



# THE SCOUTER'S JOB

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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 21<sup>st</sup> century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

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## FOREWORD

PERHAPS the greatest tragedy of youth is to be young and not to find in someone older a mind that is open to the youngest thought, yet mellowed by time and experience and a wider and more enduring youth.

The author of this book writes from experience and clearly possesses that wider and more enduring youth which has made him such a successful worker amongst boys. In these pages he gives freely of his experience and points the way to happy successful service to those who would lend a hand in the great game of Scouting for Boys.

This volume is a valuable contribution to Scouting literature and I have a sneaking feeling that many old hands at the game will find help and inspiration in its pages.

**F. HAYDN DIMMOCK**

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

NORMALLY the Scoutmaster is one of a team comprising all the Scouters in his Group under the leadership of the Group Scoutmaster, but in the following pages I am writing largely for the Scoutmaster as an individual. The reason for this approach is that in these days of shortage of manpower there are Groups in almost every District that are without a G.S.M. Regularly, also, men with little or no experience of Scouting step into the breach to save a Troop that would otherwise fold up through lack of a Scouter, and their knowledge of their responsibilities, obligations and potentialities is of the sketchiest variety.

Where there is a G.S.M., then some of what is discussed comes within his province; it is nevertheless very desirable that every Scoutmaster and Assistant should have a wide general knowledge of matters that crop up in the everyday life of a Group if they are to pull their full weight in the Scouter team.

In the following pages I am dealing with problems that trouble not only the newcomer but also the man of more mature experience. Regularly, each year, I am asked questions about the matters discussed, and from conversations with my colleagues I think every District Commissioner has the same experience.

At the end of each chapter will be found the titles of books and pamphlets that may help those who would like to study the subject matter in greater detail.

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS**  
(With acknowledgments to P.O.R.)

A.C.C.	ASSISTANT COUNTY Commissioner
A.C.M.	ASSISTANT CUBMASTER
A.D.C.	ASSISTANT DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
A.R.S.L.	ASSISTANT ROVER SCOUT LEADER
A.S.M.	ASSISTANT SCOUTMASTER
A.S.M.(S.)	ASSISTANT SCOUTMASTER ( <i>of Senior Scouts</i> )
AK.L.	AKELA LEADER
C.C.	COUNTY COMMISSIONER
C.M.	CUBMASTER
D.C.	DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
D.C.C.	DEPUTY CAMP CHIEF
D.C.M.	DISTRICT CUBMASTER
D.R.S.L.	DISTRICT ROVER SCOUT LEADER
D.S.M.	DISTRICT SCOUTMASTER
D.S.M.(S.)	DISTRICT SCOUTMASTER ( <i>of Senior Scouts</i> )
G.S.M.	GROUP SCOUTMASTER
I.H.Q.	IMPERIAL HEADQUARTERS
L.A.	LOCAL ASSOCIATION
P.O.R.	POLICY, ORGANISATION AND RULES
R.S.L.	ROVER SCOUT LEADER
S. M.	SCOUTMASTER
S.M.(S.)	SCOUTMASTER ( <i>of Senior Scouts</i> )

**GROUP.** The complete unit of three Sections, Wolf Cub Pack, Boy Scout Troop and Rover Scout Crew, with the addition, if desired, of a Senior Scout Troop. The term Group applies to the unit even if lacking one or more of the Sections.

**SCOUTER.** Any person who holds a warrant.

**GROUP SCOUTER.** A term including the G.S.M., and any Scouter of any Section of a Group.

**DISTRICT SCOUTER.** A term including D.C.M., D.S.M., D.S.M.(S.), and D.R.S.L., but not Commissioner.

**SCOUT** (printed in italics) includes Wolf Cub, Boy Scout, Senior Scout, and Rover Scout.

**CUB, SCOUT, ROVER.** For brevity these words are used throughout the text in place of the correct expressions, Wolf Cub, Boy Scout and Rover Scout respectively.

**PACK, TROOP, SENIOR TROOP, CREW.** Similarly these words are used in the place of Wolf Cub Pack, Boy Scout Troop, Senior Scout Troop and Rover Crew respectively.

**GROUP SCOUTMASTER.** The term "G.S.M." means, where the context so requires in the absence of a person holding a warrant for this rank, the Scouter who, with the approval of the L.A. and D.C., is in charge of the Group.

**1**  
**THE NEW SCOUTMASTER**

THIS chapter is written primarily for the benefit of those who are either new to Scouting or who have but little knowledge of the organisation of the Movement. Scouters of more mature experience would probably feel far happier if they turned rapidly to Chapter 2.

For a start let us examine the qualifications that are required of any man who aspires to become a Scouter. Superficially they are not difficult or exacting – for a Scoutmaster he must not be less than twenty years of age, for an Assistant Scoutmaster, eighteen: he must have a general knowledge of certain books that will be mentioned later: he must be prepared to attend a Church of a denomination of his own choosing and set his boys a practical example of their “Duty to God”: he must do his best to order his life on the basis of the Scout Promise and Law.

These are the official requirements but obviously there are others – and they can be exacting. The man must have some sort of sympathy with boys: he must know, or be willing to learn, how they may be controlled, and how their superabundance of energy and enthusiasm may be directed into the Way of Life that is Scouting. He must acquire the hide of a rhinoceros so that his disappointments seem but pin-pricks, and the discernment of a Solomon that he may recognise and savour those flashes of real character that his charges accidentally allow him to see; he must have a sense of values that will enable him to strike an exact balance between one success and “x” disappointments.

He must be prepared to have his heart broken regularly and systematically; he must realise that 99 per cent of what he says is either ignored or promptly forgotten, and he must have sufficient faith to believe that his boys absorb the odd 1 per cent and are the better for it.

If the would-be Scouter is shaken by a challenge or deterred by a disappointment, then he should devote his energies to a social service less exacting than Scouting. If, on the other hand, a challenge stimulates him, or a disappointment spurs him to greater endeavour, then he will probably make a worthy recruit to the ranks of the country's 48,000 Scouters who serve nearly half a million boys. But let us discuss more mundane things ..... To what Troop should the new man offer his services?

In the majority of cases he comes into Scouting either on the persuasion of one who is already a Scouter, or because he is a member of a Church or School that has a Scout Troop attached to it. To such a man the choice of a Troop is rarely a problem.

It sometimes happens, though, that he becomes inspired to offer his services as the result of some outside stimulus; that he has no knowledge of the Scout organisation in his neighbourhood, and he is at a loss to know what to do. The man who can then provide him with the best advice is probably the District Commissioner, and the would-be Scouter can obtain his address from the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the Probation Officer, the Local Education Authority, or the Police Station.

Should you be one of the undecided group, then there are several factors that must be taken into account when deciding where your services can be put to their best use, but firstly it is necessary for you to understand the two categories into which Scout Groups are divided – sponsored and open.

A sponsored Group is one that is attached to: a Church of any denomination; a University or School; a Youth Committee of the Local Education Authority; a Hospital or Institution; a Works; or specifically to the following organisations – Y.M.C.A., British Legion, Church Army, Church of England Temperance Society, National Association of Boys' Clubs, National Juvenile Templars Council, Salvation Army, Society of St. Vincent de Paul in England, Regnal League.

Normally members of such a Group are members of the sponsoring body.

The overwhelming majority of sponsored Groups are attached to Churches, and it will be found that what might be termed “the degree of sponsoring” varies from Church to Church. In some, all members must be regular attendants at the parent Church and the Scouters must be communicants: in others, the Sponsoring Authority allows “outside” members so that they may become recruits to the Church.

An open Group is not attached to a parent body and in its ranks there may often be found men and boys of several denominations.

Should you wish to couple your Scout work and your religious obligations, then obviously a Group attached to a Church of your own denomination is a possible solution. If, however, you do not mind particularly where you give your services, then let us consider the question of manpower.

In any District there are usually some Troops that are in the happy position of having several Scouters, while others are unable to do full justice to their boys because they are struggling along with one man. It is on this point that the District Commissioner is qualified to advise as to where your services can be of the greatest value, and the man who is willing to work where he can do most good is certainly bringing the right missionary approach to his Scouting.

Possibly you have read that Scoutmasters are urgently needed, and so, when you offer your help, you are rather surprised to find that no one falls on your neck, and that you are not immediately snapped up and put to work with the boys. There is, of course, a very good reason for this, and one that you will doubtless approve – if you have any real interest in boys.

When a man applies for a job in “civvy-street” he expects to supply references, and he does not look on this requirement as a reflection on his character; exactly the same thing applies in Scouting. One of the things in which the Movement takes the greatest pride is that the interests of the boys must always be the first consideration. So, if you are asked for references, do not consider you are being slighted – the other 48,000 Scouters of the family you are joining have all been asked to prove their bona fides. Should you have held a warrant previously in another District, then obviously your future District Commissioner will want to obtain details of your past service from the records at Imperial Headquarters. Not until these requirements have been met can you expect to start work with a Troop. Remember, the genuine man can take pride in proving that he is genuine; it is the man who has something to hide who wishes to be taken at his face-value.

Having been accepted as a possible candidate for the training of a bunch of savage barbarians who will not – apparently – appreciate your efforts in the slightest, you will find that you are expected either to take a warrant or to become an official Instructor. A warrant may be likened to a “commission”: it is issued over the signature of the Chief Scout, and confirms the holder in his particular rank. An Instructor's certificate is issued jointly by the Executive Committee of the Local Association and the District Commissioner. Each remains the property of the Movement and must be handed in when the holder leaves. Some men, on one excuse or another, offer to “help” with a Troop but decline to take a warrant or to become an official Instructor: the services of such men cannot be used.

As already stated, you must have a reasonably good general knowledge of certain books; these are: *Scouting for Boys*, *The Wolf Cub's Handbook*, *Rovering to Success*, *Policy, Organisation and Rules*, *The Senior Scout Handbook*, *Over 15*.

Before you can apply for your warrant you will be expected to serve a probationary period of three months. There are several reasons for this, to mention two of them – firstly, it allows you to see what the work involves, the time you must give up, and whether or not you have any aptitude for instructing and controlling boys: secondly, it gives you time to get to know the other Scouters of the Group – and gives them time to get to know you – and for both you and them to make up your minds whether or not you can work together loyally and wholeheartedly.

Like any other organisation we have forms; they save time when they do not have to be completed in duplicate or worse. The application for the warrant is made on Form "G" – why "G" I do not know, unless it means "Got 'im" – and you can obtain it from the District Secretary. Should your Group be a sponsored one then the Sponsoring Authority must sign as your "Nominator". On completion the form is sent back to the District Secretary, and you must then display a certain amount of patience as it has a long and devious furrow to plough.

The recommendation for the issue of the warrant is made jointly by the Executive Committee of the Local Association and the District Commissioner. Some Executives have a warrant sub-committee, and in that case you may be invited to appear before it so that the members may see you for themselves. There is nothing particularly alarming about this interview; the members are all very human people who are deeply interested in Scouting, otherwise they would not be there.

Many Executive Committees do not meet more frequently than every second month, and if the completed form is sent in just after a meeting has been held, it may be two months before the recommendation goes forward. On its being approved by the Executive Committee, the District Secretary sends it to the County Secretary, and after making a note of the application he forwards it to Imperial Headquarters. They deal with it as rapidly as possible, but as they have to cope with some thousands of applications a year with a limited staff, it naturally has to take its turn. On being issued, the warrant travels back via the County and District Secretaries.

Warrants are normally presented by the District Commissioner or one of his Assistants. It is definitely an "occasion". If you are new to the Movement then by making your Promise you become a member of the Brotherhood of Scouts; if you have seen previous service then you will be asked to renew your Promise to dedicate yourself afresh.

Many District Commissioners favour presenting the warrant in the presence of the Scouter's boys; the reason for this is twofold. Firstly, it brings home to the boys that he is officially "their man": secondly, it shows them that Scouters are not a privileged class but are expected to make and keep exactly the same Promise as they themselves.

Although it is a serious occasion it is not one that you need look forward to with foreboding that you will make a fool of yourself. Whoever is presenting the warrant will explain to you very carefully what to do, and as he knows the effect that stage-fright can have on even the most unlikely person, will probably suggest that you repeat the Promise after him sentence by sentence.

If you elect to say it entirely on your own then be careful not to follow the example of a young police constable to whom I presented his first warrant. When the fateful moment arrived he came smartly to the half-salute, then paused; suddenly his hand shot head-high and he electrified everyone present by announcing – "I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I give the Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth".

During the time you are working out your probationary period you may wear uniform and your County badge, and if you have previously made the Scout Promise your Tenderfoot badge, but badges of rank should not be put up until your warrant has been presented.

The rules allow considerable latitude in the matter of uniform but whatever you do, make sure the combination you choose is *CORRECT* and *SMART*. Shorts that droop so far over the knees that they can be classified either as "long shorts" or "short longs" will never excite admiration; shorts that go to the other extreme and show a long length of raw thigh are just as unsightly. A Scout hat that sits down on the head until propped up by the ears is sure to incite ribald jests in some quarters about a "little man with a big hat", and one that perches on top of the head like a queerly shaped pimple will be at the mercy of every gust of wind. If you are to bring credit to the Movement then your uniform must fit and must be worn smartly; another thing, presumably you do not wish your boys to be ashamed to be seen out with you –

however untidy they themselves may be, they are the first to resent it if their Scouters look “scruffy”.

It is no longer necessary to stress that revolvers, swords, gaiters and riding breeches will not be worn, but it is nevertheless surprising how many Scouters make quite unorthodox additions to their uniforms. A glance at Rule 291, in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*, may save you the embarrassment of a word in your ear from your District Commissioner – or even from the Chief himself should he spot you riotously arrayed.

One last thought. If you are new to Scouting then you will soon find something that will probably surprise you very pleasantly – that you have a ready-made friend in every other man who wears a Scout badge. Getting to know people is often a lengthy process, but meeting with the joint interest of Scouting cuts out completely all the social gambits that normally have to be indulged in: you have a common link – The Boy.

**COMPULSORY READING**

Policy, Organisation and Rules  
The Wolf Cub's Handbook  
Scouting for Boys  
The Senior Scout Handbook  
Rovering to Success  
Over 15

**SUGGESTED READING**

P.O.R., Rule 291 and Appendix C  
A Challenge to Scouting  
How to Start a Troop.  
Scouting, Religion and the Churches  
What is Scouting?  
What I.H.Q. Does  
How to Run a Troop  
The Scout Movement  
Running a Troop.

**2**

**THE SCOUTMASTER AND HIS BOYS**

NO man comes into Scouting unless he has an interest in boys but interest alone is not enough, it must be combined with some knowledge and understanding of the psychology of boyhood.

I realise that in using so loose a term I am laying myself open to criticism from those who will say that “boyhood” has no psychology, that psychology is Something that is peculiar to the individual. In one sense this is possibly correct, but the true meaning of psychology is “a scientific knowledge of mental phenomena”, and our job is to try to understand the mental phenomena that exist in boyhood, in the herd as well as in the individual.

No Scouter must ever fall into the error of regarding boys as “men in”, for nothing is further from the truth. During their pre-adolescent period, they react to such utterly different stimuli, and are motivated by reasons, urges and appetites so completely at variance with those of adult men, that they might almost be considered a separate species. It is not until their post-adolescent period, when they are in fact “young men”, that we can apply adult standards to gauge their maturity, development and progress towards good citizenship.

Scouters therefore fall into three natural groups. (1) Those who work with a Pack and deal exclusively with pre-adolescent boys. (2) Those who work with a Troop and come into contact with boys who may be pre-adolescent, adolescent, or post-adolescent. (3) Those whose work lies with Senior Troops and Rover Crews, and who deal exclusively with young men classifying boys and their Scouters thus, it can readily be seen that a man's approach to his work must vary enormously according to the Section to which he is attached. It also supplies the answer to that oft-expressed wonderment – I can't understand So-and-So, he's simply amazing with Cubs but he can't do a thing with Scouts!” This is hardly surprising: the man who has a good “Cub-approach” will fail dismally if he uses that same approach on boys



who have reached adolescence, and the man with a good "Boy Scout-approach" will invariably find that he has to make a radical adaptation of his outlook and methods if they are to be acceptable to Seniors. Let us try to work out the reason for this. At birth a baby is a completely uncivilised being, and is motivated only by the most primitive emotions; its comfort – whether or not it is wet or dry, hot or cold; its stomach – whether or not it is hungry; and, of course, pain.

During his early existence a baby may therefore be said to lead a life devoted exclusively to the attainment of "pleasure", this pleasure being expressed largely in terms of physical comfort and freedom from pain. As he gradually develops he comes to an awareness of the world around him, and he weighs up that world solely in terms of its relationship to himself – if it provides him with his fundamental needs, and other needs that he is gradually acquiring, then subconsciously he regards it as a "good" world: if it fails to make that provision then it is a "bad" world. It follows, therefore, that during the first years of his life a baby is led to believe that the world exists for the sole purpose of providing him with "pleasure". When rooted so firmly in the subconscious mind this is a belief that is exceedingly difficult to eradicate by later training: in fact, in some cases, where that later training has been bad or incomplete, it never is eradicated – we all know adults who consider that the primary purpose of the world is to give them everything they want, and that the function of the people around them is to administer to their needs and to the fulfilment of their whim of the moment.

Normally, it is when a baby is approaching two that he begins to realise that the world is sometimes a quite contrary one, and from then onwards he learns gradually that his wishes have at times to be subjugated to the wishes of others, that he is not the sole and undisputed centre of the universe. As time goes on he acquires the knack of adjusting his own wants relative to the wants of those around him, thereby becoming to some degree a "social" creature. The pursuit of pleasure, however, is still firmly implanted in his subconscious mind and will be carried far into his boyhood years. Ludovici (*The Child - an Adults Problem*) sums up the position excellently: "In order to have his own way and to secure himself every pleasure his primitive impulses suggest, the child is prepared to seize any opportunity, employ any ruse compatible with his stage of development, and exploit any weakness, forgetfulness, or absentmindedness on the part of his elders . . . his appetite for pleasure never having to meet, from the quarter of his own ruling instincts, with any moral or other obstacle, he cannot at first understand why such limitations on his free gratification should be repeatedly imposed by the giants who have hovered round him ever since he can remember."

By the time a boy reaches Cub age he has made a considerable adaptation between himself and the world. He has learnt at home, at school, and in his social contacts, that his wishes have to be considered in terms of the wishes of other people, that he is one of many, and that to be acceptable to the many his pattern of behaviour must approximate the general standard of the company in which he moves.

The adult world appears to him to be a very dull affair, peopled in the main by very dull men and women who seem to be conspiring to stop him doing all the things he wants to do. He therefore calls on his imagination to conjure up a more exciting world – one not peopled by prohibiting adults – and so vivid is his imagination that either in a crowded street or in an empty countryside, he can see as living realities a host of characters that he has brought into being to lend the scene excitement and romance.

The use of the imagination is the foundation on which Cub training is based – the jungle theme that runs all through it, the identification of the Cub himself with Mowgli, the adoption of jungle names by the Scouters – and in that fact lies the clue to the approach that a man must have if he is to be a successful Cubmaster. His imagination has got to be such that he can really enter this jungle world: it is not enough to stand on the fringe of it and say – "there it is, in you go". The Cubmaster must enter it with his Cub; must be ready to show him its wonders and its mysteries; must be prepared to live a full part amongst those other inmates

that the boy's imagination can endow with sufficient life and colour to make them as realistic to him as is his Cubmaster.

As the Cub gets older the "pleasure principle" recedes more into the background, and he becomes dominated by a "reality principle". It is the gradual expansion of this that begins to make him a responsible being, learning to take his place in a world that makes demands, and has difficulties that must be overcome. As a result, he lives less in a world of his own imagining and more in the world of reality, so that by the time he is ready to go up to Scouting he is mature in the sense that he is ready for training that is factual, but yet again allows the full exercise of his imagination. During this phase he is prepared, to a very large degree, to allow all his major thinking to be done for him: there are still residual traces of his babyhood belief that the adults who surround him are all-powerful and infallible. He responds not so much to leadership as to appeal, coercion, and suggestion.

With the onset of adolescence he undergoes the greatest changes, both physical and psychological, that he has yet experienced in life. It is a time of considerable emotional stress, and until the physical upheaval that he undergoes has steadied and struck a balance, he may well give the impression of being an entirely different-natured boy to the one whom we have hitherto known. As he settles into his period of adolescence so normally the major traits of character that he showed in his pre-adolescent days re-establish themselves, although we may occasionally find – almost overnight it sometimes seems – that he has changed from a rather colourless small boy who was prepared to regard us as the fount of wisdom, into a somewhat aggressive individual to whom we have to justify ourselves.

It is while in this phase that he begins to respond to leadership qua leadership. He resents being treated as a "small boy" – quite rightly – but is readily amenable to reason, and if his previous training has been sound, to a just, firm discipline. He wishes to have a much greater say in the management of his affairs, and derives this through the medium of the Patrol – and Troop-in-Council, and later, the Court of Honour. He is capable of giving affection and loyalty in unbounded measure – it matters not whether the object of it is old or young, strong or sickly, an Adonis or a Caliban: once given, that affection will survive almost all tribulations other than sarcasm or deceitfulness.

As he progresses through the Troop his qualities, abilities, and aptitudes become apparent. Some, such as leadership, are inherent, and are brought out only by giving him responsibility and an opportunity to lead: others, such as his practical Scouting, are learnt: yet others, his Scout Spirit, his appreciation of honour, his outlook as a Scout, are faithful copies of the pattern he has seen in his Scouters. It has been said that the parents are mirrored in the child, it is equally true that the Scouters are mirrored in their Scout.

Where many a Scoutmaster makes a fundamental error in his relationship with his boys is in judging them in terms of his own likes and dislikes, his own needs, his own sense of values. Not for one moment must a man reason that because he himself lacks the urge to roll on the floor in a flailing mass of arms and legs, his charges should be similarly inhibited: or that because he prefers a comfortable bed to sleeping rough in a homemade shelter, his boys should share his preferences. As I have pointed out, boys are not "men in miniature", and no amount of wishful thinking will ever make them so.

The principle wants of boyhood are simple and uncomplicated. They want something to do and it must be spiced with excitement, adventure and romance – in its literal not its amatory sense. They like to gather in "gangs", and only a full working of the Patrol system will satisfy this need. They wish to progress, admittedly with a minimum of personal effort more often than not, but the wish is there and must be catered for. They want opportunities of showing their prowess – a form of exhibitionism common to all of us – and a proper use of the badge system and of Scout games can satisfy this urge.

The above are the things that boys need as a Troop, as a collection of Patrols, but there are also the multitudinous things they need as individuals. In no two boys can there be an exact

similarity of character; the characteristics that go to make up human nature are so numerous, and the intensity of each can vary over so wide a range, that even without the powerful influences of environment, home, and physical dissimilarity, no character could be expected to be an exact counterpart of another. As I stressed in *The Man and The Boy*, it is essential for the Scouter who wishes to understand his boys to become acquainted in fine detail with the character of each of them, as well as to assess his home conditions, parental training, and environmental influences.

I have often been asked how this may be done by a Scouter with no training in psychology, and will therefore describe a simple method that should enable any man to make a rough survey of all the boys in his Troop.

On the left side of a large sheet of squared paper he should write the names of his boys, and across the top the list of factors, vices and virtues in the light of which he wishes to assess them. Thus:

<i>Name</i>	<b>Home Conditions</b>	<b>Parental Training</b>	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>General Behaviour</b>	<b>General Knowledge</b>	<b>Laziness</b>	<b>Honesty</b>	<b>Truthfulness</b>	<b>Punctuality</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Courtesy</b>	<b>Cleanliness</b>	<b>Loyalty</b>
JOHN														
JAMES														
JEREMIAH														
JEEP														
JINGE														

The few headings I have listed will give an idea of some that may be taken into account and it can be extended to any degree that the Scouter wishes. Scoring is another matter about which he can please himself. For instance, "Home Conditions" may be indicated by one of five straight headings – excellent, good, indifferent, bad, very bad; alternatively, a much more extensive analysis can be made by listing such details as brothers and sisters, whether one or both parents go out to work, whether there is "outside" influence contributed by relatives or a lodger living with the family, and so on.

"Parental Training" can be marked as good, indifferent or bad, or a more concise evaluation entered showing whether both parents co-operate in the training, or if it is dominated by one of them; whether the training is enlightened or whether it is on the "hit or miss" principle. Obvious virtues or vices in the parents may be tabulated since it is reasonable to suppose that these will, to some degree, be mirrored in the boy.

"Neighbourhood" can be marked solely as good, indifferent or bad, or the classification may be extended – agricultural, good or poor residential, slum, crime area, industrial, council flats, housing estate.

"School" lends itself to its standard nomenclature but in addition the "character" of the school can be included – it is a noticeable fact that at some schools the majority of boys are infected with "smut" and yet not at others. The amount of homework that is customarily set is also a worthwhile item to record.

“General Behaviour” is important, since it is, to a degree, the outward and visible expression of the sum of the boy's characteristics. A good yardstick against which to measure this behaviour is the extent to which it is necessary to “tell him off” on Troop nights. A convenient marking is 10 for exemplary behaviour ranging to nothing where the boy is an unmitigated nuisance.

“General Knowledge” is indicative of a boy's capacity for indirect learning – by experience, observation, hearsay – and it is therefore a pointer to the amount of Scouting knowledge he is likely to acquire without direct instruction. The boy may be listed as being well, indifferently, or badly-informed, or by careful study a far more accurate assessment may be arrived at and shown by a numerical value.

Some vices are easier to evaluate than their opposing virtues. Thus it is far easier to determine the extent to which a boy is lazy than the degree to which he is industrious, since it is possible for him to be thoroughly lazy, never industrious, yet always “busy”. Again, it is simpler to decide the extent to which a boy is un-cleanly in his habits than the degree to which he is cleanly.

Other characteristics, such as extroversion-introversion, truthfulness-untruthfulness, loyalty-disloyalty, punctuality-unpunctuality, reliability-unreliability, morality-amorality, amenability-awkwardness, submissiveness-obstinacy, immaturity-precociousness, and so on, can be marked down on a basis of plus 5 (in black ink) for a dominant virtue, to minus 5 (in red ink) for a vice in equal strength.

In many cases an extensive study of the boy will be necessary to decide the DEGREE to which he possesses any good or bad characteristic. For example, under the heading “Honesty”, we may have one boy who considers “findings-keepings”; another who would hand over to authority a half-crown he had found but keep a pound note; yet another who would pocket a halfcrown but hand in a pound note.

Submissiveness and obstinacy are other traits about which it is easy to be mistaken. We may, on occasions, mark a boy as submissive only to find, months later, that he has been amenable solely because nothing about which he holds strong feelings has been a bone of contention.

Alternatively, any rough Scout game will enable an observer to arrive at certain conclusions in a very short time. He will be able to see those boys who do not hesitate to tackle others who are noticeably their physical superiors. He will see the “timid” boys who hover on the outskirts of a scrimmage but rarely enter it: the boys who are generous in defeat and those who are not: the boys who play fair, whatever the odds, and those who see no harm in a little bit of cheating.

I am not claiming that such a chart is a complete psychoanalytical study, very far from it. It can, though, serve several useful purposes.

At one time or another we have all suffered from a man's total incapacity to sum up his boys. We may ask – “What's young So-and-So like?” – to be told – “He's not a bad sort of kid” – an answer that possibly leaves us more at sea than ever, since we have privately decided that he is a complete stinker, whereas his S.M. has decided to be charitable.

Almost all Scouters are guilty of a “spot-analysis” of their boys – “Who's the best man for the job?” – “He is” – “Why?” – “Oh . . . because it's right up his street!” But would it be right up his street if his abilities and shortcomings were weighed in critical balance? A boy might have high credit marks under the headings submissiveness, but however pleasing his personality, he would be a poor choice to staff say, a sale of work stall if he had equally high markings on the debit side under honesty, reliability and truthfulness. Similarly, a boy with a high rating for timidity, lack of initiative, immaturity, would be a psychological misfit for a task would require him to assume leadership in a moment of danger, however well his failings were camouflaged under a host of sterling virtues.

Consider also the new man who joins the Scouter all his knowledge of the boys is to be gained in the hard of "find it out for yourself", it will be many months before he is able to make any useful suggestion towards helping a individual boy. If, on the other hand, he has access to a analysis that shows the strengths and weaknesses of every boy in the Troop, if he is able to see just what characteristics it desirable to eliminate, and on that same analysis the virtue he can mobilise to help effect that elimination, then immediately he can begin to pull his weight in the Scouter team.

At first glance the compilation of such an analysis may seem a formidable task – but is it? One of the most important jobs of Scoutmastership is to study the individual boy and the conditions under which he is growing up, to ascertain his needs, to bring out those things in his character that are worthwhile and to help him to recognise and discard those that are not. If the Scoutmaster is doing this conscientiously, then surely the work of compiling an analysis is limited merely to the writing down of his conclusions?

Favouritism is a very natural and human failing. In our everyday lives we choose our friends because we like there better than other people, and there is no harm in allowing that preference to be apparent. If carried into Scouting, however, favouritism is a canker that can undermine and wreck even the most well-ordered Troop in a minimum of time.

It is obvious that in any collection of boys some will appeal to the men in charge of them more than others – the fault is in allowing this to show. Boys are amazingly quick to recognise any symptom that suggests favouritism and the resent it bitterly.

However much a Scouter may be on his guard against showing a preference for any individual boys, there is always the danger that it may become obvious in unintentional ways: or alternatively, that while not having any favourites he may allow it to be seen that he has some very definite "un-favourites". Two examples will suffice to show what I mean.

At a Troop meeting the S.M. was making his inspection and asked a pleasant, bright-looking youngster why he was not wearing garter tabs. The boy told an amusing story of his dog chewing one of them up while members of his family chased it from room to room, and the S.M. passed on with a laugh. A minute or two later, without any questioning, he told a rather sullen-looking boy, also without tabs, that he was "half-naked and letting his Patrol down.

The second example was on the occasion of a Troop quiz on Scouting matters. It was painfully obvious to the outside observer that whereas some boys were regularly allowed to get away with a half-answer or a clever begging of the question, others had either to answer correctly or forfeit their mark.

In neither of these cases was there any deliberate favouritism, and each Scouter would have been horrified had it been suggested to him that he was showing a marked liking for some boys and a distinct aversion to others. But these details do not pass unnoticed by the boys, and in the quiz game, one whose answer had been disallowed observed to his neighbour with a certain bitterness – "if I'd been So-and-So I'd have got a mark for that".

Some unthinking Scouters indulge in almost open favouritism that they rationalise to themselves in a variety of ways: thus a boy is selected for special treatment because he is "First Class", "a P.L."; because he "needs bringing out a bit", "has a thin time at home". Such men often use these rationalisations so much that they come to believe them – but nobody else does.

The tragic thing is that they themselves destroy the very thing they hope to gain. The primary motives that prompt favouritism are, presumably, a strong liking for the boy and a wish for this feeling to be reciprocated, but it does not work out that way. The boy may be prepared to accept the status quo, either because he does not know how to deal with the situation, because his self-esteem is flattered, or because material advantages accrue, nevertheless he knows only too well that the man is offending the strict code of honour that prevails amongst boys and those who work with them, and he therefore tends to despise the man for his fall from

grace. The other boys bitterly resent the advent of the favourite<sub>1</sub> and do not hesitate to make it known to the one chosen. He may have been the most popular boy in the Troop but he will very soon become the most unpopular, and will then turn his resentment on to the man who is fundamentally responsible. In the meantime, the rest of the boys have seen the man's deviation from the code of honour, and as he has shaken one of their most cherished beliefs they tend to withdraw their trust.

A classic case resulted in an A.S.M. almost wrecking a long-established, well-run Troop in the brief fortnight of a summer camp. For family reasons the S.M. was unable to be there, and the camp was in the charge of two A.S.M.s – one a newly warranted youngster who had grown up through the Group, the other some years his senior who had only lately come into Scouting. On account of the age difference the older man, wrongly, was put in charge.

He soon developed an attachment to two boys, was always hovering in their neighbourhood, and he granted them privileges that were denied to the other boys. When a camp activity was being discussed, their opinions were asked first and their wishes deferred to: it was as if the camp were being run for their sole benefit.

The younger A.S.M. saw the way things were heading and spoke to the other about it, but he shrugged it off and rationalised the position to his own satisfaction by saying that they were the two boys with the most camping experience. Long before the end of the fortnight the Troop was in a state of ferment; several boys asked permission to go home but were not allowed to do so.

When eventually they did return, the S.M. saved his Troop only by persuading the older A.S.M. that he was not the type of man who should be in Scouting, and by transferring the two “pets” to other Troops – then followed many months of hard work to regain the standard that had prevailed before the disastrous camp took place.

Arising out of the question of favouritism, I am often asked whether or not it is advisable for a boy to be in a Troop where his father is a Scouter. If the father is S.M., I am against it if it is possible for the boy to belong to another: if the father is A.S.M. it is not so important. The reason for this is not because the S.M. father normally indulges in favouritism, but because he usually leans over backwards to show that there is no favouritism, with the result that the boy has rather a thin time – his tests are often made more difficult than those of the others, and he is usually the last to be chosen for any treat or privilege. In fact, an S.M. father recently told me proudly that whatever knowledge his son displayed when he came for a test, he always failed him the first time. This is not only unfair but is bad training.

I do not propose to discuss the methods of approach to any particular type of boy: some of these types, and suggestions for dealing with them, I have set out sufficiently fully in *The Man and The Boy* for the Scouter to formulate his own ideas. There are, however, some general considerations that are worthy of thought.

“Army” methods can never pay dividends in Scouting – firstly, because there is no guardroom just around the corner when anyone revolts against such methods; secondly, because men are usually in the Army because they have to be, while boys are in Scouting because they want to be.

When men are herded together because they have no other option, the relationship between them and the men in charge of them is supremely unimportant – in fact, we had a saying in the Prison Service to the effect that a popular warder was not doing his job properly. But where a voluntary organisation is concerned there must be both liking and understanding between those who lead and those who are led if any worthwhile results are to be achieved.

This is particularly true of our own Movement. Scouting is a Brotherhood of men and boys who are trying to lead a Way of Life within clearly defined limits. If a boy's Scouters give him reason to think that he is expected to adhere to the Promise and the Law but that they themselves, as adults, are exempt from it, then – quite naturally – the boy will reject both the

Promise and the Law as being just words, a mere formality. There is no conscious reasoning on the part of the boy in arriving at this conclusion, it is subjective. He is taught – “A Scout is loyal . . .” – and then possibly hears his own Scouter spiritedly criticising the G.S.M. in a place other than the Group Council. He learns – “A Scout is a friend to all...” – “and then hears the man who taught it to him say – “I hate the Germans ... Jews... Americans... R.G.s . . . Protestants . . .” He has come to believe, with difficulty, that” – “A Scout obeys the orders . . .” – and then sees men who have made the same Promise as himself disregarding orders and making their own rules.

Scouters who consider that living up to the Promise and the Law is something that is all right for the boys but all wrong for themselves are an undermining influence in Scouting: they would render the best service to the Movement by getting out of it.

If boys are ever to attain, or even understand properly, the objects and ideals on which Scouting is based then there are two “musts”: firstly, that a boy must see in his Scouter a man who is really trying to practise what he preaches; secondly, that he must like him.

It is a well-known psychological fact that boys learn far more rapidly, and with a much deeper belief in what they are taught, if they can have confidence in and feel affection for the man who does the teaching. How then is the Scouter to win both the confidence and affection of his boys? Where confidence is concerned, the answer is simple – by giving them reason to have confidence: with affection, the answer is paradoxical – by never trying to get it.

The man who deliberately sets out to obtain the affection of anyone rarely wholly succeeds – we all tend to be rather wary of a person who seems to be making an undue fuss of us – and this applies to a very great degree where boys are concerned, their affection is not just any man's for the asking. The first essential is to establish confidence by being self-confident; no one can have a great deal of faith in a man who dithers and wavers when there is a decision to be made. The second requisite is reliability; a boy likes to think, has a right to think, that when his Scouter says he will do something, will be somewhere, that he is expressing a firm determination and not a vague possibility. Thirdly comes consistency; not chiding for a thing one day and passing it off with a shrug the next, not being firm one moment and vacillating another, not blowing hot and cold according to the state of the liver. Each boy likes to feel that he knows his exact relationship with his Scouters, and he is both mystified and hurt if this relationship suffers violent fluctuations due to no fault of his own.

If these essentials are observed then the boy's affection will follow as a matter of course. It will not be of rapid growth, and its intensity will vary according to the capacity of the individual boy, and the degree to which he feels that the man is interested in his affairs, his problems, his difficulties, and his progress.

Some Scouters always give one the impression of being far too busy to have time to bother about the individual boy. We all know their stock phrases – “don't bother me now, can't you see I'm busy?” – “see me later” – “good heavens, you're always asking questions!” What a pleasing contrast is the man who is always willing to pause in what he is doing to give a courteous answer to *ANY* question by *ANY* boy, realising that the most important thing in Scouting is the first syllable. A boy does not ask questions without a motive. It may be a desire for knowledge: it may be a polite way of making himself conspicuous to remind a Scouter that he has promised to test him in some subject: it may be just that he wants someone to take notice of him, to give him a moment of thought. What man would intentionally be found lacking when one of his boys thought he was worth appealing to?

A man who has taken the trouble to gain the affection of his boys will find his work made far simpler. We all wish to please someone we like; we all wish to be at our best in front of people whose good opinion we value: we are all unwilling to hurt our friends deliberately. This does not mean, of course, that a boy is to be expected to run round in small circles doing his best to please his S.M. – nothing could be more unpleasant, more unnatural, or more disconcerting – but it does mean that any order the man may give, any wish he may express,

will make its impact in terms of a personal relationship, and not solely on the impersonal grounds of authority.

And so to discipline...

In the rather distorted age in which we live, the mere mention of discipline causes many psychopathic morons to throw up their hands in horror and exclaim – “never!” To them, discipline has no deeper meaning than a man standing over a small child with a large stick, waiting for an excuse to exercise his sadistic instincts. Could anything be further from the truth? That is punishment – discipline is being attached to a teacher for education; obeying a formal set of rules; being subject to authority. The word is derived from the same source as “disciple” – one who learns from another – and to employ it in so loose a sense that it covers corporal punishment is to stamp the user as one who has but little knowledge of what he is talking about.

In any community there has to be discipline, as we see from the fact that a police force is necessary to ensure that the laws of the land – the formal set of rules – are adhered to. So, in a Scout Troop, a formal set of rules has to be established and maintained for the benefit of everyone who belongs to that Troop, man or boy, and the extent to which that formal set of rules is kept will mark the degree of discipline or indiscipline.

The wise Scouter sets and demands a high standard: firstly, because his own self-respect will not allow him to be satisfied with less; secondly, because he will find it difficult, if not impossible, to carry out the duties for which he has been appointed if everyone in the Troop decides for himself what his standard of conduct shall be.

Some Scouters fear that if they demand a high standard they will lose boys, or recruits will not join; nothing could be further from the truth providing two conditions are observed. Firstly, there must be no rules just for the sake of imposing rules. No socially minded person objects to obeying regulations that are framed in the general interest of themselves and others, but all of us kick very strongly at prohibitions that are purposeless and no one is more intolerant of useless restrictions than a boy. Secondly, once a standard has been set then it must be rigidly adhered to, the Scouters being the first to show that they do not expect to take advantage of their position to exempt themselves, for discipline can never be maintained unless the men administering it have self-discipline. If these two conditions are observed it will be found that discipline soon becomes a habit, and that any new boy coming into the Troop will automatically accept the prevailing standard.

There is, nevertheless, a continual subconscious war of attrition going on between the Scouter and his boys. They tend to strive for a slackening of the leading-rein, and the man must strive to keep it taut. Discipline may be likened to a wheel revolving by virtue of its momentum, left to itself it will always run down.

At first a Scouter may find the establishing of discipline hard going, but possibly will come the day when his work is repaid beyond all measure, for its value lies not only in the satisfaction of a well-run Troop, or in the creation of conditions that are conducive to good Scouting, at times it can make all the difference between life and death. Twenty-five years ago I saw it happen.

I was working in Cornwall. A Troop spending its summer camp in the county was playing on a small beach when the S.M. noticed the start of a cliff-fall. His shouted “Troop!” brought immediate silence, and his order “run towards the sea” was instantly obeyed although not a boy knew the reason for it. The place where they had been playing was buried beneath hundreds of tons of rock, and the training the man had given his boys was fully rewarded in the brief space of thirty seconds.



### SUGGESTED READING

Aids to Scoutmastership  
The Child – an Adult's Problem  
The Man and The Boy  
Adolescent Development  
Children of Today and Tomorrow

### 3

### THE SCOUTMASTER'S TRAINING

A COMPETENT authority claims that the relative effects of environment and training on the development of boys are as follows:

Home . . . . .	74
School . . . . .	14
Scouts . . . . .	7
Other influences . . . . .	5

Considering the limited number of hours a week that Scouting normally claims of a boy's time, it would appear that the Movement plays an even more decisive part in the shaping of his character than might, on first thoughts, be supposed.

But these figures draw attention to a matter of a different kind, namely that for two vocations which – combined - total more than 80 per cent of the influence that will determine the character of the boy, many people consider that no sort of training is necessary.

Parents produce the child, and by some unfathomable reasoning many of them then believe that this has made them experts in child-upbringing and child-guidance, and that they require no training at all for such involved and far-reaching responsibilities.

One can find it in one's heart to forgive these parents inasmuch as their delusion is the outcome of a myth that has persisted for so many generations that today only too few people draw attention to its palpable absurdity. But one cannot forgive the Scouter who considers that he needs no training, and there are many men in the work at the present time who consider they are fully qualified to teach Scouting although they have had no instruction whatsoever either in its interpretation or in its methods. This accounts for those "Troops" that are really boys' clubs in Scout uniform.

Scouter training can be said to fall into three distinct categories. Firstly, there is the organised training laid on by the Movement in the form of Preliminary Training Courses, Wood Badge Courses, and others of a specialised character that are held from time to time. Secondly, there is the almost unconscious instruction that a Scouter absorbs when working under one of more mature experience. Thirdly, there is the deliberate self-instruction that a man should undertake by seeing other Troops in action, and by reading, to acquaint himself with both practical and theoretical Scouting, and with the nature of the boy.

Preliminary Training Courses are run on either a County or a District basis to give elementary instruction to a definite Section on what *Scouting* does and how it tries to do it. They are Courses that have official recognition and the syllabus is approved by the training team at Gilwell Park. Normally they require a minimum entry of twenty Scouters for two consecutive periods of twenty-four hours. The Courses are arranged according to the particular demands of the County or District, and notification to Groups that such a Course is to be held is sent round by the District Secretary so that Scouters may apply to attend. A successful attendance

entitles the entrant to wear the woggle of the 1st Gilwell Park Troop, and he receives a Certificate.

The only proficiency badge that a Scouter may wear is the Wood Badge, which consists of a leather thong with two carved beads on the end of it, worn round the neck. The training for this Badge is extensive and is divided into three parts. As with Preliminary Training, different Courses are held for each Section.

Part 1 is theoretical and consists of a series of three papers that are obtained from the Camp Chief at Gilwell Park when the Scouter has obtained his D.C.'s permission to apply for them. The entry fee is 4s. The questions on these papers are not designed to test general knowledge, or to find out how much or how little the candidate knows; they are formulated so as to be thought-provoking, and certain books have to be read to arrive at the correct answers.

Part 2 necessitates attendance at a practical Course either at Gilwell Park, or at a County venue. Normally, it lasts from Monday to Saturday for a Cubmaster, and from Saturday to the Sunday week for a Scoutmaster, but at times there are slight variations in the duration of Courses. The cost at Gilwell Park is £3 15s. for a Cub Course, and £5 for a Scout Course. Only in exceptional circumstances may they be attended by a Scouter who is not a warrant holder, or who has not had a minimum of six months practical experience in the Section for which the Course is being held.

The dates and details of these Courses are printed in *The Scouter* from time to time. The applicant writes in as directed and receives an entry form which must be countersigned by his D.C. It is preferable for Part 1 to be completed before attending a Part 2 Course, but actually the order in which they are taken is optional.

Part 3 may be likened to a period of probation that begins when the other two parts have been completed. For four months the Scouter carries on in the normal way with his Section, and during that time his D.C. is asked to keep an eye on his work. If at the end of the four months the D.C. can testify to the Camp Chief at Gilwell Park that the Scouter is giving his boys correct *Scout* training, is co-operating loyally with the District, Group and the parents, is working within the framework of the Promise and the Law, then the Badge is awarded.

From time to time specialised Courses are held at Gilwell Park and elsewhere: these too are advertised in *The Scouter*. They are designed to give special information to Commissioners, G.S.M.s, Schoolmasters, those working with Handicapped Scouts, and so on, but attendance at these Courses does not qualify for the wearing of the Wood Badge.

The self-instruction that a Scouter is able to give himself must vary in accordance with the spare time at his disposal, but let us consider the grounds that this instruction should cover.

It is but little use for a man to regard Scouting solely in the light of his own particular Section. Where Boy Scouts are concerned, more than 90 per cent of them have been Cubs, where Seniors are concerned almost 100 per cent of them have been Boy Scouts. If a man who works in the Boy Scout Troop is to be able to see Scouting, not as a series of stepping stones from Section to Section, but as a smooth transition from childhood to manhood with the boy receiving training commensurate with his stage of development, then that man must have a working knowledge of the Sections below and above him. Only by personal observation can he learn anything of the years of work that have gone into a boy's pre-Scout training, and again, only by observation can he learn the use to which the training he himself gives the boy will be put.

This means that a Boy Scout Scouter should be a regular visitor to Packs, Senior Troops, and Rover Crews. Judging by our own District he will find himself cordially welcomed wherever he goes. He should insist on his "visitor" status and should sit back and watch, and he will probably be more than surprised at the difference between the methods that produce the best results in Pack, Troop, Senior Troop, and Crew.

As I stressed in the last chapter, there is no common approach to all age groups: a man must specialise in the training of boys of the particular age group for which he has the most aptitude. But this does not mean that he should know nothing of the work that has already been done and that will be done. Let me stress that REGULAR visits should be paid to each Section. It is not enough that an S.M. was a G.M. "x" years ago; or that he was an R.S.L. when the present G.S.M. was a Cub. The outlook of boys of all age groups changes from year to year, and those who deal with them must automatically change their approach to keep up with the modern thought of the boy.

Unfortunately, this is a fact that many people refuse to recognise, although consideration of a brief half-century should be enough to convince them. Fifty years ago the Movement did not exist. Forty years ago boys were still deciding whom they would like for a Scoutmaster and were issuing their own invitations (if they had free choice to-day, I wonder how many of us would have a chance?). Thirty years ago a Saturday afternoon paper-chase would result in the Troop turning out in strength – try running one to-day! Twenty years ago most boys came to a meeting on foot – to-day the purlieu of a Troop room looks like a bicycle store: in the same decade they expected to pull a trek-cart to get to a week-end camp, to-day – "Bill's Dad's got a Triumph Gloria, let's get him to run us out!" Ten years ago some S.M.s were finding things very comfortable with P.L.s of 15, 16 and 17 of recent years they have needed to be fully-trained at 13-14. And to-day? Within the last month one S.M. has changed his meeting night because it conflicted with a popular TV programme: another has dropped Saturday Scouting after thirty years because school football, professional football, and the five-day-week take precedence.

We must not blind ourselves to the fact that customs, habits, trends of thought, the very pattern of living, are changing imperceptibly but inevitably from month to month and from year to year. This does not mean that the fundamental nature of the boy is changing; he may mature earlier, he may have altered his viewpoint to conform with modern values, but basically he is the same boy. But the mere fact that he does mature earlier, that he has altered his viewpoint, necessitates a changed approach being used to produce the same results. A radio-controlled rocket will not respond to its guiding impulses if they are sent out on the wrong wavelength, and in the same way a boy will not respond unless his training – the SAME training that has always been the foundation of Scouting – is presented to him in a manner consistent with his present-day outlook. For this reason it is essential that an S.M. should keep abreast of the approach that is used in good Packs and Senior Troops, so that the training he gives his boys shall fit into the warp and the woof of the pattern.

There is a tendency for all of us to become too hidebound in our methods and outlook if we remain strictly parochial. An S.M. may see others regularly at meetings, District or social events, but unless he knows what goes on in their Troops he remains parochial. In the course of a year I make a very large number of visits, and almost every time I see a Troop there is something – a method, an activity, an idea – that is well-worth noting and carrying away. For this reason I am convinced that it is a vital part of a Scouter's training to visit other Troops. Most S.M.s are proud of their boys, and are only too pleased for another to see them in action. To carry the idea further, if visits are made on a Troop basis, with the home Troop acting as hosts, it is helpful not only to the S.M. but also to his P.L.s.

Regular reading of *The Scouter*, and selective reading from the wide range of books put out by I.H.Q. and other publishers, will help the inexperienced man to understand the fundamental principles and theory behind his work: it will also enable the man of more mature experience to keep abreast of the modern trends that I have mentioned above.

It seems almost superfluous to mention anything as obvious as this – but is it? A Scouter told me recently that he never had any time for reading, and it came out in the course of the same conversation that the only night he misses TV is when his Troop meet. *Vis inertiae!*

New and inexperienced Scouters often ask whether or not it is a good idea for them to work with another Troop until such time as they have gained some knowledge. If they can spare the

time to do so as well as working with their own Troop, it is an excellent scheme: if, on the other hand, they mean instead of with their own Troop, then it has little to recommend it.

Such men are often of the opinion that their lack of knowledge will show them up to a disadvantage in front of their boys, and that this will affect their authority adversely. They may be reassured – the dominant characteristic of authority is personality; knowledge comes a long way down the list.

Actually, the man who can say to a bunch of Tenderfoots – “You know nothing about Scouting, neither do I, let's learn it together” – at once establishes a bond of sympathy between himself and them, and in no way does it undermine their confidence in him: it is only the man who professes knowledge that he has not got who comes unstuck.

In 1929, as a direct result of what I saw when the cliff-fall mentioned in the last chapter took place, four boys and I began to meet in a small Cornish tin-mining village on the edge of Goss Moor, to delve into Scouting mysteries that I had forgotten since my boyhood days. With the aid of books we worked it out painfully, step by step, until we felt we were ready to deal with the horde who gathered each night outside our meeting place – “waiting to join”. The reason that no recruits were being accepted was well known throughout the countryside, but only once was I put to a disadvantage on account of it.

I was passing through Hendra, six miles away, when a small boy waved imperiously at the car: I stopped and he came to the window – “Please, sir, can't you learn just a little bit quicker? Twice a week for seven weeks I've walked to St. Dennis, hoping to join.”

There is, unfortunately, no short-cut to a knowledge of the way in which the mind of a boy works. The books listed at the end of the chapter give the theory of his “mental mechanics”, but if this theory is to be translated into a practical understanding then a long and thoughtful study of the boy, both as an individual and as one of a crowd, is inevitable.

That involved, tortuous, and binding tenet known as a boy's “Code of Honour” is made up of a large number of things that either must or must not be done. Its intensity and its detail vary from school to school, and from place to place, but all the boys must adhere rigidly to the Code that prevails amongst the group in which they move if they wish to be acceptable to their fellows. In good schools the Code is usually high, and contains many “thou shalt nots” – sneak, curry favour, be sloppy, swank, be different to the rest. If adults are to be acceptable to the boyhood world then they too must adhere rigidly to the standard of conduct expected of them: they must not – have favourites, encourage sneaking, put on side, be sarcastic, take cheap advantage of being “grown-up”.

As a step towards the understanding of the various influences, considerations, and motives that are the deciding factors of a boy's reaction to a set of circumstances that do not call into play deeper, psychological emotions, a man cannot do better than study the requirements of the particular Code of Honour to which his boys subscribe. It is valueless to ask one of them to interpret this Code. In the first place, it has probably never been put into words – boys learn in the hard school of experience just what things may or may not be done: in the second, although an adult may have a place in his own right in the world of boys, spying or insisting on talking about “uncomfortable” things is taking advantage of it. In any case, an observant man can easily make his own interpretation.

By quietly watching the boys at work, at play, at their many Scouting activities, and by seeing their collective and individual reactions to events, varying conditions, difficulties, as well as their response to the men in charge of them., it is quite easy to see the skeleton of the Code by which they are ruled. In Scouting, many a man will find with considerable surprise that this skeleton is clothed in the tradition of his Troop.

When a number of boys come together into such a body as a Scout Troop, then within a very short time the slightly varying Codes that are held by the individual members – due to their attending different schools and having different backgrounds – becomes merged into a

common Code that is, or will be, the tradition in that Troop. Tradition is, after all, nothing more than a set of unwritten rules, specifying precisely what may and what may not be done, to which members of the body concerned adhere for no other reason than that they are members of that body.

The finest clue, therefore, to the nature of any boy is an understanding of his "working rules", and a study of his behaviour in the light of them.

All abstract (character) training will be accepted far more readily by the normal boy if it is presented in a manner that conforms to his Code of Honour. To present the same training in a manner not in accordance with the Code would be working against the stream. To illustrate.

If a boy were a persistent badge-hunter for no other purpose than a desire to show a highly decorated sleeve, then possibly a suggestion that he was guilty of swanking might of its own accord bring about an abatement of his badge-hunting propensities, whereas forbidding him point-blank to obtain any more badges might be looked on with a certain amount of resentment, and regarded as a purposeless, "grown-up" prohibition to be set at defiance if possible.

In the above case there would be a conscious reaction to something that was expressed, but it is also possible for there to be a subconscious reaction to something neither expressed nor intended.

We will say that a Scouter notices that one of his boys attends Church infrequently. In an attempt to help him to a realisation of his Duty to God, the Scouter therefore invites the boy to attend Church regularly with himself. It is possible that the boy might subconsciously reject the idea of Church-going because, again subconsciously, he sees in the situation the elements of favouritism which is against his Code. This would not happen, of course, if he were one of several.

It therefore behoves a man who is trying to understand the nature of a boy to weigh up any expression of thought, any course of action, not in terms of his own motives, ideas, and viewpoints, but with due consideration for the motives, ideas, and viewpoints that the boy will impute to them. If he can do this he is very close to his target, for it is only by teaching himself to think as a boy that a man can hope to gain any real insight into the workings of the mind of a boy.

## 4

### **THE SCOUT'S TRAINING**

MANY excellent books are on sale in the Scout Shop describing the methods by which Scout training can be put across, the ideals to be aimed at, suggested programmes – a library of ideas for any man. I intend to trespass but little on their preserves. The points to be discussed are certainly relative to the training of the boy but they are based on things I see as I go around.

Scouting has many facets, many activities, and training that covers a wide range: if out of the whole lot I were asked to nominate one single thing that makes the greatest contribution to the formation of character, I should select the daily Good Turn.

If this ideal is brought home to a boy and is constantly held before him, it plays a vital part in the shaping of his everyday life. He does not sit back, a contented self-satisfied yob, but views everyone he meets as someone who may need his help.

The modern tendency is for a boy to be discourteous, selfish, and thoughtless. He is not entirely to blame for this; regrettably the present-day outlook is summed up very succinctly by the expression – "I'm all right, Jack, to blazes with you!" and the boys of the present

generation have been brought up with this attitude displayed openly on every side of them. They are living in an age when a phrase such as "I couldn't care less" is considered the height of cleverness instead of a confession of moral bankruptcy. All around them they can see degradation and depravity – men in high places openly parading vice and corruption; newspapers that pander to the pornographic tastes of the degenerates; films that glorify crime and the criminal; men and women who go their ways with a total disregard for the feelings and the well-being of others. Statesmen may well speak of nations living together in concord and harmony, but how can it ever be achieved until people of the same blood can be taught to show one another respect and consideration?

The need for our boys to watch consciously for an opportunity each day to help someone else is a moral exercise that can do more than any other single thing to counteract contamination by the influences they see around them. The mere looking for such an opportunity induces a frame of mind dominated by thoughtfulness, consideration, kindness, unselfishness, and surely these traits are the prime essentials of concordant and harmonious social relationships?

I was looking out of my office window the other day when a bicycle propped against the kerb on the other side of the road, blew over, and packages from its handle-bar basket were scattered in the street. Forty-four people walked straight past it and then a small boy picked it up. What a condemnation! Just one person in forty-four was willing to take a bit of trouble for someone else.

Unfortunately, the insistence on the daily Good Turn has not been nearly so great latterly as it was in pre-war days. I am sorry to be forced to the conclusion that this is very largely due to Scouters not plugging it regularly and forcefully.

In some Troops it is the practice of the inspecting S.M. to ask each boy what Good Turn he has done that day, and I am always impressed by the eagerness with which the majority of them give an accounting. A few, of course, try to get away with their bed-making and shoe-cleaning – jobs that all boys should do for themselves – but the many show that they really have brought some thought into the matter and, an essential for a really worthwhile Good Turn, that it has been done at personal inconvenience.

When setting a First Class Journey I always include in the instructions, in capital letters: "*DO A GOOD TURN ON BOTH DAYS OF YOUR JOURNEY. GIVE DETAILS OF THESE IN YOUR LOG.*" Regularly each year, however, I have to fail some boys on their first attempt because they expect me to believe that in twenty-four hours, and over a minimum of fourteen miles, they can find nothing to do for anyone.

Some Troops or Patrols do a communal Good Turn at Christmas time and at other seasons of the year. During last Christmas holidays one such Troop, working in relays, took over all the "dirty work" in a hospital from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The S.M. asked the District Publicity Officer not to include the matter in his weekly notes to the local paper, because he thought it would detract from its value if it were advertised. During the same period, a Cub Pack combined to make up eight Christmas parcels for the elderly inhabitants of a row of almshouses: at Easter, a Senior Troop dug half an acre of garden for a semi-invalid.

With half a million Scouts amongst a population of fifty million – one to every hundred – the daily Good Turn, done regularly and conscientiously, could do more than any other single thing to counteract the cancerous spread of the "couldn't care less" attitude.

Half a million Good Turns a day – getting on for two hundred million a year – would produce an impact on the life of the nation that might well prove a moral turning point.

It always worries me that many a boy is cheated at one of the most important occasions of his Scouting career – his Investiture.

It should be a moment that he has reason to remember all his life, but as it is carried out in some Troops he cannot be blamed if he has forgotten it before he goes to bed. The S.M. observes airily to the small Tenderfoot – "I'll invest you next week". Next week comes, the

programme drags out its weary length (the programmes of such men always do seem to drag), the Troop is fallen in, prayers said, and the Flag on the point of being lowered, when the boy realises with a shock that he really has been forgotten, and pipes up. There is a hasty search for badges, the Troop Colour is overlooked, and the boy gabbles his Promise while everyone has an eye on the clock. On one occasion recently badges had to be cut off the uniform of another boy, and after the new Scout had made his Promise the whole affair was brought to a ridiculous anti-climax by his being taken round and solemnly “introduced” to the members of the Patrol with which he had been working for the past month. How hopeless to expect boys to regard such a pantomime as something serious.

Why is it that an Investiture is so often held at the end of the evening, when the programme may have overrun its time and everyone is thinking of home? How much more suitable it is to hold it earlier on and to make it seem as if it really matters. A Scout may renew his Promise many times, but only once does it signify his acceptance into the Movement. If he is to regard his Promise as something important, then the occasion should be formal and ceremonious. The S.M. should have explained to him the significance of the Promise he is about to make, should have pointed out the relationship that it will establish – the man looking for the best in the boy, the boy trying to give of his best, perhaps never quite succeeding but always trying.

When the time comes for him to make his Promise, the care taken over the ceremony should help the boy to realise that it is something important, something that really matters. The Troop Colour should be on parade, and the Tenderfoot make his Promise with his hand resting on it – his honour and the Troop's. The S.M. should put on the boy's scarf as a sign that he welcomes him to the Troop; the P.L. should pin on his Patrol colours for the same reason. His badges should be formally handed to him and their symbolism explained: he should be taken round to members of his Patrol, not to be introduced, but to receive the left hand-shake of congratulation on becoming a Scout.

Remembering that the influence of a boy's home training is more than ten times that of Scouting, what an opportunity an Investiture gives to invite the boy's parents to be present, so they may hear for themselves what he is promising, and back it with their own training. One S.M. I know calls at a boy's home during the week preceding the Investiture to invite the parents to attend. It gives him an opportunity of pointing out to them the implications of the Promise and the Law, and of asking for their co-operation in helping the boy to live up to his Promise. He always leaves with them one of the small cards, published by I.H.Q., that expounds the Promise and the Law.

It seems a pity that so many men should make boys members of the Scout Brotherhood with less ceremony than they would lay on to welcome a stray pup into their homes.

Many Scouters profess not to believe in tests and badges – “my boys can be fine Scouts without being First or Second Class”. Can they, or is the man just rationalising to himself the fact that he is quite unable to train them up to these standards? How can boys be “fine Scouts” if they know so little about Scouting that they are unable to master the simple requirements of the Second Class badge? Fine boys, perhaps, but never fine Scouts.

I think that such men must quite lose sight of the purpose of badge training. The actual wearing of the badge is subsidiary to it, merely the outward sign of achievement. Every test calls into play some trait of character that a boy must develop to the full if he is to put back into life even a portion of what he takes out of it. Consider for a moment the tests in the Second Class badge.

*HEALTH* – to enable him to deal with small injuries so as to be of service to others; to keep himself fit so as not to be a charge on the country. *OBSERVATION* – to quicken his intelligence and resource, thereby making him a more useful member of the community; to increase his Scout knowledge thereby helping him in his practical Scouting. *PIONEERING* – again, to add to his Scout knowledge; to teach him safety measures and thrift. *SIGNALLING* – to exercise his ability to memorise and concentrate; to encourage “stick-ability”; to make him

competent in case of need. *EXPLORING* – to give him further Scout knowledge; to teach him to be practical, careful, and thrifty; to add to his independence. And so it is with every test.

The same thing applies to Proficiency badges: some are designed to increase his efficiency as a Scout, others to encourage him to have hobbies and to be knowledgeable about them.

I wonder how the “fine Scouts” show up at summer camp with their so-little Scouting knowledge? Are they the Troops that leave behind them a record of dirty and untidy sites, broken-down hedges and gates, trampled crops? How do they go on if one of their number is in urgent need of First Aid – or do they camp with a doctor just round the corner?

The man who claims not to believe in tests and badges should realise that he is not a Scouter in spirit. No one coming into the Movement is free to say – “this I believe and will do; that I do not believe and will not do”: a member of the Movement must either accept Scouting as it is or reject it completely.

Earlier on I said – “Fine boys, perhaps, but never fine Scouts”. On second thoughts I withdraw that. No “fine boys” would be prepared to accept membership of the Movement and do so little to make themselves worthy of it.

Many Troops believe firmly in tests and badges, but they never even look like getting anywhere because they think Scouting can be learnt by messing around in Patrol corners for fifteen minutes one night a week. I recently had an opportunity of seeing two widely contrasting Troops within a few days of one another.

In the first, Flag-break was forgotten in spite of the fact that the duty Patrol, after seven or eight tries, had succeeded in folding it and getting it up. The programme started with a violently rough game in which everyone got almost torn to pieces, and was followed immediately by a cursory inspection, with no interval for repairs or recovering breath. Sundry other games of no Scouting value brought the first hour to a close, and then the S.M., having bawled “Patrol corners”, remarked: “Phew! That was tough going! Now I can have a rest for a quarter of an hour.”

I went round the Patrols, and it was obvious that they had no clue as to what they were supposed to be doing. At the first, a spirited discussion on football was taking place, while an un-invested Tenderfoot, already wearing his badges, struggled with the intricacies of a bowline. Periodically his P.L. snatched the rope away, rapidly tied the knot, and shoved it back at him, remarking – “Like this, clot!”

At the second, a boy was telling of a row with his form-master and most of the Patrol were listening: two were half-heartedly looking at the signalling section of their Scout diaries. One boy asked me how long you had to be in the Scouts before “they made you a Queen’s Scout”.

At the third, the P.L. was getting his head smacked periodically by a tough egg who did not take kindly to being told to shut up and get on with his lashing.

As the combined noise gradually built up to a crescendo, it was checked by a bull-roar from the S.M. who appeared quite unconcerned at the lack of Scout work being done. This farce went on for fifteen minutes, and the pitiful thing was that the boys thought they were really “Scouting”.

The evening was brought to a close by the S.M. ordering – “P.L. of the Blank Patrol, lower the Flag” – and the P.L., finding it still unbroken, proceeded to break it, amidst great hilarity.

How different everything was at the other Troop. The programme started with Flag-break and was followed by a slap-up Inspection, with a “late-Patrol” for those who came in after it had started. There was not a sound as the Scouters made their rounds, and no detail of uniform or personal cleanliness went unchecked. Two interesting and energetic games that emphasised Scout training followed, and after “Troop” had produced immediate silence, the S.M., speaking in a normal tone, read out the remainder of the programme – half an hour Patrol corners; a



game organised by the P.L. of the... Patrol; a quarter of an hour Patrol corners; a game organised by the P.L. of the . . . Patrol; mystery activity; notices; prayers; Flag-down.

At the first Patrol, the P.L. was instructing No. 4 on map and compass, the last test for his Second Class except for repassing Tenderfoot. The Second was teaching No. 5 diagonal lashing; No. 3 was coaching Nos. 6 and 7 in Tenderfoot. I asked the P.L. how he, his Second, and No. 3 got on with their own work if they spent the whole time instructing. He said that a special night for P.L.s and Seconds was held each week, and that No. 3 was going to his house the next night "to mug up First Class Health".

The other Patrols were working equally smoothly. No voice was raised, and as one approached each there was a noticeable "tightening-up", as if each boy was determined to show that his Patrol was something pretty good. The Scouters wandered round from one Group to another but were rarely called upon to help. The P.L.'s games were well thought out, and the Troop stood perfectly silent as each P.L. explained his game. The second period of Patrol corners was as industrious as the first.

"Notices" were an example of brevity, and the sheet was pinned to the notice-board for the boys to diary some dates after dismissal.

The S.M. would have had his reward had he heard the comment that a small boy added when he said good-night to me – "Now we've got to wait a week for another Scout night".

Some boys came to me to be tested for Camper badge; they were well-instructed and passed. Two months later I visited their Troop which was run by a Scouter, normally very sound, who was in process of changing his warrant from A.S.M. to S.M.

Spotting one of the boys I had examined I called him over, with the intention of admiring the new badge. He was not wearing it, and stated rather sadly that "it was being a long time".

I asked the S.M. if there was any difficulty in getting badges, and he looked surprised – "Not as far as I know, D.C. I always keep badge certificates until I get a decent batch to send in, it saves writing. By the way, I was going to ring you up. Has my warrant come through yet? It must be at least a month since it went through the Executive."

A stranger, sitting at the same table in the Scout Restaurant at I.H.Q. on one of my Thursday visits, was discussing Scouting and Seniors with his neighbour. A remark riveted my attention – "It's far easier to do the work yourself than to train P.L.s of thirteen and fourteen".

His comment took my mind back to the testing time of a Troop we will call the 4th Dimension. They were never very strong in numbers, just three Patrols, but they were a keen, flourishing lot and their training had always been sound.

The first blow came when their A.S.M.'s firm transferred him to another part of the country: the second followed close on the heels of it, the S.M. had to go into hospital for three months.

The P.L.s came to see me to ask what could be done. One was fourteen and First Class, the others were thirteen and were getting near it. They were obviously well-trained and capable, but each doubted his ability to run a Troop meeting. Regular adult help from neighbouring Troops was not available, and it was decided that spasmodic help would make things ragged. It was one of the younger P.L.s who put forward the suggestion that was adopted.

Each Patrol would meet in the Troop room on a different night of the week, and follow as closely as possible the pattern of a normal Troop meeting, but run by the P.L. There would be Flag-break, inspection, games, Patrol corner, prayers and so on.

It was arranged for boys desirous of passing tests to go to the house of an A.D.C. once a week: he also undertook to turn up every fourth Friday to run a normal Troop meeting.

The scheme worked excellently, and thanks to the hard graft that had gone into the training of the P.L.s, their S.M. returned to find that the two younger ones were First Class, that several

Second Class badges had been gained, and that his Troop had in no way suffered by his absence. He also had the satisfaction of knowing that his boys had passed a far more rigorous test than any in the syllabus of Scouting.

If the gentleman who was lunching at I.H.Q. is doing all the work himself then his Troop will fall to pieces the first time it is called upon to do anything on its own.

Yet two more meetings have served to emphasise once again the wide variation in method that prevails between one Troop and another: how one is working on lines that are essentially wrong, while the other aims for Scouting at its best.

The first meeting was one of those periodic Troop visits that are amongst the more interesting duties of a D.C. The evening drew towards its close and the boys were fallen in. "Notices", announced the S.M. He studied the piece of paper he was holding. "Number One and I have decided that summer camp will be at Hastings again, the same site as last year – all right, John, you needn't make faces, you don't have to go if you don't want to. Next, there's the Second for the 'Beaver' Patrol, we're going to appoint Tony? All right with you, Bill?"

"Well, Skip, I had been hoping I could have Alec. He's done jolly well, almost First Class, and we've always hit it off."

"Sorry, Bill, but we think Tony's the best choice. I'm sure you can work together if you try. Lastly, there's the Whitsun camp. Number One's making all the arrangements for that and you'll be told what to do when it's all fixed."

The second meeting was at a Court of Honour of a Troop that always seems to keep its boys and to do well. It was held at the house of the P.L. who is Chairman. All P.L.s were present together with the S.M., and by invitation, the S.M.(S) and myself.

"A quarter to seven, Colin," announced the S.M. "Will you get cracking?" "Right, Skip. Shut up, you lot! For a start we'll ask the Secretary to tell us what's got to be discussed to-night. Over to you, Brian."

"Well, first of all there's the minutes of the last meeting which one of you clots missed. Then there's summer camp – you'll remember that three suggestions were talked about at the last meeting, and since then you're supposed to have chewed it over with your Patrols-in-Council so we can come to a final decision to-night. Next, there's a nomination to put forward to Skipper for a P.L. for the new Patrol – will he be allowed to choose his own Second, Skip?"

"Of course, subject to approval by the Court of Honour – you've got a minute to that effect somewhere in your book of words. I might say in passing that the Scouters are always horrified at the people you blokes choose for your Seconds, but they always seem to turn out well. Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I'm talking too much. Go on, Brian."

"Where was I?" Oh yes, at the last meeting Geoff reported that young James was being a bit of a menace, always mucking about and upsetting his Patrol. We asked Skipper to have a talk with him, you remember, and Geoff was going to report to-night if it'd done any good. After that. . . .

I did not need to think twice to decide which Troop I would rather be in.

The Juvenile Court magistrates finished their consultation, and then the Chairman looked across the table at the twelve-year-old boy who stood facing them.

"We're going to put you on probation for a year, Maurice – I'll explain what that means in a moment – but one of the conditions of that probation is that you join a boys' club or something similar to keep you out of mischief in your spare time. Are you willing to do that?" As the boy muttered assent he turned to the Probation Officer. "Can you arrange it, Mr. Jones?"

The Probation Officer saw the District Commissioner that afternoon.

“This is the first time the boy's been in trouble,” he explained. “He's not really difficult, it's just that he's got a shocking home. The father's a chronic drunkard and knocks him about at times. The mother's only interested in how much money he brings into the house from a newspaper round, and from helping one of the local tradesmen on Saturdays. He probably wouldn't have stolen on this occasion if he'd been given any regular pocket-money.”

The choice of a Troop was a matter for considerable thought. It had to be one with good, just discipline; with understanding Scouters; with an S.M. who was willing to take him. One such was found.

As the D.C. wanted to see the home for himself; he drove there to fetch the boy on the night that he was to make his first appearance at the Troop.

Outwardly neat enough, the inside of the house was a shambles – dirt, squalor, and stink. The one downstairs room that seemed to be in use was the kitchen. A rickety table, a legless and burst sofa, a broken-down armchair, a cane chair, a packing case, were the only articles of furniture. The table was littered with unwashed crocks and some greasy saucepans. Dirty clothes hung on the back of the door and were scattered around the floor.

The boy's mother sat astride the cane chair, her arms resting on the back of it, nylon-clad legs thrust out aggressively. Ten years previously she had possibly been pretty but now her heavily powdered face was set in permanent lines of discontent. In a harsh voice she complained bitterly of certain comments that had been made by the Juvenile Court magistrates. She smoked incessantly, her cigarette held between two fingers, the chipped varnish of the nails contrasting with the dirt beneath them.

“It's all very well to say look after him! How can I when I'm at work all day? If a boy of twelve can't get his own meals and keep himself decent, who can?” She lighted another cigarette from the butt of the first which she then ground out on the bare floor. “Anyway, what do we pay the police and the rest of 'em for if it's not to keep kids in order? ‘Give him regular pocket-money’, they say! Where's it coming from, I should like to know? What with the price of fags and everything else life isn't worth living. And now Scouts! Whoever heard such. . . nonsense? What's that going to get for him?” She swung round on the boy standing uneasily by the table. “Get along with the man, for heaven's sake, before I get annoyed. And you can. . . well walk home after wards, I'm not paying bus fares for Scouts! If your father's in when you get back you'd better not let him see you, or he'll give you Scouts!”

The boy spoke only once on the way to the Troop room.

“Will the other boys try to take it out of me?” he asked, and then without waiting for a reply: “Not that I care! I can lick anyone my own size!”

He *fitted* in well enough, and took a lively part in the games. The S.M. watched him with an expert eye.

“We ought to be able to make something of him if he sticks it,” he observed. “He's played fair in all the games so far and hasn't lost his temper. That's a good sign.”

Trouble began the next day when the mother of one of the other boys rang up the S.M.

“What's this I hear about your taking a young thief into the Troop, Skipper?”

The S.M. explained that he was giving the boy a chance at the request of his D.C.

“I've never heard anything so inconsiderate,” the lady retorted. “The next thing we know all the boys will be up at Court with an example like that in front of them. I shall see the Commissioner, and if he insists on this nonsense then we shall have to think seriously of taking Thomas away.”

She was as good as her word and saw the D.C. next day. He had little chance of speaking for two or three minutes, then took advantage of a pause for breath.

"I've met Thomas on several occasions, and he's always struck me as being a decent, well-brought-up sort of a boy."

The lady looked slightly mollified. "Oh well! My husband and I have always done our best for him, of course."

"It seems a pity you don't trust him, then."

"Don't trust him!" she replied indignantly. "Who says we don't trust him? We'd trust Thomas anywhere!"

"Don't you think you're being rather unfair then? You say you'd trust Thomas anywhere, and yet you seem to think that he's so weak-minded that one small twelve-year-old boy in the Troop is going to have more influence over him than his parents, his Scouters, and thirty-two other boys you seem to be quite satisfied with. Do you really think Thomas is going to come to any harm? Isn't it much more likely that the training you've given him is going to help him do his share towards straightening out the ideas of a boy who has never yet had a chance in life?"

She considered uneasily. "I must admit I hadn't quite thought of it like that. I shall have to talk it over with my husband."

Thomas stayed, and so did Maurice. His uniform proved the first stumbling-block. After much haggling with the Probation Officer, his mother agreed to the boy keeping one and six a week out of his earnings to repay the Troop for it, and to cover his subs. At the end of eight months he was Second Class.

Camp would have been impossible for him had it not been for a special District fund run for just that sort of contingency. Living with other boys was the most amazing experience he had ever had, and he watched them and their manners carefully – something that got him into trouble again when he was home.

"Wrong to eat off your knife! You're getting too la-di-da!

You'll be wanting a tablecloth next! Pity you ever joined the Scouts, getting your head filled up with fancy notions! You wait till your father hears you! Anyway, your probation's up next month and you can be shut of all that nonsense. You're old enough to get something to do in your spare time that'll bring some real money into the house – eight bob for papers, six bob for Saturday green-grocerying! Doesn't keep me in fags! You'd better wash those silly clothes they gave you, I can probably get a few bob for them."

Deliverance was nearer than Maurice knew. The next Saturday night his mother was knocked down by a bicycle and slightly injured: she was taken to hospital. A police constable was detailed to break the news to the family. His knock at the front door was drowned by screams from within the house. He ran round the back, found the door unlocked, and burst into the kitchen. Maurice was cowering in a corner of the room, his head covered with his arms. Standing over him, leather belt in hand, was a great ox of a man, drunk and sadistic. He was cursing vilely, obscenely, blasphemously, and punctuated his ravings with slashes of the belt on the boy's unprotected shoulders.

Hearing the door open he swung round, then lashed out at the P.C. with the belt, laying his face open from eye to chin with the buckle. Calculatingly, the constable drove a fist under the angle of the man's jaw, and as he crashed backwards, gathered the boy into his arms.

On the Monday Maurice made another appearance at Court – this time as being in need of care and protection. He was placed in the care of the County Council, and they found him a fine home, with fine foster-parents.

That was four years ago. Two months ago Maurice became a Queen's Scout. This week he called at my office to tell me that he has got the job on which he has set his heart, and is starting on Monday.

“Hullo, D.C.” he greeted me. “Writing again? What’s it about this time?”

He thought for a moment and then smiled. “You know, I think one of these days you ought to write a yarn about me. I mean to say – it’d show people what Scouting can do for a chap, wouldn’t it?”

*Perranporth, Cornwall, 1932.*

Be with us and with those near and dear to us... tonight and always. The S.M. closed his prayer book and stood for a moment with lowered head.

Thirty-two boys, three Scouters, and a visitor stood round the flagstaff. It was a perfect summer’s evening. To the north was the sea, almost a Mediterranean-blue, its surface unruffled but its heavy swell shown by the breakers that creamed the long beach below the camp site. To the east, the brackened slopes, already yellowing from the hot August sun, fell away in a series of steppes, studded here and there by outcropping rocks, lichen-covered. Far to the west were the head works capping the tin-mine shafts at St. Agnes, and beyond them was the setting sun, just a finger-breadth above the sea.

The S.M. stirred. “All right, chaps! Each Patrol get its cocoa made and then off to bed. P.L.s meet at my tent in half an hour.” He dismissed them and turned to me. “When I took over the Troop three months ago they were always restless at prayers, but they seem to take it as a matter of course now – I often wonder if it does any good, though.” We began to walk slowly towards one of the Patrol fires. “Don’t go yet. We’ll be brewing some tea after the P.L.s meeting.”

They came to his tent one by one after getting their boys off to bed. They were fine boys, and tough. Gavin was seventeen, a King’s Scout, and in the course of conversation offered to give me lessons in looking after what he called “unruly malefactors”. David was sixteen, and came in complaining furiously that he had found one of his boys lacing up the tent doors – “I don’t know what present-day kids are coming to, they’ll want their mothers at camp with them next!” Michael and John arrived almost simultaneously. John told me hesitantly that he was sixteen – “though I may not look it”, Michael claimed to be fifteen and “wiser than all these other stiffs put together”.

The meeting was routine: there was a post mortem on the day’s programme, and a discussion on the next day’s activities. Then the S.M. asked: “Any complaints, suggestions, ideas?”

Michael came to life. “Don’t think I’m criticising, Skip, but there’s something I want to raise.” His S.M. reassured him. “Well, isn’t there a bit too much religion creeping into things – all this business of prayers and Church parades? We’re an open Troop and we’ve never been particularly hot on that sort of thing. Skipper – sorry, I mean our old Skipper – didn’t go a lot on it. We always went to Church two or three times a year, but at camp . . . well, I mean, prayers every morning and evening, and Church parade each Sunday – it seems a bit much!”

*London, 1941.*

One of our prisoners had escaped; a dangerous unpredictable character serving a term for armed robbery.

Home Office regulations laid down that on the sounding of an “Alert”, day or night, all prisoners were to be conducted to shelters – not an easy matter when these shelters were some distance from the main buildings, and the operation had to be carried out under blackout conditions. “104” just broke the ranks and disappeared into the darkness: with more than a hundred others to guard there was little we could do about it.

By stealing a series of cars he managed to get to London, where he was picked up a week later on an identity card check. It was in the middle of the afternoon that a City of London police station telephoned to say they had him in custody and would we send to collect him.

Petrol shortage was responsible for other regulations – “whenever possible prisoners will be conveyed by public transport”: accordingly I caught a train for Liverpool Street. It was getting dusk as a Circle Line train dropped me at a City station: a police constable was standing in the entrance.

“There’s a ‘red’ on, sir, and things are a bit hot south of the river. You’d better get to a shelter. First turning on the right, you can’t miss it, there’s a blue light over the door.”

The shelter was crowded with some hundreds of people in a space intended for half that number. Above us things warmed up. Bomb explosions got nearer and nearer, then suddenly one corner of the shelter erupted in fire, noise, and blast that paralysed the senses. The lights went out, the air was thick with fumes: screams, groans, and pleas for help went up from all sides, a mad surging of the crowd told of coming panic. Suddenly, a tenor voice rang out clearly – “Abide with me, fast falls the eventide...”

Slowly at first, then quickly, the panic died. In the darkness the voice went on. Its owner seemed to know only one verse and sang it again and again. Rescue workers came in and brought light: they began sorting out the living from the dead, and the man brought his verse to a close.

I could see him in the light of a hurricane lamp, a tall, lean, hard-bitten man, with a slightly sardonic expression.

He wore battle dress, a corporal’s stripes, and the insignia of the Royal Armoured Corps: he seemed vaguely familiar. I edged my way over to him and asked why. It took a lot of sorting out but we got there eventually – Michael, Perranporth, 1932. I congratulated him on calming down the crowd, and then the same thought seemed to occur to each of us simultaneously, for as a memory came back to me he suddenly threw up his head and laughed.

“Don’t let it fool you, not for one little minute! I’m not getting religious. You can always stop panic by singing hymns, I saw it on the pictures – a ship sinking or something.”

*St. George’s Day Church Parade, 1954.*

The Colour Party moved slowly down the aisle and took up a position at the back of the Church. Amidst a rustling of hymn sheets and a plopping of hassocks, the six hundred Scouts in the congregation began to kneel.

In front of the altar stood the presiding chaplain, waiting to give the blessing. A bright April sun shone through a stained-glass window and spot-lighted him in a multi-coloured beam. As the boys settled down he watched them with a smile that might once have been sardonic but was now understanding. They became silent, and slowly he raised his right hand; be with you and with those near and dear to you ... today... and always.”

For a long moment Michael brooded over the bent heads, then his hand fell to his side: he turned to the altar and knelt.

**SUGGESTED READING**

Religious Obligations of Scouts  
Smartness in Scouting  
The Sponsored Group  
God and the Open Scout Group  
The Court of Honour

Patrol Leader's Handbook  
Working the Patrol System  
Ideas for Scout Troops  
Ideas for Rover Scouts  
Indoor Games for Scouts  
Outdoor Games for Scouts  
A Scouter's Book of Ideas  
Games for Scouts

**5**

**SOME RESPONSIBILITIES**

As mentioned in the first chapter, one of the cardinal principles of Scouting is that the interests of the boys must always come first, and yet these interests are very often jeopardised by the fact that the Scoutmaster is a decent, clean-living individual who is slow to suspect unworthy motives, and who has never come into contact with the more steamy sides of life.

Of recent months there has been a searchlight of publicity thrown on many dozens of cases of indecent practices. Unfortunately, there are a very large number of men in the country who are abnormal, and they wish to have access to boys for reasons that are very much opposed to the welfare of those boys'. It is very obvious, therefore, that all boys' organisations will be a target for the attention of these individuals, and the resource, the cunning, and the persistency they display in trying to gain entry have to be experienced to be believed,

All boys' organisations have developed a security system of one sort or another whereby these undesirables may be kept out of their ranks, and that in force in the Scout Movement is as foolproof as it can be made – *PROVIDED EVERY SCOUTER KNOWS THE PART HE HAS TO PLAY IN IT, AND ALWAYS PLAYS THAT PART.*

It is the responsibility of the L.A. and D.C. to enquire into the character of any man or woman who is desirous of working with the boys, and they have special facilities for doing so. But the essential feature of the security system is this – *NO MAN OR WOMAN MAY WORK WITH THE BOYS UNTIL SUCH AN ENQUIRY HAS BEEN MADE.*

It sometimes happens that a Scouter, single-handed, harassed, and overworked, regards any outside offer of help as a gift from heaven. Because he himself is a normal, clean-living, unsuspecting individual, and because the person who offers help is well-dressed, well-spoken, and superficially all that he should be, the Scouter jumps at the offer – sometimes, weeks later, he remembers to notify his D.C. of the newcomer, at other times he relies on his own judgment.

*WOULD A SCOUTER EVER FORGIVE HIMSELF IF ONE OF HIS BOYS WAS THE VICTIM OF A SHATTERING EXPERIENCE THAT MIGHT ADVERSELY AFFECT HIS WHOLE LIFE BECAUSE HE, THE SCOUTER, PREFERRED TO BACK HIS OWN JUDGMENT RATHER THAN FULFIL HIS OBLIGATIONS?*

It is not safe to assume that because a man has some standing locally and is apparently well-known and respected, that he is a thoroughly desirable type. Those of us whose work has taken us amongst criminals know only too well that in every community, and in every strata of society, there are men – and women – now living seemingly law-abiding lives, who have a criminal history behind them.

A Scouter is often puzzled to know how to deal with an offer of help without either giving the person who makes it the impression that he is not wanted, or giving him the freedom of the Troop room. Actually the drill is quite simple.

The Scouter should inform his visitor that the appointment of Scouters does not rest with him but with his L.A. and D.C., and that he will be delighted to pass on the offer of help. This gives a perfectly natural opportunity to enquire the person's name (in full), address, age, occupation, and previous Scouting experience, which will enable the D.C. to begin his enquiry. Should the applicant ask to start work with the Troop right away, the Scouter can pass the buck to his D.C. – "I'm sorry but that's something only the District Commissioner can give you permission to do."

I need hardly stress that I am not suggesting for one moment that Scouters should regard all offers of help with distrust and suspicion – very far from it. What I am putting forward as a *MUST* is that no Scouter should allow an outside person to have access to his boys until his character has been checked, thus ensuring that the security system is given every opportunity of fulfilling the purpose for which it has been designed. It must also be borne in mind that the mere fact of a man being in Scout uniform is no proof that he is a Scouter.

Earlier on I used the words "resource, cunning, and persistency" to describe the efforts of undesirables to get into the Movement. So that Scouters may not think that these words are too strong, or that the need for precautions is exaggerated, I will quote two cases chosen at random.

In the first, a man was brought to a certain Troop room by one of the boys and was introduced as – "a friend of my father's who wants to help with the Troop". He had a delightful manner, was knowledgeable about certain subjects in which the boys needed instruction, and seemed the ideal type for a Scouter. He disclaimed any previous connection with Scouting and professed himself as willing to take a warrant. Enquiries were instituted but were hampered by the fact that his work took him around the country and he rarely stayed for more than a year at any one place: nothing was known against him.

At first it seemed that everything was as it should be, and then it occurred to the D.C. who interviewed him that for a man who had had no previous connection with Scouting, the newcomer knew far too much about it. This led to even more extensive enquiries which brought to light the fact that the man had given a false name, a false age, had been kicked out of two Scout Districts, and had served a term of imprisonment for indecency.

The father of the boy who had brought him up to the Troop room had met the man casually in a pub, and he had expressed a willingness to help on hearing that the local Troop was in need of Scouters.

In the second case an individual boy was concerned. He met a man who rendered him a service, and they discovered that they lived within a few miles of one another. Soon after, the man called and introduced himself to the boy's parents. They were impressed by him – he had a good position, a good home, charm, a disarming manner – and they were flattered by his taking an interest in their son. There followed several weeks of what can be described only as persistent wooing the boy was invited out on every possible occasion and was given presents.

The parents were vaguely uneasy, but every time they met the man his charm, kindness, and easy manner disarmed suspicion. Then came one of the periodic visits of the boy's S.M., and the parents mentioned the matter and asked if he thought it was all right. The S.M. took a sufficiently dim view of it to pass on details to his D.C., and it took just one telephone call to establish that the man in question had already blotted his copy-book badly in Scouting.

I have always been of the opinion that the average boy of Boy Scout age is quite unfitted to protect himself from men of a certain type, but there is a danger of adhering to beliefs for no better reason than that one always has held them. Before writing this chapter, therefore, I obtained some fresh ideas on the subject by asking a small panel of senior-Senior Scouts to answer three questions for me. The members of the panel were drawn from varying schools and different types of home.



The questions were: (1) At what age do the boys of today learn about abnormal sex practices? Are they warned about them by their parents? At what age do they really understand what such things mean? (2) If a man takes an excessive interest in a boy of thirteen or fourteen does the boy perceive in that interest a possible danger to himself? (3) If a man were to behave in an indecent manner, would the boy promptly report the incident to his parents or to his S.M.?

On (1) they very soon reached unanimity. They considered that at nine or ten most boys know that "funny things happen": the information came occasionally from parents but mostly from other boys, usually through "smut". They were of the opinion that it was not until thirteen or fourteen that boys realised "just what things meant". One boy provided an enlightening insight by saying – "It depends on what school you go to; if it's . . .you haven't got much to learn after you're ten".

On (2) they were again unanimous. They thought that far from seeing any threat to himself the average boy would be flattered by the man's interest – provided they had got to know one another "in a normal sort of a way".

(3) resulted in very divided opinions. Some believed that the boy would promptly call in adult help: others that it would depend upon the "degree of indecency": yet others that he would be far too embarrassed to mention the matter even to his best friend. The most helpful opinion came from a boy who said: "If my Scoutmaster or parents had talked to me about these things and anything happened, I'd go to them straight away – but they haven't. I doubt if my Scoutmaster knows anything about it, and I'm quite sure my parents don't."

Actually, his S.M. is not so ill-informed as the boy supposes, but he is one of those men who is quite unable to discuss such things with his boys. For the boy's parents I cannot answer, but I do know that some parents – admittedly few and far between – are quite without knowledge. A friend of mine is approaching sixty; he has raised a family of three boys and a girl. He is one of those men who may be believed unreservedly, and he told me recently that abnormal sex practices were something he never understood until one of his sons explained matters to him just ten years ago.

Before leaving the subject of the vital need for every Scouter to see that no offer of help is accepted without adherence to the security system, I will mention a case of another kind. There was no question of indecency, but an S.M.'s too eager acceptance of an offer of help gave rise to a situation of extreme embarrassment.

For some time a workmate had evinced considerable interest in the S.M.'s Troop, and eventually asked if he might go along to see what happened. Permission was readily given. The man proved a great success with the boys, was really helpful, and was allowed to attend for several weeks. Then the S.M. suggested that the other might care to become his Assistant, an offer that was immediately accepted: only then was the D.C. notified.

In his interview with District officials, the newcomer confessed that there was something in his background that he wished to be kept secret from his workmates – on two occasions he had been a voluntary patient in a mental hospital. He gave his doctor as a reference, and that gentleman promptly stated that it would be most unsafe to allow the man to be in charge of boys. It was then someone's very embarrassing duty to tell the man that the Troop could not use his services, and at the same time, in carrying out his wish, no explanation could be given to the S.M.

A question that crops up regularly, and causes many Scouters considerable unease, is whether or not they are responsible for the sex education of the boys in their charge, and if so, to what degree.

There can be no gainsaying that a Movement such as ours, which offers guidance to boys on all other aspects of their lives, must be prepared to accept this additional responsibility if called upon to do so. So far as the individual Scouter is concerned, his obligations depend to a

considerable extent on his make-up – it is not given to every man to talk on this subject without embarrassment, and there must be no embarrassment if boys are to regard matters sexual as natural and healthy.

Then there is the question of the boy's parents. It is most desirable that whenever possible a boy should receive his knowledge of life from his own parents, but unfortunately not all of them are capable of giving this instruction. However, it can be laid down as a hard and fast rule that no regular instruction – I will explain my meaning of “regular” in a moment – should be given without the consent of the parents. Where it is the parents' wish that Scouting should accept this responsibility, then if the Scouter doubts his own capabilities the onus is on him to provide the necessary instructor – a doctor, a padre, a schoolmaster, even the father of one of the other boys.

By using the qualification “regular” in the preceding paragraph, I meant deliberate or premeditated instruction. There will always be the moment either in the Troop room or at camp when a boy will blurt out a question about something that has been worrying him. The Scouter then has no one to lean on and must answer to the best of his ability. Unless he is prepared to risk forfeiting the boy's respect, he will be very ill-advised either to profess ignorance, to give an untrue answer, or just to tell the enquirer to shut up.

Should a Scouter think that any of his boys are badly informed for their age and development, it is as well to see the parents and discuss the position with them frankly.

When a Scoutmaster is able to undertake the grave responsibility of instructing his boys on matters of sex, he will probably find that it is one of the strongest links in the chain of trust that he has yet forged between himself and them.

And now some warnings. All competent authorities agree that trying to frighten a boy out of the habit of self-abuse produces far more deleterious effects than the habit itself. The overwhelming majority of them will automatically reach that stage in their development when they just leave it behind them as a childish thing: to the one who fails to do so the average Scoutmaster can give but little help.

Although the dangers of venereal diseases must be pointed out, it is inadvisable to dwell on the subject and it is essential that the boys should be given a clear understanding. I know of a man who was frightened off marriage for life because as a boy he had been given so vague an explanation that he had grown up in the belief that V.D. was inherent in all women.

An instructor should never speak to a large number of boys at once; three is a safe maximum, and a home atmosphere is helpful to both sides. It is a lamentable fact that the sex vocabulary of most boys is crude in the extreme, and many of them seem to be quite without knowledge of the more refined nomenclature for various parts of the body and their functions. The instructor in matters sexual must, therefore, make quite sure that the boys connect up in their own minds the terms he uses with the somewhat cruder expressions that they have heard used by school-friends and workmates. Should he fail to do so then he might just as well be speaking to them in a foreign language.

A further responsibility about which many Scouters are very vague is the question of insurance.

I.H.Q. have taken out central policies covering certain risks and units may participate in these policies on a Group, a District, or a County basis.

Of recent years the Treasurers of many Districts have adopted the principle of deducting the premium money towards the policies in which their District participate at the same time that they are dealing with the yield from Bob-a-Job week. This does not mean that insurance is in any way tied to Bob-a-Job: it is just that by making the deductions from the balance of the money that is returned to Groups, Treasurers save themselves the labour and expense of applying to the Scouters in charge of all the Groups in the District for their contributions, and save those Scouters the trouble of forwarding them.

Briefly, the policies held by I.H.Q. are as follow:

*SCOUTMASTERS' INDEMNITY POLICY.* The premium is paid by I.H.Q. and covers every Scouter in the country against "legal liability arising out of occurrences during organised Scout work". (Organised Scout work may here be defined as any activity that is part of normal Scout training; thus, a First Class Journey, the use of a felling-axe, a Troop camp, would come under this heading, but any money-raising activity or any help given to an outside body would not). Whatever local arrangements are made about other forms of insurance, every Scouter is automatically safeguarded by this policy without any further obligation on his part other than being a Scouter.

*PROPERTY OWNER'S RISK.* If a Troop has its own H.Q. in which it holds social occasions which are attended by members of the public – and that includes boys' parents – there is always the possibility that someone may fall down the steps, may trip over a loose board, may suffer injury from electric shock because a switch has been broken at handball.

Unless it is insured, the Group is a sitting target for a civil action, inasmuch as it is the responsibility of all owners of property to which the public have access to keep it in a sufficiently good state of repair to ensure that anyone using it suffers no injury due to negligence other than his own. It is very unwise for a Scouter to rely on his personal conviction that "young Bill's dad" would never think of suing the Group.

*PERSONAL ACCIDENT AND MEDICAL EXPENSES POLICY.* This covers boys and Scouters alike against personal injuries arising out of accidents that occur during normal Scout work – this is here defined as – "work authorised and controlled by the Scouters concerned". It covers also any Instructor, any Scouter about to take a warrant. In addition to accidents it includes any illnesses contracted by attendance at camp. (NOTE – not illnesses developing at camp that have been contracted elsewhere.) The Insurance Department at I.H.Q. will be found quite ready to inform an enquirer concerning the benefits that are offered under this policy.

*SCOUT PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT POLICY.* This is something that is the concern of every Scouter who is the head of a Section. What happens if the Troop room catches fire and equipment is burnt? Is the Group insured against burglary? Is there any redress should a tent catch fire at camp? If the Group have hired some equipment for a show and it gets pinched, who takes the can back? This policy is the answer to these and many other eventualities.

*SEA SCOUT INSURANCE POLICY AND GUARD SHIPS.* These policies cover all other risks arising out of the use of boats and the use of a floating H.Q. As far as Guard Ships are concerned, each case is considered on its merits and demerits. Any Group that wishes to effect such an insurance should get in touch with the appropriate department at I.H.Q. It is not something that is normally covered on a District basis.

To sum up: it is the responsibility of every Scouter to make sure that his boys, their H.Q., their civil liability, and their equipment, are insured against all foreseeable risks. Where a Scouter is in any doubt regarding the degree of protection afforded to him by his District, a telephone call to his D.C. will give him the information he requires.

Where the question of boys riding on lorries is concerned the matter is a complicated one, since the vehicle has to comply with certain requirements of the Road Traffic Act or ALL insurance is rendered invalid; these requirements include that the vehicle shall be properly insured under the Road Traffic Act, and that the Road Fund tax paid shall be sufficient to cover the use to which the vehicle *IS THEN BEING PUT*.

Two points must be stressed. Firstly, no matter what insurance cover Groups may have under any of the I.H.Q. policies mentioned earlier, their boys are *NOT* insured as lorry passengers. Secondly, unless the vehicle is a public service vehicle then neither the boys nor their equipment will be automatically covered by its existing insurance. The reason for this is that the insurance policy of the normal commercial vehicle bears an endorsement stating the use to

which that vehicle must be put for the policy to be valid, and unless that policy has been specially effected, the carriage of Scouts and their equipment will not be included.

In order to cover the carriage of the boys a special policy can be arranged with almost any insurance company, or through the Insurance Department at I.H.Q., at a cost of 1s. per head which covers both the outward and the inward journeys.

Scout equipment that is insured under Section D of the *SCOUT PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT POLICE* mentioned earlier is automatically covered while in transit in Great Britain. Scouts travelling abroad must make special arrangements, and there again, I.H.Q. can help them.

Another point must be emphasised: unless the vehicle is a public service vehicle then *NO CHARGE MUST BE MADE FOR THE CARRIAGE OF THE BOYS*. To avoid doubts in event of the lorry being stopped by the police, it is as well for the driver to have on him an invoice showing that whatever charge is made is solely in respect to the equipment. It is as well for this document to bear the words – “Boys carried free of charge”.

Be it noted. If Bill's dad has a lorry and offers to take equipment and boys, free of all charge, for a journey of one mile or one hundred miles, then a special policy still needs to be effected if they are to be covered by insurance.

If Scouts are to derive the maximum benefit from their training, and if they are to be encouraged to become capable, self-reliant, and above all, adventurous, then they must in no way be mollycoddled – the Scouter who runs round after his little gentlemen like an anxious great-aunt renders them a great disservice. At the same time, it is the duty of every Scouter to safeguard his boys against possible danger, and a question that crops up regularly from time to time is the extent to which a Scouter is justified in exposing his boys to risks.

The natural tendency is to reply promptly that on no account must they ever be exposed to risks – but let us look at the matter from another viewpoint.

Risks can be classified under two headings, justifiable and unjustifiable. In the former group come all those things that are comparable with the normal hazards of living – riding a bicycle, climbing a tree, playing a rough game, and so on. In the latter group may be placed those risks where the element of chance plays too great a part, and where possible dangers are unforeseeable – boys riding uninsured on lorries, bathing without supervision.

Also the “degree” of risk must be taken into account. What might be dangerous in the case of one boy could be reasonably safe for another: thus it might be inadvisable for a delicate boy to do his First Class Journey under winter conditions, whereas with another, one would hope for snow and sub-zero temperatures to provide him with a worthwhile test. Again, it would be hazardous to allow twelve-year-olds to practise, say, tree-rescue, whereas with Seniors one would make a point of choosing a particularly difficult tree.

Whenever, therefore, this question of risk crops up, a Scouter must consider several factors if he is not, on the one hand, to stifle the adventurous spirit of his boys, or on the other, to subject them to a risk that is unjustifiable. He should ask himself firstly if the risk is too great, taking into account the age, health, and capabilities of the boy concerned. Next, can the element of chance play too great a part? Thirdly, is the risk a “normal hazard”, the overcoming of which will add to the boy's self-confidence and character?

It must weigh nothing with a Scouter that a boy's parents have many times allowed him to take precisely the same risk – the attitude of parents after an accident has happened tops the list of things unpredictable.

Occasionally a procedure that seems full of dangerous possibilities at first glance can be modified so that the element of risk is reduced to a normal hazard, and many a Scouter can obtain peace of mind by puzzling out such a modification. To illustrate.

An S.M. had arranged to start his summer camp on August 1st, but his Assistant could not get off work until the following day and would have to travel down later. Heavy gear had been sent in advance. As the site was an isolated one, the S.M. wanted to have his car at camp for fetching supplies. The question he posed to his D.C. was this – would it be too risky for him to drive down, taking the three smallest Scouts, and allowing the other twenty-two to travel on their own by train?

At first glance, the thought of twenty-two camp-happy boys travelling more than a hundred miles, with no restraining adult influence, gave rise to visions of the railway line being strewn with bodies from doors that had opened at the wrong moment. Second thoughts, however, showed that the element of risk could be reduced to a normal hazard, and that the situation had great training possibilities. This is how it was worked.

The journey was run as a Patrol activity with points to count towards the camp competition. From the time they left the Troop room each Patrol was an individual unit, and travelled to the London terminus by a different, prearranged route. Although they were all using the same main-line train each Patrol was to travel in a separate coach counting from the engine (this necessitated a visit to the terminus a day or two beforehand to see how the train was made up), and the corridor of that coach was the extreme limit over which the boys of that Patrol might wander.

P.L.s were warned to watch out for members of another Patrol speaking to, or even “recognising”, a boy in his own.

So well did the boys enter into the spirit of the game that one Scout went without his lunch because his sandwiches were in the haversack of his brother in another Patrol. At the “in-quest” on the game this boy was awarded a mark for his self-sacrifice, thereby putting his Patrol in the lead: no one lost marks.

To sum up. If the Movement is to give boys adventure, to bring out qualities of self-reliance and independence, to avoid putting a damper on all those things that they need to experience if they are to become true pioneers of the new Elizabethan era, then the taking of a justifiable risk is something that Scouters cannot avoid on occasions. It is the unjustifiable risk, where chance plays too great a part, where the element of danger cannot be reduced to a normal hazard, that must be instantly rejected.

Where a Group is sponsored, the Sponsoring Authority has some very definite rights and duties that are clearly defined in P.O.R., Rule 180. Amongst other things these include the nomination of Scouters; the right to be heard by the L.A. and D.C. should an alteration in the registration of the Group be contemplated, or in the event of a *Scout* or Scouter being suspended; the religious training of the *Scouts* where the Group is attached to a religious organisation. This rule also points out clearly that the Sponsoring Authority has no concern with the actual *Scout* training of the Group: for this the G.S.M. is responsible directly to the L.A. and D.C.

This last does not mean that the Sponsoring Authority and the Scouters are sitting on different sides of a metaphorical fence, but that both parties are working for the welfare of the boys although from different angles. It is, therefore, most desirable that there shall be a sympathetic and understanding relationship between the Group and its Sponsoring Authority if the best interests of the boys are to be the primary consideration.

If the Group is sponsored by the Church of England, then under P.O.R., Rule 579 (3), the Sponsoring Authority is either the incumbent or his nominee. Should the organisation be other than the Church of England then the Sponsoring Authority may possibly be a Committee as mentioned in P.O.R., Rule 179 (2).

One does occasionally hear of Sponsoring Authorities who take advantage of the fact that the Group meets on property belonging to the sponsoring body to demand a say in *Scouting* matters far beyond the powers defined by Rule 180. Happily these cases are a very small

minority amongst the many sponsored Groups, and the overwhelming majority of Sponsoring Authorities are only too glad to leave all matters appertaining to *Scouting* to those whose job it is.

Apart from any question of courtesy, it is most desirable in the interests of the smooth-running of the Group that the Sponsoring Authority should be offered representation on the Group Committee, although in actuality no demand for such representation can be made.

An exceedingly important matter that is the responsibility of the G.S.M. is to agree with the Sponsoring Authority exactly what is Group property and to draw up an agreement that is signed by both parties. If this is not done, and the Group should come to an end, it is possible that property and equipment will otherwise be lost to the Movement. In addition, where land or buildings are concerned particularly, it is advisable for a Deed of Trust to be executed, whereby the property is held for Scouting. A model Deed of Trust is obtainable from the Legal Department at I.H.Q.

Where a Group is attached to a religious organisation, Scouters are failing badly in their Duty to God if they do not do everything in their power to maintain a helpful working relationship with the Sponsoring Authority. Where there is a "padre" – I use the word to indicate clergy of any denomination – he sees in the Group those who will be his Church members of the future, and Scouters are morally bound to do their utmost to give effect to his wishes in matters of Churchgoing and Sunday-school attendance.

It is a regrettable fact that some sponsored Groups are only too glad to avail themselves of the facilities their parent body can offer, but at the same time do little or nothing to identify themselves with the life of that body – "false pretences" have no place in Scouting.

Let us bring this chapter to a close by considering the responsibility of a Scouter in helping to maintain a friendly atmosphere with the schools attended by his boys. Normally, diplomatic relations with headmasters are established at District level and can be most helpful to individual Groups – this was illustrated in our own District last summer when seventeen boys from three schools were given permission to end term early to go to camp. A thoughtless Scouter can do much to harm these relationships.

Many boys get on exceedingly well without Scouting – the realisation of this is always something of a shock to the keen Scouter – but they would not get on exceedingly well without education: therefore education, the school, must come first.

I suppose everyone regards homework as a scourge – possibly even the schoolmaster himself as he has to correct the stuff – and I am more than doubtful whether the excessive quantities ladled out indiscriminately by some schools can be justified; nevertheless, it has to be done if the boy is not to be in trouble next day. When a boy arrives late at Troop meeting and gives homework as an excuse, the wise Scouter will not grumble at him. It is true that such a grumble might result in his being punctual the following week, but as a consequence he would probably be carpeted next day for homework neglected or improperly done. If he is asked the reason and says "Scouts", then the diplomatic relations mentioned earlier suffer a reverse.

I am quite aware that boys often use the excuse of homework to dodge something they do not wish to attend, but if their Troop meeting is worth attending then it hardly comes into this category.

At a recent P.L.s' Conference homework was discussed very fully, and one boy put forward a solution that certainly worked in his case: he said he did as much as he could before Troop meeting and got up at six next morning to complete the remainder. It is, of course, no solution for a boy who has a newspaper round, but it is certainly worthy of consideration by those who have not. It might also be regarded as a test of good Scoutmastership – can the man put on a sufficiently interesting programme to make a bed-wallower think it worthwhile sacrificing all those extra "five minutes" to get up at 6 a.m.?

Many boys arriving late at a Troop meeting turn up in civvies. I think a Scouter is well-advised to tell them that he would rather have them five minutes later in uniform. Apart from other considerations, some typical Scout games played in civvies are likely to result in strained diplomatic relations with another authority – the parents.

Putting school first applies not only to homework but also to games, and there the Scouter is studying his own interests because to all boys who are keen sportsmen these games mean much. If he is unwise enough to grudge a boy time off from Scouting to play in matches, then he is more or less inviting that boy to choose between his Scouting and his games, and the choice will often shock the man.

Summing up is easy: a boy cannot do without his school, but he can do without his Scouting, and in that order of priority they must be placed.

**6**  
**THE GROUP COUNCIL, GROUP COMMITTEE, AND SUPPORTERS'**  
**ASSOCIATION**

By far the happiest Groups I ever visit are those that have a family feeling running through them, and the development of this atmosphere is something that only the Scouters of a Group can inspire and maintain.

If the Scouter in charge of any particular Section looks on it as the beginning and the end, and has no wider outlook, then a family atmosphere will never be established with the result that there will be friction between Scouters, boys will not want to go up, and there will be leakage between Sections.

It is, of course, primarily the responsibility of the G.S.M. to see that the Group works as a whole and not as independent units, but sometimes there is no G.S.M. and it falls to the lot of the Scoutmaster to do certain of his duties,

In trying to assess the reasons for a Scouter being inordinately jealous where his own particular Section is concerned, I have been forced to the conclusion that it is due to one of three failings, each of which is sadly out of place in Scouting – possessiveness, awkwardness, or ignorance. The possessive Scouter has a singularly narrow outlook dominated by the principle “what I have I hold”. Thus it is always “my boys”, and nothing should ever happen in the Group unless it is his Section that derives the ultimate benefit, The ages of his boys give him away badly; he always tries to hang on to them long after they should have gone up. It is not easy to get the co-operation of such a man: about the only hope is to try to lead him to become possessively jealous of the Group as a whole instead of his own little part in it – not easy.

For the man who is awkward, either of deliberate intent or because he is made that way, there can be only one solution – to get rid of him, he is a misfit in Scouting.

The ignorant Scouter never seems capable of realising that Scouting is a team game and a Way of *Life*, and must therefore be progressive; that the whole idea of Cub training is to prepare the boy for the Troop, that Scout training is to prepare him for the Senior Troop, and so on. He therefore muddles through, never with a clear idea of the goal, living in the present and incapable of regarding Scouting as a whole. In his way he is as big a menace as the possessive Scouter, but with patience he can sometimes be taught.

The seed of the happy family feeling germinates in the Group Council. There must be no petty jealousies, and there should be no reason for any if the Group is being run for the benefit of the boys and not for the greater glorification of the Scouters.

Let us look at it this way. When the boy goes from the Pack to the Troop he is not “lost” to the G.M. Every success he may have in the Troop – his Second Class, First Class, Scout Cord – is due in part to the training he received while in the Pack, and surely any G.M. with the welfare of his boys at heart can derive happiness and gratification from seeing the growth of a character he has played so large a part in shaping? The same reasoning applies to the S.M. when his charges outgrow the Troop, and to the S.M.(S.) when his boys become Rovers and men.

Every single Scouter in a Group is *DOING THE SAME JOB*, trying to train the boys of that Group for citizenship, and if a boy is lost anywhere along the path from Pack to Grew then his training, although not wasted, is incomplete. If this idea is kept in the forefront of the mind of each and every Scouter on the Group Council, then the idea of a family growing from childhood to maturity under their guidance will inevitably present itself and the foundations of a family spirit will be laid.

Some Councils meet at their H.Q. but this is a mistake: the occasion then becomes vested with the idea of a “meeting”, with the result that it tends to be formal and the atmosphere hardly that of a family conference. A far more natural spirit will prevail if it is held in the house of the G.S.M., or the Scouter who is substituting for him. The worth of a cup of tea on these occasions is too obvious to need stressing.

The matters that are the concern of the Council are many and varied. One of the most important will be the programme of training throughout the Group. There can be no real progress unless a programme is planned and adhered to – the Scouter who looks vaguely round the H.Q. at Pack or Troop meetings with the question “what shall we do next?” sticking out all over him, is an obstruction to any sort of progress. One Scouter, to prove to me his versatility, boasted: “I never know what I’m going to do until I get to the Troop meeting!” I looked up my records and found that he had not had a First Class Scout in eight years.

I know one Council who discuss each individual member of the Group every three months to assess what progress he is making, and to decide what provision they will have to make for his instruction and testing during the following months. This is a fine Group in many ways: everything they undertake is imbued with an abundance of energy and enthusiasm: they know just what results they want to achieve, and every Scouter pulls his weight in helping to achieve them.

The individual problems of all its members are the concern of the Council – the Cub who tries to turn every Pack meeting into a bear-garden, the Scout who “couldn’t care less” whether or not he passes his Second Class. These are not the personal headaches of the G.M. and S.M. respectively but are problems to be solved by the combined ingenuity and experience of all the Council members.

The allocation of equipment to various Sections for training and recreational purposes is the Council’s responsibility. In a Group run on the “departmental” basis there is a deplorable tendency for various items of equipment to be regarded as the property of the Section that makes most use of them. Thus, the Pack lays claim to skipping ropes, bean bags, and tennis balls; the Troop to tents, cooking gear, and so on. In actual fact they are, of course, all *GROUP* property.

I once had the misfortune to be present on the occasion of a lengthy argument between a Cubmaster and a Scoutmaster over whether a pair of signalling flags belonged to the Pack or the Troop: a Scout, wanting to use them, stood idle nearby, awaiting the outcome. My suggestion that he might be allowed to put them to good use in the meantime met with a reluctant acquiescence; the attitude of the Scouters showed plainly that each was hurt and mystified by my failing to grasp the vital importance of the question of ownership.

The planning of such occasions as Bob-a-Job week is an item for the agenda. If the maximum number of jobs are to be done, and the minimum number of householders infuriated by



overlapping calls, it is an event that needs careful organisation and cooperation – and yet I know of a Pack that started two days early one year so as to “get in before the Scouts”.

Groups wise by experience know the value of County and District competitions to act as stimuli to training, and to provide a yardstick against which they can measure the soundness of their own training programme. As soon as the dates of these events are published, the Council should decide for which each Section will compete.

The Council provides an opportunity for the future financial requirements of Pack, Troops, and Crew to be discussed, so that the G.S.M. may pass on the information to the Group Committee at its next meeting.

Social occasions must be arranged so that all members of the family can get together at such events as a Christmas festivity, a party to celebrate the Group's birthday, a mid-summer picnic.

They must organise other occasions for the Boy Scout Troop to act as hosts to the Pack, and the Seniors to the Boy Scouts – for it is only when each boy is given the opportunity of seeing what happens in the Section next above him, and of getting to know the men and boys who comprise it, that that lamentable cry – “I don't want to go up!” – ceases to draw attention to faulty training and incomplete preparation.

A well-run Council meeting always reminds me of a family conclave, called to discuss ways and means, the bringing-up of the children, work, and holidays. At such a meeting there is no time for pettiness or jealousy, bickering or selfishness, since all those present are concerned with only one thing – the progress and welfare of *ALL* the boys in their Group.

It is no exaggeration to say that a Group will never be a good one without an energetic Group Committee.

Where this Committee has lapsed, or where one is to be formed for the first time, there are a variety of ways in which it can be done. The particular method I am going to describe I was able to see at first-hand, and it proved so very successful that it is well worth placing on record. But firstly a word about the Group concerned.

Four years ago it consisted of a Cub Pack, about twenty-four strong, with two Scouters, and four Boy Scouts working under the guidance of the C.M. For two years a Scoutmaster had been impossible to find and suddenly, when things were at their lowest ebb, two turned up within a week.

Under their direction the Troop went ahead and at the end of a year was just over twenty strong, with a good proportion of Second Class boys. The Group Council then decided to form their Group Committee, and the occasion chosen was at a party that was being thrown to mark the first anniversary of the rejuvenated Troop.

Prior to the day, the acting-G.S.M. approached two fathers and a mother whom the Group Council had marked down as potential Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer respectively. With a bit of persuasion they agreed to stand.

All the boys and parents were invited to the party, together with the D.C. It was like many another Scout party – games and competitions in which everyone could join, a short Cub display, the building of an ambitious indoor bridge by the Scouts. Refreshments were served, and then everyone was asked to sit down.

In a very short speech the acting-G.S.M. announced that it was proposed to form a Group Committee, and that the D.C. was present to explain the purpose and functions of such a body. These explanations took a little over five minutes.

The acting-G.S.M. then announced that Mr. “X” was prepared to act as Chairman and asked for “proposer”, “seconder”, “any amendments”, “those in favour”. The same procedure was adopted with the Secretary and Treasurer. As the Pack and Troop strengths were on a par, it

had been decided to have three parents to represent each Section. These six were a bit slow in allowing themselves to be proposed and elected, but even so, in less than fifteen minutes the Committee had come into being, had arranged the date of its first meeting, and had been given copies of the I.H.Q. pamphlet – *The Group Committee*.

At their first meeting some more detailed explanations were made, again by the D.C., and the Committee drew up for themselves a tentative programme, and arranged a retiring rota.

It is interesting to note that with the help and encouragement of those and succeeding parents, the Group has continued to go from strength to strength during the three years of the Committee's existence, and at the present moment is erecting its own H.Q.

I have heard the above method of electing a Committee, with the Officers to all intents and purposes chosen beforehand, described as “undemocratic”, but I cannot agree with that. In the first place, these Officers are the chief helpers and advisers of the G.S.M. on the matters for which they are responsible, and could anything be more democratic than allowing him to suggest whom he would like? In the second place, if anyone has a valid objection to a nomination he has an opportunity of raising the matter under “any amendments”. In the third, if all nominations are left to the meeting then probably the Officers will be elected either because they are well-known, or popular, or have the gift of the gab – in fact for every reason other than their suitability for the duties they will be required to perform.

A Group in a remote Cornish tin-mining village learnt the danger of open nomination the tough way. A delightfully kind-hearted old miner was elected Secretary of the Group Committee because his enthusiasm led him to exclaim “us can do that!” at the right – or wrong moment. It was found later that he could neither read nor write, and when another was appointed, some villagers exclaimed in all seriousness: “They might've given old Robert a chance!”

Let us consider in some detail the duties of a Group Committee in the light of P.O.R., Rule 202 (1). As there are, regrettably, some Scouters who are still so unenlightened that they regard such a Committee as a liability rather than an asset, I propose to quote instances, from the many dozens I have on record, of occasions when they have more than proved their worth.

“...to be responsible for Group property..” This does not mean that the Committee is going into a flat spin because that clot Bill has burnt the bottom out of a dixie. It is for the protection of those fortunate Groups that own their H.Q., Guard Ship, or other valuable assets. To be an excellent business man is not one of the qualifications demanded of a Scouter, and anyway, if he has the interests of his boys at heart he will be far too busy to bother about such tedious things as leases, insurance, dilapidations, rates, and it is the job of the Group Committee to take all these worries off his shoulders.

Martin was a G.M., and for two years he had had the additional responsibility of acting as G.S.M. After a lapse of a year the Group Committee had just been re-formed, and a week previously he had handed over to the Secretary a mass of documents relating to the Group with a sigh of relief.

He was enjoying a quiet evening at home when there was a ring at the front-door bell, followed immediately by a crashing knock; a combination that experience had taught him meant a Cub requiring attention. This Cub brought news.

“Headquarters is on fire, Akela! “Tisn't half burning too!”

As Martin hurried through the streets on the heels of his Cub, he thought bitterly of a decision arrived at by the Group Council, largely on his insistence, that the H.Q. insurance should not be renewed as nothing had ever happened and the money was needed for other things.

The hut was burning furiously when he got there; the tarred-felt roof and the wooden framework that the Scouts had so lavishly splashed with creosote a *few* weeks earlier were

excellent combustibles. When the brigade finally got the flames under control there was nothing but a gutted shell containing the burnt-out remains of all the Group equipment.

Martin spent a sleepless night. In view of the large share of the responsibility that he must shoulder for the loss, he could not see that any course lay open to him other than to resign, and the thought of a future without the Pack on which he had lavished so many years' work seemed singularly bleak.

It was not until the following evening that he learnt that he had been saved by his Group Committee – the Secretary had found the time-expired policy amongst the papers handed to him and had promptly renewed it.

“...to assist the G.S.M. with finance..” The time that every Scouter in a Group can spare can be put to its best advantage in the training of the boys. If he has to take time off to finance that training then the boys are going to be the losers. Apart from Bob-a-Job, money-raising should be presented to the Group Committee as their headache: most of them take this duty very seriously, and I know of more than a few Groups with incomes varying between £250 and £350 a year. At times, the members help in other ways; at all events one Group has its own H.Q. because the individual members of the Committee lodged personal security for the overdraft that was used to build it.

“...propaganda...” Recruiting, Bob-a-Job, concerts, sales of work, whist drives, beetle drives, rummage sales, dances: all these events need publicity to provide the customers, and sometimes the Committee members have far brighter ideas than the Scouters.

The 20th century Group was inclined to be a poor relation: it was the latest one formed in a fairly large provincial town. The well-established Groups all had their regular following at their social occasions and did well, but somehow the events of the 20th were always poorly attended.

The previous year they had held a Concert in the Town Hall in an attempt to get themselves known, but they had barely covered expenses. As a final, despairing kick the Group Committee decided to try another one, although most of the members felt that it would be yet another flop – then one member asked if he might handle publicity.

As a result of his efforts, on the two Saturdays preceding the event, the crowded shopping centre of the town witnessed a parade such as it had never seen before. Twenty-six Scouts filed through the streets twenty yards apart: each was clad in the most fantastic fancy dress that he could beg, bag, borrow, or devise, and wore a grotesque mask. Front and back he carried large sheets of cardboard, sandwich-man style, on which were affixed home-made posters telling of the concert: around his neck was fastened a dog-lead and the other end was held by a Cub in uniform.

It proved the talking point of the town for days. The local paper reported it, using such telling phrases as – “outstanding originality”, “colourful personalities”, “deserving of every support”. The whole scheme cost less than the £5 the Committee had voted for publicity, and the concert was a sell-out.

“...accommodation...” Where a Group meets in other people's premises on a tenant-at-will basis they have no security of tenure, and if the owner wishes to put the premises to another use it is often far from easy to find alternative accommodation.

A Group that had met since its formation in a large builder's shed received the unpleasant news that it was to be demolished. The only hall in the neighbourhood was fully booked – badminton twice a week, amateur theatricals, a lit, and deb., Boys' Brigade, a political organisation – so the Pack was split into its Sixes and met in the houses of its Scouters; the Troop met under lamp-posts.

Two months went by and wintry weather arrived. Several boys got bad colds, parents got the wind up, and eventually came the day when there was talk of closing the Troop until the spring.

In desperation the Chairman of the Group Committee went to see his opposite number of the Badminton Club - a fellow Rotarian. Not only did the Club offer to give up one of their evenings at the hail each week but they insisted on paying the rent – “to help the Group along”.

“...camping...” At times it is possible to obtain the help of members of the Committee at summer camp. In addition, they are often able to suggest a suitable locality or site that they have encountered while on holiday. At times they perform even more vital service.

The 1st Edition Troop had booked a wonderful site nearly two hundred miles from home: the Scouters had visited it at Easter and were counting the days until they could get the boys there. Heavy kit had been sent in advance and a post card from the farmer had told of its arrival. Then, a week before the camp was due to start, came the bombshell – owing to an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease the farm could not be camped on. Neither Scouter could get time off from work to try to make other arrangements; they began to think the camp would have to be scrubbed, but they had reckoned without their Group Committee.

One member spent an expensive evening making trunk calls to enquire into alternative sites in the neighbourhood that were not affected by the ban; another placed his services and his car at the disposal of the Scouters for the week-end to inspect these sites, and to shift the heavy gear from the farmhouse to the one selected. The camp was held.

“...employment for members of the Group...” A member of a North London Committee has found jobs for more than fifty boys in the last eight years. Many Committees give themselves far wider terms of reference than just “employment”.

Kevin was orphaned when he was four and went to live with an elderly relative. She died when he was fifteen and he went into digs, just managing to pay his way on his small wage as a garage hand. From that day on, the Group Committee kept the kindly eye on his affairs that his parents would have done had they been alive, and at many of their meetings the single word “Kevin” appeared on the agenda. When the garage job showed signs of having but little future in it one of the members found him other, more lucrative, employment. When he began to save, the Group Treasurer advised him about the opening of a savings account and personal insurance. When he became mildly interested in girls, another member made it his business to see that he was fully acquainted with matters of sex.

He spent most of his time on National Service abroad, and his only mail was “Scout” letters – spasmodic, sketchy affairs from his fellow Rovers; more regular efforts from his G.S.M. and members of the Committee; a periodic Group news-sheet from the Secretary.

On demob, Kevin immediately returned to the only family he had ever known, and is now their S.M. – putting back into Scouting for the benefit of the present-day boy some of the fun, help, and guidance that he himself received from it.

The above are all examples of Group Committees that have been successful – “happy ending” stories that are pleasant to write about but which do not, unfortunately, show both sides of the picture. On occasions such Committees slip up badly. Let us examine why.

P.O.R., Rule 202 (3) states very definitely that the Committee is not concerned in any way with the actual training of the boys, but either this fact is not impressed on them sufficiently clearly at the beginning of their term of office, or they are allowed to forget it. What so often happens is this.

The Committee go to work with vigour and enthusiasm and make a considerable amount of money. Gradually they slip into the attitude that “the man who pays the piper calls the tune”. The first occasion on which they overstep their duties is possibly on a point so trivial that the

G.S.M. does not consider it worthwhile calling their attention to it. But it may prove the thin edge of the wedge, and sometimes before he realises it the Committee is running his Group for him. He then has to call in District help, and if feelings have been ruffled, the matter is very difficult to settle without hurt to the Group.

If such a situation is to be avoided, it is essential that the G.S.M. should ensure that all the Committee members are aware of this limitation of their powers, and that he should be strong-minded enough to deal firmly with even the most trivial encroachment on his own.

Trouble blew up in a Group recently because their Committee was "magpie-minded".

They ran numerous social events each year, at which the boys did their full whack, and built up a bank balance of some hundreds of pounds, but they were loath to spend any of it – it was there for a "rainy day". The Group equipment was amongst the poorest I have seen; the camping gear was wholly inadequate, some tents not even waterproof. It took a considerable effort to convince this Committee that while there is everything to be said for thrift, commonsense and justice must go with it: that money earned by the boys of the present Scout generation should be used to equip those boys properly, and not hoarded for some indefinite purpose while they camp in leaky tents.

It is very much in the interests of smooth running if members of the Group Committee have regular opportunities of seeing the boys for whom they are working: apart from stimulating their interest, it will give them a much clearer understanding of the difficulties with which the Scouters have to contend.

However good the manners of the boys may be, they are so very much creatures of the immediate present that they almost invariably take for granted "services rendered" when those services are somewhat in the background. A Scouter expects no thanks for giving up his time, his reward is in the results of his work, but people who possess only a limited insight into the muddled mass of contradictions that is the mind of a boy are often genuinely hurt by what they consider to be his ingratitude. It is a good scheme, therefore, to stage occasionally a slightly formal moment when, in the presence of the Committee members, the service they render to the Group is pointed out to the boys, and they respond with a B-R-A-V-O or other suitable acknowledgment. My more cynical friends will label this as "blarney", but at the same time it can be regarded as good manners and therefore good training.

I am often asked whether or not the Scouters of a Group should serve on the Group Committee, and I think P.O.R., Rule 202 (2) gives the answer very pointedly - "The G.S.M. will be a member of the Group Committee": not the R.S.L., the S.M.(S.), the S.M., the C.M. – but the G.S.M. It is his privilege to serve as the link between the Council and the Committee. Other Scouters on the Committee tend to defeat one of the chief purposes it should serve – that of a watchdog between Scouting and the general public. Scouting lives almost entirely on money that has been provided in one way or another by that public, and it is essential that they should feel assured that it is being administered in the best interests of the boys. If the G.S.M. is the only Scouter on the Committee then they are unlikely to think that he can exert undue influence; if there are others, they may wonder. There is no accounting for the strange viewpoints of some people - today we are nearly half a million strong in this country, five million throughout the world, and there are estimated to be twenty-five million Old Scouts alive; yet there are still some who believe that Scouting is run for the personal benefit of the Scouters.

A reference in P.O.R. to the possible formation of a Parents' and Supporters' Association will be found in Rule 202 (1) which places on the Group Committee the onus of deciding its advisability and its scope.

A Group Committee has certain specific duties that are explained to members when they agree to serve and that may be looked up in P.O.R. at any time, and their acceptance of office may be taken as an acceptance of those conditions. In the case of a Parents' and Supporters' Association there is no such safeguard. It is a body that is controlled by the Group Committee

only to the extent that is defined in the Association's Constitution, and therefore that Constitution needs the most careful drawing up. Failing this, it is not bound by any of the rules of Scouting and is responsible to no one except itself. The Constitution should include clauses stating specifically that its affairs will be conducted in accordance with the rules of the Boy Scouts' Association and to the approval of the Group Committee: that any money earned shall be handed over to the Group Treasurer to be administered in accordance with P.O.R., Rule 208: and providing for the disbandment of the Association at the discretion of the L.A. and D.C. in consultation with the G.S.M. and the Group Committee.

If the above precautions are taken to avoid misunderstandings and "situations", such an organisation can be of very great service to a Group, particularly from a social aspect, inasmuch as all the parents and keen supporters may be enrolled as members which gives an even wider application to the "family" idea. Whereas the size of a Group Committee has to be limited so that a rapid execution of business is not held up by the inertia of its numerical strength, no such limitation in size need be imposed on a Parents' and Supporters' Association.

In some Groups the membership of a boy in one of the Sections automatically makes his parents members of the Association, but this is not always satisfactory since some parents invariably say – "We didn't know we belonged" – even though membership cards may have been sent to them. It will be found far more effective to invite them to become members, and to charge them a bob each for the privilege. It is amazing how that shilling will make their membership stick in their minds, and will give them a wish to have a stake in what goes on.

The set-up in a particularly go-ahead Group is well worth recording. Their Group Committee is twelve strong; it includes parental representation from each Section and also the Chairman of the Supporters' Association. The Association *has* a carefully drawn up Constitution which emphasises the points mentioned earlier and stresses that its functions are purely social. When an event is run, the Group Committee attend to what might be termed the "executive" details, while the Association supplies a team who do the actual running of it. As this is a Group with a strong family atmosphere, the Council, Committee, and Association work together in complete harmony.

I was recently invited to a social evening of theirs which was attended by approximately 80 boys and 130 parents: it was one of the most enjoyable functions I have been to. During a short interval the Chairman of the Group Committee told those present that £100 was needed to complete their H.Q., then in course of construction, and asked for volunteers to make interest-free loans of £1 upwards for a period of two years. Something over £80 was offered within a matter of minutes, and this is not what might be termed a wealthy Group.

Those who have never tapped the immense store of energy, enthusiasm, and kindness that is waiting to be harnessed for the benefit of their boys and their Group have never experienced one of the greatest miracles that Scouting can achieve.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

P.O.R., Rules 169, 573, 201, 208, relating to the Group Council.  
P.O.R., Rules 173, 202 - 3, 208, relating to the Group Committee.  
P.O.R., Rule 202, relating to a body of parents and supporters.  
The Group Committee  
Games for Socials

## SCOUT PARENTS

THE Scout Restaurant at I.H.Q. is one of the best places in which to hear the uncensored opinions of all types of Scouters on every matter appertaining to Scouting. Most of these opinions are sound, but occasionally one hears a comment that suggests a singular lack of judgment. One such floated across from an adjoining table quite recently – “the only thing that spoils Scouting is the boys’ parents”.

The majority of men in the room could have told the speaker that his Group would never be really successful unless he had the interest and co-operation of those parents, but as a man must so obviously be working on the wrong lines to have such a conviction, he probably would not have believed them.

In the last chapter I have tried to show the way in which parents can help by being enlisted as members of the Group Committee or Supporters’ Association, but their interest is essential for several other reasons.

However, first let us clear the air by admitting quite freely that many parents just have no clue as to how their children should be trained. They have brought into the world a life, but they have not fitted themselves for the shaping of it. It is to the boys of such parents that Scouting owes its greatest duty. These parents rarely identify themselves with their children’s interests and are therefore unlikely to be particularly interested in the Group. They are the ones who look on Scouting as something that takes the boy out of the house so that they can get a bit of peace and quietness, or as a hobby that provides him with a maximum of enjoyment for a minimum of expenditure. Fortunately, such parents are in the minority; nevertheless, a Scouter must keep in touch with them.

Apart from the social aspect, a close contact between the Troop and the parents can be of inestimable value both to the S.M. and to the boy. In the first place such a contact is a potent influence against leakage. If a boy gets temporarily browned-off and announces at home – “I’m jacking up Scouts” – then if his parents have no interest in the matter he will probably be lost to the Movement. If, on the other hand, they have a definite stake in the Group, or if they know the S.M. well enough to regard him as a personal friend, they will have quite a lot to say about it to their young man.

The ideal in Scout training is to make it complementary to the home training, and to that end the regular visiting of parents is essential. How else can an S.M. know what the home training comprises (if anything), or understand what influences he has either to strengthen or combat?

In Chapter 5 I mentioned the case of a boy who was possibly saved from an unpleasant experience by a timely home visit from his S.M. These visits can serve other useful purposes in the way of helping the boy, who so often takes home a very garbled account of his Scouting activities, thus giving rise to considerable misgivings on the part of the parents.

James was just such a boy: he was twelve. He had not been in the Cubs; he turned up at a Troop, asked to join, and spent the evening with them. The following week and the week after he was missing. Fortunately, the S.M. had taken his name and address – how many do on the first night? – and called at the boy’s home. He was met by an indignant mother who stated she would never allow her son to belong to a Troop where he was “brutally flogged”. An enquiry from the alarmed S.M. brought to light the facts. On the evening the boy had been there, the Troop had played the circle game in which everyone faces inwards, eyes closed, and a “weapon” is placed in the hands of one boy so that he may chastise his neighbour while chasing him around the circle. In this case the “weapon” had been a knotted duster. In an attempt to impress his mother with his toughness, James had reported that he had been given several good beatings but he could take it! Explanations were made, and James was at Troop night the following week together with a small friend who also wanted to join.

Nicholas nearly lost his first camp through a leg-pull. One of his Patrol, having read a book on "darkest Africa", told him that all first-timers were slung out of camp to live on the country for a week. Nicholas was not too sure he believed it, but it was a good story to carry home to prove he really was growing up. His horrified mother promptly vetoed camp, a decision that was rapidly reversed after a visit from the S.M.

Sometimes parents have but little idea of the objects and principles of Scouting; they look on it vaguely as "something the boys do on Friday nights". Home visiting enables an S.M. to leave with them a copy of such I.H.Q. pamphlets as *Scouting*: to explain to them the Promise and the Law, and to ask for their help in encouraging the boy to live up to these ideals at home. If the Troop and the home pull in one direction, it is a very unresponsive youngster who can withstand them.

Some mothers – usually those whose affection for their offspring can best be described as "smother" love – regard Scouters as a tough, sergeant-major-like race who propose to submit their ewe-lambs to the most frightful hardening treatment. In their imaginations this consists of sending them out in all weathers and letting them stay in wet clothes; allowing them to sleep in damp blankets; feeding them on half-burnt, unsuitable foods that will ruin their digestions and bring on all manner of ills.

When a mother has a boy in a Troop and still adheres to these beliefs, it indicates one of two things – either the S.M. is indeed the complete monster, or else that she has never met him. Such mothers are usually amazed when they do get to know their son's S.M. to find that he is every bit as interested in the welfare of her boy as she is herself, and though torture would not make her admit it, that he knows far more about boys than she does – he having spent much time studying many boys, she having devoted many years to spoiling one.

A good Parent-Troop relationship can be vital in some cases of emergency. This was shown in the case of a strong, keen, well-run Sea Scout Troop. They lost their three Scouters within the brief space of two months - the S.M. went to Australia to open up a new branch for his firm; the A.S.M. had to give up on account of night-classes and intensive studying for his "finals"; the acting-A.S.M. received his call-up papers.

At a Parents' evening, the possibility of the Troop having to close down was pointed out and volunteers were asked for three fathers came forward. None of them knew anything about Scouting and they had to learn it the hard way. One soon found that he could not spare enough time and so became an official Instructor. The other two became warrant holders as S.M. and A.S.M. respectively, and it is due solely to the hard graft of these three fathers that the Troop is in existence to-day, still making a fine contribution to Scouting.

Many S.M.s have never realised the potential there is amongst fathers for help at summer camp. Last June, a parent rang up to say that he knew their Skipper was worded about manpower for camp, and did I think he would be butting in if he volunteered to help? There must be plenty more fathers just waiting to be asked, and once they get bitten by the bug it takes a tough wife to stop them accepting a warrant.

It happened the other way round in a certain policeman's family two years ago. His wife got roped in by the Guides, and to show he did not care two hoots he became a Scouter.

Now, between them, they work harmoniously for the interests of nearly sixty young people. Some parents are prepared to serve Scouting in a far wider manner than by taking an interest in just one Group: they need but little encouragement. During the last four years parents in our own District have acted as hosts to Scouts from the Philippines, Italy, Germany, France, Turkey, Switzerland, and Greece. All have stayed in private Scout homes, and their hosts agreed to take them with no more formality than a telephone call, Robert T. Lewis (Romulus) writes: "...the modern home is not, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a place suitable for the rearing of children".



Nevertheless, the average Scout-home manages to produce the finest boys in the world, and given the slightest encouragement, their parents can prove the finest friends we have in Scouting.

## 8 GROUP EVENTS

APART from Bob-a-Job almost the entire income of any Group comes from events that are organised either by the Group Council, the Group Committee, or the Supporters' Association.

It sometimes surprises the new Scouter to find that the Movement is not subsidised and that each of the (nearly) 10,000 Groups in the country is expected to be self-supporting.

A consideration, therefore, of the various methods by which money can be raised is of vital importance if a Group is to be properly equipped, and is to consider owning its own H.Q.

For a start, two things must be emphasised. The first is that individual Groups are not permitted to run a Bob-a-Job effort at any time of the year other than the official dates. The second, that everyone connected with a Group should have a very clear idea of the provisions of P.O.R., Rules 19, 20, and 21, which lay down emphatically that no money-raising methods savouring of begging or gambling may be employed.

A variety of schemes are used by different Groups and it may perhaps be worthwhile to consider some of them in detail. Let it be clearly understood, however, that where examples occur I am not claiming that they are in any way perfect or that they cannot be improved upon: they are merely factual descriptions of events that have been run by quite "unprofessional" people, and they have been successful in their primary object of raising money.

*ADVERTISING* is always a matter that needs considerable thought, and it must be borne in mind that the general public is, on the whole, completely blind to anything that is not literally thrust under its nose. For this reason it is a rare thing for posters in shop windows or small advertisements in local papers to make an impact on more than a few people. Many will pass even the most dazzling poster dozens of times without noticing it, and certainly without stopping to read it. This can be proved to anyone's satisfaction by affixing such a poster to a board, standing it against a shop-front in a busy street, then observing the number of people who even glance at it.

In discussing the duties of the Group Committee, I mentioned an occasion when an enterprising member devised a scheme that could not be overlooked by anyone in possession of his senses. It was, of course, blatantly vulgar showmanship, nevertheless it paid off, and to some extent Groups have got to indulge in a modicum of showmanship unless they have such a huge following that the success of any event is assured beforehand.

This showmanship need not necessarily be undignified and there are many ways in which it can be given expression.

A Group in a medium-sized town had enough drag with shop-keepers and the local press to run a competition in which members of the public were invited to spot an article in a shop-window in the town that was out of keeping with the goods sold by the shop. In a very large number of the windows there was a small poster headed "It is not this" – which advertised the forthcoming event.

Regularly some Groups use public address equipment mounted on a car to tour shopping centres and residential districts. The police rarely object to this practice provided it is done at a reasonable time of day, and not to such a degree as to constitute a nuisance.

One Group, without comment, flew six brightly-painted, hydrogen-filled ex-Government meteorological balloons from the garden of a house on the outskirts of a provincial town. Speculation was rife amongst the inhabitants concerning their purpose, and at the psychological moment a two-column, two-inch advertisement appeared in the local paper – “THE BALLOONS! SEE THIS SPACE NEXT WEEK!”

The following week the space was again headed - “THE BALLOONS” – and was followed by an advertisement of the event.

It is as well to note in passing that the flying of such balloons is subject to Air Ministry approval, and the height at which they may be flown varies in accordance with the distance of the site from aerodromes and air routes. Also, it is contrary to town planning regulations for them to be flown in a built-up area. If after this Groups consider the idea is worth trying, they will find they can buy balloons about four feet in diameter for 3s. 6d. each, and that any industrial organisation using hydrogen is usually prepared to fill them for a shilling a time.

Yet another Group used its “Soapbox Derby” car, suitably adorned with placards and driven through crowded shopping areas by a Scout in uniform, but the wisdom of this is doubtful where there is a heavy volume of traffic.

A handbill in the letter-box of every house in the town or District is very effective and reasonably cheap (£2 10s. for 5,000) and their distribution can well be undertaken by Cubs and Scouts.

Anyone with ingenuity can readily think up schemes that will forcibly draw public attention, but whatever method of advertising is used, a Group must make up its mind to get away from stereotyped methods if it is going out after big numbers.

*RUMMAGE SALES.* Some people consider that these are events which raise the maximum amount of money for the minimum of effort and expense; when run on a medium scale there is a lot to be said for this belief.

The most effective sales seem to be those that have been advertised by handbills in letter-boxes, but this method must not be used for collection purposes – BEGGING for rummage would come within the provisions of Rules 19 and 20.

Two sales took place recently and allowed a comparison of methods to be made: the quantity of rummage and the type of district were comparable, and in neither case did the event clash with any other major event in the neighbourhood.

Both Groups collected by the same system - the individual boys, the Scouters, and the Group Committee were asked to get in touch with relatives and friends. They were provided with handbills for distribution to these people, and on the handbills was stated the date and the approximate time when the rummage would be collected.

The first Group advertised the event solely by a large number of posters in shops, the windows of private houses, and outside the hall where the sale was to be held. They raised a gross of £26, but had about three-quarters of their stuff left on their hands.

The second Group had 1,000 handbills printed announcing the sale and these were put through the letter-boxes of houses in a part of the district that suggested potential customers. As a result, people were queuing up two hours before the event was due to start: it was almost a sell-out and took £104.

There are three warnings that must be given to those who have never tried to run a rummage sale. Each is worthy of a separate paragraph. Firstly, if the usual practice of charging 3d. admission fee is indulged in, then entry must be arranged so that only one person can get in at a time. If double-swing doors are suddenly thrown open, any unfortunate helpers standing just inside in the hope of collecting three pences will find themselves knocked over and trampled underfoot by a charging horde in comparison with which a herd of stampeding elephants is mincing delicacy.

Secondly, some of those who make a practice of frequenting rummage sales often regard the occasion as a pitting of their sleight-of-hand against the acuteness of observation of the helpers. It cuts down stealing if some large men, mounted on chairs or tables, are ostentatiously watching those who crowd round the stalls. Another habit is to knock goods off stalls on to the floor and then pick them up later: Scouts can do a good job of work by forestalling the picking up.

Thirdly, hot and perspiring helpers should not idly discard their mink and throw it negligently over the nearest chair – it will have been sold for a couple of bob before they can turn round.

**SALES OF WORK.** Where a Group is particularly interested in handicrafts, or has a big following to provide the articles to be sold, such a sale can result in a large turnover. But obviously, if the cost of all raw materials is to be deducted from the gross, the profits will amount to only a small percentage of the total takings.

Various sidelines are usual, such as guessing the name of a doll, the weight of a cake, and so on. If the event is in the open-air, bowling for a chicken, a balloon race, darts, a treasure hunt patch, skittles, electric penny in a bucket of water, quoits, Aunt Sally, lucky dip, throwing tennis balls in tilted buckets, refreshments, are all possible additions.

Needless to say, the somewhat leisurely progress and polite atmosphere of a sale of work are in sharp contrast to the air of grim determination and preparedness for battle that pervades a rummage sale.

**WHIST DRIVES.** These fall into two categories – an occasional full-scale affair with advertising in proportion, and regular smaller drives, run over a period, to which the same people turn up time after time.

The full-scale drive is far more likely to be a success if really worthwhile prizes can be advertised, but unless these have been given, the Group is committing itself to a heavy loss if the event is poorly attended. Taking a long-term view, the smaller, regular drives, with their week by week following, are a safer proposition.

It will often be found that one or two members of the Group Committee or the Supporters' Association are prepared to run a weekly self-supporting effort that brings in a considerable income over a period of time. One such was recently brought to my notice.

It is run by two mothers and a father every Saturday night, and has collected a following that fluctuates between fifty-five and sixty-five. The charge is 2s. a head which includes light refreshments. About £3 is spent weekly on prizes, 10s. on refreshments, and 10s. put to reserve for the purchase of really good prizes for the top scores totalled over the season to encourage the attendance of regular patrons. Two seasons of five months each are run, and the net gain to the Group averages out at £1 a week.

**BEETLE DRIVES.** Small, regular beetle drives have been held by many Groups with varying success, but this form of entertainment does not seem to hold its popularity in the same way as whist.

**CONCERTS.** It must be stressed that if a concert is to be put on at all then it must be good. So-called concerts that dish up glorified camp-fire stunts, badly-rehearsed plays, and corny slapstick, are virtually taking money by false pretences, and bring discredit on the Movement. On the other hand, a really well-rehearsed Group concert – preferably with a recognisable theme running through it – is one of the finest advertisements that a Group can have.

There are many books available to the Scouter who wishes to produce such an effort. I do not intend to overlap the very detailed advice they give, but just to cram a few hard facts into a minimum of space.

The amount of work that goes into producing a concert is far too great to be expended just by one performance. If there is any possible chance of obtaining audiences then a minimum of three shows should be aimed at. It must be borne in mind that the more boys who appear

during the course of the programme the better from a ticket-selling point of view. Parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, will flock to see their sweet infants, some of them even taking tickets for more than one performance.

If an audience is to go away satisfied that it has got its money's worth, the minimum length of programme should be in the region of an hour and a quarter for the first half, and an hour for the second, with a fifteen-minute interval.

Scout audiences invariably come to see "the boy", and for that reason an undue proportion of the programme should not be given over to adult friends and supporters who are willing to "help". By the same token, it is more difficult to sell tickets for a show put on by a professional concert party on behalf of a Group, than it is for a show staged by the Group itself.

Unless there is a catch in it such as a lucky number (gambling?), it will be found that programmes sell to a little less than half those who attend. The charges that can be made to local tradesmen for advertisements in the programme of a small Group show are usually so low that any profits that might accrue are swallowed up by extra printing charges.

Long announcements from the stage, giving thanks to all and sundry, are rather tedious for the audience, and if a line of heavy type in the programme pays public tribute, then most helpers are more than satisfied when the Scouters render their personal thanks behind the scenes.

Ralph Reader's "Gang Show" has brought home to most Scouters just how a snappy, fast-moving production should be presented, but nevertheless many Group concerts that drag interminably are put on every year. The audience does not pay to be bored, and if it is, then members of it will be found to have long memories the next time tickets are being sold.

Background music before the curtain goes up and during the interval can be helpful in producing the right atmosphere, but let it be "background" music. What often appears to the operator – behind the loudspeakers, curtains, and scenes – to be a tuneful melody, is to the audience a hideous cacophony of ear-splitting sound that makes normal conversation impossible.

Profits from interval refreshments average out at from 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the total profits of the concert, unless a large proportion is given, when it is of course quantitatively higher. Adult audiences go mostly for tea, small and sliced cakes, plain and chocolate biscuits: child audiences for soft drinks, potato crisps, and chocolate biscuits. It solves many problems if the soft drinks are in cardboard cartons that can be thrown away when empty. Many firms are prepared to supply soft drinks, crisps, and biscuits on a sale-or-return basis. Ice cream will have a ready sale, but it is difficult to deal with unless a refrigerator is available.

*DANCES.* These come under three distinct headings – ballroom, old-time, and square.

Unless a Group is in a neighbourhood where it has a ready sale for a large number of tickets priced at 5s. or over, it will be found difficult to make a turnover that is not swamped by overhead expenses. For a charge of this sort the dancers naturally expect a far better floor than can be offered by an H.Q. or by most Church buildings, and this means hiring a hall. Obviously one of the greatest attractions to a ballroom dance is the band, and the better the band the higher the price. If refreshments are to be included in the cost of admission, tickets will need to be considerably higher than 5s., since at an affair of this sort something a bit more ambitious than a cup of tea and a bun must be provided. The other alternative is the provision of a running buffet at which the dancers buy their own refreshments. Even so, it will be found that by the time the bills for the hall, band, printing, advertising and food have been met, the profit is but a very small percentage of the turnover. At one such event recently just over 80 tickets were sold at 5s. each, and the net profit was in the region of £9.

In most cases old-time dancing will be found to be a greater attraction for parents and friends, and some Groups hold such an event monthly during the winter, in their own H.Q. or Church

hall. There is a far more informal atmosphere about these gatherings and many of them dispense with a band in favour of a radiogram. An admission price of 2s. and the provision of a buffet where the dancers may buy their own refreshments, usually shows a much greater percentage of profit on ticket sales than would accrue from a dance of the ballroom variety.

Square dancing appeals to many nowadays, particularly the younger generation, and provided a good "caller" is available, a series arranged fortnightly or monthly will usually attract a regular following. Again, 2s. admission and a buffet should show a favourable return.

*WHITE ELEPHANT SALE.* This is really a rummage sale on more "genteel" lines, the customers often being drawn from amongst those who have presented the "elephants".

A very successful one was held by a certain Group in the form of a party. All members canvassed friends and relatives for serviceable articles surplus to their requirements. All Cubs, Scouts, and Seniors (there is no Rover Grew as yet) were invited to the party together with their parents and friends, members of the Group Committee and Supporters Association. Games and competitions in which all who wished could join formed the principle part of the programme, and the white elephant stalls manned by Committee members were open all the evening at one end of the hall. During the course of the evening an opportunity was made for the presentation of badges and awards to the Pack and Troops. In spite of the fact that refreshments were provided free, the occasion showed a profit of more than £30.

*DISPLAYS.* Summer, open-air displays of Scout work by Pack and Troops can be relied upon to produce a good audience, but so many of these events are spoiled because the items chosen are not suitable for presentation to a crowd some distance away. To be really interesting a display must be fast-moving, stream-lined, and with plenty of action. A Group that specialises in these events put on a most successful show last summer.

It was held in a large paddock and an arena was roped off. Such forms and chairs as their H.Q. possessed were dotted around the perimeter for the use of elderly people, but the majority of the audience were content either to stand or sit on the grass. It was a well-advertised event and attracted more than 400 people at 1s. a head, pay at the gate.

Up to the time the display was due to start not a boy was to be seen, but a note on a horn brought Cubs, Scouts, Seniors, and Scouters running into the arena from all directions. They converged on a flagstaff that was almost invisible lying on the ground. Two of the guys were already affixed to pegs and a pull on the third brought the pole upright, with the folded flag and halliards already in position. A loop on the end of this third guy was quickly slipped over a peg previously driven into the correct position. A smart flag-break followed, and then all the Scouts ran off leaving the Cubs in possession.

At one end of the arena they staged a jungle dance, at the other end some of the more spectacular Cub games. Both items finished together and the Scouts doubled back.

At one end they had a fire-lighting competition, glorified under the title "Operation Atom Bomb". They had to turf their fireplace, collect some wood from a pile in readiness some thirty yards away, light their fires, "cook" a tightly-sealed 2-lb. treacle tin three parts full of water until it blew its top, put out their fires, dispose of the debris, and return.

While this was going on, eight Seniors at the other end of the arena were erecting, or acting as guy-men, to a stave flagstaff. They got nine staves high before it slowly sagged in the middle and collapsed.

Other fast-moving Cub activities were followed by an inter-Patrol trek-cart race against time, over a forty yard course in the centre of which a length of wattle fencing on stands was put up. They had to run the cart up to the fence, dismantle it, get it over piece by piece, pole jump over with staves, re-erect the cart and run it to the finishing line. In the meantime the Seniors were erecting a bridge. To save a tedious period of waiting while the trestles were being lashed they had been pre-fabricated, and all anchorages were already in position. It went up in under ten minutes.

A comic item was put on by the S.M., in an old-fashioned bathing costume, challenging all-comers to a pillow fight on a greasy pole. The pool was made out of a railway tarpaulin with the ends and sides turned up and fixed to stakes; it was ready filled with water. Several Scouts in old uniforms, and a Senior in Charley's Aunt attire, accepted the challenge.

The display was brought to a conclusion by flag-down, the flagstaff again disappearing.

With these and other items the show took an hour and ten minutes, and the whole of the time there was action, plenty to watch, and no tedious waits. When the visitors left, they found a barrel at the gate guarded by a diminutive Cub: there was a large notice - "*IF YOU'VE ENJOYED THE SHOW PUT A PENNY IN THE BARREL. IF YOU HAVEN'T, TAKE ONE OUT*". This netted an additional £6.

*TRADING* has proved profitable in at all events one Group. The thirty-five Cubs and twenty-eight Scouts were each given 6s. and told to trade with it for six weeks, to see how much they could turn it into. The 63s became £14. The individual record was put up by a Cub with a little over 6s. He bought old orange boxes and crates from tradesmen, cut them into kindling which he sold, re-invested the money in more boxes and so on.

Occasionally one hears of more unusual methods of raising funds. Some years ago a Leicester Troop worked up quite a good business. Potatoes were bought in the wholesale market, and the boys obtained orders at the prevailing retail prices from their relatives and friends, weekly deliveries being made on Saturdays by trek-cart and bicycles. On account of the work that fell on the individual boys, a percentage of the profits went into a camp fund in which they all participated in proportion to the orders obtained and delivered by each boy. At its peak, the "business" was handling nearly half a ton of potatoes a week.

No discussion of money-raising efforts would be complete without a description of one put over by a Cornish Troop. It was in a part of the county where whippet racing is very popular, and the Troop decided to hold a race meeting, with a class for mongrels. It was widely advertised, but even so, the results surpassed all expectations. From all over the county men turned up with a variety of queer beasts – big dogs, little dogs; long dogs, short dogs; smooth dogs and ones like walking doormats: the Scouters went nearly frantic in trying to decide on classes for them.

The "hare" was a dead rabbit attached to a long length of cord fastened over the rear wheel of a bicycle without its tyre, propped up on a stand and pedalled furiously by a perspiring Scout. The rabbit came to bits during the first heat and there was a glorious dog-fight for the remains. When the heat was re-run an old sack was substituted but the dogs did not seem to mind.

The meeting started at two, and the Scouters had in mind a leisurely two-hour show, but at eight o'clock they were still frenziedly dividing dogs into batches of similar size and weight and running heats. If a dog did not do well in one heat, its owner promptly paid a further 2s. and entered it for another. This went on interminably with six dogs in a heat and a prize of 5s. for the winner.

On every side was an army of dogs of every colour, size, shape, and breed. Whenever two got close together they started a fight. They all barked, yapped, snarled, and growled continuously in different keys. At the end of each heat the dogs taking part in it converged on the sack with the intention of tearing it to shreds, and the boy on the bicycle had to sit with his legs out of harm's way on the handlebars until they were collected by their owners.

Never had such an uproar been heard in the village. All the inhabitants turned out and flocked to the field. Passing cars stopped to see what on earth was going on, and an enterprising Scout ushered many of them into an adjoining meadow and charged a 2s parking fee. One of the boys on the gate admitted a travelling ice-cream salesman on a tricycle, having sold him the "sole ice-cream rights" for £1. An opulent-looking, bookie, having seen advertisements of the event, arrived in a large car and announced his intention of setting up a stand: with P.Q.R. in

mind, the S.M. had to detach himself from organising heats to argue with him, and what an argument that was.

Fortunately, darkness set in before the whole thing got out of hand, and the dogs and their owners withdrew to the local pub. In no way can the Troop be held responsible for the man – and dog – fights that ended the evening.

For one of the Scouters, a Londoner, the crowning insult came in the middle of the afternoon.

The village constable arrived, took a wondering look around at the milling crowds, the parked cars, and the bedlam of barking dogs, then pushed his peaked-cap slowly to the back of his head. “Blow me down!” he exclaimed. “It gets more like London every day!”

### **SUGGESTED READING**

Scouting and Dramatics  
Public Occasions  
Good Turns from the “Gang Show”  
More Sketches from the “Gang Show”  
Five Plays for Scouts  
Six Pantomimes for Scouts  
Concert Items for Cubs and Scouts

## **9**

### **CAMPS**

EACH year, as the “P.C.” forms begin to come in, I am surprised afresh at the lack of imagination shown by some Troops in the choice of a site for summer camp. Men and boys who spend fifty weeks of the year surrounded by houses and shops choose a place as near as they can get to a large town. Others, who at home spend shillings each week travelling to and from their nearest swimming pool, camp miles away from any suitable bathing place. Surely the ideal is to make summer camp as different as possible from the normal pattern of living.

The primary reason for this lack of enterprise seems to be largely due to the fact that the only sites known to many Troops are ones they have been to before, or others that are recommended by friends, and they do not know how to set about finding something more ambitious. This is a matter in which the D.C. at the other end can very often help considerably.

If, when the locality is chosen, the S.M. writes to him outlining the sort of site he has in mind, and the facilities he would like, more often than not the local D.C. can fix him up with something that approximates closely to his requirements. It is not necessary to know the D.C.'s name and address to get in touch with him: a letter sent to “D.C. for ..., care of Imperial Headquarters” will be forwarded with a minimum of delay.

Some Troops are singularly conservative in their choice of a locality which always seems a pity when the whole country is open to them. Scouting gets a very fair crack of the whip from British Railways with return fares for under-sixteens at three-quarters of the single fare, and for sixteens to eighteens at one and a half times single fare, and this means that any place within a radius of 220 miles can be visited by the lower age Groups for £1 5s at the existing rates. Unless expensive outings are to be a part of the programme, then a camp at this distance from home can be run comfortably on £4 10s a head for a fortnight.

The breakdown figures per head of the costs of a London Sea Scout Troop camping in Devon last year for twelve days were as follows. The personnel was forty boys under sixteen and four Scouters.

	£	s.	d.
Food	1	15	6
Fares	1	6	5
Transport		3	3
Boats		6	5
Kitchen and			
Camp Sundries		11	
Miscellaneous		5	
	£3	13	11

Each boy paid £4 10s and Scouters an additional amount to cover their extra railway fare.

This left 1 6s 1d per head for outings and so forth. I was rather surprised at the low figure of 3s per head per day for food, and questioned various members of the party. Except for one boy, they agreed that the food was “smashing”.

Misunderstandings arise on occasions because boys are not told before camp that the manners and customs in the part of the country they are to visit differ from their own. Thus a London Troop camping in a small place in Cornwall earned itself a reputation for being “stuck-up” – quite undeservedly – because the boys had not been warned that the country people had that delightful habit of passing the time of day with all and sundry. Finding themselves being addressed by perfect strangers, the boys thought they were being “fresh” and did not respond readily.

Almost every part of the country has its different way of life, and this must be respected by Troops who wish to be welcome visitors.

It is always refreshing to hear of a Troop that is sufficiently enterprising to get away completely from its normal type of summer camp and try something fresh. One such Troop made an interesting expedition last summer. For a variety of reasons only eleven boys were able to attend, and it was decided that in place of a fortnight's standing camp they and their S.M. would have a week's voyage of exploration of the Thames from Oxford to Teddington and back.

A motor cruiser was hired from Salter's of Folly Bridge, Oxford. Seven of the party were able to sleep on the built-in bunks and an eighth on the floor of the wheelhouse; the remaining four camped ashore each night in hike tents. Cooking was on a Calor gas stove that was one of the boat's fittings. The craft also had two small toilets with lavatory and washbowl accommodation.

The party was divided into two “watches” which changed daily “deck” and “duty”. It was the job of the deck watch to provide a helmsman who was changed hourly, to wash down all the outside paintwork, to handle the fore and aft lines in locks and help the lock-keepers with the sluices, to look after the filling of the fresh-water and petrol tanks.

The duty watch were responsible for keeping clean all below-deck accommodation, for providing a daily shopping party for supplies, for cooking meals and washing up, for emptying and re-charging chemical closets.

Normal Scout training was not neglected, and for part of each day the boat was moored up so that instructing and testing might take place.

In spite of the many “no mooring, no camping” notices that decorated the banks, the party experienced but little difficulty in finding somewhere each night where they could tie up and the shore party could pitch their tents. On both the outward and inward runs a night was spent at the site between Marlow and Temple Lock that has been advertised frequently in *The*



*Scouter*, and a camp fire was held. It is a fine site for any Troop that does not wish to camp in the middle of a market place.

Opportunities for Good Turns were boundless and included towing a broken-down motor boat, hauling another cruiser off the mud, helping other boats with their ropes in locks, rescuing a drowning pigeon with a damaged wing, giving a "ride" to four boys who had never been in a boat before, helping another cruiser who had over-run daylight to moor up in the dark: working the sluices for lock-keepers was not allowed to count as a Good Turn because the boys enjoyed it too much.

In all, the party covered 190 miles in the week, and passed through sixty-two locks before their return to Oxford. The total cost was £5 per head, and those who took part agreed that they had had more experience and enjoyment in the week than they would have done at their usual fortnight's standing camp.

Breakdown figures of costs are not available in the form given previously, but in round sums were as follows:

Hire of Cruiser	£
(including all lock charges)	30
Petrol (average 3.64 m.p.g.)	11
Fares	3
Food	15

A Sea Scout Troop that got away from the ordinary camped on a peninsula in South Devon. On foot the town was several miles away but was less than a mile by water. All shopping, expeditions, and activities involved boating, and individual boys received instruction in motor-launch handling, sailing, and rowing.

This was a twelve-day camp, thirty-six strong. The basic charge was £4 10s and there was an additional charge of 7s 6d per head boat money. During the months before camp the boys worked to raise another £ 15 that went into the "boat fund". This provided a large motor boat, a sailing dinghy, and a rowing "pram", and the camp finished with a credit balance of £4

Many Scouters are not aware of two services that are offered by British Railways that can save them a lot of work. The first is the help that a representative of the District Passenger Superintendent is prepared to give, free of all charge. All he needs to know is the destination, date, time, number, and ages of the boys travelling, and he will make all arrangements for booking tickets and reserving seating, however many different trains may be necessary to arrive at the destination. If buses are needed at either end, or transport for heavy kit from H.Q. to station, and station to site, he will also attend to this.

I have on record an occasion when such a representative arranged for a tea-trolley to be outside the reserved compartments when the train pulled up at a large station about halfway to its destination, and of another time when one of his colleagues boarded the train at a town en route to enquire if everything was all right. In the London area, at all events, he will arrange a free film show at any Group event where a minimum audience of fifty can be guaranteed.

The second service is the use of a container for heavy gear. For a small charge it is dumped against the Troop H.Q. in ample time to allow for packing. "Packing" is really the wrong word since there is no reason for staves, poles, tents, and so on, to be made up into neat packages; everything that is to go can just be stacked inside and the container locked. It is then collected by the railway people, sent by rail to its nearest unloading point, and dumped on the camp site. Similar arrangements can be made for the return journey.

While on this subject of train travel and camp, it is perhaps opportune to raise another matter. I am often more than surprised at the total lack of consideration for other members of the travelling public that is shown by some Scouters, particularly on crowded holiday trains, in allowing their boys to wander up and down the corridors throughout the length of the train, thereby being an unmitigated nuisance to those people who are without seats. Obviously, no

one mind moving for a boy if the reason is necessitous, but if these moves are multiplied by "x" boys "y" times, for no other purpose than an urge to work off superfluous energy, then many sympathisers of the Movement may end their journey with the thought that their sympathies have been misplaced. It is surely no more than reasonable that the wanderings of the boys should be limited to the corridor of the coach in which they are travelling?

A large number of camp-happy boys will be in fairly high spirits, but this does not mean that all control and discipline have to be abandoned. While travelling down to Devon on one occasion I saw a classic example of a Troop allowed to run wild. They were in another coach but the boys were passing our carriage at the rate of one a minute. At least one "pop" bottle was thrown out of a window; it burst against a bridge and pieces of glass bounced back through open windows further down the train. Noise was simply terrific, and physical combat appeared to be the order of the day. At stops, any member of the opposite sex under about forty was hailed with wolf-whistles, cat-calls, and audible remarks. The comments of my fellow-passengers were scathing, and it was one of the few occasions on which I have ever regretted having a Scout badge in my buttonhole.

When a camp is being held a long way from home and arrival is not until early evening, a Scouter with a young and travel-tired Troop has an unenviable task in trying to get a camp set up and a meal prepared before dark. An S.M. who has experienced this difficulty on more than one occasion in the past has made an arrangement for this year that is well worth passing on. He approached local Scouting in the town nearest to the site and asked to borrow a headquarters in which the Troop might sleep for the first night. Not only was suitable accommodation immediately offered, but local Scouts volunteered to have a cooked meal ready for the party on arrival. This year his camp will go up on the first morning, with a whole day ahead and no rush.

During the summer months a large number of overseas Scouts visit this country, and it is a very practical expression of the Fourth Law for a Troop to act as hosts to one or more of these visitors by inviting them to camp. They expect to pay their own way and are therefore no burden on a Troop that is working to a fine financial margin. The International Secretary at I.H.Q. is often able to put S.M.s in touch with Scouts who would appreciate such hospitality.

In these days of shortage of manpower many a Scouter finds it very difficult to obtain sufficient adult help for camp. As mentioned in Chapter 7, fathers are – occasionally – just waiting to be asked: another possible source of volunteers is the Group Committee or Supporters' Association, where there are members other than fathers. Even though these men may have no knowledge of practical Scouting they can be of great assistance, particularly in the job of quarter-mastering. It need hardly be stressed that in the case of any offers of help other than from warranted Scouters, there must be the usual character check.

A daily meeting of P.L.s in camp can be of assistance to the Scouters in helping them to gauge the wants of the boys, and to decide which activities they are enjoying and which they are not so enthusiastic about. While the idea of "like it or lump it" seems to appeal to some men as being good discipline, it must be remembered that for a lot of the boys camp may be their only away-from-home holiday from year to year, and half the purpose of running a camp will be lost if they do not enjoy it to the full.

Such a P.L.s meeting can be a quite informal affair, held at any suitable time of the day, and one item that will be sure to crop up during the course of any camp will be "grub". Dyspeptic Scouters with jaded appetites would do well to consider the answer a young Scout gave when I asked him if he had enjoyed his camp – "Smashing, D.C.! It rained all the time but the grub was super!"

Expeditions by individual Patrols can be not only great fun for the boys but also of very considerable value to the P.L., both in helping him to assume his rightful position and in creating a good Patrol spirit. Many Scouters say disdainfully – "A thirteen-year-old P.L. can't be much good, he hasn't the experience"; but if that P.L. and his Patrol are given a chance of

working together without a Scouter for ever clucking around after them like a broody hen, it is surprising how capable they can be when they suddenly find themselves up against it. Camp is just the place to run Patrol expeditions, to make sure there are plenty of difficulties, and to see how the boys overcome them. An example will show what I mean.

An S.M. outlined a two-day hike to a young Patrol: the avowed object of it was to find a suitable piece of coast for the construction of a "mulberry" harbour. The first day they were to go by cliff-path to a lonely spot ten miles away; they were told that a car would have dumped a tent, blankets, food and cooking utensils there – "if we remember" added the S.M. The boys missed the significance of this qualification and took it as a feeble attempt at humour. In the afternoon a car dumped blankets and two spies with field-glasses, but no tent and no food. The spies took up a position on a high bluff overlooking the place.

The boys arrived on site just before five, and the field glasses showed clearly the disgust with which they viewed just the heap of blankets. After, no doubt, describing their Scouters in no polite terms, they settled down around their thirteen-year-old P.L. to discuss the position. At first there was much recourse to their map, but finding the nearest village was some miles away they discarded it. A few moments later they got up, descended to the beach by a *cliff-path*, and there the P.L. sent his Second and two boys in one direction, while he and the remaining three went in the other. After a few minutes there were loud whistle-blasts from the direction the P.L. had taken, and these resulted in a mad dash by the Second and his boys to join him.

Shortly after, they ascended the cliff-path, collected their blankets and possessions, and went down again. After a long interval they came up to the top of the cliff once more, and again there was much map-studying. From the direction of their pointing, the spies guessed that their objective was an isolated farm about a mile inland. One spy set off to trail the boys, the other to follow the footsteps on the beach.

The latter found that they had dumped their possessions in a small cave; it was dry, safe, and well above the high tide mark. They had cut bracken from the cliff slopes and made up some excellent beds; a fire of driftwood had been laid in the entrance and was ready for lighting.

In the meantime, the second spy had trailed the Patrol to the farmhouse. The P.L. left his boys outside and went to speak to a man in the stack-yard. This man seemed very puzzled, for several times he raised his hat and scratched his head wonderingly: eventually he left the P.L. and went to the house. After a few minutes he came to the door and shouted something that resulted in the P.L. signalling to his followers. They all disappeared into the house.

After nearly an hour, they emerged, and from their pantomiming the spy guessed that they were rather full of food. One boy was carrying a kettle and another a small package. When it became dark the spies approached the cave. A bright fire was burning in the entrance and the kettle was set to boil. Before returning to the standing camp, they were able to get sufficiently close to judge from the conversation that the P.L. had made arrangements for breakfast at the farmhouse in the morning.

The Patrol returned to the main camp the following evening, thrilled with their "adventure" and at their ability to cope with their Scouters' duplicity, and thoroughly pleased with themselves for having beaten the S.M. at his own game – they had pledged his credit at the farmhouse to the extent of £1 12s.

Regularly each year the question of camp cooking crops up – which is the most desirable, for Patrols to take it in turns to cook for the whole camp, or for each Patrol to cook for itself? There can be only one answer for a Troop that is using the Patrol system as it is meant to be used, and that is for each Patrol to be responsible for its individual cooking.

The adherents to the other method raise several objections in an attempt to justify their case. They say, amongst other things, that it saves time, is cheaper, is less wasteful, but none of these claims will stand close investigation.

It is quite obvious that far from saving time it is going to take a Patrol considerably longer to prepare and cook sufficient food for the whole Troop than just for themselves. Even if the Patrols are so badly trained that each takes an excessive time in preparing, cooking, and clearing a meal, to what use would any time saved by other methods be put? If it is just a pleasure camp and not a Scout camp, then the answer is obvious, but if on the other hand training is a part of the camp programme then what better training could there possibly be than teaching a Patrol to work as a team, under its own P.L., and to look after itself entirely? Personally I should feel that a camp had been very well worth while if the boys had learnt nothing else than to work the Patrol system properly.

The argument of cheapness also fails. Provided menus are suitably chosen it is no more expensive to divide the food into three, four, or five portions and to cook it separately than to cook it en bloc.

The claim of wastage is self-contradictory. If a Patrol has an accident then the waste is far greater if they are cooking a large quantity of food for the whole camp than a much smaller quantity for themselves. If the waste is supposed to be amongst the individual Patrol stores such as butter fats, sugar, milk, and so on, then surely the fault does not lie in the Patrol system but with the S.M. who has not taken the trouble to teach his boys how they should look after these commodities?

After listening to all the arguments of those who advocate "Troop" cooking, I am forced to the reluctant conclusion that they adopt this method for no other reason than because it is far easier than teaching their boys how to make the Patrol system work.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

P.O.R., Rules 327 – 40  
Camping Standards  
Camp Fire Leader's Book  
Outdoor Cooking  
Scout Camps  
Standing Camps  
Boy Scout's Camp Book

## **10**

### **THE PROBLEM SCOUTMASTER**

IN the series "Troop Night" that has been appearing in *The Scouter*, the following pithy comment summed up one of the biggest headaches from which the Movement suffers: "It isn't the problem boy that produces the problem Troop, it's the problem Scouter." I suppose that of all people in Scouting it is the average D.C. who comes most into contact – and conflict – with these difficult gentlemen.

While no two of them are problems in exactly the same way, it is possible to classify them loosely under four general headings – the "Unruly Scouter", the "Possessive Scouter", the "Slapdash Scouter", the "Genius Scouter". Each, in his way, can be a menace to the smooth-running of a District, and a potential saboteur of the whole fabric of Scouting.

The Unruly Scouter may be recognised by two stock phrases – "Of course, P.O.R. is only meant for a guide", "I wouldn't hesitate to break any rule if I thought it was for the benefit of the boys".

If a man thinks that P.O.R. is only meant for a guide then either he cannot read or else his knowledge of the English language is sadly deficient. At the foot of the "Contents" page of

P.O.R. is printed quite clearly – “Rules on how to play the game of Scouting for boys”, and any dictionary will tell him that a rule is not a “guide” but a “prescribed law”.

If the same man joined a football club would he expect to play according to the rules of football or according to his own interpretation of them? The latter course would very soon bring him into conflict with the referee – and it is never very pleasant to be sent off the field.

There are some 48,000 Scouters in this country. What sort of chaos would reign if every one of them were to regard P.O.R. as a “guide”, to be translated according to his individual preferences? Scouting would no longer be an organised Movement but a confused rabble.

The Unruly Scouter attempts to defend his attitude by saying – “After all, it’s a voluntary Movement, you can please yourself”. How wrong he is! There are only two things in Scouting about which he can please himself – when he comes into it and when he goes out of it. While he remains in Scouting he is bound by the rules that govern the Movement.

Before applying for his warrant he is supposed to have studied P.O.R., and therefore his application to become a Scouter may be taken to indicate an acceptance of the rules it contains. If a breach of those rules ever resulted in events that led to his appearance in a court of law in an action for negligence, he would soon find that such a breach could have the most devastating consequences to himself.

It is surprising how some men are quite unscrupulous in making their boys an excuse for breaking rules on the pretence that it is for their benefit. It is a method of getting their own way by a course of action that is either contrary to the principles of Scouting in direct defiance of the established rules – needless to say, the benefit that accrues to the boys is negligible. The rules of Scouting have been framed for the benefit of the boys *AS A WHOLE*, and there can be no justification for breaking those rules for the benefit of one boy or one Troop.

For example, the “Supervised bathing” rule may not appear to be to the immediate benefit of an unaccompanied Scout who is a strong swimmer and who is dying for a bathe. Nevertheless, it is framed for the protection of all the boys, and so that the good name of the Movement shall not suffer on account of accidents that are avoidable.

The rule that a boy may not wear Proficiency badges until he has obtained his Second Class Badge may seem to a Scouter to be opposed to the interests of some individual boy, but it is very much in the interests of the standard of training throughout the Movement that boys should work for their Second Class Badge before they start to widen their interests.

Every rule in P.O.R. is framed with the intention of creating one standard throughout Scouting, and it is the very fact that we have such a standard that makes the Movement unique.

One last thought while we are considering the Unruly Scouter. P.O.R. is on open sale to boys as well as to Scouters, and it is surprising how many boys have a copy. What do they think if they see the man brazenly breaking the rules he has promised to obey? Surely they are more than justified in thinking that he is quite lacking in that extra loyalty – loyalty to the Movement? It cannot be too strongly emphasised that far from being a “guide”, P.O.R. is just what it claims to be – “Rules on how to play the game of Scouting for boys”.

The Possessive Scouter falls into two main categories: the first that the I.H.Q. pamphlet *The Use and Recruitment of Manpower* labels “the one-man band”; the second what we may call “the Scouter with the Wallflower Assistants”.

The “one-man band” consists of a Group that is run solely by one man. He entrenches himself in his position by getting the G.S.M.’s warrant, and were he able to do so would add to it that of the S.M.(S.) and S.M. He works without Assistants, either from choice or because no one is able to stick his autocratic methods for very long. Almost invariably he has a fine Group to show, and that is not surprising since more often than not he works on their behalf for ten or

eleven nights a week. Nevertheless, his District sees little either of him or his boys, he is quite unable to share them even to that extent. Such a Group stands out as a solitary unit in the Brotherhood of Scouts, separated from that Brotherhood by the isolationist attitude of its Scouter.

He rationalises his conduct by pointing to the results of his work – “this I have achieved” – and more often than not his pride is justified for he has achieved much. *BUT*, he has failed his boys utterly, completely, abjectly, for he has not provided the one thing that will bring security to their Scouting – *CONTINUITY*. The entire structure is built around himself and his personality, and should he suffer a long illness, or die, then there is no one to carry on and the whole Group collapses like a house of cards.

His attitude seems to be the outcome of two motives. The first, intense selfishness and jealousy – “these are *MY* boys, I don't hold them in trust for Scouting, they are *MINE, MINE*, and no one can do for them what I am doing”. The second, a desire to create a personal monument, a great work by which he will be remembered. Unfortunately he defeats his own purpose, for his work dies with him.

A year ago I was asked to write the history of a Group that has been in continuous existence since 1908. Today that Group is a living monument to every Scouter who has ever been connected with it. Had its founder been dominated by the principle “my Group, my boys”, it would have died when he left it, thirty years ago.

If a man has any real belief in the ideals of Scouting, if he is capable of seeing it as a Way of Life that is continuous, if he has any genuine interest in the welfare of his boys, then it is his clear duty *NOT* to try to make himself indispensable, *NOT* to build his Group around himself only, but to ensure that if he drops out of Scouting tomorrow his boys will be enabled to continue their training and enjoyment.

“The Scouter with the Wallflower Assistants” occurs most frequently in Cub Packs but he is also well-known in Scout Troops. Either because he is convinced that he is the only person who can do things properly, or else because subconsciously he is so uncertain of himself that he seeks constant reassurance by acting “the boss”, he runs the entire programme himself on meeting nights. His Assistants are left leaning against the wall with nothing to do, or they are given small jobs that could be tackled equally well by the P.L.s. Naturally these Assistants very soon get browned-off with having no duties, no responsibilities, no stake in the Troop, with the result that some more manpower is lost to the Movement. The incredible thing is that the Scouter rarely sees it for himself, and remarks wonderingly: “I don't understand these young people nowadays, they can't stick a job for a couple of months.”

By comparison how wise is the S.M. who remains the boss but who does as little as possible, leaving every part of the programme to be run by his Assistants. What does it matter if they do make mistakes? The man who never made a mistake never made anything. It is by making mistakes that Assistants learn, and anyway the S.M. is there to pick up the pieces.

For whom would *you* rather work – the man who acts the boss the whole time, or the man who lets you try out your own ideas and remains in the background, ready to give help and advice when you need it?

The Slapdash Scouter is not an uncommon bird and may be recognised by a variety of characteristics. In fact, his degree of “slapdashery” may be assessed with some accuracy by the number of ticks that can be put against his name.

His records are only half-kept, and if a boy loses his card he filling in of the replacement is just guesswork. His petty-cash accounts can be understood by no one, not even himself. He often does not know the names and addresses of all his boys. He considers home-visiting an unnecessary chore. He keeps no attendance register. Bills are never submitted to the Group Treasurer for payment. He is apparently unable to read or write since two letters and a telephone call are the minimum requirements for obtaining an answer on any matter. He

cannot conceive of anything important arriving in an envelope bearing a three-halfpenny stamp. A "PC" form and a railway voucher are sent to him in May but he has always lost them by July. The replacement "PC" is never returned in time for the statutory three weeks' notice to be given to the away D.C. He puts all District circulars behind the clock unread and then rings up to ask about the matters with which they deal. He passes on no information about meetings and dates to his Assistants. At a Scouters' meeting he argues hotly in favour of a certain event being held and is then conspicuous at it by his absence. He returns forms "G" without checking that all necessary signatures are there. He loses any papers sent to him for signature. His Annual Census returns and Bob-a-Job money always reach the District late whatever time limit is set. He has to be reminded each year that a copy of Group accounts must be sent to the District. He promises to take boys for tests, then lets them down. He turns up late on Troop nights so the boys are standing about in the rain. He commits the unforgivable sin of not turning up at all, and sends no word, so that after hanging about indefinitely his boys drift off home, wondering if they would not be better off in the Boys' Brigade. He rings up to find out the date, time, and place of a meeting, asks detailed instructions for getting there, then does not attend. He runs dull and dreary Troop-night meetings, his boys make no progress and leave as a consequence. He clamours to be given a particular job and then does not do it. He is always "desperately busy" but not even he knows at what. He is doing excellently with one Section and then suddenly decides he would like to change to another about which he knows nothing. He changes his address, tells no one, and then complains that he is not getting his notices. He has a serious accident in the Troop and fails to report it to the District. He changes his Troop night and fails to let his D.C. know.

In fairness I must admit that I have never yet encountered a man who could claim a tick for all these failings, but the work of any District is increased enormously if each Scouter can plead guilty on only two counts.

The Genius Scouter has missed the boat by nearly half a better He is quite sure that he could have laid down far principles of Scouting, far more effectively, had it not been for B.-P. getting in first. He is convinced that he can produce infinitely better results by strange short-cuts and half-baked practices of his own devising, than by the use of tested and proven methods.

He is filled with a boundless and exuberant energy that finds its expression in his volunteering for every job that crops up – "just leave it to me, old boy" – and then blatantly and unashamedly he backs out of it with the work still undone - "it's not worth wasting my time on anything as trivial as that". He has "strong views" about everything under the sun, and inflicts them on all and sundry without the slightest encouragement. He believes in "speaking his mind", and takes pride in it, although it appears to be merely an excuse for being rude, tactless, and inconsiderate of the feelings of other people.

When a District occasion is being discussed he suggests enough "improvements" to turn the whole affair into a bedlamite circus. On St. George's Day Church Parade he reduces everyone to babbling fury – "I don't believe in Scouts marching, we'll just walk behind" – "I hope it's all right our turning up without hats" – "just let me read the Lesson, old boy, I guarantee they'll hear *ME* at the back of the Church".

Sometimes he is strange in his appearance. He wears a wild and ragged beard that would result in his being put on a charge in any Navy in the world: or his hair is so long that it is difficult to determine his sex from a rear view. His uniform occasionally has queer little adornments that are quite irregular.

His Troop meetings have to be seen to be believed – "My programme, old boy? Good heavens, that's old-fashioned stuff! I never make out a programme. Trust me to serve up something good when I see what sort of mood the boys are in". The "something good" consists of leaping about from training to game, from game to activity, from activity to futility, until by the end of the evening his boys are almost as addle-pated as he is himself.

Should their conduct ever be called into account he springs to their defence like an enraged mother protecting her young, and their most outrageous escapades are described as “boyish fun”. Where his own boys are concerned his motto is “live and let live”, but he believes that boys in other Troops should “reap as they sow”.

Training he has “improved” out of all knowledge – “never mind what it says in the book, the man who wrote it doesn't know a thing, leave out all the cross-struts” – and when his magnificent pioneering structure crashes to the ground, almost producing mayhem amongst his boys – “ropes and spars aren't what they used to be, old boy, now if I had my way ”

In District matters, too, he has ripe ideas – “you stand too much nonsense, old boy, make all the Scouters toe the line or boot 'em out” – “I'd tell I.H.Q. where they get off, after all, what do they know about Scouting, sitting in an office all day?” – “make me an A.D.C. and I'll straighten things out for you in a jiffy” – “if you'd only listen to me ”

His sense of humour ceased to develop when he was about ten and his boys, regrettably, have to bear the brunt of it – “ever tried British Bulldog in the dark, great fun, they nearly tear one another to pieces” – “you'd have laughed, raining like stink-o and they didn't want to get up so I dropped the tent on them” – “I dressed up as a ghost and scared the boys stiff, best joke I ever played on them”.

If it is correct that just a hair's-breadth separates genius from madness, then such a man should be able to find a far more natural place than Scouting in which to display his talents.