

THE SCOUTER'S BOOKS – No. 5

IT'S TROOP NIGHT AGAIN

More Ideas for Troop Meetings

BY
DELTA and THETA

“Scouting is a boy's game but a man's job.”

Lord Rowallan, February 1945

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Editor's Note:

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

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INTRODUCTION

You gave so warm a welcome to the first book in this series *100 Ideas for Troop Meetings* that we were asked to produce a sequel to it. So here are another 75 (or so) ideas which we hope will help you to make your Troop Meetings varied, amusing and progressive. For Scouts will never stay away from Troop Meetings which are exciting and good fun and which, week by week, help them forward on the Scouting Trail. . . .

"We're on the Scouting Trail . . ."

To where?

Here are two quotations separated by the years but united in spirit. In 1914 our Founder wrote: – "I don't consider a boy is a real Scout till he has passed his First Class tests."

And in 1953, that wise writer who amuses us while he instructs us and who goes under the pseudonym 'A.D.C.' in *The Scouter* wrote: "A Troop that doesn't *aim* at Queen's Scout Badges is like a football team that doesn't try to score goals. However pretty the mid-field play may be, the game lacks purpose, and the players get bored."

May our little book help to keep your Scouts happy along the trail and help them to arrive at their true destination.

DELTA.

THETA.

WHY SCOUTMASTERS GROW OLD QUICKLY

"WHY DID I PROMISE THEM A
SURPRISE STUNT TO-NIGHT?"



IT'S TROOP NIGHT AGAIN

1. **PROBLEM CARD (1).** Each Patrol Leader is given a card bearing the following words: "Your Patrol has 15 minutes (from now) to collect and bring to their corner in the H.Q. as many articles beginning with the letter T as you can." (Or Q or N, etc.).

Points: One for each article, bonus points up to 5 for the unexpected or the unusual.

2. **WHAT'S WRONG?** One Patrol to stage a tableau in which there will be 10 errors, *e.g.*: mistakes in dress, wrong use of knots or first aid, wrong diagrams on wall, in fact anything the Patrol can think up. The other Patrols are given five minutes to survey tableau when it is ready and list the errors. A better result will be obtained if the tableau-Patrol is given a week's notice. There is no reason why the other Patrols should not put on tableaux in the following consecutive weeks.

3. **THE MESSAGE RACE.** A message has to be delivered to a destination at least a mile away. One Patrol uses a team of runners with the message in simple code, one Patrol uses Semaphore and the third Patrol uses Morse. If more than three Patrols, repeat the above methods as necessary. The route of the message needs some careful thought beforehand.

4. **THREE YEAR PLAN.** Every Troop Meeting should have a theme – the same theme: the First Class Badge. Or to put it another way: never run a Troop Meeting which isn't going to help at least one Scout present to make some progress towards his First Class Badge.

Remember the First Class Badge is achieved by a fifty-fifty partnership between Scout and Scouter. The first night they ever meet (oh all right, the second!) this should be made clear to the Scout by the Scouter. From the start, show the Scout the trail that leads to the log hut which has First Class Scouts Only over the doorway, and make it clear that he must be

prepared to use some of his leisure practising the skills (knots, signalling, etc.) you will help him to learn at Troop Meetings.

There should be a regular progress check-up with every Scout in the Troop.

But there must be a long-term plan to see that the whole syllabus of Second and First Class Instruction is covered. Leave it to chance and you'll leave a lot of it out. Listen to our Founder.

B.-P. said:

"Ablar men than I, I suppose, can keep their boys busy and progressing in knowledge without working on any special system; but I confess that I cannot. The only way by which, personally, I can effect anything is by laying down definite programmes beforehand and working on them – a general one for the winter season, a more particular one for each week, with a detailed one for each working evening as it comes round.

"I don't make them too cut-and-dried, but leave margins and openings for unforeseen occurrences. In this way a great amount of worry and waste of time is saved; in fact, it is scarcely exaggeration to say that the results obtained by a systematic plan of work have four times the value of those where arrangements have been haphazard. It is good for their 'character' to teach the boys also to plan their work beforehand; and, knowing what they are aiming for, they become twice as keen."

5. NEW D.C.'s SPEECH. Each Patrol is given a copy of a speech made by the new D.C. They are given 5 minutes to make a list of any mistakes in it. Scouters can prepare the speeches to fit the age and experience of their Scouts, The following is merely given as an example.

The new D.C. said: "First of all I must congratulate you on your smartness. I hope you will let the three dents in your hat always remind you of the three Scout Promises. I am glad to hear that two of your Rovers are sitting for the Wood Badge exams. If they pass I believe they will be allowed to wear three beads on a Bushman's Thong. Yesterday I saw the Cub Pack and I thought your Cubmistresses had done a wonderful job with them. What a lot of fine badges you have too. Your Troop Leader has been explaining them to me, the binoculars meaning the Athlete's Badge, the magnifying glass the Observer's Badge and the three bananas the Cook's Badge. I shall come and see you again. Meanwhile, brother Scouts, may I wish you Good Hunting."

6. ARE YOU AWAKE IN THE DARK? Patrols are given five minutes to collect in the dark (i.e., with lights out, etc.) something round, something square, a blue object, a yellow object, something weighing approximately a lb., and something with a hole in it.

(Other varieties for other evenings).

7. WHAT EVERY SCOUT SHOULD KNOW (1). How to summon help by telephone (police, fire or ambulance); how to send a telegram; how to send a registered letter; how to make a toll or trunk call.

(Query: Ts a Troop tour of a large Post Office possible? Will the Post Master come and yarn to the Troop on the above?).

8. GOOD TURNS. To what extent the 'average Scout' does a Good Turn every day, or doesn't, can only be a matter of opinion. What isn't a matter of opinion is that we all (even the youngest of us) need reminding about our duty from time to time.

So now and again;

a) Let each Patrol Leader take his Patrol to their corner and write down quickly all the genuine good turns done that day. Patrol Leaders read them out (without mentioning names) and the Scoutmaster may make a comment – kindly but firm if necessary.

b) Bring in the question 'What good turn have you done today?' into an individual quick-quiz among such questions as 'Where is the nearest doctor?' 'Who is the Chief Scout of the

World?', etc. Let each Scout give himself 3, 2, 1 or 0 marks for his Good Turn answer according to his own conscience.

c) Suggest a Good Turn for the Troop to do as a whole.

9. HOT SUMMER'S EVENING. Formal programmes can be abandoned. Instead:

a) Assemble as many 'examiners' (L.A. or Rovers, etc.) to help examine Scouts in all sorts of accumulated odds and ends of tests and badges, and have a lazy sit-around Meeting at which nevertheless *progress is being made*.

b) Go off as a Troop to the local Baths for swimming and diving practice. (Warn Patrol Leaders of possibility: they should have a plan for getting in touch with their Patrol within minutes.)

10. COLD WINTER'S NIGHT. Send the Troop Leader out to buy enough chips hot from the Fried Fish Shop for an impromptu feast at end of Troop Meeting.

11. EVENING IN SPRING. Send out each Patrol for 15 minutes. On their return each will report any 'Signs of Spring' (floral, arboreal, ornithological, human) they have noticed.

12. AFTERNOON IN AUTUMN. Why not occasionally have a Troop Meeting not on a Troop Night but on a Saturday afternoon? For the normal Troop Night that week you could substitute an informal "tests evening" or some extra instruction classes.

Challenge the nearest Troop you know (or the Troop whose Skipper is your friend) to:

(a) an afternoon wide game on the nearest common

(Secret Service details to be planned by Rover Crew or local Bright-Ideas-Boy);

(b) a tea with you afterwards (arranged by Mothers and paid for by the Group Committee) followed by

(c) some roughish games and a film or sing-song. The 4th Scout Law begins at home.

13. ADVENTURES OF A SPY. In his book of that name B.-P. tells of how he had once to pretend to be an absent-minded professor catching and sketching butter flies. So Scouts must be prepared to act a part when called upon.

Volunteers from each Patrol in turn draw a card from a hat and act, e.g., a cricketer walking from the pavilion and being given out l.b.w.; a gentleman with hiccoughs at a concert; a boy without braces whose belt has broken trying to do up his shoelace; a chairman introducing a speaker; a boy forgetting his words in a play, etc.

Four are enough for any one Troop Meeting. Volume of applause decides winner.

14. LEARN DEAF AND DUMB LANGUAGE. Keep to either the one-hand or the two- and system. It can be learnt in an evening or two, and practice soon brings mastery. Useful for communicating when silence is essential, and has an obvious value with the handicapped. When the Troop is fairly proficient, have a period when all orders are given by this method.

15. MEMORY TRAINING (1). At the beginning of the evening, give each Scout a short message which he must change into an agreed code; this he must commit to memory until the end of the evening when he will try to write it down.

16. HAVE YOU A PET ARTIST?*(1). Or photographer?* Get him to make a number of drawings (or photographs) of things to be observed within a reasonable distance of H.Q., or within a certain district of the town or part of the countryside. They shouldn't be too obvious, e.g., bits of notices, trade signs, gates, buildings, houses.

Patrols are given a set of drawings (or photographs) and have either to recognise and check them, or discover them within a given time.

(*B.-P. Guild? Rover Crew? Group Committee? Supporters' Club?)

17. AVOIDING BOREDOM (1). It's easy to get into a rut in running Troop Meetings and that way lies boredom. So try and use different approaches, so that the Scout who thinks he knows exactly what's coming gets a surprise, e.g., First Aid Practice.

(i) Instead of using other Scouts as 'patients' get some fathers to volunteer; or what about Cub Sixers for once?

(ii) Let each Scout use himself as a patient to treat for nose bleed, blistered heel, arm needing a sling, etc.

(iii) Let two or three Scouts do their First Aid while others sit round like doctors making notes and afterwards criticising the performance, etc.

or e.g., Knotting

(i) Lengths of rope hidden and must be found by means of code clue before knots can be tied.

(ii) Knots must be tied lying on back, or with one hand, or in pairs (left hands only.)

18. WHAT EVERY SCOUT SHOULD KNOW (2). The answers* to the following Quiz:

(i) What three men were our first three Chief Scouts?

(ii) What three men have been Directors of the International Bureau?

(iii) What three men have been Camp Chiefs at Gilwell Park?

(The answers should be followed by a brief yarn on what the International Bureau is, and what Gilwell Park is.) *Answers at the back of this book.

19. THAT NOTICE BOARD AGAIN!

(i) Pin up each month's Night Sky – they can be found in, e.g., *The Radio Times*, *The Times*, *The Manchester Guardian*, etc.

(ii) Pin up photographs from month's *Scouter* with a 'Who is this?', 'Where is this?', 'What is this?', caption.

(If you don't like cutting up your own copy of *The Scouter* get the Group Committee to invest in a subscription copy "to be cut up" for the good of the Troop.)

(iii) Fasten a wild flower (each week as soon as any are available) to the board with its name on a label underneath. Some Scouts will remember some of them!

20. DARK NIGHT OBSTACLE TRAIL. An outside exercise for a dark fine night. Plans should be made in advance so that when the right time comes, preparations take a minimum of time.

Suggestions: –

(i) Follow a cord trail

(iii) Get over a 6 ft. fence 30 yds. N.E. from H.Q.

(iv) Crawl under pegged net or raised hut, etc.

(v) Find person rattling button in a mug.

(vi) Fetch down an onion you will find in the branches of the nearest tree or some other height above ground.

(vii) Follow a trail of tent pegs at 10 yd. intervals, etc. A notice should be fixed at the end of each obstacle giving directions to next.

21. THE BOMB. The bomb is an alarm clock in a box. Warn the Troop that when it goes off they must get themselves and all their personal belongings clear of the hut before the alarm ceases.

Alternative: They must tie up the S.M. and any other staff (A.S.M.s, etc.) ceasing when the alarm ceases. The S.M., etc. will not struggle. If at the end of the alarm the S.M., etc. can't get free within 60 seconds they win!

22. REMEMBERING THE LAW. We all need reminding about the Scout Laws but sermons are out of place in a Troop Meeting. Try:

- (i) Scouter tells a yarn and Patrols afterwards say which Scout Law or Laws is illustrated.
- (ii) Patrols act a little sketch showing any of the Laws at work.
- (iii) Patrol Leaders (on consecutive weeks) are asked to read an incident from a book illustrating any one of the Laws.
- (iv) Scout of one Patrol names a Law and asks a Scout in another Patrol to explain it in his own words.

23. **STORMING THE FORT.** This is a game to be played on waste-land or a near-by common, etc., on a darkish night. One Patrol is situated round a bush or tree stump and these are the Settlers. A rope is then circled round them at a distance of 10 yards. This is the fence round the fort. The rest of the Troop is then placed at a distance of about 100 yards to act as Indians attacking the fort. The Settlers are armed with torches and have to pick out individual members of the Troop and name them by flashing the torch. They are allowed to have 6 flashes and then have to wait $\frac{1}{4}$ of a minute while they re-arm their 'rifles'. If an Indian touches the rope he kills the 3 Settlers nearest to him. The game is finished when there are no more Indians or Settlers left alive. The game can be made more realistic by a yarn being told by the Scouter just before the Troop goes out.

24. **AVOIDING BOREDOM (2).** Keep the Scouts occupied *before* Troop Meeting officially begins by starting a game of Tennis Ball Tig or Cross Tig.

25. **MEMORY TEST (2).** Give each Scout at beginning of Meeting 3 telephone numbers – of actual people, D.C., Vicar, I.H.Q., etc. — which he will try to memorize and write down at end of Troop Meeting.

26. **PROBLEM CARD (2).** Each Patrol Leader is given a card bearing the following words: "Your Patrol has 15 minutes (from now) to collect and bring to their corner in this H.Q. as many red objects as possible."
(Or any other selected colour).

27. **MENTAL SOMERSAULTS.** To keep Scouts alert and to give practice in mental quickness suddenly put a question to a Scout which is right off the subject which you are talking about, e.g., during a talk of First Aid suddenly ask one of the Troop, "What is the map sign for a windmill?", etc.

28. **CHECK LIST FOR TROOP MEETINGS,** Before leaving the house check:
Your uniform: is it correct? Your pockets: Notebook? Keys?
Pencil, etc.?
Your needs for the Meeting: any special materials or articles for games, instruction, yarn, prayers?
N.B. – Have you made a memo of notices to be given out?

29. **FOREIGNERS ALLOWED.** Give each Patrol a name of a Country and 5 minutes in which to produce a typical inhabitant of that Country. Along with him they must add as many accessories as they can, i.e., attendants, music, in fact anything to make it more realistic.

30. **THAT COMPETITION! (1).** We all like to win competitions and a certain amount of training for Camping (or other) competitions ought to be a regular feature of Troop programmes.

e.g. Give each Patrol the following information. "You are a Patrol of 6 going to camp after lunch on Saturday and returning after tea on Sunday. You have 30/- to spend on food. Decide on menus and make out accurate order lists for the butcher, grocer, greengrocer, etc." After 15 minutes each Patrol's ideas are discussed and criticised from the point of view of dietetics

as well as cost. The Scouter should come prepared with up-to-date price lists supplied by grocer, etc., or by his wife!

31. **THAT COMPETITION!** (2). Clean habits and a clean camp will not only gain points but will bring health and happiness to it.

Give each Patrol 10 minutes to write down 6 helps towards healthy camping. The Patrol Leaders read out ideas which the Scouter should do his utmost to praise. He should make sure by the end of this project that every Scout knows such things as, e.g.,

- (i) It is easier to clean the bottom and sides of a billy if soap is rubbed on them before use.
- (ii) A Scout should wash his hands thoroughly before handling food – preparing, cooking or serving,
- (iii) It is easier to clean a porridge dixie with cold water,
- (iv) Always put on water for washing-up before you begin a meal.
- (v) The wash-bowl with soap and water outside the latrines is meant for use.

32. **OLD FAVOURITES** (1). You may have forgotten them, but how long since.

- (i) Each Scout mimed a trade (Patrol by Patrol) which others guessed silently by writing down?
- (ii) One Patrol represents anything made of wood, another anything made of metal, a third anything growing, a fourth anything red or blue, etc. You tell a yarn (made up as you go along) and each time you mention anything made of wood, metal, growing, red or blue, etc. Patrol concerned must race to end of room and back before you count 10.
- (iii) Each Patrol has to bring a guest to the next Troop Meeting who will give a 5 minute yarn on something interesting to the Troop.

33. **TRUE OR FALSE.** Scouter reads out 10 statements he has previously prepared. Patrols write down 'true' or 'false' to each one. This is a good method for revision or for getting over general knowledge of the Movement.

34. **HAVE YOU A PET ARTIST?** (2). Get your pet artist to copy the drawing on the opposite page or to draw something like it. Let the Scouts study the picture for 2 minutes giving some such introduction as: "It is very difficult, in exciting incidents, to keep a cool head and calm judgment. That is shown again and again by the contradictory statements made by witnesses in court. Study the picture attentively for 2 minutes."

Then cover it. Now ask the following questions:

1. What has happened here?
2. What is the time?
3. Is it a working day or holiday?
4. Who must have been eyewitnesses of this occurrence?
5. At what time of the year did this accident take place?
6. Is the street lit at night and how?
7. What means of transport plies on one of the streets?
8. Where is the real position of the accident and how did it happen?
9. In what Country did this accident occur?

35. **HOW TO INSTRUCT.** The golden rule for instruction is

First: Theory (as brief as possible);

Second: Demonstration;

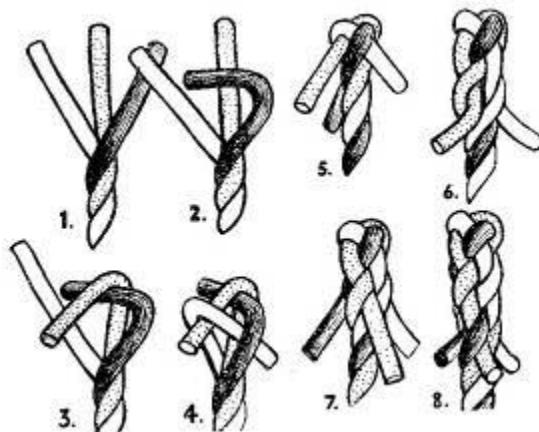
Third: Practice.

ALWAYS follow this method if you want good results.

It's Troop Night Again

For Demonstration use models, charts, "pre-fabricated equipment" (i.e., partly finished examples). Don't use charts or models, etc. while you're at the First Stage – they merely distract the Scouts who should be *LISTENING*. Then demonstrate – and the Scouts should be *WATCHING*. (Nos 1 to 4 in illustration of back-splice instructing). Finally the Scouts practice and are *DOING*. (Have "prefabricated" Nos. 5 to 8 for Scouts to consult).

During practice Scouts should be encouraged to ask questions or to ask for help.



36. INCENTIVES. Any incentive which encourages keenness helps Troop Meetings. Each C. of H. should decide on its own but examples might be:

- (i) No Scout allowed to wear a sheath knife before passing Second Class badge.
- (ii) A Scout is allowed to wear a special woggle or lanyard after so many nights camping.
- (iii) 100% attendance at Troop Meetings for a year gives Scout the privilege of staying for special 15 minutes after Troop Meeting ends (it counts as being present if Scout informs his Scouter or P.L. beforehand that he will not be present at Troop Meeting for an acceptable reason.)

37. INTERNATIONAL SIGNS. Begin interesting Scouts in going abroad (camping or hiking, etc.) by letting each Patrol invent international road signs. Patrol Competition points either for most sensible or for those nearest the actual signs in use. Then show Troop enlarged drawings of real signs.

38. HAVE YOU A PET ARTIST? (3). Get your Group artist to draw (one for each Patrol 'plate' size if possible, or failing that one large enough for all the Troop to see clearly) a drawing like the one shown on the next page. Each Patrol is required to recognise as many articles as 'they can and list them under two following headings "To be taken to camp", "Not to be taken to camp". (Points for correct articles in correct list.) Winning Patrol given points or small prize.

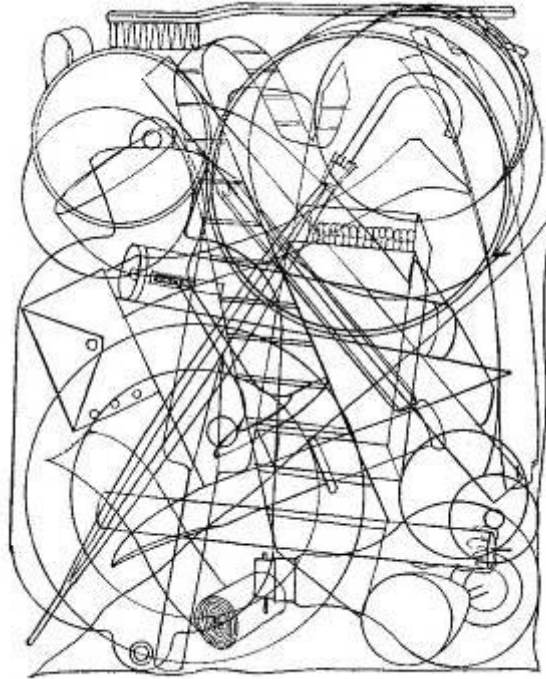
39. READING INTERLUDE. Let each Scout read quietly for ten minutes from some Scout book, either by himself or with a pal. Obviously a Troop Library is necessary for this, but *that's* a good idea, too.

Such an interlude as this should come after some very active project or particularly riotous game.

40. EXHIBITION HALF-HOUR. Each Scout to bring along an exhibit to do with his private hobby, and Patrols lay on an exhibition. The Patrols visit one another's "stalls" and questions should be asked and answered. The Scouter might give five minutes talk on hobby-proficiency badges.

(Exhibits might be stamp-collecting, model aeroplanes, woodwork, etc.)

Such a half-hour might encourage handicrafts, in the value of which B.-P. was a great believer.



41. **COOKING COMPETITION.** Scouts are provided with recipes for a cake and some sweets. The idea is that during the week the Scouts make the cake or sweets and bring the finished 'objects' along the next week together with a signed note from their mothers saying that it was all their own work. (Cakes and sweets to be judged by the mothers of the Parents Committee?)

42. **MEMORY ESTIMATION.** Patrols are asked to estimate from memory the lengths of four or five well-known local streets. Correct distances to be found out by S.M. before Meeting.

43. **HAVING FUN (1).** Each Patrol names one of its members to tell an) original tall story. Tallest story wins.

44. **HINTS FOR HAPPY MEETINGS.**

- (i) *Action – Variety – Purpose* – the Three Musketeers of all Troop activities.
- (ii) Action, not talk, is what keeps the boys interested.
- (iii) Recipe for a good meeting:
 - Something old (a couple of the old favourite games);
 - Something new (a brand new game; a new song; a new Scoutcraft trick);
 - Something surprising (a special stunt; a treat);
 - Something true (a story based on the Scout Law; a story of a hero).
- (iv) Boys have a thousand muscles to wiggle with and only one dozen to sit still with. That dozen gets mighty tired mighty quickly.
- (v) Keep every moment busy. Crowd things along, and you will have no discipline problems, or uncontrolled rough-housing.
- (vi) As a general rule, allow no more than twenty minutes to any one activity.

- (vii) Plan for more than can be accomplished rather than too little. Better leave some good things undone than to have the meeting 'peter out' a half hour early.
- (viii) Shift to something else before the boys tire of what they are doing.
- (ix) If the planned programme doesn't work, be resourceful. Throw some out, if necessary, to suit conditions.

45. **HAVING FUN (2).** This is a kind of Patrol Olympiad. Each Patrol appoints one of its members for each event, no Scout taking part in 2 events so long as any member of his Patrol hasn't been a representative.

Suggested events: –

1. *Discus Throw.* Contestants to throw a cardboard plate to try to cover a chalk ring near other end of room.

2. *Olympic Torch.* Contestants to race each other at lighting 6 candles as far apart as Headquarters allows. Two matches in match-box allowed to each.

3. *Balloon Burst.* Contestants to blow up and burst a balloon.

4. *Two Handed Balance.* Contestants race along given course holding in *each* hand a teaspoon containing a table-tennis ball. If ball (or balls) is (or are) dropped contestant must pick them up himself and begin course again.

5. *Throw in Soccer Ball backwards.* Contestant stands as for normal throw in but must throw *back* over head instead of forward. Where ball lands first counts: furthest throw wins.

6. *Throw Forward and Catch.* Contestant to throw tennis ball upward and outward and catch it before it lands. One trial throw allowed. Contestants failing to catch the ball they have thrown are disqualified. Winner is the catcher furthest from starting line.

46. **OLD FRIEND'S RETURN.** Persuade a friend to appear at Troop Meeting. Read the Troop B.-P.'s piece on observing people (*Scouting for Boys* Camp Fire Yarn 11). Let them observe your friend for five minutes. He says good night and departs. Leave it there and *forget to ask the Troop to do anything about it* – till next week! Then your friend appears again and is observed again for five minutes. He then withdraws and Patrols are asked to note any changes in the friend's appearance, etc., between the two occasions (e.g., ring on finger; different tie; socks; fountain pen in different place, etc., etc. – some changes obvious, some subtle.)

47. **MAPPING PRACTICE (1).** Each Scout has a sheet of paper and pencil and a book or board to rest it on. Scouter very slowly gives details of walk he has taken bringing in compass directions, distances, and conventional signs.

(e.g., "I left the local church (which has a tower) and took the road which led N.N.W. for about a hundred yards. Here I took a field path due E. for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile until I came to an orchard which I passed through. Another $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away and with the path now turning towards the S.E. I reached the bridge over a stream where I was to meet Alan.")

Scouts to make sketch map as correct as possible as Scouter talks.

48. **OLD BLIND PEW.** All blindfolded except Patrol Leaders who have to persuade their Patrols to tie them, well and truly, into a chair. Points are awarded for (a) speed, (b) knots, (c) excellence of job. Patrol Leaders must do nothing but give orders.

49. **SILENT HUNT.** Stand a small toy animal some where in the Headquarters. Tell the Scouts that they are to look for it and when they find it, to sit down without giving it way. (The fun comes in watching the last ones.)

Variation: – Stick a stamp somewhere.

50. GEAR. Successful Troop Meetings which will continue to *hold* the Scouts year in year out cannot be run without proper gear. It should be every Scouter's ambition to have available the following: –

(This does not include camp equipment.)

Permanent Troop Gear. Union flag, First Aid equipment, hand and felling axes, compasses, O/S maps 1", 2½" and 6", street map of district, life line, *Scouting for Boys*, *P.O.R.*, record books, prayer book, badge books, log book, song books, hymn books, marline spikes, games books, pioneering books, complete set of *The Scouter's* books.

Permanent Patrol Gear. *Scouting for Boys*,* staff for each Scout, hand axe, signalling flags, Morse buzzers, Morse lamps, compass,* O/S Maps,* copies of *Highway Code**, *Scouts Book of Rules*,* *Patrol Books* series,* *Patrol Log Book*,* *Patrol Flag*.

*Expendable Patrol Gear.** Knotting ropes (6 ft. lengths of 1"), spun yarn for whipping, triangular bandages for practice, roller bandages for practice, splicing rope, pencils, paper, chalk, Tenderfoot cards, test progress cards.

(*to be kept in Patrol boxes under care of Patrol Leader).

All we are saying here is that Scouting must be practical and, when it comes to doing things, realistic. The Scout should not have to imagine he's got an axe: he should be handling one. He shouldn't have to use his scarf because there aren't any bandages: he should have proper bandages and splints and the rest to train with.

51. OLD FAVOURITES (2). Here are four observation exercises, which are old friends of Scouting. How long is it since your Scouts met them?

- (i) *Morgan's Game* (to observe a shop window for a given time and on return to answer questions on it)
- (ii) *The Pocket Game* (Scouter emptying pockets and filling them again and asking questions: 'How much money in silver?', 'Where did I put the keys?', 'Where did the letter come from?', etc.)
- (iii) *Shapes*. Scouts handle shapes hidden in paper or other bags, recognise and note.
- (iv) *High-low Kim*. Objects not usually there are hung up on the walls of H.Q. at different levels. Troop trot round 5 times and then go outside and write down what they can remember: come in to check lists.

52. MAPPING PRACTICE (2). Each Scout draws from memory a map of the roads – as near to scale of 6" to 1 mile as he can manage – within a radius of 1 mile from H.Q. Checking results afterwards with pukka map of district, same scale.

Scouter should advise Scouts where "1 mile radius" roughly ends, and Scouts should put in as much detail as they can manage.

Alternative: let each Patrol produce such a map, the members contributing what they can to their one Patrol map.

53. WHAT WOULD YOU DO, CHUM? Without warning ask Patrols to go to their corners to discuss and report back in five minutes' time what they would do, e.g.

- (i) If the house opposite (give actual address if possible: realism always helps) caught fire *now*.
- (ii) If the Scouter suddenly fainted.
- (iii) If a brick came through the H.Q. window.
- (iv) If you and your Patrol are sitting round the kitchen fire brewing cocoa when you suddenly notice your tent is on fire . . .

54. PATROL CORNERS. Nearly every Troop Meeting has a period of 15 to 20 minutes called 'Patrol Corners' or something like it when instruction by the Patrol Leader or Patrol activities take place. This time is nearly always wasted, and to avoid this the Scouter should provide some project or test or activity for the Patrol to do: it will remain the training in

leadership it is supposed to be, but it will cease to be the waste of time and inculcator of boredom it so often becomes. Many of the ideas in this booklet (and in our previous *100 Ideas for Troop Meetings*) are suitable for the 'Patrol Corners' period. See also *The Patrol Year* (Patrol Book No. 12).

55. WHAT EVERY SCOUT SHOULD KNOW (3). How to roll and break the flag. (This is the type of thing a Patrol Leader can demonstrate and practise with his Patrol during 'Patrol Corners' (see No. 54) – one Patrol Leader one week, next Patrol Leader next week, etc.)

56. IDEAS FOR 'PATROL CORNERS.'

- (i) Patrol to write down from memory as many 'Milestones of Scouting' as they can. One list per Patrol. After marking and giving points, Scouter should read list from *Scouting for Boys* (full edition), or consult *Your Movement* (Patrol Series).
- (ii) Patrol to write a message of given number of words without using pen or pencil or chalk or crayon or any generally recognised means.
- (iii) Display, and name from provided books, collection of tree-leaves collected by Patrol during previous week. *Variation*: wild flowers.

57. WHAT EVERY SCOUT SHOULD KNOW (4). How to read or give a National Grid Reference.

(Point of origin of National Grid is to the West and South of Land's End. Distances are measured to the *East* (Eastings) and *North* (Northings) of this point. Eastings are always given before Northings, and there are an equal number of figures in each. In a six-figure co-ordinate the first two figures of the Eastings and Northings are taken from the lines to the West and South of the point. The last figures are obtained by estimating lengths East and North between the Grid lines. Correct use of the Grid enables point to be indicated within 100 yards).

See also *Projection for Ordnance Survey Maps and Plans and the National Grid System* (H.M.S.O., price 1/3d. or 1/5d. by post).

58. HAVING FUN (3). Hide half a pound of toffees separately high and low all over the Headquarters. Tell Scouts their Patrols can have all they find: all that is needed is for the 'Go' to be uttered!

59. ROPE WHIRLIGIG. Each Scout is provided with a piece of knotting rope and at the word 'Go' each Patrol must tie their ropes together, using a sheet-bend, (*alternative*: fisherman's) to form a complete circle; they must then get inside the circle and race round the room along a course formed by e.g.. a chair at each corner of the room. Winning Patrol is first to complete course with knots all correct.

60. THE P.L.S' QUARTER OF AN HOUR.

P.L.s are privileged people and should be treated as such. One of their privileges should be to remain after all the other Scouts have left at the end of Troop Meeting for

- a) A vigorous game with the Scouters (e.g. indoor hockey);
- b) A small training or instruction session;
- c) A yarn and a cup of tea.

61. CAMP FIRE CONCERT. Have a 'concert' in stead of the normal sing-song at the end of Troop Meeting where every Scout must contribute something – even if it's only an anecdote, but it could be a song, a recitation, playing an instrument, a one-man play, miming, etc.

Points to note:

At least a week's warning should be given;

Every effort should be applauded,

62. **WHEN OLD IDEAS ARE NEW.** In 5 years an old idea not used is a new idea! But it's no idea at all if it's forgotten. So buy yourself a loose-leaf pocket book and write therein any ideas you invent, or borrow, or steal – because then the old ideas will one day become new ideas again.

63. **INTER-PATROL QUIZ.** Each Patrol given 5 minutes to prepare 4 questions (to which they must know the answers) to ask the other Patrols. Each Patrol in turn reads out its questions. Best set of answers (one mark each answer) wins. Quizzes may be on any subjects connected with Scouting.

64. **STREET EXPLORATION.** Choose a street not too far away with good supply of pillar boxes, lampposts, bus stops, traffic signs, etc. Instruct Patrols to use this street and observe it – no other instructions except to be back in exactly 15 minutes from – *now!*

On their return ask them to plot a diagram showing all lampposts, bus stops, traffic signs, etc.

Scouter should have provided himself with key beforehand. (Excellent good turn for Rover Crew).

65. **MAPPING PRACTICE (3).** Patrols to make cut outs of conventional signs and paste them on a card. Best designed and produced set wins.

Provide: scissors, black paper, white paper, gloy, maps, cardboard. (Troop Meeting expenses accounts should be carefully kept and presented to the Group Treasurer or the G.S.M. once a month. They should never go beyond an agreed sum.)

66. **FIRE BY FRICTION.** This, very popular in the early days of Scouting, seems to be neglected these days: yet surely it's the sort of thing that young Scouts, anyway, like trying to do.

The following hints are taken from Gilcraft's *Spare Time Activities* which is out of print:–



There is no need to import tamarac or balsam fir or any other foreign wood, for it can be done just as well with our native woods, such as elm, sycamore or willow. By far the best wood of this kind is elm. If you are lucky enough to find a dead elm tree fallen over and can get permission to cut off a few pieces from the stump you have got the best possible wood, but if not a few pence will purchase plenty of odd pieces of elm from a friendly undertaker or carpenter, and these will do just as well.

Having got your elm, make a flat platform about 6 in. by 2 in. by ½ in. thick.

Then from the same wood make a shaft or spindle about a foot long, shaped rather like a cigar, with one rather rounded blunt end and one pointed end. It is important that one end should be fairly broad, say $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in order to get plenty of friction.

Now you want a palm or socket. The best thing for this is a flat stone with a little recessed hole in it, but unless you live at the seaside this may be difficult to find. However, make a note of that for your next seaside visit, and meanwhile you will have to carry on with a wooden palm. You can make this of a thickish piece of wood with a hole bored in it about 1 in. deep. A small knot of wood does pretty well – just a little knob cut off level, with a hole bored in it by the top of a knife. Remember, by the way, to put a little grease in the hole or it will get very hot.

Our next need is a bow. For this any stiff piece of wood will do, but it must be stiff. You want a rigid bow and not a springy one, and you should make it, roughly, two feet long.

For a thong some strong leather is needed, such as the belting used on small lathes and sewing machines, or you can make a twisted one out of a flat piece of leather, as shown in the sketch, but don't try using your bootlaces – they will only break long before you get a fire.

Note how the thong is attached to the bow by means of three holes bored in it; this enables you to easily adjust the tension on the thong, upon which a good deal of your success depends.

All you need now is some tinder. If you are in the wilds you use dry fine grass or moss or bracken or fine shavings, but in more civilised surroundings you can get tow or frazzle out of an old piece of rope to use as tinder.

Having made the fire drill outfit you must first get a spark and then convert the spark into a flame.

To get the spark take your knife and gouge out a shallow round depression near the edge of the platform. Then cut a V-shaped notch in the edge of the platform reaching nearly to the middle of the shallow hole. See that this V-shaped notch is not too narrow. It should be almost as wide as the board is thick.

Now fix the thong on to your bow. Just a thumb or figure-eight knot one end and slip through the two holes the other. Don't have it too tight. Place the platform on a firm, smooth surface and hold it down by putting your left heel firmly upon it. Slip the thong round the spindle, taking care that the spindle is outside the thong, and not inside. Then put the base of the spindle on to the hollow in the platform and the point in the palm-stone held firmly in the left hand, *with the left wrist pressed hard against the shin.*

See that the spindle is perfectly upright, and then start drilling away with the bow, slowly at first and not putting on too much pressure with the left hand.

In a few minutes the wood will begin to get hot – so will you – and then smoke begins to curl up. Gradually press harder with the left hand and increase the speed of the bow. You will then have dense clouds of smoke and a little pile of glowing wood dust in the V-shaped notch. Do not disturb this, lay aside the bow, wipe your forehead and try not to be too much overcome by excitement.

Take your tinder of tow or grass or whatever it may be, and make it into a kind of bird's nest with the tip of your knife, and close it all up. Then swing it round and round, holding it not too tightly, and just as it bursts into flames drop it on the ground and start your fire.

You will probably burn your hands the first time, but never mind, it's worth it, and if you don't know the glow of satisfaction which comes from your first fire lit without matches you have not yet really lived.

67. FOREIGN AGENTS. At the beginning of the meeting every Scout draws a screw of paper from a hat (or other container). All but two of these are blank. Of these two one contains the following: –

“You are Agent (1). You will be able to recognise Agent (2) because he will pull his left ear* every so often. He will not know you. During the evening you must endeavour to give

him a penny* without any of the Troop (who will be on the alert) discovering you or his identity.”

On the second will be:—

“You are Agent (2). You will pull your left ear at intervals* so that Agent (1) can recognise you. He will endeavour to contact you and do what he has been told to do without being observed.”

The game which is explained beforehand begins as soon as all have drawn papers and ends at a time previously announced.

*Or some other sign (e.g. blowing his nose every quarter of an hour; tying up his shoe lace, etc.). Or some other action (e.g. swop woggles with him; lend him a handkerchief; borrow his knife; do up his shoe lace for him).

68. TREASURE QUIZ. One clue each Troop Meeting for 5 weeks. Each clue is a question to which Patrol must find the answer. At end of 6th Meeting best set of answers wins points and prize (5/- to be spent on Patrol equipment perhaps – voted by C. of H.)

The enterprise begins by the Scouter telling them of the idea. He then gives clue (1) e.g. ‘Can you strike what isn’t there?’ (Solution: 6 empty match boxes just visible in different parts of Troop room. Each holds identical Question (1) e.g. ‘What colour is the D.C.’s front door painted?’).

No doubt the reader’s ingenuity can invent other clues: the following are merely given as suggestions not to be too slavishly followed: –

2) ‘Where will the A.S.M. be at 9 o’clock on Tuesday? (Solution: A.S.M. will have supply of envelopes with second question – perhaps: ‘What is the name of the tree in a certain garden?’ – and will leave his house at 8.30 p.m. and be outside the station at 9 p.m.).

3) ‘A local call for the proud walkers, the pirates who came to London Town, a Scout number in Buckingham Palace Road’. (Solution: local call to 6325, where a friend gives them a third question – perhaps: ‘What knot would you use to form a series of loops in a rope?’ It’s quite easy to think of simple disguises for telephone numbers).

4) ‘The Sergeant might know’, (Solution: local Police Station. The Police are always kindly disposed and helpful – and it’s a good thing for our boys to know them as their friends. If you can’t think of questions yourself there are plenty in Patrol Book No. 14 *The Scouts Quiz Book*).

5) ‘Does the Curate smoke?’ (Solution: A dummy cigarette for each Patrol is made consisting of the question inside a cigarette paper made up into a tobacco-less “cigarette”. It’s up to the P.L. to ask the right questions of the Curate – or some other well-known friend of the Group or local personality who will play – to get hold of one of the dummies, etc.).

69. COLOURED PINS. The pins with various heads that can be bought nowadays are useful equipment in number of ways. Here are two uses:

(i) On a board have a list of the names of the Scouts in the Troop. Put, say, a blue pin against his name for every section of the Second Class he passes, a scarlet for every section of the First Class he passes, a green for every night he spends in camp. These are useful reminders and a challenge to the Scout.

(ii) Use a six inch map of the district to show where Scouts live – a different colour (one of the Patrol colours) for each Patrol. This keeps useful information in front of the Troop and is a sensible decoration.

70. THE THREE YEAR PLAN (2). It isn’t necessary to segregate instruction into strict departments. If, for example, Scouts are due to be instructed in the treatment of shock there is

no reason why it shouldn't be arranged for *all* the Troop. It's something that every Scout should know as soon as possible and the Tenderfoot can learn it even if he *is* a Tenderfoot. Why shouldn't a Scout "pass" something in his First Class Badge before he's got his Second Class – perhaps it's just the incentive he needs? It is important not to fetter the Scout with regulations: it is important to remember that B.-P. invented Scouting for the good and development of the Scout,

In the same way a Scout who is from the beginning a keen camper should be given every opportunity of passing all those tests (Second or First Class) which are most easily passed in camp – *whatever badge-stage he's reached*.

The national average (1958) of only 33% of our Scouts being Second Class and only 8½% First Class ought to be sufficient inducement to us to try *anything* that will encourage and help the Scout.

Remember: the boy is the *reason* for Scouting!

71. SCRAMBLE. A game for three or four Patrols: each P.L. is given a simple (different) word, or a message if everyone is pretty good, and sent to one end of the room. Their Patrols place themselves opposite at the other end of the room. The P.L.s then signal their word (or message). Points are given to the Patrol which: 1. reads its message first; 2. reads the greatest number of other Patrol's messages; 3. has its message intercepted by the fewest other Patrols. The Patrol with the greatest number of signallers is at an advantage and a smart Patrol may try its hand at coding its messages. (We believe this game to have been invented by Dr. T. T. Macan, to whom we offer grateful acknowledgment).

72. MAPPING PRACTICE (3). Give each Patrol a couple of 1" maps (if you are poorly equipped borrow them from Crew or Seniors or friends; best of all put them on your wanted list for the Group Committee as essential equipment) and 3 or 4 questions the answers to which they must ferret out themselves by puzzling on the map, e.g.

- (i) What is the best walking route from A to B and how long would it take you at 4 m.p.h.?
- (ii) If you stood on the top of the hill X what would you expect to see looking S.W.?
- (iii) You are at point Z (give grid reference) when a cyclist says he is lost but asks directions to get to Y. Using your map, what instructions would you give him?

Etc.

73. SCOUTER'S TROOP-RATING SCALE. This is a useful *occasional* check to keep us on the right lines. Check each statement either true or false.

- 1. The meeting began and ended on time. True False
 - 2. I had all the gear ready as needed. True False
 - 3. Everyone was occupied all the time i.e. no-one was hanging around idle and no time was wasted. True False
 - 4. There was a chance for *every* Scout to make some progress – either by instruction or testing towards First Class standard or beyond. True False
 - 5. I had a surprise item. True False
 - 6. A yarn was part of the programme. True False
 - 7. I shared the running of the programme with my A.S.M.s and T.L. True False
 - 8. The games all had a purpose and did not take up too large a proportion of the Meeting. True False
 - 9. During 80% of the programme the Scouts were active. True False
 - 10. We worked through the Patrol Leaders 80% of the time. True False
 - 11. The atmosphere of the Meeting was gay, high-spirited and friendly. True False
 - 12. I ended with Troop Prayers which had been thought out beforehand. True False
- Scoring: Count the number checked "true."

Excellent: 10 to 12 Good: 6 to 8 Very good: 8 to 10 Fair: 4 to 6 Poor: under 4

74. **CAMP FIRE BY CANDLELIGHT.** It is often difficult to get the Camp Fire atmosphere at a Troop Sing Song. Sometimes the imitation "camp fire" is available: sometimes it isn't and often it isn't a tremendous success. Try having just candlelight. Four or five candles on an inverted enamel plate in the place of the fire give, curiously, the eerie atmosphere.

A small ceremony of lighting them (one candle by each P.L, say) can be enjoyed. If songbooks are in use, two or three small torches per Patrol can be allowed – but *not* during the yarn, which may permissibly be a ghost story.

75. **THE LAST FIVE MINUTES.** The last 5 minutes of a Troop Meeting can be made more of an act of worship instead of the sometimes rather hurried prayers if a small 1 or 2 minute anecdote is told. Ideas for these may sometimes be found in newspapers especially the Religious newspapers, or in such books as; *Stories and Prayers at Five to Ten* by Rev. Richard Tatlock (Mowbrays); *Children's Hour Prayers, Listen on Wednesday* and *Switch on the News* by Rev. J. G. Williams (S.C.M.) ; *Eton Fables* by Rev. C. A. Alington (Longmans), Etc.

Answers to No. 18.

- (i) B.-P.; Lord Somers; Lord Rowallan.
- (ii) Hubert Martin; Colonel J. S. Wilson; Major General D. C. Spry,
- (iii) Frances Gidney; J. S. Wilson; John Thurman.

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