

CAMP FIRE YARN NO. 4



SCOUT PATROLS

Patrol System - a Patrol Leader - Patrol Signs Games

Each Scout troop consists of two or more Patrols of six to eight boys.

The main object of the Patrol System is to give real responsibility to as many boys as possible. It leads each boy to see that he has some individual responsibility for the good of his Patrol. It leads each Patrol to see that it has definite responsibility for the good of the Troop. Through the Patrol System the Scouts learn that they have considerable say in what their Troop does.

The Patrol Leader

Each Patrol chooses a boy as leader. He is called the Patrol Leader. The Scoutmaster expects a great deal from the Patrol Leader and leaves him a free hand in caring out the work in the Patrol. The Patrol Leader selects another boy to be second in command. This boy is called Second (or Assistant Patrol Leader). The Patrol Leader is responsible for the efficiency and smartness of his Patrol. The Scouts in his Patrol obey his orders, not from fear of punishment, as is often the case in military discipline, but because they are a team playing together and backing up their leader for the honour and success of the Patrol.

A Word to Patrol Leaders

I want you Patrol Leaders to go on and train your Patrols entirely yourselves, because it is possible for you to get hold of each boy in your Patrol and make a good fellow of him. It is no use having one or two brilliant boys and the rest no good at all. You should try to make them all fairly good.

The most important step to this is your own example, because what you do yourselves, your Scouts will do also.

Show them that you can obey orders whether they are given by word of mouth or are printed or written rules, and that you carry them out whether your Scoutmaster is present or not. Show them that you can earn Badges for Proficiency, and your boys will follow with very little persuasion. But remember that you must give them the *lead* and not the *push*.

And the Patrol Leader, in training and leading his Patrol, is gaining practice and experience for being a fellow who can take responsibility.

Also, besides training his Patrol, the Patrol Leader has to *lead* it, that is, he must be at least as good as any of his Scouts at the different jobs they have to do. He must never ask a fellow to do anything he would not do himself. And he must never be “down” on anyone but must get the enthusiasm and willing work of everyone by cheerily encouraging their efforts.

In every line of life young men are wanted who can be trusted to take responsibility and leadership. So the Patrol Leader who has made a success with his Patrol has every chance of making a success of his life when he goes out into the world.

Most of your work in the Patrol consists in playing Scouting games and practices by which you gain experience as Scouts.

The Court of Honour

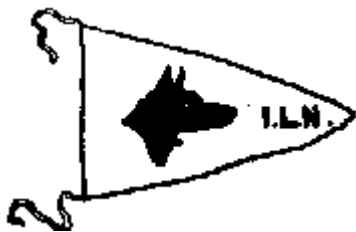
The Court of Honour is an important part of the Patrol System. It is a standing committee which settles the affairs of the Troop. A Court of Honour is formed of the Scoutmaster and the Patrol Leaders, or, in the case of a small Troop, of the Patrol Leaders and Seconds. In many Courts the Scoutmaster attends the meetings but does not vote. Patrol Leaders in a Court of Honour have in many cases carried on the Troop in the absence of the Scoutmaster.

The Court of Honour decides programmes of work, camps, rewards and other questions affecting Troop management. The members of the Court are pledged to secrecy. Only those decisions which affect the whole Troop, that is, competitions, appointments, and so on, would be made public.

Patrol Names and Signs

Each Troop is named after the place to which it belongs. Each Patrol in the Troop is named after an animal. It is a good plan to choose only animals and birds found in your district. Thus the 33rd London Troop may have five Patrols which are respectively the “Curlews”, the “Bulldogs”, the “Owls”, the “Bats” and the “Cats”

Each Patrol Leader has a small flag on his staff with his Patrol animal shown on it on both sides.



This is the Patrol flag of the Wolf Patrol of the 1st London Troop

Each Scout in a Patrol has his regular number. The Patrol Leader is No. 1, the Second No. 2. The other Scouts have the consecutive numbers after these. Scouts usually work in pairs as comrades, Nos. 3 and 4 together, Nos. 5 and 6 together, and Nos. 7 and 8.

Patrol Motto

Each Patrol chooses its own motto, which generally applies in some way to the Patrol animal. For instance, the Eagles could take as their guiding words “Soar High”, or the Beavers could say “Work Hard”, the Hounds “True till Death”, and so on.

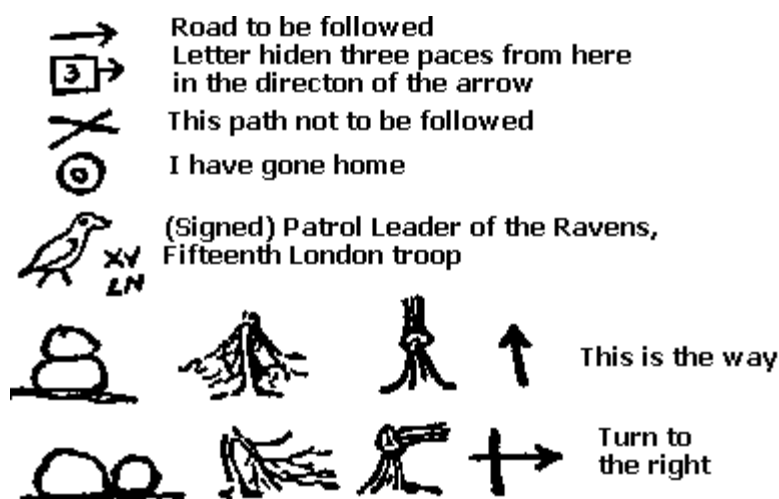
Patrol Call

Each Scout in the Patrol has to be able to make the call of his Patrol animal—thus every Scout in the “Bulldogs” must be able to imitate the growl of the bulldog. This is the signal by which Scouts of a Patrol can communicate with each other when hiding or at night. No Scout is allowed to use the call of any Patrol except his own. The Patrol Leader calls his Patrol at any time by sounding his whistle and giving the Patrol call.

[Five pages of patrol animals, signs, calls and colours omitted from this edition]

Woodcraft Trail Signs

Scout trail signs are made on the ground, close to the right-hand side of the road. They should never be made where they will damage or disfigure private property.



When a Scout makes signs on the ground for others to read he also draws the head of the Patrol animal. Thus if he wants to show that a certain road should not be followed he draws a Sign across it that means “Not to be followed”, and adds the head of his Patrol animal to show which Patrol discovered that the road was no good, and his own number to show which Scout discovered it, thus:



At night sticks with a wisp of grass round them or stones should be laid on the road in similar forms so that they can be felt with the hand.

PATROL PRACTICES

Each Scout should learn the call of his Patrol animal. He should be encouraged to know all he can about its habits, etc. This can be a first step in nature lore.

Each Scout should know how to make a simple drawing of his Patrol animal. The Scouts should use this as their Patrol signature.

The special Scout signs should be used out-of-doors. They can be made in the dust, or by using sticks, and so on. A good tracking game can be arranged by using signs only.

Acting in all forms should be encouraged: Mock trials and impromptu plays are excellent training and useful for evenings around the camp fire or when you have to be indoors.

GAMES

Scout Meets Scout

Single Scouts, or pairs of Scouts or complete Patrols, are taken out about two miles apart. They are then made to move towards each other, either alongside a road, or by giving each side a landmark to move toward, such as a steep hill or big tree which is directly behind the other party and will thus ensure their coming together. The Patrol which first sees the other wins. This is signified by the Patrol Leader holding up his Patrol flag for the umpire to see, and sounding his whistle. A Patrol need not keep together, but that Patrol wins which first holds up its flag; so it is well for the Scouts to keep in touch with their Patrol Leaders by signal, voice, or message.

Scouts may employ any ruse they like, such as climbing into trees, hiding in carts, etc., but they must not dress up in disguise unless specially permitted.

This game may also be practised at night.

Debates

A good exercise for a winter's evening in the meeting room is to hold a debate on any subject of topical interest, with the Scoutmaster acting as chairman. He will see that there is a speaker prepared beforehand to introduce and support one view of the subject, and another speaker prepared to expound another view. After hearing them, he will call on the others present in turn to express their views. In the end he takes the votes for and against the motion.

At first boys will be very shy of speaking unless the subject selected by the Scoutmaster is one which really interests them and takes them out of themselves.

After a debate or two they get greater confidence, and are able to express themselves coherently. They also pick up the proper procedure for public meetings, such as seconding a motion, moving amendments, obeying chairman's ruling, voting, according votes of thanks to chair, etc.

Mock Trial

In place of a debate a mock trial may be of interest as a change.

For instance, the story of the Elsdon Murder given in Yarn No. 2 might form the subject of a trial.

The Scoutmaster acts as judge, and details boys to the following parts:

<i>Prisoner</i>	.	.	. William Winter.
<i>Witness</i>	.	.	. Boy, Robert Hindmarsh.
<i>Witness</i>	.	.	. Police Constable.
<i>Witness</i>	.	.	. Villager.
<i>Witness</i>	.	.	. Old woman (friend of the murdered woman).

Counsel for Prisoner.

Counsel for Prosecution.

Foreman and Jury (if there are enough Scouts).

Follow as nearly as possible the procedure of a court of law. Let each make up his own evidence, speeches, or cross-examination according to his own notions and imagination, along the lines of the story, but in greater detail. Do not necessarily find the prisoner guilty unless the prosecution proves its case to the jury.

In summing up, the Scoutmaster may bring out the fact that the boy, Hindmarsh, carried out each part of the duty of a Scout, in order to bring home the lesson to the boys.

Unprepared Plays

The plot of a short, simple play is given, and each player is assigned his part, with an outline of what he has to do and say. The Scouts act, making up the required conversation as they go along.

This develops the power of imagination and expression.

Play acting is good fun. It doesn't matter what kind of voice you have so long as you get out your words clearly and distinctly.



HINTS TO INSTRUCTORS

In all games and competitions it should be arranged, as far as possible, that all the scouts should take part, because we do not want to have merely one or two brilliant performers and the others no use at all. All ought to get practice, and all ought to be pretty good. In competitions where there are enough entries to make heats, ties should be run off by losers instead of the usual system of by winners, and the game should be to find out which are the worst instead of which are the best. Good men will strive just as hard not to be worst as they would to gain a prize, and this form of competition gives the bad man most practice.

Scout War Songs

The Scout's Chorus. This is a chant that the African Zulus used to sing to their Chief. It may be shouted on the march, or used as applause at games and meetings and camp fires. It must be sung exactly in time.

They then form into a wide circle, into the centre of which one steps forward and carries out a war dance, representing how he tracked and fought with one of his enemies. He goes through the



The war dance of the young men of the Kikuyu tribe in Africa provided the inspiration for the Scout's "war dance".

whole fight in dumb show, until he finally kills his foe. The Scouts meantime sing the Eengonyama chorus and dance on their own ground. As soon as he finishes the fight, the leader starts the "Be Prepared" chorus, which they repeat three times in honour of the Scout who has just danced.

Then they recommence the Eengonyama chorus, and another Scout steps into the ring, and describes in dumb show how he stalked and killed a wild buffalo. While he does the creeping up and stalking of the animal, the Scouts all crouch and sing their chorus very softly, and as he gets close to the beast, they simultaneously spring up and dance and shout the chorus loudly. When he has slain the beast, the leader again gives the "Be Prepared" chorus in his honour, which is repeated three times, the Scouts banging their staffs on the ground at the same time as they stamp "Bom! bom!" At the end of the third repetition, "Bom! bom!" is given twice.

The circle then closes together, the Scouts turn to their left again, grasping shoulders with the left hand, and move off, singing the Eengonyama chorus, or, if it not desired to move away, they break up after the final "Bom! bom!"

The Eengonyama song should be sung in a spirited way, and not droned out dismally like a dirge.

NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS

Although the war dance and songs may seem at first sight to be gibberish—especially to those who have never had much to do with boys—yet there is a certain value underlying them as a corrective of self-consciousness.

If you want, for instance, to get discipline among your lads it means their constantly bottling up some energy that requires an occasional vent or safety-valve. A war dance supplies such vent, but still in a certain disciplined way.

Also it forms an attraction to wilder spirits who would never join a band of quieter boys.

Mr. Tomlin, "the hooligan tamer", catches and gets his lads in hand entirely by the force of energetic singing and action in chorus.

Most schools and colleges have their "Ra-ra-ra" choruses, of which "Zing-a-zing: bom, bom" is a type.

FOR WINTER IN NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Arctic Expedition

Each Patrol makes a toboggan with ropes and harness, for two of their number to pull (or for dogs if they have them, and can train them to the work). Two Scouts go a mile or so ahead; the remainder with the toboggan follow, finding the way by means of the spoor, and by such signs as the leading Scout may draw in the snow. All other signs seen on the way are to be examined, noted, and their meaning read. The toboggan carries rations and cooking pots, and other supplies.



Build snow huts. These must be made narrow, according to the length of branches available for forming the roof, which can be made with brushwood, and covered with snow.

Snow Fort

The snow fort may be built by one Patrol according to the boys' own ideas of fortification, with loopholes for looking out. When finished it will be attacked by hostile Patrols, using snowballs as ammunition. Every Scout struck by a snow ball is counted dead. The attackers should, as a rule, number at least twice the strength of the defenders.

Siberian Man Hunt

One Scout as fugitive runs away across the snow in any direction he may please until he finds a good hiding-place, and there conceals himself. The remainder, after giving him twenty minutes' start or more, proceed to follow him by his tracks. As they approach his hiding-place, he shoots at them with snowballs, and everyone who is struck must fall out dead. The fugitive must be struck three times before he is counted dead.

In Towns

Scouts can be very useful in snowy weather by working as a Patrol under their leader in clearing away the snow from pavements, houses, etc. And in fog by acting as guides. This they may either do as a Good Turn, or accept money to be devoted to their funds.