

The Patrol Books No. 10

KEEPING LOG BOOKS

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.

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

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CHAPTER ONE

WHY KEEP A LOG BOOK?

SOME months ago I was invited to a meeting of a Troop in which I once served as a young Assistant Scoutmaster. As it was some twenty-five years since I had anything to do with that particular Troop I accepted without hesitation although all those members I once knew so well had long departed.

In those far-off days when I proudly wore a red plume in my hat, it was always the thing for the Patrols in that Troop to maintain Log Books as well as a general Troop Log kept up by the S.M. and his assistants. Great was the rivalry between the Patrols to produce the most attractive record of events.

I was highly delighted to find this tradition still a strong feature of the Troop and had been all along right through the intervening quarter-of-a-century. What a source of delight it was for me to delve into the pages of the various Logs of the middle 'twenties and recall those happy carefree days.

There in the rounded handwriting of one of the P.L.s of the time I was reminded of a long-forgotten crazy incident which took place at one Summer Camp when I dolled up as a "witch doctor" and led the campers in procession to the formal opening of the newly-dug latrines!

With the aid of the succession of Patrol Logs I was able to trace the history of the Troop. Everything was faithfully recorded. There was the date that "Bioko" finally succeeded in passing his Tenderfoot knots. It took him months to master the bowline! There too, was recorded the time when gawky "Lean Wolf" dropped his haversack (avec lunch) into a stinking duck-pond; the year when the good old Owls represented the Troop and came second in the District Camping Competition; the day when dear old "Frogs" French passed on to Higher Service.

I wonder how many Patrols, let alone Troops, these days could produce from the cupboard such loving, priceless records? From what I have seen of a good many Troops during my wanderings I venture to say that log keeping is the exception rather than the rule nowadays. I wonder why?

What a swell opportunity is being missed by so many present day P.L.s in the building up of a strong Patrol tradition. Are the grand times they and their blokes are having right now not worth recording? Are not the hopes and ambitions, the mishaps, the achievements of the gang, the snaps of hikes and camps worth keeping for those who follow on to turn up and read with pleasure (and perhaps profit) in the years to come?

As I write I have before me a small photograph of a Scout of about 14 years of age with ruffled hair, a determined set to his mouth and a merry twinkle in his eyes. Just an ordinary looking cove like the fellows in YOUR patrol. I wonder whether the person who took the snap ever imagined what a kick it would give to so many Scouts of later years to see what Bruce Woodcock looked like when he was a lad? How proud should be the Patrol that could produce a back issue of its Log and say, "There's old Woodcock when he was one of the gang." Is his Patrol of today, in fact, in possession of a Log containing accounts of the Scouting days of this tough British ring fighter?

Who knows, but what that freckled kid who recently came up from the Cubs and is now the "tail-end Charlie" in the Cuckoos may one day be Britain's number one test pilot. What a chuckle you – AND he – would get out of it if in, say, ten years from now it could be discovered from the Patrol Log that when he was a boy he was scared stiff of launching himself down an aerial runway or was never known to climb anything higher than a five-bar gate!

There are of course many other reasons for keeping a Log besides providing nostalgic memories for old-timers or for the inspiration and encouragement of new members to uphold the good name of the Patrol. Properly planned and maintained it can give every son-of-a-gun in the gang a chance to express himself by means of the written word in a freer manner than is seldom permitted in school, by pen or pencil sketches or with the aid of a box camera. Everyone can contribute their share. It can promote neatness in presentation and good craftsmanship – pride in one's work is often lacking these days. Discipline, too, plays a part for it is not a bit of good putting off making the entries until next week. Those amusing happenings we chuckle at today have a way of being forgotten in the rush of other things.

Observation also has a place in the fun of Log keeping. Scribes should always be on the look-out for the interesting story behind the hundred-and-one incidents which occur in the life of the Patrol. Journalists call this “having a nose for news” and more than one newspaper man discovered he had a flair for writing through having a go at keeping the Log as a Scout.

* * *

You may say this is all very fine but how does one set about starting a Patrol Log? . . . who should keep it? . . . what should go into it?

I hope that by the time you've read through the pages of this little book you will have found some of the answers to some of your queries and be rarin' to go.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BOOK ITSELF

Now, then, you budding scribes, don't make the same mistake as so many fellows of my acquaintance and get hold of just any kind of book for the purpose. I once knew a P.L. who bought an ordinary typists' notebook for the job and then wondered why none of his chaps took an interest in it. If you want your pals to take a pride in the Log then get a book they will be pleased to handle and do their best with. Let it be something that will last and not just satisfy a temporary whim.

There are several types from which to choose and for those of you who are having a go for the first time you cannot do better than acquire one of those Gilwell notebooks with stiff covers used by Scouters on Wood Badge Courses. Its size is very convenient and contains sufficient pages to accommodate a year's notes. It may be considered a good idea to keep each year in a separate book and over a period of time the Patrol should have quite a library of Logs of uniform size each bearing the year on the spine for quick reference. One advantage of the Gilwell notebook is that in addition to the ruled pages for written notes it contains a number of plain cartridge pages which can be used for sketching or for mounting snapshots.

On the other hand you may wish to keep the Logs of several years in one book in which case you can purchase what is called a “Minutes” book, the kind of book used for the recording of business and discussions of committees. The initial outlay may be a trifle heavy but considering the number of pages they usually contain and the permanent nature of these books they will prove economical in the long run.

For those with very limited funds there are several types of exercise books as used by scholars, but these are designed to give service over a comparatively short period and are not recommended as they stand. Having flimsy covers the pages soon become dog-eared but you could overcome this trouble by purchasing three or four at one time, stripping off the outside

covers, and punching holes down the spine sides so that they can be kept in one of the many types of loose-leaf covers.

But a Scout is supposed to be a handy type of chap capable of resourcefulness, and to those of you who answer to this description I would suggest you make up your own book entirely to your own liking. This does not necessarily mean learning all about book-binding. It is a quite simple matter and in the following chapter I will attempt to give you the know-how.

CHAPTER THREE

MAKING UP YOUR OWN BOOK

As I have already said, making up a book to your own requirements is fairly simple. At any rate it is not such a difficult task as you may imagine. I have seen some excellent examples of home-made Logs turned out by Scouts with the very minimum of tools and I myself have made up several as well as purchasing the ready-made variety. I have no need to tell you which of these two kinds I am most proud of.

Here, then, is a detailed description of a straightforward yet attractive style of book that any handy Scout can construct.

The Inside Pages.

My first advice to you is get hold of a *good* supply of paper while you are about it. As with any job there is nothing more annoying than to kick off with a certain kind of material only to find when you come to enlarge on the article you cannot match up with the material you started off with.

Furthermore, if you are going to make provisions for sketches, photographs, charts, etc., you'll require other kinds of paper besides the ruled sheets wanted for the written notes. So let us consider the various kinds in turn.

First of all the ruled pages. You will undoubtedly want more of these than the others so I would suggest you buy, say, 3 quires of folded, ruled foolscap which can be obtained at almost any stationery shop. This will provide you with a total of 144 sheets which should last you quite a while. Now a foolscap size is not altogether handy so I should cut off about 3 ins. from the bottom of every sheet. These odd pieces may be used for various purposes. Shopping lists for instance. Don't cut each sheet separately but a block of them at a time, using a *sharp* knife and a straight-edge. Thus trimmed your sheets should now measure exactly 10 ins. deep by 8 ins. wide and this size will determine the size of the book. By the way, leave your double sheets folded just as you bought them, don't tear them up into single leaves.

No Logs are complete without sketches. You won't want to do these on ruled paper except perhaps amusing little "thumbnails" down the margins. I advocate a good quality cartridge drawing paper with a fairly smooth surface, not *the* spongy variety. A good surfaced cartridge will be found suitable for pen and watercolour sketches as well as pencil work. You can buy sheets measuring 20 ins. by 25 ins. Get six sheets and cut them up into leaves the same size as the trimmed ruled pages, *i.e.* 10 ins. by 8 ins. These should give you a total of 36 leaves for sketches.

Snapshots, too, will figure in any worthwhile Log. You can, if you wish, stick these on to the same kind of plain cartridge that you've got for sketches but I would not recommend it. It is preferable to mount prints on to dark paper for this shows them up to advantage. Stout black paper can be bought for the purpose the same as you find in made-up photograph albums. The only snag with black paper is that you have to write the captions in white ink and this is not always satisfactory. Much better to go

for grey mounting paper or, if you don't want to go to that expense, why not try stout brown paper, not too dark, and with a surface you can write on in ordinary ink. I should buy sufficient of this to make 20 sheets of the same size as the rest of your inside pages.

If you wish to include maps and charts in your Log the best paper for these is the squared variety which can be got in foolscap size the same as the ruled sheets. Again, trim these down to the required depth. You'll need about $\frac{1}{2}$ quire of this at the most.

You now have four piles of paper. The next step is to collate or gather them together in some order. I usually do mine in this way; four sheets of ruled followed by one sheet of cartridge, then two ruled, one squared, two ruled, one cartridge, then back to four ruled and repeat as before. I prefer to have all snapshots in a separate section at the end of the book so that is where I slip in my block of photo mounting paper. Don't follow my procedure slavishly but make up your own book in your own way.

Having gathered up all your various sheets in one pile place one extra cartridge sheet on the top. This can be your inside title page which you can treat in a decorative manner. I have something more to say about this in Chapter Four.

Now set aside the pages for the time being and get weaving on the next part of the job.

The Covers

As one of the functions of these is to prevent the inside pages from becoming dog-eared it is advisable to make the covers of our Log really substantial. It is likely to receive some rough handling particularly if you are going to take it to camp, as of course you should. A flimsy covered Log carried around in a ruck-sack or kit bag will very soon take on the appearance of a screwed up copy of "Beano".

There are all sorts of materials from which to choose but for a long-life, Scouty article you cannot do better than plump for three-ply wood for the front and back with leather for the spine. So let's work upon those lines.

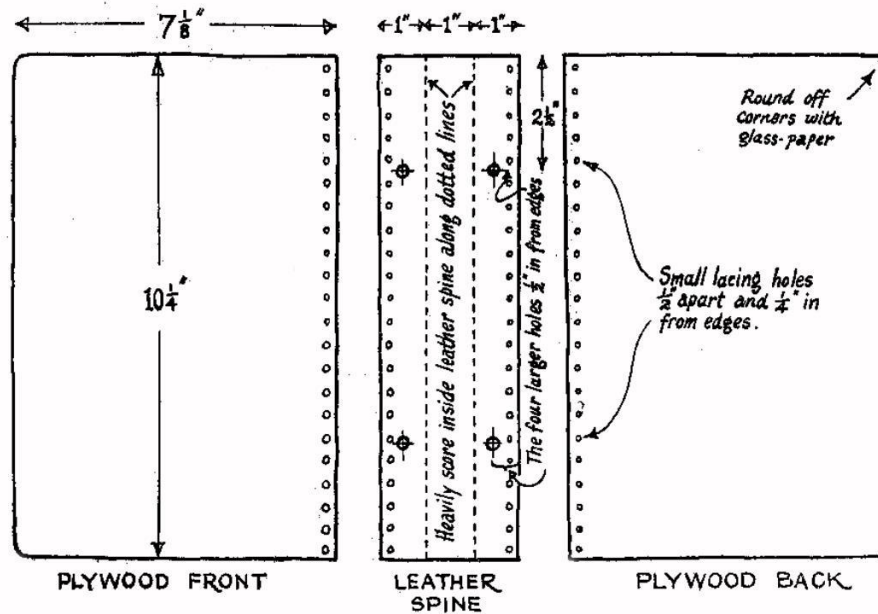


Fig. 1

First the spine. Purchase a strip of fairly stout but pliable leather – the sort shoe repairers use for soling ladies' shoes. For a book of the size we are working on the strip wants to be

10¼" long and of a width sufficient to go round the end of your stack of paper plus two inches for lapping over back and front.

Next cut two pieces of three-ply wood each measuring 10¼" by 7⅛". Now lay them down flat with your strip of leather between them and mark them up for the drilling and punching of holes as illustrated in fig. 1. These holes are for threading purposes. You will require four additional holes, two on each side of the leather strip, a little wider than the threading holes. Again fig. 1 will show you just what I mean. The threading holes need not be more than about a tenth of an inch wide while the four additional holes should be about ⅛" wide.

To lace the boards to the spine use thin leather thongs which can be obtained from dealers in handicraft materials, or alternatively, thin leather boot laces, and thread through and along the smaller holes as illustrated in fig. 2.

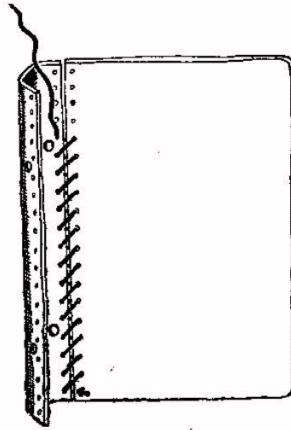


Fig. 2

Completing the Book.

Your covers completed, all that remains to be done is to wrap them around your stack of paper and fix in position.

Make sure the leather spine wraps snugly round the paper having seen that the ends and sides of the sheets are flush. When in position the covers should overlap the pages of the book by about ⅛" on the three open sides.

Clamp the lot in a vice or bind together tightly with some webbing or tape – nor string for this will damage the edges of your covers. Then with a drill or a sharp-pointed tool such as an awl, pierce two good clean holes right through the inside pages where you have the pairs of ⅛" holes in the leather spine.

To finish the job thread a doubled boot-lace through these two holes as in fig. 3. To tighten up the lace (and it should always be kept tight) pull loop A down flush with the hole taking up the slack by pulling on ends B. No matter how long these ends may be don't cut them short but leave them to hang loose. If you wish to add to the appearance of the book you can finish off the two ends of the lace with leather Turks Heads.

The three-ply cover boards would be greatly improved with a coating of clear varnish. If you wish to inscribe the name of your Patrol or have a design on the front cover you can either burn it on with a heated knitting-needle or draw it on in Indian ink – before you varnish it, of course.

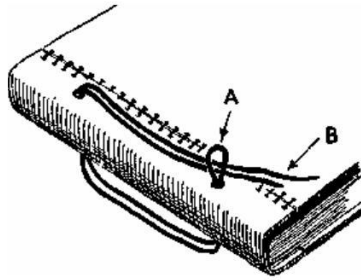


Fig. 3



Fig. 4—Suggested covers for ready-made note-books

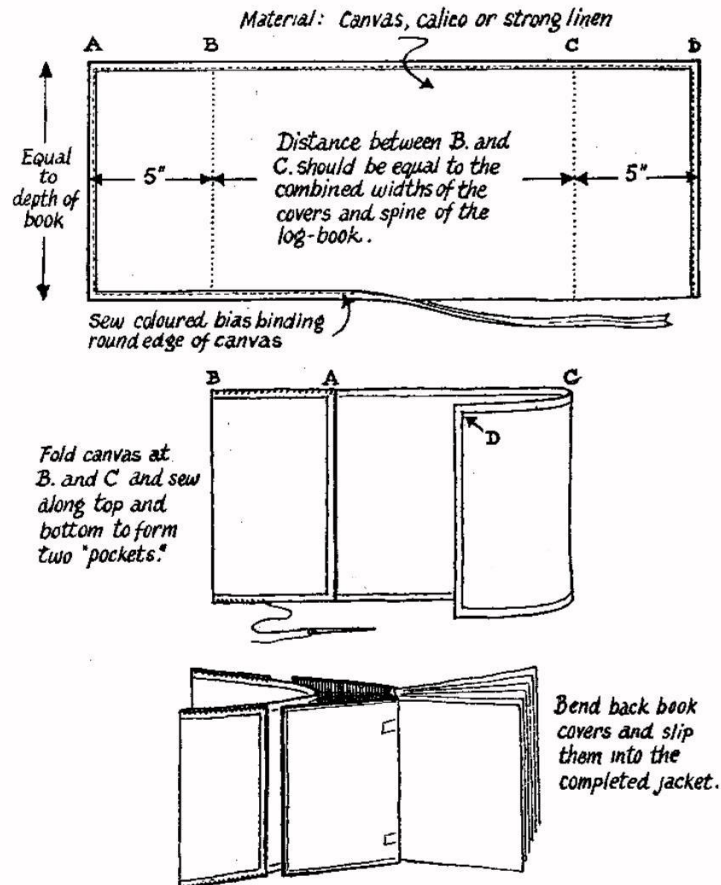


Fig. 5

For those of you who decide on buying a ready-made book here are details on how to make a slip-on cloth jacket.

CHAPTER FOUR

KEEPING THE LOG

LIKE every other Patrol activity the keeping of the Log should be the concern of all and not the task of one keen type. By this I do not mean that everyone should subscribe to its contents in a haphazard manner just as the mood takes them. The Patrol should appoint one person to act as the official Scribe or Log Keeper. And it does not follow this person should be the P.L.!

A Scribe or Keeper is rather essential in order to maintain continuity and make regular entries. A Log is useless unless it is kept bang up-to-date. It should also be the Log-Keeper's job to see that the diary notes, sketches and all other contents are of a fair standard and it should be his responsibility to see that the book is kept in good condition and not left kicking around the den.

Remember, the Log should be one of the Patrol's most treasured possessions just as a ship's or aircraft's log is regarded as a very important document and as such is always in safe keeping.

The Log Keeper can, if he so wishes, enter all diary notes but should always be willing to give others an opportunity of making entries especially if a first-hand account of some particular event is called for in which he himself did not participate.

He should encourage everyone in the Patrol to contribute items such as snapshots and sketches. A good Log Keeper will quickly find out what his pals are capable of adding to the kitty. If he finds a chap is particularly keen on mapping he should get him to record the routes of all Patrol hikes and charts of week-end camp sites. Another chap may be detailed to keep a look-out for interesting news items or useful hints published in *The Scout* or Scouting pictures which appear in newspapers and magazines and be given the job of pasting such clippings in the book. It isn't every Patrol that possesses a pet cartoonist but there's bound to be one Scout in the gang with a good sense of humour who can brighten the pages with those expressive little sketches called "pin-figure drawings".

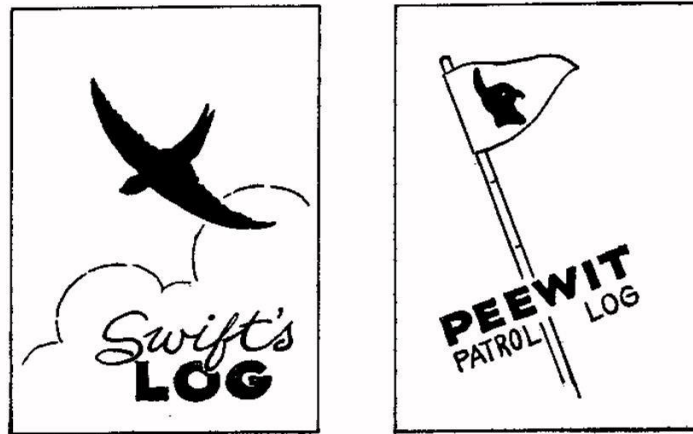


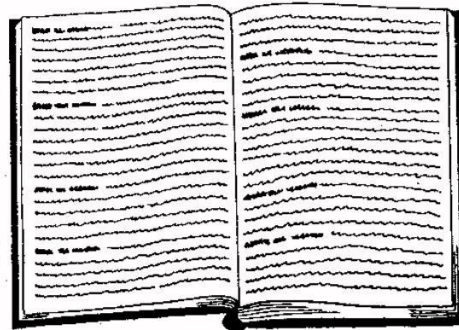
Fig. 6—Examples of main title pages.



Having got our talent lined up let's turn our attention to the style we intend to follow. Now the first page of the Log should set the tone and the standard of workmanship to be followed throughout. The best artist in the Patrol should be given his head to produce a really attractive title page. This need not be too ornate. Aim for simplicity, don't be too fussy. The kind of thing to aim for is a design which at once identifies the Log as being the possession of "such and such" Patrol. A few suggestions are given on the opposite page.

And now for a word or two about the written diary pages. The main thing to guard against is over-cramming. Give each page room to “breathe” by leaving plenty of white space or margin all round. This area around the written notes can either be left blank or can be used for the drawing in of those pin-figures I have already mentioned. This feeling of airiness to every page can be helped along by leaving a blank line between each diary entry. The dates themselves should be written in block letters and underlined or, better still, written in red ink. Not only does this make for an interesting layout, it also helps the readers to quickly refer to any particular entry.

The examples given on the next page will give you an opportunity of comparing a page crammed tight with writing with one treated the way I have suggested.



**BAD
LAYOUT**

*Packed tight like this your pages
will look dull and uninteresting . . .*

*. . . but treated in this fashion your
Log entries are more easily read.*

**GOOD
LAYOUT**

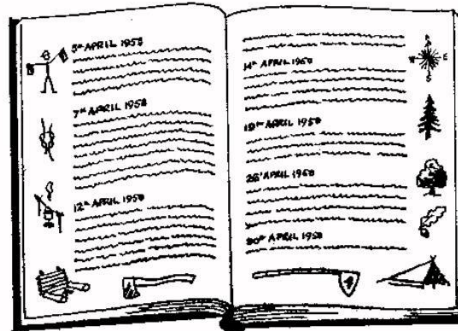


Fig. 7

Pay some attention also to the layout of the snapshot pages. Don't just stick the prints in like so many foreign stamps in an album, and don't overcrowd the pages. Make your prints form various patterns on the pages. Avoid mixing up the photographs of different events but give each occasion a page or a number of pages to itself.

While on the subject of photographs here is a suggestion you may think worth trying. Set aside a definite section as a “portrait gallery” in which to insert individual snaps of every member of the Patrol, adding any newcomers as and when they are invested.

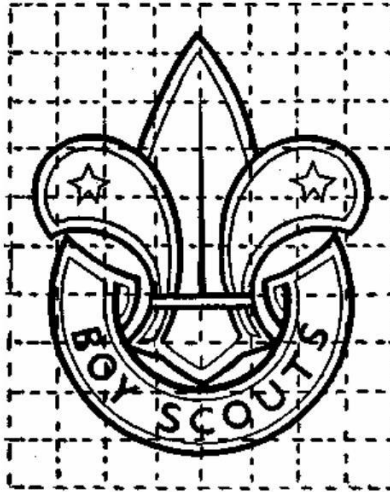
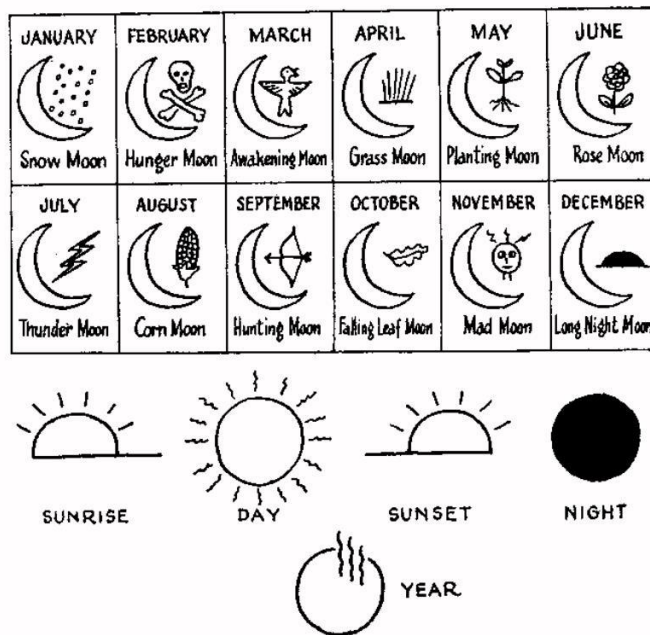


Fig. 8

This squared-up design will help you to draw the Scout Badge to the correct proportions.



Here is how you would indicate 7 PM on 12TH of JULY 1951

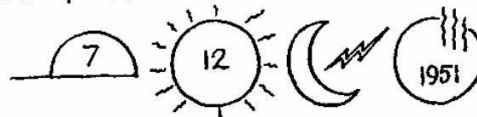


Fig. 9—THE WOODCRAFT CALENDAR

Give your Log Book a woodcraft touch by indicating the hours, days, months and year in the following pictorial fashion. These symbols are based on old North American-Indian signs.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE LOG OF THE FIRST-CLASS HIKE

1

HIKE reports are really Logs so a few notes about their presentation should therefore be included in this book, and from what I have seen of all too many this last year or two they will not come amiss!

Out of the last twenty reports I have checked only about half-a-dozen have been really *first class*. About fifty per cent, of the remainder were passable – but only just, while the balance were returned for complete re-writing.

Only the other month I struggled hard to make some sense of a report handed in by a 14-year-old Scout. So bad was it in every way that I gave up the struggle after about an hour. To start with the fellow had the audacity to submit the “thing” in an exercise book clearly issued to him for the purposes of homework or classroom use. On the jacket of the book for all to see was the name of the County Educational Authorities who had furnished the stationery! I cannot believe that even these days schools dole out exercise books for non-scholastic use. (Later, when I tackled the boy on the subject, he had the honesty to admit he had “scrounged” it.)

From beginning to end the pages were covered with scratchings, rubbings, blots, tears, smudges, and the remnants of several meals – mainly sticky ones. Now there is absolutely no excuse for this kind of thing for, as you all know, it is permissible for rough notes to be made in a small notebook during the hike and the final report entered in another book at the end of the journey.

Admittedly, the purpose of the report is not to test a Scout on his powers of composition, spelling, etc., but it is quite permissible for an examiner to assess the standard of a report on the educational background of the candidate. What would YOU say of a report I recently had submitted to me from a boy (nearly fifteen) who was a scholar at a County School? Here is an extract:

“Arrived at Shere. Had tea under a chessnut tree by a road leading to a church with a spire surrounded by a wall. Had an ice cream cornet and walked up a lane by a stream (I think it is called the tilingborn) past some cottages on the left then some fields through a gate into a park where there were some rabbits feeding. At the other end of the park turned right and then left then saw some cows and a horse in a field with a hedge on the left and a fence on the right.”

Whew!

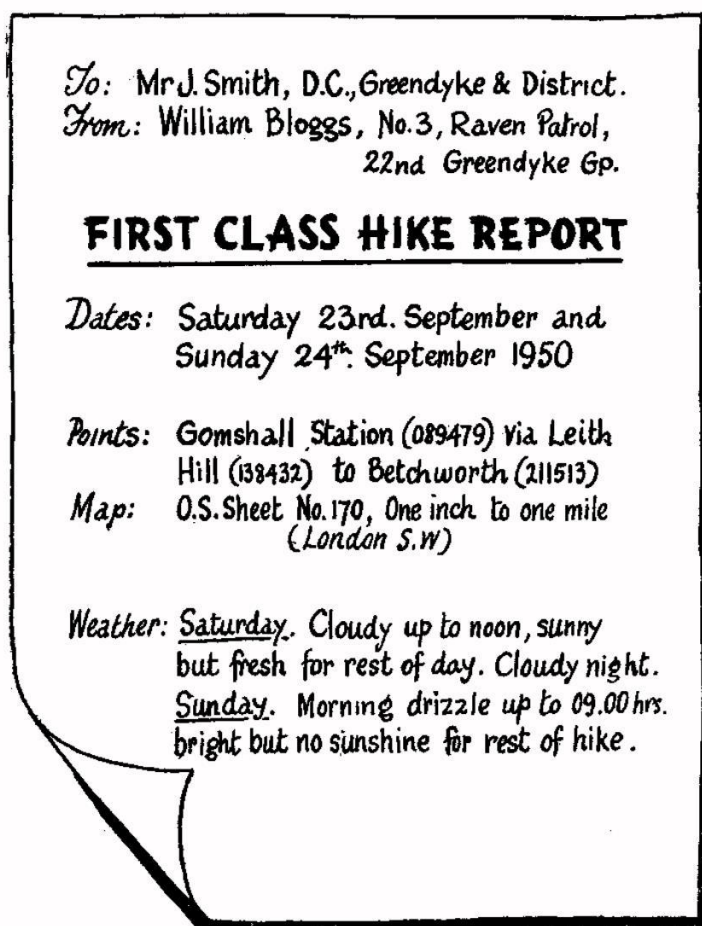
Believe it or not, he was astonished when I “ploughed” him.

Just as the First-Class Hike itself should be carried out only after a series of try-outs so should the report writing part of the test be preceded by some practice. As the Camp Chief says in the *Patrol Leaders' Handbook*, “It is an awful labour to do a report if you have never done one, but it is the easiest thing in the world to do a report if you have done it before, if you know the snags, and if you know how to set about it.”

So let us spend a little time on HOW TO SET ABOUT IT.

Firstly, the book itself. The limp covered Gilwell Hike Report Book is the thing but if you cannot obtain one of these then buy – I repeat BUY an exercise type of book. They are still cheap enough. Now this book should not be taken on the hike. As previously mentioned a small notebook or scribbling pad – small enough to slip into the pocket – should be used to record the rough notes from which the final report can be compiled later.

It is important that the first inside page of the finished report should give details as to who has written the log, to whom it is addressed (usually the person who has set the journey), date, weather conditions, map sheet, etc. An example as to how this should be laid out is given in Fig. 10.



To: Mr J. Smith, D.C., Greendyke & District.
From: William Bloggs, No. 3, Raven Patrol,
22nd Greendyke Gp.

FIRST CLASS HIKE REPORT

Dates: Saturday 23rd. September and
Sunday 24th. September 1950

Points: Gomshall Station (089479) via Leith
Hill (138432) to Betchworth (211513)

Map: O.S. Sheet No. 170, One inch to one mile
(London S.W)

Weather: Saturday. Cloudy up to noon, sunny
but fresh for rest of day. Cloudy night.
Sunday. Morning drizzle up to 09.00 hrs.
bright but no sunshine for rest of hike.

Fig. 10—Introductory page to a hike report.

Page two might well be taken up with a list of the gear and food carried on your person and in your pack together with the weight of each item and the total weight carried throughout the hike.

Page three should then commence the written description of the hike. There is no hard and fast rule as to how these descriptive pages should be presented but it is now the practice to divide the pages into four columns – one extra wide for the notes and the other three narrow for recording times and distances. The example contained on the opposite page will give a clear idea as to what I mean.

It used to be the custom to include a further wide column in which to draw small sectional sketch maps of the route alongside the relevant written notes. Personally, I never found this

method very satisfactory. Not only did it give rise to confusion in the mind of the person reading the report who may never have traversed the route but also one could never do justice to either the notes or the maps in the small spaces provided. If for any reason I find it necessary to supplement my notes with a small "thumbnail" map, e.g. to clarify the route through a tricky piece of countryside, I considered it better to draw it clearly on a facing page and to a fairly large scale. Again see the opposite page for an example.

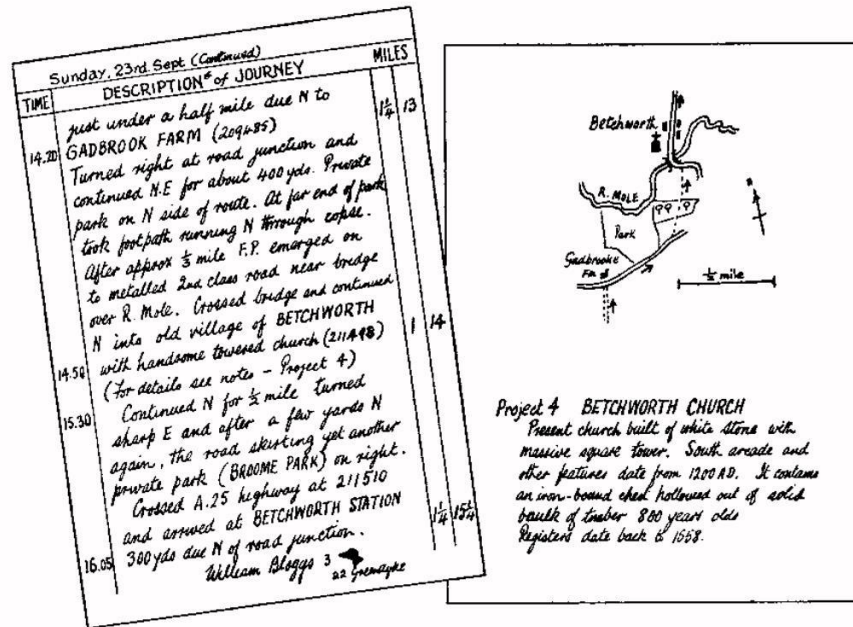


Fig. 11
Specimen pages from a First Class hike report.

While on the subject of sketch maps your report should, of course, contain a good, cleanly drawn map of the entire route. This should be done on two complete pages and not crowded on to one. The best position in the book is right in the middle where the spine threading is to be found. If this middle sheet or "centre page spread" as it is sometimes called, is plain paper or of the squared variety so much the better. Your map should be as accurate as you can make it and I can see no reason why you should not copy it from your Ordnance Survey sheet. This does not mean tracing it. Try keeping it to a definite scale throughout and don't forget to include the North point. You will naturally make use of those conventional signs you should have already learnt when you come to put in such details as churches, windmills, marshes, woods, footpaths, and what have you.

Sketches of interesting buildings seen *en route* and details of any special projects set you by the examiner should also be drawn or written up on separate pages and not mixed up with the text of the report proper.

Besides being a mere report of a journey of a number of miles your log should, if compiled in a decent fashion, give clear directions to a perfect stranger to the part of the country covered. He or she should be able to cover the same route with the aid of your report and sketch map and nothing more. If you bear this in mind the compiling of a journey report ceases to be a rather tedious piece of homework but will take on an entirely new significance. After all is said and done a real Scout is a person who can be sent into a stretch of foreign territory and return with all the information required by others who may want to follow the trail.

And another piece of advice. Do your journey with your eyes wide open. Give a clear idea as to the nature of the countryside through which you pass. By all means include such things as the types of vegetation along the route, the state of growing crops, the presence of a rookery in a wayside wood, permanent landmarks, peculiar features seen on the way such as an unusual stile, a novel gateway, roadside memorial or shrine. These things will help others to establish their whereabouts when following your route.

Conversely, leave out any mention of what might be termed temporary features. Nobody is interested in the fact that you “saw a man coming along the road wearing a beard” or that “a rabbit darted into his hole in a field on my right.” You might be tempted to state that you saw a chestnut mare grazing in a field two hundred yards beyond a certain village. But does this piece of information really serve any purpose? The chances are that if you went by that same spot on a dozen subsequent occasions there would be no sign of that or any other horse. Don’t run away with the idea that I am suggesting you should exclude all mention of wild life. Far from it. But keep such notes out of the “description of journey” column. Instead, devote a separate page to a list of wild birds and other creatures of the wide open spaces encountered on the way.

3

Reading through the reports that come my way I can tell at once those chaps who have derived pleasure from this all-important test of the First Class Hike. Some find it a little difficult to put what they see into words while others wax eloquent. But no matter, it is quite simple to detect those to whom the hike was more than just a hot sticky tramp to be got over as quickly as possible.

The following words were written by a Surrey Scout who did his First Class Hike while at summer camp in the neighbouring county of Sussex.

“Here the turf was soft and springy, clipped short yet ungrazed, studded with picturesque little flowers like the harebell with its blue frailty. And everywhere the prickly thistle to goad the last grains of energy from the exhausted traveller who thought of resting. (I like that bit.)”

“I paused on an earth mound about three feet high – obviously an outer defence work of the ancient camp which surrounds Mount Caburn – to sketch the graceful line of the Mount silhouetted against the sky with Firle Beacon in the background.”

And later . . .

“The woodland gave way to downland as I neared the top of the track and I passed through a gate with a queer latch which I sketched. I continued up the track which had steep 4ft. banks and turned East out on to the top of this line of downs. A strong breeze accompanied the heavy rain blowing in from the sea now visible from between the Seven Sisters and Rottingdean. The breakwater of Newhaven Harbour stood like a great arm defying the heavy sea. The calmer waters within gave shelter to a collection of small boats . . .”

Don’t tell me this fellow found his journey an awful “bind”. I am sure he loved every minute, every yard of the way despite the wind and the rain.