

The Patrol Books No. 11

THE FIRST CLASS JOURNEY

by
PETER TRAXTON

with a Foreword by John Thurman

Published by
THE BOY SCOUTS' ASSOCIATION
25, Buckingham Palace Road
London, S.W.1

Published 1951
2nd edition 1953

Printed by C. Tinling & Co. Ltd., Liverpool, London and Prescott.

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Thanks to Dennis Trimble for providing this booklet.



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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The First Class Journey

packets of sandwiches and shop-made meat pies. They went as Scouts are meant to go, completely self-contained, relying on their previous training and experience as Scouts and prepared to cope with whatever the gods had to offer. You will find, too, that they remembered many important things which I am afraid are sometimes overlooked, not least, their prayers at morning and evening, going quietly through the woodlands and noticing the birds and animals. They remembered to be courteous in the countryside and to be a credit to their Troop so that the places they passed through would say, "Scouting is a good thing". They remembered to greet other Scouts as they met them and not slink by as though they belonged to some strange unknown race. In short, Peter and Bill did a pretty good job and obviously enjoyed it, but they did not do a better job or a better hike than you can do if you set about it in the same way and in the same spirit.

Lastly, I would like to say to you that hiking remains the finest way of seeing your own countryside and that of any other country; it does not cost very much except in the effort we make to do it properly; it is far better than speeding through the countryside in a car and it is something you can go on doing through the years. I hope that every Scout who reads this book and who makes his own First Class Journey will regard it as the real beginning of the hundreds of hikes that are open to him. Peter and Bill have blazed a trail for all Scouts and it is up to all of us to try to follow.

JOHN THURMAN

Camp Chief, Gilwell Park.

THE RULES OF THE TEST

Policy Organisation and Rules, Rule No. 431.

6. (b) Go on foot, alone or with another Scout, a 24-hour journey of at least 14 miles. In the course of the journey he must cook his own meals, one of which must include meat, over a wood fire in the open; find his camp site and camp for the night. He must carry out any instructions given by the Examiner as to things to be observed *en route*, and make a log of his journey. A Sea Scout may do this journey partly by water and partly by land – at least five miles of the 14 to be done on foot. This test should be taken last.

FIRST CLASS JOURNEY REPORT

Area: Bybridge, Mercia. *Map:* O.S. Sheet 159.

To: The Examiner.

From: Peter ----- .

Object: To study the First Class Journey, and report on anything which might help others in doing their hikes.

Date: 18th/19th September, 19 .

Companion: Bill ----- .

Saturday, 18th September, 19 .

Weather: Showery with bright intervals. Sunny and warm at time of starting. Approximate temperature 65°. Wind SSW, rate 2.

14.00 Bill and I arrived at BYBRIDGE STATION and opened our sealed instructions, which read as follows: –

“Proceed direct to West Bybridge, and from there continue through Madmenton. Find a camp site and camp in the vicinity of Walter’s Oak. Follow Grym’s Dyke up to Macey Common, then cut across to Upper Icknield Way. Follow this, ascend High Leaf Cross, and then proceed via Lectern Hill and Cymbal’s Mount, and finish at Little Bimble. During your hike you will make a report on any special objectives which you think could profitably be set for other Scouts doing their hikes in the same area, and give some idea how you would tackle each. Cook for each other and report on the other’s cooking. Try and do a good turn to someone during the hike.”

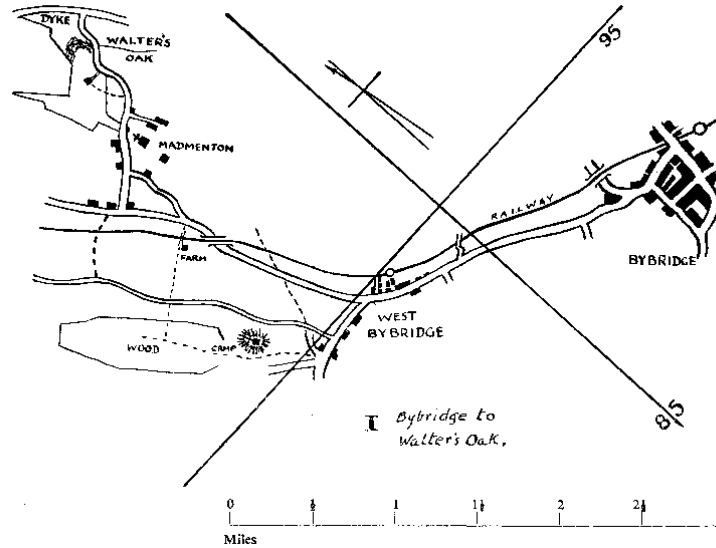
14.30 After reading our instructions, we studied the map at some length and traced out what we considered to be the best route on the transparent face of our map case. We felt it would be better to work out our whole route at the start rather than go from point to point, as we might thereby avoid having to double back on ourselves. At last we were ready and started off. We were very happy to be actually on our way at last, as we felt that we were not so much on a test as an adventure. We were quite prepared to believe what Skipper had told us: that the First Class Hike is the climax of Scout training, embracing all that has been previously learnt; and that as it is the most important test, so it should also be the most enjoyable.

We had to follow the main road for the first three miles to West Bybridge, as unfortunately no route across country was available. We had not quite done two miles when we had to stop, because the sharp corner of a billie was sticking out of Bill’s rucsac, prodding him in the back. He had packed in a hurry, just throwing everything in, and now he was suffering for it. We stopped by the roadside, near Road Junction MR 843942, took everything out of his rucsac, and then re-packed it, carefully folding everything neatly instead of chucking it all in anyhow. We put the blankets and clothing up the back of the rucsac, so that nothing could stick out. We also put the things we should not need until last – pyjamas, billie, the bulk of the food, etc. – at the bottom, and things we might need during the hike – fruit, cape, first aid kit – at the top easy to hand.

15.20 We set off again and soon reached the ancient village of WEST BYBRIDGE. We climbed up the hill above the village and had a look at the church. We decided to sketch it. This took us some time, as when one wishes to draw sketches in rough, it is necessary to include *at least* as much detail (and all in proportion and perspective) as one will wish to include in the final copy. When writing rough notes for one’s account of the hike, only the barest essentials need be noted: place-names and times at which they were reached, and odd phrases here and there; just enough to remind one what happened, and where and when, and the memory will fill in the details; but only a brilliant photographic memory can recall the exact details of a building or object for sketching.

3
miles

3½
miles



The church appeared to have had a fairly interesting history, and we thought that a report on it might well be set as an object in a First Class Hike. Had we had something of this kind to cope with, we should have tried to contact the Verger, or better still the Vicar of the church in order to glean the necessary information. Indeed, wherever an historical object is set on a hike – be it a church, a castle, an old house, an ancient track, a barrow or tumulus, or a whole village – the vicar of the nearest church, politely approached, is the person who is most likely to be able to help. If he doesn't know the answers himself, he will be well acquainted with everyone in the locality and will be able to advise as to the best local historian. We should also consult the clergy, or perhaps the police, if we were asked to report on local industries or some aspect of country life.



15.50 After leaving the Church, we followed a footpath across a green and into a large wood mainly comprised of beech trees. 3½ miles

16.00 As we entered, a fairly large bird flew from a hole in a tree directly above us, which, with the aid of an Observer's Series book on Birds, we identified as a Green Woodpecker. Objects concerned with Nature Study are often set on

hikes: one may be asked, for instance, to report on the types of trees, or the bird or insect or plant-life observed during the Journey. We had no desire to cart a library about with us, but thinking that we might get something of this kind, we debated which of the branches of Nature Study we were weakest at; and of those which were likely to be set, we decided we knew least about birds, so brought just a bird-book with us. Shortly after this we noticed a wild flower with which we were unfamiliar, so we took it back and identified it later at home. It turned out to be an Helleborine, or Epipactis.

When we reached the centre of the wood, we turned right on to another path down to the village of MADMENTON passing through Averingdon Farm and under the railway, before striking the main road.

4½
miles

We turned right in the village, and near the church we came upon a car halted and apparently broken down, with the driver peering in at the engine. Thinking this would be an opportunity to do our good turn, we saluted smartly and asked if we could be of assistance, but met with a very cold reception. "Not blinking likely. I don't want you messing my car about!" We continued on our way, feeling rather abashed.

5
miles

16.45 We thought we really ought to start looking for a camp site before long, so just out of Madmenton we asked at a cottage on the right of the road if we could camp, but the owner couldn't oblige us. He advised us to go up the road for about another mile and take a path to the left through the woods. "There's a small farm there where I know they take campers sometimes – you'll be able to get milk there too".

"It's not a big camping site, is it?" I asked, for we had been warned about such sites, which get crowded with family campers and all sorts of people – many of them bad campers – where they charge you so much per tent, and we were determined to keep well away from such places.

"Oh no! It's only a small place; but they let Scouts camp there sometimes."

"Oh, that's different" – and we thanked him and went our way. We carefully followed his directions, and were soon at the farm to which he had referred.

17.15 We found the farmer in the dairy behind the house. "Excuse me, Sir. Could we please camp here just for one night? We miles shall be leaving in the morning". "I dare say we can fix you up", he replied. "What kind of spot would you like?" Bill, who always rather likes to hear himself speak, and air such knowledge as he has, made use of the occasion to give forth the following requirements of an ideal camp site, which he had learnt by heart. "Well, sir, it ought to be well sheltered from wind and rain and close to a supply of fresh drinking water. The grass should be ordinary plain turf, springy, and soft to lie on, but not rich dark green grass, as this is an indication that the ground easily gets water-logged: and it shouldn't be too long; it's so wet in the morning if there is a heavy dew. Another thing: damp areas, thick undergrowth and woodlands, and particularly streams and ponds, always seem to harbour midges, gnats and other insects which can make a site sheer misery, so we should not be too close either to

6
miles

water or the woods, although the woods should be close enough to provide some shelter by breaking the wind. Also, of course, there *must* be plenty of good, dry, well-burning wood around, preferably ash or birch, and the closer the better. The soil should be easy for digging and should drain well, and the ground wants to be smooth and level, not broken or stony. We oughtn't to be directly under any trees, in case of falling branches, and there shouldn't be any cattle about on the site; they're so inquisitive and might damage the tent while we are asleep. H'm – oh, yes – we ought to be close enough to the house for milk and water, but not too close; we should have privacy and we want to be well away from any roads. Also, it's very nice if the site can be sheltered to the West and North, but fairly open to the East and South – unless there's a strong East wind – so that we get the sun in the early morning. I think that's about all! “The farmer grinned. “Really?” he said. “And is there such a place in England? Still, I suppose I did ask what you would like, not what you expect! Now come with me and I'll show you what we've got and you can take it or leave it”.

He took us round the house and across a field, and indicated a spot in the corner near the wood. It was a high, bleak, exposed spot, the ground rough and broken by the activities of moles, and chunks of chalk and stone lying about all over the place.

Although there was plenty of wood it was quite a long way from the house for water and it looked as if digging would be the world's worst job. However, it was dry ground and there would be little danger of getting water-logged. Moreover, it was coming on to rain, so we decided to clinch the matter.

“Yes, thank you sir. This will be excellent.”

“Good,” said the farmer. “You can get what fresh water you need from the farm. Only don't come after 9 o'clock. We go to bed early, and you would wake the dogs.”

“Can you please sell us a little milk?”

“How much?”

“A pint tonight, and the same in the morning, please?”

“Yes, all right, come over for it when you're ready”, and he walked off.

17.45 It was beginning to rain fairly heavily, so we unpacked the tent and pitched it without further ado, ensuring that it was square but not too taut in case it should tighten in the rain. We then laid down our groundsheets inside the tent, put our kits inside, took off our uniforms, and donned ourselves in sweaters, P.T. shorts and plimsolls by way of camp kit. Bill then went off to gather wood and put it into the tent before it should get any wetter, while I concentrated on the fireplace. We were using an ordinary garden hand trowel as an entrenching tool, this being the lightest and least bulky article which can conveniently be used for such a purpose. It is very efficient for turfing, digging pits, and also for digging holes for latrines. The stony nature of the ground made it very difficult to get the turf up cleanly but this was eventually achieved, by which time Bill had gathered sufficient wood. I turfed an area of about 18 in. by 2 ft. 6 in.

It is necessary to turf an area quite a bit bigger than that which the fire will occupy otherwise the grass all round the fire will become singed.

When I had finished, I went to the farm for milk and water, while Bill dug a

wet pit. For two campers, staying only one night on a site, one pit only is really sufficient. This should be used as a wet pit and all dry rubbish burnt. Then, when clearing the site, anything which has not burnt away-bashed out tins, etc. – can be buried in the pit before it is filled in.

The pit proved even more difficult than the fireplace, and Bill was still at it when I returned. By the time he had finished, I had sorted out the tent and got everything into some semblance of order, putting all the food into one rucksack by way of a larder, and placing everything else tidily about the tent so that we would know exactly where everything was. We then debated whether it would be necessary to dig a trench around the tent – not an enviable task in such soil – in case it should set in really wet for the night; but as we had pitched on a fold in the ground so that the water would tend to drain away from us on all sides, and as in any case the rain had eased off quite considerably, we decided this would not be necessary. We therefore turned our attentions towards supper. In our desire to cut down weight, the only cooking utensils we had brought were a Gilwell and two small billies, and this somewhat complicated the requirement that we should cook for each other.

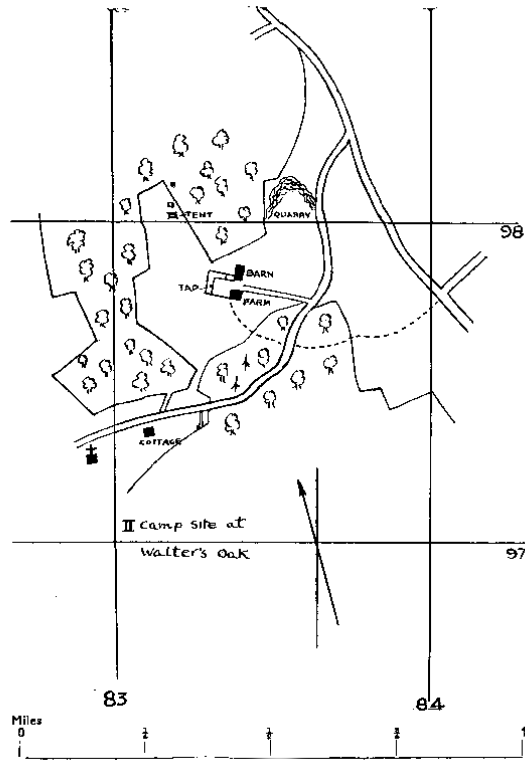
We decided that we should have to eat one at a time and therefore tossed up. I won the toss and elected to eat first.

While Bill was peeling the spuds and preparing the sprouts, I lit the fire. This was not too easy as even though we had gathered the wood as soon as we could and put it in the dry, it had still got fairly wet. I managed it, however, by using paper and plenty of very thin kindling wood and also some dry bracken which we had managed to find in a sheltered spot in the wood, and by cutting open with our small hand axe one or two dead pieces of ash and chopping up the dry interior of the wood into small shavings. Soon I had quite a good fire going. Bill then cooked, while I gathered more wood. Our menu was as follows:

Tomato soup (Symington's from a packet); Lamb chop with mint sauce, sprouts and potatoes; Stewed Plums and Custard; Coffee.

We had brought packet soup, in preference to tinned, as tins are so bulky and heavy and have to be got rid of when empty! The mint sauce we had prepared at home and brought with us in a small bottle.

While I ate, Bill washed up, ready for me to start cooking. The meal was very satisfying. Quite apart from the rules of the test, it is essential to have a good rilling meal during the week-end hike. To try to cook up for the Sunday lunch is rather a waste of time: getting permission to light a fire, gathering wood, turfing, cooking, washing up and covering up the fireplace, and in any case one can always ask one's mother to keep the Sunday dinner until one gets home! It is much better to have a big hot breakfast on the Sunday, and a light snack mid-day – a picnic lunch – and have a meal Sat. evening, so that the one fireplace can be used both for supper and breakfast. As to the menu, if something original can be prepared, so much the better. What is most important is to decide the menu for the whole week-end beforehand and work out exactly how much of each commodity will be needed and who will bring what and hence avoid duplication. It is bad Scouting to take either too little food and go hungry, or too much and have to waste some or take it home.



19.15 Bill went for more wood while I cooked his meal. By eight o'clock we had both eaten and washed up and had got enough wood in for the morning.

20.00 We spent the next twenty minutes writing up our notes, and then went for a run round the site before turning in. By this time it had stopped raining altogether and was beginning to look as though we might have a fine night after all. A short way from the site, round the wood and near the road, was a small chalk quarry, so we ran off to have a look at it. We enjoyed ourselves sliding down the quarry on bits of tin for a while and then we had a fight, with
20.30 Bill defending the cliff at the top of the quarry and trying to stop me from storming up and taking possession.

When we got back to the site, we took a look at our grazes and scratches. The fire was still burning, so we heated some water and bathed them. They weren't very bad, so we covered them with Acri-flavine from our First Aid kit: they didn't need bandaging. It is absolutely essential to take a First Aid kit to any hike or camp: quite a small one will do, the essentials being a triangular and a roller bandage, boracic lint, and some Acri-flavine – by far the best antiseptic for general use, being suitable for small burns as well as cuts and grazes. Possibly bicarbonate of soda could also be included for bad burns or scalds such as one might get by spilling a boiling dixie over one's foot, and there should be a few Elastoplasts.

By the time we had finished treating ourselves it was getting late and quite dark, so we prepared ourselves for bed.

We put the fire out, spreading earth over the ashes to prevent it from burning up again and sparks flying about setting fire to things. Our larder, the rucsac

containing all the food, we elevated on stones at the rear end of our tent to keep it off the ground. There wasn't enough room in our tent for our morning's wood supply, so we wrapped this in our capes and placed it in a well-sheltered fork in a tree. Our washed-up dixies and plates, etc., we stacked neatly near the kitchen, the dixies upside down and on sticks off the ground. We had a last look round to see if we had left anything out which ought to be in for the night and sure enough found our small hand-axe, masked in a log in the chopping area near the fire-place. We didn't possess a leather shield, so we masked it by tying rag round the bit, which is how we usually carry it, and put it in a rucsac in the tent. We then got our bedding ready and tidied up again in the tent. On a journey there is little point in spending valuable time last thing at night making gadgets only to take them down again first thing in the morning, but at the same time there is no excuse for slovenliness and all the principles which gadgets serve can be carried out without actually making gadgets. These are neatness and tidiness, with everything easy to hand, so that valuable time isn't wasted in looking for things; no dirt or rubbish about, food covered so flies can't get at it and food and cooking utensils off the ground away from rats and other vermin. If the weather is warm, any milk should be boiled over-night, and milk and fats should be kept cool by being immersed in water – either a stream or the water-bucket – or by being partly buried in a shady spot. The divisions of the kitchen – fireplace, washing-up area, and chopping area – can be maintained even if they aren't roped off. Having checked the site, we had a last look at the guy lines, making sure that they were neither too tight nor too slack and that all the pegs were in firmly. We then pegged out our doors, to be sure of ventilation, and after washing ourselves were at last ready for bed.

21.30 Before changing into pyjamas, we knelt on the floor of the tent and I took prayers.

“O Heavenly Father, who hast put us into this splendid world of Thine, we thank Thee for all Thy goodness to us; for the beauty of the sky, the woods and of the fields; and for all things in which we may see Thy hand, and by which we come to love Thee.

“We thank Thee for health and strength and freedom, that we are able to carry a home and our food on our backs, and hike through the country exploring Thy wonders. Grant that, guided and directed by Thee, we may make the best use of all the opportunities before us; fill us with the Spirit of Adventure; give us strength sufficient for each task, and the will to persevere, and to succeed: We pray for our brother Scouts all over the world. Help all of us to keep true to our aims and our ideals. And we pray for all people everywhere, particularly those who are ill or anxious or troubled, and ask for Thy blessing on them all. All this we ask in the name of Jesus, who taught us when we pray to say: ‘Our Father which art in heaven. . .’ ‘And now may the love of God, the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, rest and abide with us, this night and always.’ Amen.”

Before we fell asleep, we heard a nightingale singing.

Sunday, 19th September, 19 .

Weather: Fine, and warm. Mist in early morning. Approximate mid-day temperature 70° Wind South, rate 2-3.

06.30 I awoke to the crowing of a cock and much clatter from the farm. From the mooing I assumed that the cows were being milked. Our nightingale had gone but a blackbird had taken his place and the air was alive with country sounds. A wasp came droning round the tent but fortunately went away again. I attacked Bill, who was still asleep, and tried to drag him out of his sleeping bag. Battle royal ensued, which ended in a stalemate with both of us flushed and breathless. I looked out of the tent, and beheld a misty dew-soaked world.

“I’ve a jolly good mind to wear shoes and socks,” I said, “Be hanged to barefeet and plimsolls on a morning like this.”

“You’ll get your socks soaked if you do. And what would Skipper say? You know he always insists that no one wears socks on the dewy grass.”

“Well Skipper isn’t here – and there’s no need to say anything in the Log.”

“Not putting it in the Log won’t stop you getting a lousy cold through hiking all day with wet socks.”

“No, I suppose you’re right, blow it!” – and so saying I put on my plimsolls and emerged thinking that most of these rules and axioms of camping exist for good reasons and we do well to observe them whether anyone is by or not.

I went off to the farm shortly, where I bought our milk and obtained water. While I was away, Bill got busy preparing to light the fire.

I soon returned, and then I remembered – “We haven’t done any morning exercises. Let’s have a run round the field!” We did, and returned breathless and panting but so much warmer, that after doing B-P’s 6 Exercises, we were even able to face washing with comparative equanimity. Soon we had washed, cleaned our teeth, and lit the fire. Suddenly a happy thought struck me. Bill doesn’t like porridge, while I do, particularly on a hike, when I think it gives an excellent solid warming start to the day. I had, therefore, brought porridge whereas Bill had brought cornflakes.

07.45 “I say, Bill. You’ll have to cook my porridge for me while I prepare your cornflakes. Mind you don’t burn it”.

“What! I’m not having that. It’s not fair. Why I’ll eat porridge if it chokes me.” Reluctantly I had to agree in the end that we should each eat porridge with cornflakes on top. As I had eaten first at supper, I had to cook first at breakfast. I soon got cooking, while Bill wooded. The menu was as follows:

Grapefruit; Porridge and Corn Flakes; Egg, Bacon, Tomato and Baked Beans; Twists; butter and Marmalade; Tea.

08.30 By half-past eight we had finished eating and we cooked for each other the sausages which we intended having cold for lunch, and then got busy clearing up, though we didn’t feel much like work after such a fine breakfast. We washed up thoroughly and burnt all our rubbish and began to pack up. It is always rather fun deciding what order to do things in and what to leave till last. So far as

possible, I like to clear the site and pack, leaving out only washing gear, and wash and change into uniform very last of all; if you wash earlier, you may get dirty again filling in pits and so on; but if it's raining, you have to leave the tent up till last of all because you'll want it to dress in; and you'll also have to dress in the tent if there are houses or a road near, or people about. On this occasion, however, we were able to take the tent down early, which is a good thing because it will not be needed again and can go right to the bottom of the rucsac.

The fire should be put out as early as possible and water poured on it, but the putting back of the turf should be left as long as possible – until just before washing – in order to let the fire cool right down. Turves must never be put back on a warm fireplace, as this kills the grass, and it will never grow again. At the same time, however, the fire should not be put out until the site has been cleared pretty well, as one always tends to find lots of paper and feathers from one's flea bag which want burning just *after* one has put the fire out! As soon as we had got the tent down, therefore, we scoured round, collected everything that wanted burning, burnt it, put the fire out, poured water on it, and then cleared the ashes and surplus rubbish which hadn't burnt and put these into the wet pit, which we then filled and covered. There was a little firewood left over, unused, which we then took back into the woods and scattered. We also put the bricks and stones we had used in the fireplace for resting our billies on, back where we had found them, leaving the fireplace smooth and flat, to cool off ready for recovering. We then packed, putting in the tent and billies first, with our pyjamas and other things we should not need again, leaving out only the trowel, with which to cover the fireplace, our washing gear, uniforms, and such things as our capes, first aid kit, and food for lunch, which we should need during our hike and wanted to pack last of all. We cleaned our shoes and put the cleaning materials away. During the course of these operations, each of us in turn retired into the woods for a "rear".

09.30 After all else was finished, the gear packed as far as possible, and the fireplace re-turved, we carefully went over the site to make sure there were no bits of rubbish left about, and then had a thorough wash. We had cleaned our teeth and had a quick freshening up wash when we first got up but this was a proper strip to the waist affair, behind the ears, legs, feet, and everything. As the mist had completely gone by now and the world basked in glorious sunlight, we felt much more inclined for washing than earlier on. We packed our washing gear and towels and at last changed into our uniforms, packed our plimsolls and camp kit, and put in, last of all, the things we should want on our way, and strapped up our rucsacs. We were ready to leave at last. As I had taken prayers at bedtime, it was Bill's turn now, so we stood at the edge of the wood and bowed our heads for a moment. We stood in silence for a while, collecting our thoughts, and listening to the busy murmur of a glorious autumn morning – the birds, the rustle of the leaves, the occasional bee buzzing past, the barking of a distant dog, and all the sounds of the country. Then Bill took prayers:

“Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for a peaceful night, for rest and quiet; for the beauty of the morning, and for all the good food we have eaten; and also for the happiness of the homes to which we shall be returning. Teach us to be grateful for all good things; to our parents and those who care for us; but chiefly, O Lord, to Thee, for Thy great goodness. Be with us throughout this day; guard us from harm, and from temptation; and guide our steps into the

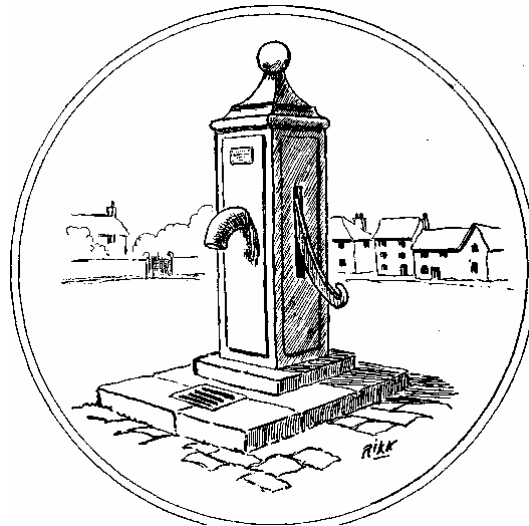
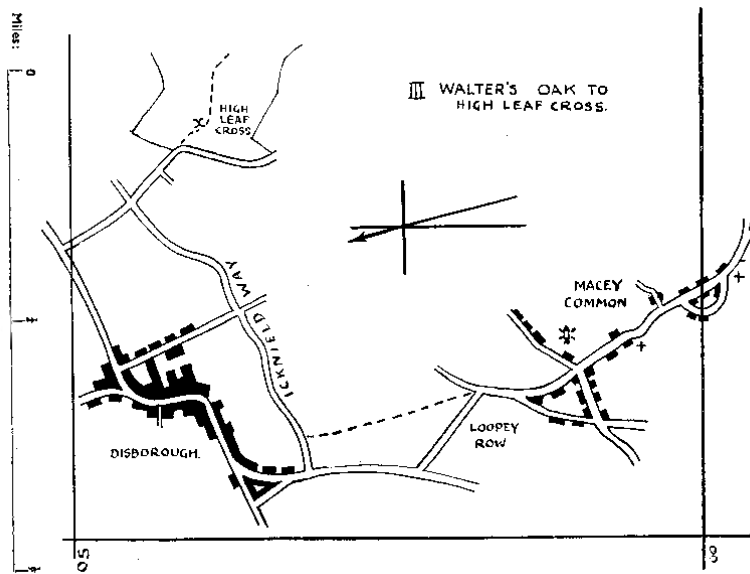
paths Thou wouldst have us tread. Help us to do our best to live out our Promise as Scouts, that we may do nothing which is displeasing in thy sight; support us when we falter, and be quick to forgive us when we fall. 'Our Father . . .'"

After this we picked up our packs and went over to the farm to thank the farmer, in order that we might comply with B.P.'s injunction that when leaving a site we should leave behind (1) Nothing, except (2) Our thanks. The farmer was in the house just finishing breakfast but he came out.

"Good morning, Sir. We're just off, we've called to thank you for your kindness."

"Oh, that's all right. Did you have a good night?"

"Yes, thank you sir; fine".



“Good. Well, come again any time you please. Goodbye”.

09.45 “Thank you very much indeed, sir. Cheerio!” – and with that, we left.

We had to return into the woods just behind our quarry in order to find GRYM’S DITCH. We looked for this for quite a time before realising that it was nothing more than a shallow depression in the woods, completely overgrown and visible only in places. On account of this we had not a little difficulty in following it.

10.15 After about a mile we joined a muddy cart track which ran parallel with a tiny lane. We followed this for a further ½ mile and then struck a road. We crossed over and continued along a footpath which our map told us followed the Grym’s Ditch, of which there was now no trace whatever, probably owing to ploughing. We then came to the village of MACEY, beyond which the Ditch turns away to the North East. Here we were to depart from it and cut across in a north-westerly direction until we should come to the Upper Icknield Way. We

10.30 stopped in the village to sketch the old pump. A sweet shop was open and we went in to buy some pop. Inside we found two other Scouts of the 2nd Disborough Troop, who appeared to be on their Journey, too. We shook hands and chatted. They were going to follow the same route as ourselves as far as Loopey Row which was a mile or so further on, and there they intended to follow the road round to the left, while we were going to keep straight on by a footpath. We all drank pop and then picked up our kits and continued on our way together. One of our new friends was a rather tubby boy who staggered under an enormous rucsac and who walked slowly and looked most uncomfortable. The other was a tall lanky lad, who seemed to have hardly any kit at all – just a small rucsac with hardly anything in it and who wore boots and obviously wanted to stride out but couldn’t because of his friend.

7½
miles

8
miles

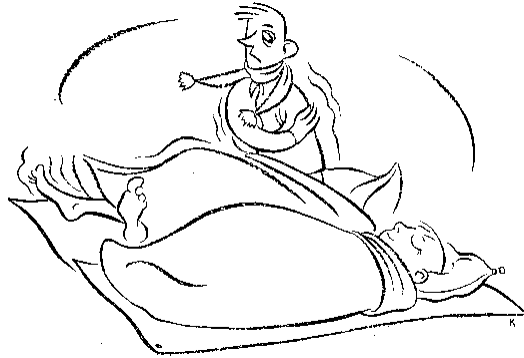
“Isn’t it going so well?” I asked the tubby one.

“No, it isn’t. Like a fool I came in brand new shoes which I hadn’t got used to and they’re killing me. I’m crippled with blisters. I’ll never wear new shoes on a hike again. A good old comfortable well-worn pair for me in future – stout, strong and in good condition, of course, but shoes I’ve already broken in. I’ve brought far too much kit, too, and my pack’s miles too heavy. It’s nearly breaking my back. Still at least I was warm in bed; more than Dick was “ – indicating his friend – ” why, his teeth were chattering so much he kept me awake half the night”.

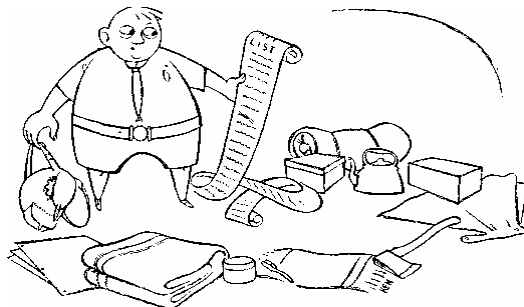
“Yes, it was quite a cold night”, I observed.



“Cold!” said Dick. “I’ve never been so cold in all my life. I wanted to cut down my kit to the absolute minimum, so I only brought one blanket, and golly, I was frozen, particularly my feet. I hardly slept a wink all night. However much I cut down gear in future I shall always make sure I take enough bedding. I don’t want another night like last night, it’s not worth it.” We all agreed that the kit one should take on a hike is a question of striking the happy medium between freezing to death by night, or being crushed by an insupportable burden by day! This led to a discussion on how to decide what to take on a hike. The fat boy, whose name was John, said he had made a list of everything he thought he would need and put it all in. After a lengthy debate, we decided that it is better to compile a list of those things only which one cannot do without, provided it is granted that one of these is enough bedding to be warm on a cold night. Bill and I had gone into this question fairly carefully and were finally able to convince the other two that our own kit list, which we have given on page 23 of this log, is as good as any. We argued for some time about the items on this list.



Firstly, the tent; what type should one take? This, of course, depends on what one can get. We had brought an Itisa; John and Dick had got a Good Companion. A really good lightweight tent, by a reputable firm, like either of these, or like the Scout Shop’s Gilwell Hike, is the best possible tent for the job. Failing this, any type of hike tent which is both light and waterproof will do. If it has enough room to move about in so much the better; true one can put up with being fairly cramped for just one night, though camping, as B-P. has said, is not a question of “putting up with things”; it is a question of making oneself really comfortable with the minimum equipment and expense.



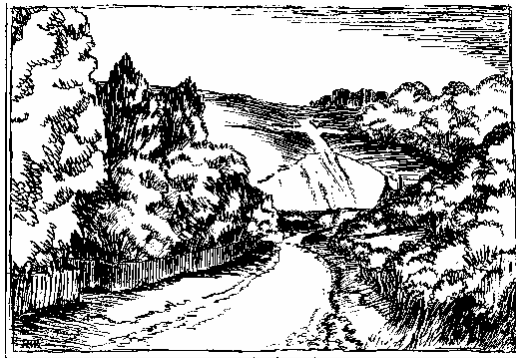
As regards the other items on our list, Dick and John were surprised how many things we were sharing, which it is usual for each person to take. One bar of soap, one tube of toothpaste, one nail brush, one set of darning and sewing gear for socks and buttons, will serve for two people, though two can scarcely share a toothbrush! If both have shoes or boots of the same colour, one brush and tin of

polish will suffice, so will one spare pair of laces; it is most unlikely that both parties will break their laces. Both people should, however, take matches; it is a mistake to rely on one box; it will either get lost or damp. A hand axe is not absolutely essential; in well wooded country it should be possible to find enough wood lying around for ordinary purposes which doesn't need chopping, but it is an asset if a small, light one can be obtained. A torch should be taken, in case one either has nocturnal visitors, or wishes to get up in the night. Whether a candle should be taken is debatable. If it is late in the year and it gets dark early, a candle is much better for writing up notes and for lighting the tent than a torch, but a candle in a tent is always a danger; it is so likely to fall over and tents catch fire very easily, and in any case candle grease is terribly messy.

Regarding the items on our list of personal gear, we all agreed that if possible the rucksac should be one with a good stout frame, which must be tried out and the straps adjusted properly before starting the hike. A sleeping bag is better than blankets, though if it is a thin bag a blanket may be needed as well. If one has no sleeping bag, then the number of blankets which should be taken depends, obviously, on the weather and time of year. On a very warm July evening, one may be enough, but usually two will be necessary and if it's very cold three may be needed.

We disagreed as to whether pyjamas are desirable. Personally, I like them and always wear them, but Bill sleeps in a spare sweater and a pair of shorts. The important thing is not to sleep in any of the clothes one has hiked in or worn during the day. I like to wear a vest under my pyjamas, so take a spare vest accordingly.

By this time we had passed through LOOPEY ROW, and had to part. We agreed to try and persuade our Scouters to arrange a joint camp between our two Troops, and said goodbye. Bill and I watched the others walk off down the road, Dick striding out in front, John grunting on behind. I must say they looked a bit incongruous. Apart from anything else, they hadn't taken much care of their uniforms in camp and their hats looked frightful and their scarves little better. It isn't much trouble to fold one's uniform up, and keep it smart, while wearing camp kit, and scarves in particular must be folded very carefully, otherwise they look ghastly. Our two friends provided quite a good object lesson on this. We watched them disappear and continued on our way.



11.15

We had been going downhill for some time now and found that our footpath continued to descend steadily, for the Upper Icknield Way runs along the foot of an escarpment, and the Lower Way follows the line of the valley. As we crossed the field we saw a fine pair of magpies fluttering about in the hedges. We

10
miles

also saw several rabbits, which scattered as we approached. At the bottom of the hill, we turned right on to the UPPER ICKNIELD WAY. This is one of the ancient roads which was a trunk trade route even before the Romans came. We thought a report on the present condition of the Way could profitably be set as an object on some future hike. The part we were on is still as it has been for centuries past, just a muddy cart track, flanked with hedges mainly composed of thorn. After about ½ mile we crossed a minor road and continued, passing many trees standing in the hedgerow, one or two sycamore, horse chestnut, beech of course, and one very fine ilex, or holm oak. After we had gone some little way on, we suddenly noticed a lady walking ahead of us carrying two baskets which appeared to be heavy to judge by her laboured footsteps. “Good turn!” we both thought instantly and hared off after her. The lady looked over her shoulder somewhat fearfully, and seeing us charging after her increased her speed; she couldn’t have known much about Scouts – or perhaps she did! “If this doesn’t succeed, I give up!” I muttered. We overtook the lady near the gate of a cottage.

“Can we help you carry your baskets, madam?” Bill spluttered.

The lady turned and smiled on us with positive relief. “Well, thank you very much, boys, but I’m not going any further. I live here. Good morning.” And so saying, she turned into the cottage.

“Well?” said Bill.

“I give up,” I replied.

12.10 Just past the cottage we came upon another road. Here we turned right, leaving the Icknield Way, and climbed a very steep hill, until we found ourselves beneath HIGH LEAF CROSS. We decided to have lunch at the top, above the Cross, and climbed straight up the centre of it. It was of chalk, cut into the side of the hill, and at the bottom was very steep and very heavy going with rucsacs. However, we made it, and eventually got to the top, very puffed out, and were rewarded with a magnificent view, which it is commonly said extends to seven Counties on a clear day.

12½
miles

12.30 We dumped our rucsacs on the ground, got our capes out, as we did not wish to sit on the ground which was still damp from the dew, and then began to prepare lunch, our menu being as follows:

Lettuce, tomatoes, watercress, onion, cucumber, cheese and cold sausages; bread, butter and marmalade; biscuits, buns, oranges, apples and nuts; lemonade (mixed up on the spot with powder, water and sugar).

We did not, however, have sandwiches but cut our bread and prepared our food as we wanted it. Sandwiches are always pretty grim unless eaten on the same day as they are cut as the bread gets terribly stale. After lunching, we wiped our plates and cutlery on the grass, for our flasks had contained enough water to make the lemonade, but none for washing up.

We then lay on the grass for some time, resting. I was writing up my notes, though I found I was more interested in watching the activities of a sparrowhawk which hovered about overhead. Meanwhile Bill was studying the map.

Suddenly an elderly gentleman came wandering through the bushes and sat down between us.

“Hallo, lads. Hiking?”

We suspected him at once. Only a Scout Commissioner would ever ask such a silly question! And sure enough he was wearing a Scout badge: our suspicions were confirmed. I remembered the 5th Scout Law just in time to stop myself saying “No, we’re fishing” and said “Yes, sir. We’re on our Journey.”

“Good. Please don’t get up,” and he shook hands with us where we were, very informally! He asked us our Troop, and we told him. We chatted about our Journey and told him where we had been and showed him our notes.

“Well, it’s been a good week-end for it. Have you enjoyed it?”

“Yes, sir. So far, very much.”

“Fine. That’s the important thing, you know. Provided you try hard, learn something and have a good time, nothing else matters much.”

We got chatting about Journeys in general and logs in particular.

“One thing I’ve wondered about, sir. All the Journey Logs I’ve ever seen have been written in short notes, not in full sentences – you know the kind of thing.”

“Yes, I know. ‘Followed road SSE 2 miles. Turned left Rd. Junct. 143856. Passed church and public house. Sketched latter. Continued ESE ½ mile. Turned right on to path at stile.’ – That’s what you mean, isn’t it?”

“Yes, sir. That’s right. Must a log be written like that, or can you write in proper English if you prefer?”

“Oh yes, of course you can. The point is that the Log is a record of what you did and where you went; it isn’t an Essay or a Composition and the Examiner is only interested in your Scouting; he doesn’t want to test your grammar, so most boys prefer the short note method and in any case it is shorter and more concise. If you have a flair for descriptive writing, then you would do well to make use of it in your log, just as the boy who is good at sketching makes use of his talents.”

“Yes, I see. And that’s another thing. Why is so much stress placed on sketching in logs? It’s all right for people like Bill here, who can draw, but I couldn’t do a decent sketch to save my life.”

“Well, firstly, sketching is good observation training. You really *see* a thing if you’ve got to draw it; you may only look at it if you’re just going to describe it. Secondly, a sketch gives a much clearer idea of an object than a verbal description. Thirdly, lots of people who think they can’t draw find that they are much better than they thought they were when they really try. Does that answer you?”

“Yes thank you, sir”. “If you aren’t very good at sketching, use small simple sketches, thumbnail size, with match-stick figures, but put in as many sketches as you can; they make your log interesting. Put in other things as well – birds’ feathers, plants, etc.”

Next we talked about mapping.

“Why do we have maps in a log?” he asked.

“Isn’t it because the idea behind a log is that anyone who wanted, should be able with the aid of the log and nothing else – except perhaps a compass – to go over the same route as we followed, and they would want maps to help them?”

“Yes, that’s about it. So what should your maps include?”

“Firstly, the north point and scale, then the exact route taken, every road and path traversed, with turnings off, and as much country on either side as could actually be seen.”

“Yes, that’s right. Make your maps as neat as possible. It’s better to include less detail and have them tidy and nicely finished off, than to smother them with all kinds of details which don’t really concern your hike, and make them a messy eye-sore. You should do several maps of fairly large scale instead of one big one, though it is a good idea to have in addition one big map showing the whole area covered, to act as an index to other maps. Use plenty of colours – water in blue, main roads red, 2nd-class roads yellow, woods green, and so on, and always give a legend or table of all the conventional signs you have used. One good idea is to affix tracing paper over your maps and show your route, camp site, lunch halt and such things on this. Still, whatever you do, be consistent about it, and remember that neatness and clarity are the important things.

“Well, that’s enough on mapping. You know how to set out your log, I expect?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Bill, who was feeling a bit left out of things. “You have columns on the left and right for the time (using 24-hour clock) and the mileage respectively. You start with a proper form of heading, give a report on the weather each day, and end with a kit list – and you have to sign it at the end.”

“Yes, that’s right. What do you put in your headings?”

“Well, the area of the hike, the map used, who the log is addressed to, who it’s by, the special object, if any, the date, and the name of your companion.”

“Good. Also, you either give, in full, the instructions you were given, or else attach them. One of you will have to copy them, the other can attach them. By the way, don’t forget to include the menu for your meals; Scouts often do. Whether you give it at the end, the beginning, or in the text is immaterial, but don’t forget it! Anything else?”

Neither of us could think of anything.

“Well, there is one thing. Try to emphasise key words – such as place names – in some way. You can put them in block capitals, or underline them, but draw attention to them. I have seen a log in which all place names were underlined in red; all historical references, in blue; all those referring to nature study in green; and all references to the specific object, which was something about farming methods (the boy being interested in farming) in yellow. Perhaps that’s taking things a bit too far but you should make important things stand out. By the way, what’s the time? I believe my watch has stopped.”

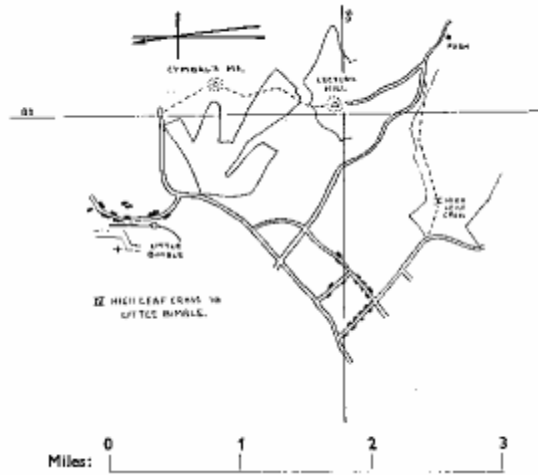
“It’s a quarter to two, sir”, I replied.

“Good heavens, is it really? I must go. Cheerio lads, and good luck. I hope you pass, in fact I’m sure you will!” – and with that he shook hands with us and left as quickly as he had arrived. It was high time that we, too, were on our way, and having consulted the map and decided what route we should take, we donned our packs and started.

For the first time our feet felt really frightful – red hot – as if we were

13.50 walking on pin cushions! It's funny how one's feet always feel much worse after a rest during a hike. For the first few yards we felt crippled and just hobbled along, but as we got under way we soon felt better and before long we warmed up and were going as well as ever.

We followed a path along the top of the ridge, walking almost due East, and at the far end we found a footpath by which we began to descend rapidly into the depths of a huge beech-wood, going S.E. roughly. By the time we had reached the bottom, however, we had lost the path and were staggering about through beds of leaves and thick brambles. After a while we found ourselves getting hazy about our direction and we had to admit we weren't sure where we were.



14.15 On referring to the map we found we had veered round too much to the East. We therefore struck due South and ploughed on. We climbed a hill and before long found ourselves on a road, not far from Longdown Farm. Just opposite we found a footpath, which we followed. It brought us out on to a track which took us up a steep incline, and soon we were near the summit of LECTERN HILL. A short scramble took us to the top. We sat down and surveyed the world.

14
miles

"I'm going to take a look at my feet," said Bill. "I believe I've got a blister".

He had! It was quite a beauty.

"Ought I to prick it?"

"No. Here, put on this Elastoplast. Look! do you see that hole in your sock? I expect that caused it. You'd better put your spare pair on."

Soon Bill had patched himself up, and changed socks, and we were ready to move on. We decided to make a bee-line for Cymbal's Mount, so we worked out the compass bearing, and then set off along it.

By now, however, our packs were beginning to feel really heavy and our backs and shoulders were aching. As we left the summit and descended into the wood we noticed that the outlines of the camp, which according to our map had in olden times stood upon the crown of the hill, could be seen fairly clearly. Three defensive ditches could be traced in a series of furrows and ditches. We thought that the task of mapping and attempting to reconstruct these could make quite an interesting object for a Journey.

16

15.00 It was just over a mile between the two hilltops, and by 3 p.m. we were on the summit of CYMBAL'S MOUNT. As we wanted to get home in time for church, we didn't stop, but descended the hill and climbed over a wall out on to a road.

15.30 We turned left, and followed the road to the West. Soon we arrived at a Road Junction and turned right. A short way up the road we found LITTLE BIMBLE STATION. Our hike was over. We found that we had fifteen minutes to wait for our train, so we bought our tickets and sat in the waiting room and got on with our notes.

15.45 Just after a quarter to four, our train pulled in. We boarded, and were soon comfortably settled and on our way home.

"Well, it's been a grand week-end", said Bill.

"It's a nuisance about the Good Turn", I replied.

"I wonder whether he'll fail us on account of that?"

We finished off our notes and put them away. After some time the train reached Bybridge Station, from where we had started the previous day. We looked out with interest on a busy platform.

Suddenly, as the guard was shutting doors and thinking about getting the train away, we saw two Sea Scouts staggering along carrying a heavy Kayak full of gear towards the Guard's Van, which was next to our compartment.

"Come on. We'd better give them a hand", said Bill. "They'll never catch the train otherwise."

We jumped out, and helped carry the boat, which was a really lovely job, and just got it loaded in time. The Sea Scouts joined us in our compartment, and the train moved on.

"Thanks a lot", said one of them. "That's *your* good turn for the day!"

"Why, so it is", I said. "I suppose that'll count all right. Saved by the gong!"

Our new friends had been doing their Journey by water and we passed the time by discussing our experiences.

We listened enthralled as they told us of the joys of doing a Journey by water; of weirs, and locks, and of getting slapped broadside by the wash of steamers, and many other things of which we had little idea.

Their object had been to explore and sound a number of backwaters and note landing-places and depth and breadth of channels and so on, and they had also had to do a short hike ashore. As we thus compared notes, it seemed to make the journey much shorter. We all agreed we had thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. At Jennings's Cross they got out and left us to ourselves for the remainder of the journey home, which was without incident. We finally arrived home at 5.30 p.m.

17.30 So I regretfully bring my account of our hike to its close and submit my log to my Examiners – you who read this booklet. Whether you pass or fail me for my Journey, the hike was well worth while. We thoroughly enjoyed it, full as it was of interest, and new experiences. The great thing about the Journey, is to take it as a

challenge to one's Scouting, and to enter the fray determined to get as much out of it as possible, and to have a really splendid time.

I can only hope that other Scouts will get as much fun, interest, and happiness out of their hikes as we got out of ours.

Signed: PETER _____ ,

Eagle Patrol, 2nd Mudbury Troop.

LIST OF KIT CARRIED ON HIKE

JOINT KIT WHICH WE CARRIED BETWEEN US

Carried by me

Tent
Pegs
Gilwell
Small Billie
Canvas Water Bucket
Small Hand Axe
Shoe polish and brush
Darning Wool and Needle
Sewing Needle and Thread
Map
Compass
Bird Book

Carried by Bill

Pole
Groundsheet
First-Aid Kit
Small Billie
Trowel
Tea cloth and Scourer
Bar of Soap
Toothpaste
Nail-brush
Toilet Paper
Torch

MY OWN PERSONAL KIT

Complete Scout Uniform
Rucsac
Cape
Sleeping Bag
Pyjamas
Spare Vest
Running Shorts
Plimsolls
Sweater
Spare Socks
Washing Bag
Toothbrush
Flannel
Towel

Drinking Flask
Mug
One Plate
Knife fork and spoon
Jack-knife (with tin-opener)
Matches
Cord
Notebook
Pencil
Food