Leader told me. "A Jobs and Occupations series was rather good but we did want something new, and at the County Moot in June several of us heard that chap on forestry. He told us all about trees – after that every tree in the whole park was alive to us, and I don't think we spent too much time at the other sessions. We went browsing about right away, and talked and talked about the new idea. In fact, before we left the Moot we had decided to take up Trees, as a Crew Quest.

"We thought it was no use just rushing things, so we carefully thought out a planned programme to cover roughly about two years," he continued, "I do think Crews would get on far better if they planned ideas well in advance in all seriousness and then worked things out to a programme.

"We agreed to run Trees in two definite lines – one as an indoor activity and the other as an outdoor effort, and also agreed that it must be a distinctly practical Quest.

"The indoor work was exciting. Frank, our Rover Mate, worked it all out. He made us all take up an individual British tree, specialise on it and, in fact, write up its complete history. I drew the Lime out of the hat and found all sorts of things about it in the "Ref" (the town's Public Library) and found all the old customs and photos of celebrated lime trees, and so on, I could. Then we pooled all our efforts and had the whole thing typed with several copies, and then bound them – we did bookbinding last year, you remember.

"After that we managed to get a second-hand set of the British Tree series of pictures by Barbara Briggs, published by Lutterworth Press, and framed them for the Den, and made a collection of rings cut from different trees, glued on a board. We wrote to the secretary of the Men of the Trees Society, at The Gate, Abbotsbury, Dorset, for some of their invaluable literature.

"It was easy after that. Frank made us all make Tree Albums. You take your own tree and collect specimens of its bark, leaves, blossom, seeds, and so on. Then you get some good stout white pasteboard, or, better still, a piece of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch planed oak, and make the size about 8 inch X 5 inch or 9 inch X 6 inch. Paste your specimens on the sheet or board – one tree to each board, and add anything you like about the tree, using your ingenuity.

"They made a really fine den decoration and Frank exchanged some with Rover pals in Scotland and Ireland. Joe also made several copies of the British Oak and exchanged them with some Rover pals overseas. That explains why we have Tree Albums of the Australian gum trees, and that beauty of the Giant Californian Redwood over the fireplace, and the queer bamboo one from Penang in the corner. Anyway, here we are at last."

We turned down a short lane and soon arrived at a little cottage outside which was parked a smart trek cart.

Sounds of rending saws, and the clink of axe on wood, greeted us. The Crew, or some of them, were hard at work, felling a dead and dingy-looking tree in the corner of the garden, while an admiring crowd watched the proceedings. (Nothing like a practical Good Turn for publicity purposes). The next part of the proceedings consisted in giving the Scouts who came with us some instruction in First Class Axemanship. All this was part of the practical part of the Quest. We put an advertisement in the local paper – *“Have you any old or unwanted or unsightly trees in your garden? The St. Martin’s Rover Scout Crew will gladly deal with same if you drop a card to Rover Mate Frank ...”*

“It worked and led on to other things. The Crew acted as instructors and examiners for the Scout Tests and earned the gratitude of all Troop Scouters, hence these boys this afternoon. The Crew always respected the wishes of their ‘clients.’ But most of them give the Crew the timber, and it was usually cut up into logs for Scout headquarters or sold for Bob-a-job – good money well earned!

“Firewood and useless timber were stacked, and then, on Christmas morning, sacks of firewood along with food parcels were given to old-age pensioners. For every old tree felled a young one was planted at the Association camping ground.

“If a ‘client’ wanted the timber for his own use the Crew just regarded it as a really Good Turn.”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE DISTRICT QUEST

I HAVE already dealt with the problem of Questing from the point of view of the Individual Rover and the Crew. Now for District Questing. In the first place we had better be quite clear as to what we mean by the term “district,” for it can be vague. Most of us in Scouting are familiar with “the Association,” and it is essentially this meaning that is implied in “the district” – all the Crews in your own small area. In the towns the district is usually well defined and Crews get together fairly often, perhaps as a Round Table or “Pow-Wow.” In the country things are generally not quite so easy, and the number of occasions when local Crews can get together are necessarily limited; indeed, it may not be possible to do much in the district line at all, and Rovers would be doing a better job by concentrating on individual and Crew quests.

A planned scheme of district questing has some distinct advantages. In the first place you may have noticed that a good deal of time can be wasted at district Rover gatherings. “Wasted” in the sense that we spend hours and hours discussing the most trivial details – generally business ones, who is to be on this or that committee, what its functions are, the reports of delegates and minutes and a procedure very similar to some Town Council or a Company’s annual meeting. Much of the business side may be necessary, but it could be cut down at most district Rover meetings by at least 50 per cent. It has been a general fault of Rovering in the past that we tend to spend far too much time in Talk, and not enough on Practical Scout training and Service. We ought to remember, too, that Scouting was never intended to be one long round of committees. District Questing can occupy much of that “wasted” time.

Then again there may be a lack of fraternity in the district. Crews simply don’t know one another, often because they never have enough opportunities to mix together frequently. Crews may be doing good work in their own little sphere both as regards training and Service, but their opportunities of contact with the other Crews in the district may be too

limited. This brings me to an important point: *isolation breeds stagnation*. It is worth examining a little more closely.

Isolation breeds stagnation

The Rover Crew which gets the best out of Rovering is the Crew with the *wide* interests, the members of which can see beyond the limits of their own Crew. So cut out wasted time and any lack of fraternity. District Questing can supply the answer to the problem of how to do it.

Two methods are available when District Questing is considered. Either the district may decide on a plan of what I would call "Personal Progress," or it can plan a definite job or service to be undertaken as a district "Personal Progress" could include many things from which the Rover will benefit himself particularly. Practical Service would include many things by which the Rover will benefit other people. It is all a question of exactly how much time there is available. Suppose that your Crew had a panel of particularly good speakers – the kind who prove of value by the thoughts they leave behind them. It would be a good idea to let the district have the benefit of them. Cut down the business part of your "Get-Together" as much as possible, and devote the rest of the time to doing something of value. Talks are good only if they lead to discussion and provoke thought. Naturally this leads on to debates which, far from being "dry," are the best medium for improving one's mind and learning the art of putting individual thoughts into words. The district might all go to the cinema or theatre together one night. Why not? It may well lead to better understanding of something under discussion. There are several subjects for district quests here – and perhaps one of the best and easiest to start is the Quest of Fraternity.

If your district decided that for a period of one year they would try to carry out this Quest of Fraternity it would be doing fine work. Arrange joint Crew informal meetings, potato-pie supper orgies, Smoking Concerts, inter-Crew discussions – anything so long as it is getting the Rovers in your district to know one another well, so that Joe Smith of the 7th recognises Sam Brown of the 14th immediately in the street as the fellow who licked him at table tennis the other evening.

When we get this spirit of cordiality and brotherhood working in Rover Scouting we shall really have done something worth while. Take almost any County Rover Moot. How much real fraternisation is made at the majority of County Moots. We get in our little cliques and stick in them all through the moot. When a County Moot has everyone mixed up anyhow, with tent tea parties and so on, with Rovers from Littletown caring not a jot whether they see other Rovers from Littletown during the weekend or not because they know them already – yes, we shall have progressed again. Fraternity can be a sound investment as a district quest.

However, though these are merely suggestions that I am throwing out, I think we may get the real spirit of camaraderie by undertaking a practical job, particularly if your Crew Quest happens to be an indoor one based on "self-improvement." One experience in the 'thirties was the running of week-end camps for unemployed men as a district quest. I do not wish to elaborate the point now in the days of the Welfare State, but my experience at thirteen such camps run by the Rover Scouts of Eccles, Lancashire, before 1939, convinced me that there was really something to be said for the practical district idea. The value lay not so much in the good work done then by such a practical idea as helping men or boys down on their luck, as in the spirit the Rovers themselves imbibed from the scheme. Many Rovers, I imagine, would confess that they are really happiest when doing something, and if everybody feels the same way, something will surely happen. There are many other worthy reasons for running week-end camps. Think of handicapped children; children from dockland areas or slums; or boys who have been in trouble with the police. Could you do something for them? I would like to see the Rovers of a District Crew (it is fine to have your *district* gatherings as the meetings of a *district* Crew rather than as a meeting of individual Crews) doing more really BIG jobs. Indoor programmes are

good when well planned, but don't you feel that they are rather SAFE? When things are safe, particularly with regard to Rover Scouting, there is a dangerous tendency to get into a rut and, oh! yes, things are running smoothly, everything's O.K., Rovering is fine. How many Crews are still running on the same lines they were five, six or more years ago? Many are not running at all now. When things are on the move, when there is something doing, then we have keenness, and there is not a wide gulf between keenness and progress.

Tackling the BIG job then is to be recommended.

Dens need furniture and fittings. They can be made by the Crew themselves. You may be content to "raise the 'oof" and watch the jobs done professionally. Very praiseworthy, but is there any Adventure in it? Unless it be in chasing Jack Robinson for the cash for his dance tickets. We might not know how to build, but there are ways and means of knowing, and we can at any rate supply the labour to supplement skilled and expert advice. It would be, I am convinced, a tremendous stimulus to Scouting if every local Association had its own district Headquarters, a central place which would be the focus for the Association. Why not, Rovers?

Questing is really a very live and energetic job. The order or degree of importance is entirely in the plan of these chapters. The Rover's personal quest is the most important to him. If he can give some help to the Crew job well and good, and, if he believes conscientiously that there is a lot in the district idea, that is excellent. Anything that an individual Rover can do beyond his personal quest is additional work or service that ought to be highly appreciated no matter where it is done. Make your own quest something really "live" and vital. Far too many Rovers have been saddled with odd jobs in the past merely because they were keen, which is a nasty thought. We need "far more people, doing less in Scouting," to quote an important feeling voiced at a recent National Scout Conference.

Here are a few more specific District Quests worth thinking about: –

PUBLICITY IN THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION

*Report of an unrehearsed conversation between a journalist
and a District Scout Commissioner.*

"I'm very glad to hear your Association has decided to do something about publicity locally."

"Well, yes, the 21st at All Saint's Church told me some time ago they were on the look-out for a Crew Quest and, after a chat with their Rover Leader and Mate, they became the Publicity Patrol for the Association."

"What a great idea! I suppose they are doing this as a job of service as well as a Crew Quest? Good – I want to know how you are setting about this publicity business."

"The Press Secretary at I.H.Q., set the County off on it. He's very anxious to get a real system working in the counties, and a County Publicity Secretary keeps our own Association Patrol hard at it. If the Associations get down to it, the County soon finds the question of publicity becomes much easier. At the moment, publicity in the Movement is very patchy and not altogether satisfactory in many Associations."

"I suppose the first thing your Publicity Patrol did was to define its policy and method of attack on the plain citizen?"

"Yes, first of all we were determined to get the active sympathy of the general public in the town towards the Scout Movement. Secondly, we decided to try and attract more outside men and women as workers within the Movement. Thirdly, we decided to attract the boy as strongly as ever we can."

"That seems very concise, but there's a lot to do for one Crew, isn't there?"

"Oh, but they work in three sections, and as they are a large Crew and have the opportunity of as much manpower as they like from the District Rovers, they work all right. A Publicity Patrol for an Association is essentially a Rover job."

"What does the first section do?"

"This one is concerned with the first object of our policy, namely, to get Scouting over to the general public. The first idea was to get a regular Scout News and Notes column into the local papers, giving prominence to local groups and individuals, and reporting general progress in Scouting in the County and as a Movement."

"Yes, I know that. The man who does it in our district has never missed a weekly article in the local rag for fourteen years. Headquarters help a great deal if they are asked by issuing line and half-tone blocks, general information, news bulletins and so on."

"We invite the Editor along as a guest to the Annual Local Association dinner, and get him to reply to one of the toasts. Then after the local paper come the cinemas. This section gets the support of the local managers, and has the annual Scout Week Service in one of them. They help by foyer displays and putting on slides of local events and shows during their advertisement sections."

"A good idea! 'Character and Health' are worth putting over to show the opportunities in Scouting for Boys. The public are always interested in camping scenes with happy youngsters and a good deal of fun."

"I must make a note of that. Cinema managers are most useful men, and have given every encouragement to special Scout films. During the Annual Scout Week we had a special Saturday morning show of films, including one or two amateur cine films, and the Publicity Department at I.H.Q., has some fine Jamboree films."

"I suppose you have roped in all your photographs and cine-enthusiasts so that they can get down to making a pictorial and film record of Scouting in the Association?"

"Yes. They go about with their cameras and have already earned the praise of the Town Council for making a ciné record of some civic affairs too, thus putting over to the public the service idea in Scouting."

"It is a good idea, too, to get canvas placards and posters on your Town Hall and other buildings during the local Scout Week. You know the idea! *This is Scout Week! Ask for a programme at any shop free of charge.*"

"M'yes, and the Rovers see to it that things like the garden fete are well advertised, but"—

"Do they see that an Annual Report in the shape of a booklet is issued? The Secretary is usually the man who helps the most in that way. But it means more work for him!"

"Suffering cats! We *must* have one. Is it an expensive idea? The extent of our publicity depends on expense, but the Treasurer sometimes smiles where Progress is concerned."

"No! it does not cost too much. I saw the Brightlads' Association one the other day. It was called ABOUT SCOUTING and ingeniously put over the annual report and a good deal of information in an attractive way."

"We might manage that, I think. Will you send me one?"

"Delighted. But I say, your sections overlap, don't they?"

"Well, they do, but I think it is unavoidable. The second section concentrates on attracting outside people into the Movement. The biggest find was the Borough Surveyor, who is now the Association Chairman. I might add that we found an efficient Panel of Badge Examiners and Instructors was the best way to attract them in the first place."

"What kind of people do you get?"

“Oh! all types. Parents, the Secretary for Education, the various religious heads in the district, doctors, the fire brigade officers, policemen and chaps who work at the Town Hall. Even if you only get them *interested* it is well worth the trouble.”

“You can always approach the Rotary Club too, as well as the Y.M.C.A. and other similar organisations. If you like it is quite a sound plan to invite the local Road Club or Wheelers, and the local Rambling Societies and Youth Hostellers to be the guests at a District Rover Hot-Pot or Smoker.”

“Must think of that too. The third section overlaps here. The Scouters help most in attracting the boy and we work closely with the schools through the Secretary for Education and the teachers, who often give us much support. We distribute the I.H.Q. pamphlets and got Brownley, who’s an architect, to make up some splendid coloured posters for the Troop headquarters.”

“Have you tried to work out the percentage of boys of Wolf Cub age in the district who are Cubs and the percentage of boys of Scout age who are Scouts and then publicize the figures?”

“Is it difficult to get the figures?”

“No. Just get the figures from the education people and compare the Local Association Secretary’s figures. In our district the figures were 13.5 per cent, for Cubs and 11.2 per cent, for Scouts. Then you try to improve those percentages and compare your figures year by year.”

“I must try that right away. Thanks for the tip. But I must be getting along. I could talk about this and the County Publicity Scheme for hours.”

“At any rate it has been worth it. You have outlined a definite policy and some ideas to follow in an Association. The Publicity Patrol is mighty busy, I suppose?”

“They are. And they are Rovers who believe in doing things, especially in ideas which can help the Movement so much such as organised and careful publicity of the right sort.”

“Yes, none of your screaming headlines: *Are you a Scout? If not, why not?* and so on, I suppose.”

“No, but we *are* getting the sympathy and support of the public and attracting more boys, and that is the aim of the Publicity Patrol.”

And I shook hands with the Commissioner, and left him knowing that his Rover Scouts in his district were doing some valuable work.

In districts where the B.-P. Guild of Old Scouts is active and flourishing this kind of Crew or District Quest may well be tackled by the branch in co- operation with local Rover Scouts.

THE QUEST OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Ideas for a district winter Rover Scout programme need to be constructive and sound and I have persuaded one D.R.S.L. to let me tell you what they did. Their District plan revolved round the theme of Physical Education.

First of all the D.R.S.L. pulled out a little record book that was very familiar to my eyes. It was actually an artist’s loose-leaf sketch book, with every sheet something like a postcard, and therefore more rigid and hardwearing than paper. In this were particulars, gathered at all sorts of odd times, about every Crew in the District.

He collected particulars of every Rover’s activities in the sphere of Physical Education. He asked each Rover to say if he played Saturday games (or mid week games in some cases). What game? What club or team? From this questionnaire, he secured much useful information. He found out that rugby, soccer, cricket, athletics, tennis and hockey were popular games. Some had joined clubs, while others played for works’ teams, or those run by works’

social clubs, and others for Y.M.C.A. or Toc H teams. He found out, too, that many preferred cycling, and some were ardent club enthusiasts with a wealth of conversation about “Club 25’s” and “Flat Fifties.”

The D.R.S.L. also found out that Saturday workers – such as transport and shop assistants – frequently had a miserable time on their half-day off in mid-week and he did some useful work in fixing them up with games of some kind then.

Then, of course, there were some Rovers who were not keen about team or club games at all. These were turned into a sort of special patrol to help to organise and run Wide Games for the local Scouts, and picnics and games’ days for the Cubs. Gradually he got them all doing outdoor recreational work of some kind or other on their “day off,” and for the great majority that was Saturday.

That was a big step, but was only the beginning of the D.R.S.L.’s plan to make his Rovers physically fit. The next plan was to introduce Physical Education into the District in a more “all-together” form, and then into the Crews according to individual wishes.

He went to the Education Offices and saw the Local Organiser for Physical Training and said to him, “Look here, I’ve got a number of Rovers who would like to join a P.T. Class, and there’s a brand-new modern gym at the Grammar School which is doing nothing on a Thursday night. We will provide the class and pay an agreed fee per Rover, if you will provide the instructor and give us a regular class every week.” The Organiser for P.T. liked the idea so much that he offered to take the class himself.

That class was the high-light of the District programme. Fellows came along as keen as mustard with their togs and a towel at 8 p.m. and were thoroughly put through the mill for an hour or so, and then they had a shower after it. The ages of the participants varied from 16 to 42, and it was an understood thing that a Rover could drop out of anything he did not quite feel up to.

Incidentally, the D.R.S.L. persuaded the same P.T. Organiser and a Doctor friend of his to give the Rovers some useful talks on their bodies, and scientific and sensible ways of looking after themselves. He told them, for instance, that it is unreasonable to play Saturday games unless you are prepared to train for them and keep fit. Soon after this some well-known professional footballers came and talked about physical fitness at a District Round Table.

In case you are going to put forward that age-old excuse of night schools and “no time” and so on preventing you from following their example, let me say again that a Rover can find time for anything he *wants* to do. If he is the sort of Rover we need to-day in Scouting he *finds* time for night schools, Rover Scouting and anything else.

Nor did the D.R.S.L. neglect other phases of Physical Education. His district had one District hike during October on a Sunday for those who cared to go, and during Christmas they had a very jolly time in a Youth Hostel, accompanied by girl friends, fiancées and wives.

The local public library provided books on any and every aspect of physical education for private work in the Crews. Some Crews arranged table tennis or badminton evenings, and the cynic need not sniff and ask if this is Rovering, for it was all part of the District Quest. The making of simple gymnastic apparatus was actually undertaken by three Rovers for special work in one Crew. Two of the three were crippled and could not possibly use the gear they helped to make.

I cannot relate, for space reasons, all the good work that was done in the Crews, or the difference in personal health that this District Quest made to the average Rover in two ordinary Towns. I need only add that physical education can fill up a winter programme, either as a Crew or District, if you are prepared to put some time and thought into it.

With Questing one thing is quite clear. The individual Rover Scout, the individual Rover Crew and the individual District will all find their *own* opportunities of Questing. Every Rover, every Crew, every District ... all are different, and must adapt ideas according to their own conditions and situation.

So we leave Questing with one last thought. *Look wide – in all directions, and look upon Questing as healthy, mature Rover Scouting.*

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE SPIRIT OF ROVER SCOUTING

*“The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will gleam out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil crushed.”*
Gerard Manley Hopkins (*God’s Grandeur*)

NOW comes the time to add up our own account of Rover Scouting, to weigh up in our minds the value of it all and to clarify our thoughts about the ideals we are all striving to approach.

I have tried to depict Rover Scouting as it is, and not as it might be. For it is true that a simple tale of accomplishment can be of greater inspirational value to Rover Scouts than a million urges to go and do the right thing.

Our object in Rover Scouting is to place our aims and objects so securely before us that we can go ahead with Rover Scouting of the right depth and quality. We have need of Rover Scouting of a standard that is as high as a spring dawn-chorus of superb timbre, heard when under canvas.

Do we see our Rover Scouting as “the Vision Splendid?”

The Vision is in the Rover Scout himself and the way he lives his life. A young man; a Scout and sportsman; a cheerful, happy young man whose conscience, trained in Rover Scout ideals, can discriminate immediately between right and wrong without a quibble; a young man who tries to live a clear, clean life based on the Scout Promise and the ten points of the Scout Law; a young man to be thoroughly proud of as a friend, and comrade.

The trained Rover Scout is not by any means a little prig, nor is he a blackguard! He’s honest with himself, and knows exactly when and where he fails. He does his utmost to put his Rover Scouting into practice along the lines he has learned in the Crew. He does not tend to over-specialise in Rover Service at the expense of his own Scout training in the Crew, although he knows full well the place that service has in his life.

He concentrates on his career or job in life because true Rover Scouting demands that he should do so. He sees the other fellow’s point of view. He is sympathetic, and friendly, and happy. By his example, his ways, his personality, he impresses others with the thought that Scouting is a way to live fully and joyously, and *always* with adventure round the corner, waiting to be found.

Does this paint the vision too vividly! Does the Rover Scout never come down to earth? Are we in the clouds too much? Of course, the Rover must be practical. He’s a man, and human!

But the Vision must not be painted in oils of such magnificence that Rover Scouting in itself ever becomes detached from the realities of life. Rover Scouting shows how a man can live a decent and good life (not *THE* Good Life or *THE* Perfect Life) by insisting on a spiritual

basis for its practical training. This in its turn has the development of deep-rooted, staunch, sincere character in the individual as a leading principle. There is no set way to do all this. But the responsibility for working it out lies with the Crew, and it is the Crew's own fault if it cannot see Rover Scouting as "The Vision Splendid."

There is a danger in assessing all Scout ideals which we might identify as the creeping-in of romanticism. The ideals of Rover Scouting are not a fancy picture in the mind's eye. We do not ever want our ideals of Rover Scouting to become a maze of intricate poetic imagery.

We fail utterly in our purpose as Rover Scouts if we for one moment ever escape from the realities of Life.

"Escape" is the very word that describes the one state we must avoid, not only in Rover Scouting, but in Scouting everywhere. The Crew guards *against* "uniqueness" without losing one iota of its search for originality in its scheme of training. It also guards *against* "isolationism," and certainly *against* over-personality. The Crew impresses other Crews by the quiet strength of its own work, not by the fact that it does things differently from every other Crew.

* * *

In the same way the Rover Scout is not over-conscious of himself. He is certainly never afraid of himself (a warrant as a Troop or Pack Scouter will soon cure that). Nor does he ever see himself sympathetically, with vague emotions and a certain amount of self-hypnotism. This attitude has been seen more than once in the past in young men who have come into Rovering as a means of "escape" from a tough and realistic world.

If a Rover gets like that, and I've seen a few who have, he needs one or both of two things – a lily (plus a glass of crystal-clear water) and a kick in the pants by someone with large feet.

So the Rover Scout avoids dream-worlds and the construction of them, and especially the creation of stock images of Rover Scout ideals. Anything that savours too highly of "Escape" is to be avoided in Rover Scouting.

Life is by no means an easy thing, especially in Britain in these post-war years. The Rover Scout's ability to train himself to be an individual man, and a responsible citizen of character, will give him that superb quality of being able to digest, control and then transmute his living experience as a Rover Scout. Rover Scouting is a very vivid and full thing in itself, but not so vivid or full that it must needs ever overcome the Rover. For Heaven's sake, *don't frighten a good man off!* Go in for straight, hard simplicity. Make no bones about what you are after in Rover Scouting. But don't bleat about it to such an extent that it ever puts a teen-age boy, or a man, off Scouting. I've seen good potential Rover Scouts and Scouters lost that way.

Again we do not want the cheerfulness and happiness that are characteristic of all true Rover Scouts ever to develop into either flippancy or irresponsibility. A Rover Scout *has* responsibility – in the well-known parody, some have it already, others acquire it, and some have it thrust upon them – but it does not prevent him from having the time of his life refereeing a glorious game with his troop in camp, the rules of which may eventually involve the possibility of the complete troop sitting upon its Scoutmaster, if it is a happy camp. Nor does it prevent him doing many mad things for the sake of his Scouting. But he can always pull himself together immediately, and ask himself whether this or that is the right thing to do. In other words, he knows and understands Scouting, as laid down by B.-P. in *Scouting for Boys* and *Rovering to Success*.

If a Rover Scout is a Scoutmaster he knows that Scout discipline does not mean rows of boys in order, whistles, and barked orders. It's having the troop at your finger ends so that they would do anything for you, but are equally ready to come to heel at the same moment's notice if you say the word. Whistles are never necessary for Good Scouting. These are not new thoughts on Scoutmastership. You can learn much from an intelligent spaniel about the art of running a Scout troop.

Guard, too, against Rover Scouting ever becoming austere or forbidding, dull, heavy, pompous, didactic, stilted, or even a little clogged. It's easy to get the right approach if you go the right way about it. A Rover Scout knows how to use his common-sense.

Our Roving Scouting must be full of enthusiasm for Scouting – both for what Scouting stands for, and what it does – and it is up to ourselves to put rhythmic variety into our methods. If a Rover is melancholy, remote, faraway or entirely unreal – take him on a hike and show him he's wrong. Don't encourage the Rover who goes all hushed, religiose and esoteric! (Turn it up in the Oxford Dictionary). Show him he's wrong, too. But give a pat on the back to the bloke who's trying to run a weekend camp for his troop on 2s. 6d. a head. He's doing *real* Scouting.

You catch glimpses of the real Rover spirit in odd ways. For instance, a Rover working party for a County Rally Camp) – the digging of latrines – a sun of great heat – measuring up – laying sisal and water pipes – repairing bridges, and repairing gateways. A Rover Scout dashes up . . . oil, dirt, sweat and grin all apparent on his face! "Gosh! I've got an idea! Look – take five or ten gallon oil drums and use them for extra rubbish bins. Take the tops out with cold 'chisels . . . swill the drums out with paraffin . . . and there you are!" And he and his Crew make forty of them.

* * *

Estimations! Yes, for Rovers, too! And Joe, who in the modern idiom "swings it nicely on the ivories," has it. "Guess . . . no, I mean, just *estimate*, fellows! *Listen!* I'll play two or three bars of "Hot Momma" and you estimate how many notes I've played in the process!"

And it kept the Crew quiet for an hour or more, with much weighty argument when it came to checking up the notes on the sheet copy.

* * *

"Got a better one than that," says Jim. "Watch . . ." he throws a key-ring across the den floor, picks it up, dangles it once before the Crew's eyes and puts it in his pocket again.

"How many keys were there on that ring?" he enquires, triumphantly. Later he is sat on when the Crew discover that, in addition to 12 keys of all sorts and sizes (only three of which he used, incidentally) there were three button hooks and a piece of wire!

* * *

Or we see it at a Camp Site like Great Tower, near Windermere, for instance. It was morning, in early Spring, about 7 a.m. There was a sudden scratching at the window of the cabin. I looked, saw, and was conquered. It was a red squirrel. . . but he was gone like a flash. I opened the window cautiously about six inches, put a monkey-nut in my fingers and just drummed on the side of the sill without moving and without stopping. Red squirrel stood on a hump outside the window and didn't believe his eyes when he saw that monkey-nut. But he came all right. . . slowly at first . . . then quickly . . . up the side of the wooden cabin with a scurry of feet . . . then over the ledge of the sill came his crinkled nose, and bright, piercing eyes, and with a gesture he had taken the monkey-nut from my fingers and was off to the hump with it, sitting up on his haunches as only squirrels can, and getting on with the meal. Time and again he did it.

We noticed a curious thing about Red Squirrel. If he took a monkey-nut he would gnaw it in two and eat each nut from each half separately, making a gay old mess of the shells. But when he got a hazel nut, which had a much tougher shell, he would turn it round and round in his front paws until he found the weak spot there is in every hazel nut shell and then he would fix his claws in it and lever the shell open. "There's another little item for breakfast," he would turn round to us and seem to say . . . and what about another monkey-nut?

Here he is again over the window sill, when he heard my drumming on the edge of it with another nut. This time I saw something I wanted to see and that was his long ear tufts. Red squirrels have these in winter time and lose them in the summer and over the edge of the sill they looked like fixed bayonets.

These are the simple but homely incidents that make Rover hikes and camps memorable occasions.

* * *

And we see it at the Crew's Christmas Party for poor or crippled kiddies – at the week-end camp for unemployed men – on any troop or pack night – picking mushrooms or apples or soft fruit for distribution to grateful old-age pensioners.

We see it again on the Crew programmes – remember the hectic night of Skipper's joy ride when we all got secret instructions in Morse to meet in a transport cafe by the docks? After a thrilling launch trip by night down the river we were turned loose at a lonely place, and ordered to find a man with a coke brazier guarding a hole in the road, and he turned out to be a *Chinese*. And there was a chase on a bike, and another launch trip and a feed in an all-night transport café – and when it was all over Skipper made us meet his Chinese Scout pal who was in town! That was fun all right!

* * *

All this is but a glimpse of “the Vision Splendid.” In your own Crew you know all about it. And you know, too, that above all your Crew work, all your Rover Scouting in Practice, there is Inspiration, which is clearly based on the fundamental bedrock of Scouting principles. And I mean B.-P. Scouting.

How much of the success of our own Rover Scouting is going to depend upon ourselves? The answer is “All of it.” For B.-P. did not study tomes and tomes of adolescent psychology when he had the inspiration to start Scouting. He went to the Boy to learn about Scouting. He went to the same boy – just a little older – for Rover Scouting. And he understood him, knew what he wanted and what he expected from Scouting.

The fault lies not with Rover Scouting but in ourselves if we are ever dull . . .

Go on! Get down to it – *now!* And please read the preface to this book again. Here's success to Rover Scouting *in your Crew!*

THE END