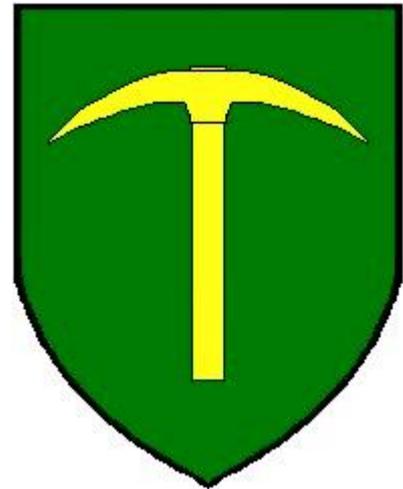




**September – December
2007**

Pioneer Trail



**Meeting
Mabukuwene Nature Reserve
Friday's 19:00 - 21:00 hrs**

**Scout Leader
Norman Scott
nclscott@netconnect.co.zw**

1st Bulawayo (Pioneer) Scout Group
www.angelfire.com/sc/matabeles/troops

Under the *Pseudolachnostylis Maprouneifolia*

As our Centenary year of World Scouting now draws to an end I am confident to say that we as a Troop have done our best in celebrating this milestone of Scouting in grand style. We have had a full and varied year of Scouting activities, despite the hardships that we are experiencing, both natural and man-made. Numbers in the Troop have declined through natural wastage, unfortunately artificially enhanced due to our current environment, although, I am sure I could have minimised the loss with a recruitment initiative. This has resulted in the average age of the Troop becoming younger as it was those families with older children who have emigrated. This has placed a higher burden on me, to ensure that each Scout gets the maximum benefit as a member of the world-wide brotherhood of Scouting. My view is that Scouting should be quality driven and not a game of numbers. In time, as the present membership begins to age and become experienced, younger boys will once again be drawn in and leadership will gradually evolve on the older boy once again. Cognizance must be taken that our Troop programme is outdoor orientated, which of necessity, requires among other needs, adequate transport, equipment and leadership, all three of which are limited. We are, however, fortunate in having Mabukuwene as our meeting place. This venue of granite outcrops resembling the Matopos situated in the heart of the suburb of Burnside is central for all our Scouts and provides a rugged environment for our activities.



Sweets Again! – Great thanks to our friends overseas

I would like to congratulate our two Cook-Out teams for their culinary expertise, for they brought the Provincial Cook-Out trophy back to the Troop. Our efforts at the one day Arnold Carnegie Assegai Competition, the premier Provincial Scouting competition, highlighted deficiencies in our training. Our score of 216 points out of a possible total of 420 put us in fourth position out of ten Troops that entered. This score is a result of the Scouts, in the main, being juniors and therefore they had not reached the level of Scouting to tackle some of the bases. However, a reasonable result and an indicator of those areas where we need to do more work in.

The international event of Jamboree-on-the-Air held in October was not held in Matabeleland this year. For this event to happen, we call upon the services of the Amateur Radio Ham Society. Unfortunately, the Society can no longer help us as their numbers are very few and are now elderly. The Provincial swimming gala, which has not been held for many years was programmed for October, but unfortunately did not take place. The Sausage Sizzle was held at Barry and Lara Knight's house, for which I would like to thank them most sincerely for allowing us to invade the peace and tranquillity of their garden. We did not enter The "Chuck" Wilcox Art and Craft Competition, which I heard was a great success, as the Troop was involved in hosting the Matopos Conservation Society's Annual General Meeting, held this year over two days at Gordon Park. This date had already been set last year to commemorate the Centenary year of World Scouting and as the Society is deeply involved in the welfare of the Matopos, and as a Troop we are members of the Society, we had accepted to host the venue.

The monthly inter-denominational services have continued to be held at Gordon Park, on the whole regularly attended by members of the Troop. Of special note, Father Noel Scott, who has been heading these services for many years, was awarded the Silver Eagle at the October service. The Silver Eagle, the second highest National Scouting award, is presented for dedicated service to Scouting over a prolonged period. Our thanks and congratulations to Father Noel. Also

of interest, the annual Remembrance Day Service was held at Gordon Park on the 11th of November, commemorating those Scouts who gave their lives in previous wars and hostilities. Our thanks to Father Benno Holtz for conducting this service.

Ending off the year in great Scouting fashion, six members of the Troop undertook a hike in the Chimanimani Mountains, a fantastic area to hike in and quite different from the Matopos. The mountains and accompanying expedition add great value to our Scouting, not to mention our physical and mental endurance. I was particularly impressed by the individual performances of our Scouts under adverse weather conditions we were confronted with this year. In being able to once again take an expedition to the Chimanimani Mountains, I would like to express the Troop's sincere Thanks for the donation of fuel for the trip by former Scouting members, Ian Harmer and Dominic Eames, who appreciate the value of Scouting in the development of young men.

Scouting is only one aspect of our members' development and achievements. I would like to congratulate our Scouts, who are performing in other fields. First to Scout Brendon Judge on his selection during the year to play cricket and to swim for the Province of Matabeleland. He also went to Harare for selection for the Zimbabwean cricket team. At the time of writing he had not heard of the results of the selection. Second, to Scout Dale van Aarde on his selection during the year to play cricket for the Province of Matabeleland and he too



Father Noel Scott receiving the Silver Eagle

went to Harare for selection for the Zimbabwean team. Result is still awaited. Dale was also appointed Head Boy of his school, Centenary Primary as well as receiving a number of end-of-year school achievement awards. Thirdly, Scout Declan FitzPatrick was appointed Head Boy of his school, Petra Primary. Sable Scout Leon Wuyts wrote his 'A'-levels at the end of the year and now awaits his results. As he has now come to the end of his school years, we will be saying good-bye early in the New Year as he starts out on his career in adult life.

And now, until the next time, it is back to my hammock beneath my *Pseudolachnostylis Maprouneifolia* with a floppy hat pulled over my eyes as I dream of a Blessed Christmas and Peaceful New Year for us all.

N. Scott
Scout Leader

A Moment for Reflection

The person who knows how to laugh at himself will never cease to be amused.
-- Shirley Maclaine

If you want something done, ask a busy person.
Benjamin Franklin --

A good scare is worth more than good advice.
-- Edgar Allan Poe

The door of opportunity won't open unless you do some pushing.
Henry Ford –

The Long Hike

7th – 8th September 2007

In search of a little adventure and challenge, the September hike was planned to be a little rougher than most hikes, as most of the 'lighties' had other activities on, and it was left to Norm, Chris, Dale and myself to take the rugged road to adventure in the Matopos we so love. The hike was planned from Silobini growth point, a short distance away from Mtshetshe Dam, across the Sotshe Ridge, fording the Tuli, following the Tohwe to Nanke Cave, before heading north up the Tohwe to Kopilo Gap, finally reaching the Valley Road leading us right to Gordon Park. All in all, a distance of approximately 35 kilometres, over some of the most rugged country the Matopos has to offer. Friday dawned, as usual, with a brighter sun than otherwise; 5 o'clock rolled round, and four intrepid Scouts were to be found at Christ the King Church piling into Chris' dad's car, ready for the long drive out to Gordon Park, to drop off Norm's landy, and then onto the dreaded Old Gwanda Road to Silobini Business Centre.

After bouncing and bumping along the Old Gwanda Road for what felt like an age, we finally disembarked at Silobini, which boasted two shops, a beer garden, a hospital, and some scattered houses. After persuading the local drunks that we were not lost, we found two slightly less inebriated young men, who offered to show us the way to the dam. With much arguing between themselves, they eventually left us in sight of the dam, and returned to Silobini. It was dark by now, and as bumbling about on kopjes in pitch darkness isn't exactly our idea of fun, we made for the nearest level ground, which happened to be a kraal.

Here Norm stopped for a while to ask permission to sleep in their field, and imagine our surprise when the old man who came out to see us recognised Norm, who had been this way many years before in the landy. And, to make matters worse, he was also called Norman. By now I was getting quite confused, so we went off into the field to find a suitable place to cook our supper and get some sleep.

If I were an inventor of sayings, this would be today's offering: he who sleeps in middle of field, wakes up with sore back; he who sleeps on edge of field, wakes up without sore back; he who sleeps at home in nice, warm bed with blankets and teddy wakes up relaxed and refreshed. Needless to say, we slept in the middle of the field, and woke up with S shaped backs the next morning. It was a long night.

But the next morning eventually arrived, and we didn't lose any time in getting breakfast on the go, packing our kit and moving off after saying goodbye to the people at the kraal. We followed the pipeline towards the dam, though we turned off before we actually reached it. By now the sun was already fairly high in the sky.

Thus began the Day of Walking, as we spent the rest of the day walking, climbing, walking some more, resting, walking, resting again, before walking, resting yet again, and finally walking and eventually crawling into bed. And all through this we had to repeatedly remind ourselves that what we were doing was fun and exciting, and not a rather bizarre form of self-torture.

The hike, passing from the east to the west of most major rivers, was fascinating. There had been some small rain showers in the area quite recently, and the bush was just turning green. To say that is gross understatement, as the sheer variation in the greenness made the surrounding countryside come alive with splendour. All around us birds sang in the trees, and rustled through the undergrowth at our passage.

The first section was relatively easy, for we already stood on the bastion of the Sotshe Ridge, and following a gap through the Ridge, we began the downhill into the Tuli valley. This we crossed at an old kraal site, getting our shoes wet in the process, though trying hard not to. From here we began the long climb up to Nanke, a large kopje we had visited several times before, stopping off

first at an old Ranger's Hut and base station, and eventually following an old road up into the high ground around the kopje.



Overlooking the Tuli Vallev.

The climb up to the kopje was arduous, as we went straight up the sheer face, instead of following the tourist path all the way round to the easier ascent. We eventually reached the Cave, and being close to lunchtime, we immediately settled down to lunch, followed by an afternoon siesta, surrounded by clouds of unrelenting midges.

Once the heat of the day had passed, we climbed back into our packs, and began the descent, but going the other direction. It was now close to three o'clock, and we were about two thirds of the way to the Park. The

worst of the climbing had been done, and it was smooth sailing from here on. We were headed northwards now, following the flow of the rivers in this area, headed for Kopilo Gap.

We reached the Gap sooner than I had expected, and trundled through to the top of the pass. Here we visited a small cave with paintings which we had also been to before, and began the descent through the Gap. According to Norm, there is a path through here, and we followed the vestiges of one for about 20 metres before it petered out, and we bushwhacked the rest of the way down. However, being perseverant, we forced our way through the tangle of bush until finally we were through, and we stumbled out in a daze onto the Valley Road.

The sun was fast setting as we set off down the road, with the 'just-round-the-corner' thudding through our brains. It is actually disgusting how many corners that small stretch of road has, and I think National Parks ought to be ashamed of misleading hikers so cruelly.

Needless to say, we eventually arrived at the small path leading off from the road towards the river, and following this, not without some bumbling around first, we eventually reached the crossing point of the Mtshelili River. A foot full of mud squelched up the track on the other side, and joy of joys: the pump, and just, just beyond it, Headquarters, where a warm shower and warm beds awaited the four intrepid, somewhat deluded Hikers of the rugged Matobo Hills.

Leon Wuyts
Patrol Leader

Provincial Cook-Out Competition

22nd September 2007

On Saturday the 22nd September Declan, Mike and myself met at McKeurtan Primary School for the Cook-Out competition together with about 7 or 8 other Scout Troops and Cub Packs from in and around Bulawayo. Opening Parade was at 1:00 pm where we were told that closing time for judging would be 3:30 pm, after that no food would be judged. Then we were given our sites: at first the judges wanted all the different sections in the same areas, but some of the other Troops like us were sharing equipment and fires so they decided it would be better if Troops were placed together, so after that was agreed we all started our fires and prepared to start cooking.

After a while the organizers of the Cook-Out came round to each Troop to judge how well our cooking areas were and if we had wood and water, and we were given scores, these scores were added to the food scores at the end of the competition.

Declan and Mike had to cook homemade tomato and onion soup with French toast and a homemade orange drink for the under-12 section, I had a three-course meal of my own choice in the under-18 section so it was vegetable soup, savoury mince with rice, carrots and green beans followed by banana custard with a fruit drink. All the meals had to be served on a tray together with all the trimmings.

Declan and Mike finished way before me and before the food judges had even arrived so they had a long wait. When the judges did arrive off they went to be judged – even then they had to wait as a few of the other Troops had also finished. My food took a little longer, but I made it before the end of judging. After we had been judged we had to clear up, pack away and load up the cars and make sure our sites were left as we found them with nothing showing that we had been there. Norm and Leon had arrived later in the afternoon.



Presenting the food for judging

When all the Troops had been judged and the scores added up, we had Closing Parade. Norm was asked to present the trophy. Third and second places were announced, then first place was announced: we had won. Declan and I went p to collect the trophy, as unfortunately Mike had had to leave earlier due to another commitment. We were both very excited.

Afterwards we went to say well done to the other Troops and the organizers. This was Mike's first Cook-Out and Declan's first as a Scout – he had taken part as a Cub – and I hope they had fun doing it. As for me it was my fourth year as a Scout and I have enjoyed it every year. I would like to thank Norm for letting us take part, my Mom and Rob (although he was not there this year as he was away fishing) for helping me and encouraging me to attend, and also to the organizer and McKeurtan Primary for hosting us this year, and not least of all, Declan and Mike for being there with me.

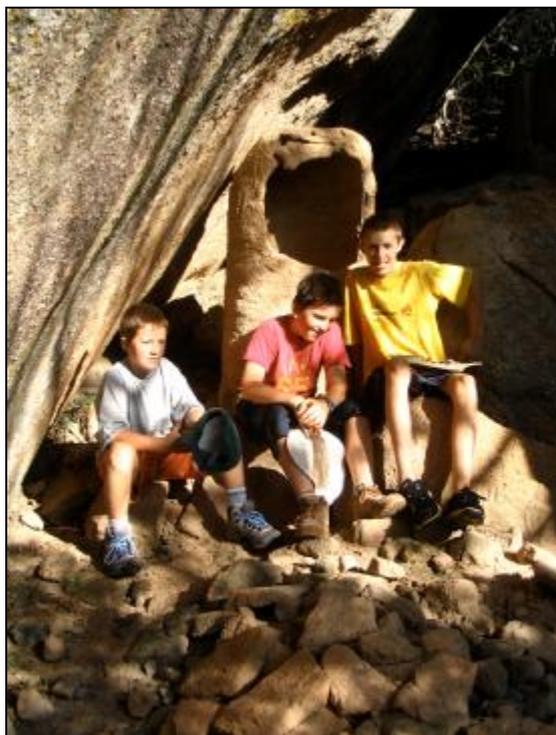
Christopher Mackenzie
Assistant Patrol Leader

October Treasure

13th – 14th October 2007

Over the waterfall behind Leask scrambled the intrepid adventurers. Yes, Christopher, Declan, Mike and Norman were off on yet another monthly hike. We had arrived at Gordon Park the previous evening and because we had only one vehicle it had been decided to sleep the night at the Park and then to undertake a short hike up the Mtshelili valley the next morning, so as to be back at the Park by mid day. In the afternoon we were to set up our campsite in readiness for the Parents Camp which was to be held on the Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

Christopher set a brisk pace through the bush following game trails, which at times were strewn with the droppings of the white rhino, kudu, zebra and other small buck. At this time of the year the grass and trees were a verdant lush green and fairly thick. Our first stop was at a small



Mike, Declan and Chris in front of the grainbin

over hanging rock shelter which contained a grain bin. Although not complete, the bin was never-the-less in fair condition. After a good look around in the hope of finding some Stone Age tools, we left empty handed. Our route took us in a large curve down towards the river some two kilometres away. The bush on this section of the hike had been burnt in a veldt fire during the winter months and the grass had only just started to grow. It was great hiking in this area for we could see for quite a distance ahead, which enabled us to get a fleeting glance of a small herd of zebra.

About half way to the river, we negotiated a small granite ridge. On descending down the other side we found the remains of a large clay pot. An exciting find indeed, for we have not yet found any pots on our hikes. When complete, it must have been about 40 centimetres in diameter, but alas, no sign of any design; worthless. On crossing the river, all we found was a small stagnant pool of dirty, dark green slime covered water. On we trudged, heading for the MOTH (Memorial Order of Tin Hats) shrine at the base of Imadzi kopje. On the way we passed through a small dry dam. At the shrine we had a short rest before ascending Imadzi.

Arriving at the top of the kopje we were pleased to find that the shallow depressions were filled with water. Well, water plus Scouts add up to a water fight. Having had our fun we then headed off in the direction of Gordon Park which we could see further down the valley. Hiking along the ridge was not easy and even more difficult negotiating a route down to the valley below. On reaching the flat ground of the valley, we found that we were close to some rock paintings that Baden-Powell had written about in his book, The Matabele Campaign. As not all of us had seen these particular San paintings, we turned off from our direction of travel to spend a few moments to view them. Leaving this rocky outcrop, we headed across the main road for the Mtshelili river and then followed it back to Gordon Park.

Our hike and exploration had taken us the full morning, during which we had covered eleven kilometres amongst the boulders and kopjes of our beloved Matopos. And of our treasure. Well, being privileged to hike in this unspoilt wilderness of huge granite kopjes with its wild animals, the soaring raptors and rich in the San painted caves, a playground for the young and old, is indeed a treasure beyond measure.

Norman Scott
Scout Leader

A night at Gordon Park...

13th – 14th October 2007

What a pleasure to see a group of hikers coming up from the vlei. Strong, sure footed, happy smiling faces and cheerful voices, must be young fellows. They headed straight for me, although they could not see me as I hid in the deep shadows of the *Pterocarpus rotundifolius*.

After they had had their lunch, they loaded Ingulungundu with mountains of camping gear and headed off for the Bowl campsites. Mmmm, they must be getting ready for a camp. I had better get there and see what is going on. Well I did not have to wait too long, as the hikers were soon setting up camp in the 1st Bulawayo campsite and by tea time, what was a vacant site, had been transformed into a camp ready to receive royalty. In no time cars began to arrive, spilling out their eager contents of youngsters and oldies, well not quite as old as me, but then all is relative is it not. By evening little tents were everywhere and the smoke from the cooking fire curled lazily skyward dissipating in among the branches of the trees that abound.

After everyone had had their fill, the group of fifteen ambled over to where the campfire had been laid. A hush descended, a match was struck, moved to the pile of logs and then tiny at first, the flames licked skyward as they readily consumed the kindling. An opening sentence so often heard here at Gordon Park and then into the first song of the evening. The merriment continued for sometime and then as the flames slackened an old familiar face was requested to take centre stage. It was no other than Martin Sanderson who had the honour of giving the campfire yarn. In true Sanderson fashion, Martin soon had everyone mesmerised as the story unfolded. A hunter, his gun bearer, an old muzzle-loader, gun powder, wads of cotton lint and lead shot. But the yarn was not all talk, for each Scout had a part to play as the story unfolded. Lead was placed in a crucible on the embers of the fire and then carefully poured into a mould to make round balls for the muzzle loader to shoot. The barrel was charged, but for safety reasons the lead shot was left out. The hunter, a Scout dressed up with moustache and pith helmet took aim and the gun erupted into life. Each Scout was involved in the drama, on stage, action, imagination no inhibitions. The life of boys lost in the magical world of make believe.



Everyone lending a hand in the making of the lead bullets.

All to soon, it was time for the closing songs and then taps, a solo given by one of the parents, which drifted to the tops of the surrounding kopjes. A fitting conclusion to a great day, but not quite, for there were the traditional flap-jacks and hot chocolate before good nights were said and the campsite fell silent. Now it was the turn of the animals of the night watch to take over and guard the weary campers. I too snuggled up in my blankets and was soon fast asleep.

The morning was heralded in by the blasts of the kudu horn, in true B-P style. The early rises had stoked up the still red hot coals of the cooking fire. Ingulungundu's engine burst into life and a little party of adventurers set off to climb Mount Shumba shaba. A well established tradition on

these parent camps. The more mature decided to stay in camp and to get breakfast ready for when the adventurers returned.

Toward mid day, after a few activities to keep everyone busy, the campers were joined by many more people who had come out from the city to take part in the monthly church service in the open air St. George's Chapel, in amongst the granite boulders. The service was followed by lunch and what seemed like no break, by afternoon tea. Soon after four o'clock people started to drift off for home, until only the Camp Commissioner and a few Scouts were left to lock up and depart. Well, it was time to fold up my deck chair -- the one with the fading canvas that blended in with the fallen leaves of a winter past, but enough green to tone with the budding green of a coming summer, however, I must add with no floral design.

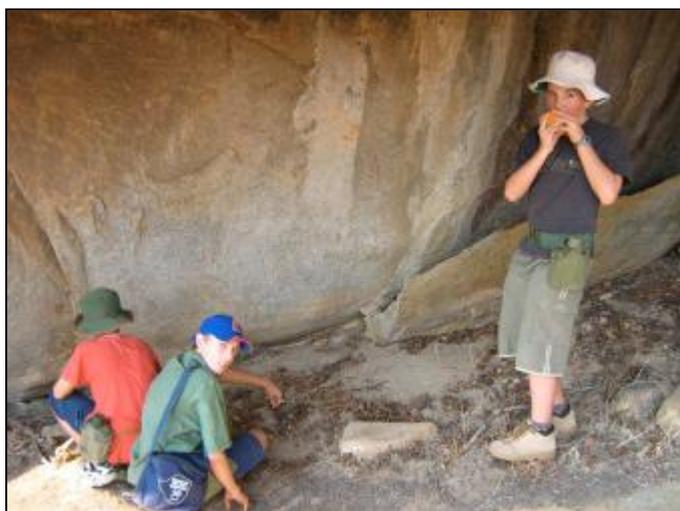
The Silent G.P. Observer.

Nov Hike

2nd – 3rd November 2007

It is a wonder, isn't it, that the Church authorities at Christ the King Church don't erect a shelter for those Scouts who arrive there with expectant faces, bursting packs and unhinged jaws, usually on the first Friday of the month. And this month was no different: as Norm's landy chugged up the driveway of the church, the bevy of excited Scouts were there waiting for him. This month, there were four: Chris, Declan, Dale and myself. The packs were soon loaded, parent's bid farewell to, and the Landover chugged off down the driveway – headed to the Matopos, adventure, fun and excitement.

Tonight, we were headed for Maleme Dam, where we were going to sleep the night, as we were hiking from Pomongwe to Gordon Park, through World's View. The sun glinted through some sparse clouds as we came hurtling down the hair-pin bends leading down into the Maleme valley, and the dam shone golden in the dying light. A suitable place was found to sleep on, with no bumps, sticks, stones or foreign objects to disturb our sleep, and supper was soon bubbling away furiously on the gas stoves. A quick clean up before bedding down under a huge, spreading tree,



Dale, Chris and Declan examining the rock paintings

where we found that not all bumps, sticks, stones and foreign objects had been removed, and a considerable quantity continued to bug us until we drifted off to sleep, the moon riding high above us.

Morning eventually arrived, with all of us hopping up and cooking breakfast, before packing our kit and setting off down the road, whilst Norm sped off in the landie. Climbing up the steep winding road we had zoomed down with such ease the night before, we soon reached the path to Pomongwe Cave, where we found Norm waiting for us. Locking the landie, we all got going down the path, which wound it's way through the dense undergrowth, until we began to climb the kopje itself.

Our first stop was the top, to see the aerial erected to help locate rhino, before making our way to the Cave itself. The museum was locked, and no one was around, so we made do with looking at the cave paintings arrayed in the huge bubble cave. But, time was pressing, and whilst Norm nipped back over the mountain to the landie, and then onto Gordon Park, the rest of us intrepid hikers set off down the vleis to reach World's View, or thereabouts, and from there onto the Park.

Some rain had fallen already this season, and the bush was thick, making hiking a slow process – bundu-bashing every couple of steps. We kept close to the kopje's, where the vegetation was slightly thinner, and so passed the first few kilometres quite quickly. We were meandering our way through the vleis and rivers that form here, heading northwards, to intersect the Circular Drive just before World's View.

The bush being so thick, we neither heard nor saw any game, though at about ten o'clock we came across some cave paintings, marked on the map, which we stopped to look at and explore around. The sun was hot now, but we only had a short way to go.

The last bit of bundu-bashing was really strenuous, as we hit a whole patch of *Strychnos matopoensis*, a creeper growing to 1-2 metres high, with tough branches and spikes. It took quite a bit of pushing and scrambling to get through and out onto a rocky outcrop, from which we could see World's View quite clearly just across the valley.

When we reached the main Circular Drive, we turned right, and began the long solid trek along the road back to the Park. The sun was riding high, and we were quite exhausted by the time we passed the curio sellers, and began the downhill to the Park.

It was a group of rather tired piccanins who finally stumbled into the Park, just before lunchtime. Tired yes – but also excited, proud and very happy.

Leon Wuyts
Patrol Leader

Sausage Sizzle

23rd November 2007

It started with a phone-call. Phone-calls are innocent enough, aren't they? But what Barry and Larry Knight didn't realise was that when the 1st invite themselves round for their termly Sausage Sizzle, casually mentioning both a braai and a little dip in the pool, things don't remain innocent for very long.

The plan of attack was very subtle: no good just assaulting their home with a whole pack full of Scouts, a more delicate modus operandi was called for. First, one arrived, alone and inconspicuous, the decoy if you will. It was the task of this peaceful, law abiding paragon of virtue to distract the Knights, and prepare the braai fires for when the action started.

Unfortunately, the decoy was slightly out of the plan, and so made a number of rather vital faux pas, namely being unable to open the gate – though we suspect a counter-attack on Barry's part. But the cardinal sin was the forgetting of matches, earning looks of intense disapproval from Mr. Knight himself. The matches, when they arrived, were not accompanied by a gallon of fuel, so the fire-lighting was delayed for rather a while, but the fire was at last lit, amid the pall of Barry's harsh gaze.

Things were looking bad, so reinforcements were sent in, in fact, outside help was required. Cue Mr. Sanderson. This secret agent can play the most curious of roles, from absent-minded school-teacher, to fierce disciplinarian, and when the situation arises, can sometimes be found at Gordon Park partaking in the most outrageous pranks. However, the mood tonight was one of decorum, and he was quick to smooth away the frown from Barry's face with the production of an obscure piece of memorabilia. It does pay to come prepared.

Now that Barry's attention had been suitably isolated, the real attack could begin. A rumble sounded as the land-rover chugged up the hill, before a hoot was heard. A hasty hand to open the gate, and the penetration had been effected. The 1st had arrived!

But, what is this? All is quiet in the back, though not absolutely silent. It seems some mischief is afoot, as all the Scouts have been blindfolded, and as they bumble out of the car, peeking around surreptitiously, cries of "where are we?" are heard. They are soon gathered together in a circle, and the Interrogation begins. Quizzed as to where they are, how they got there, the phases of the moon, and the important dates in the life of Abraham Lincoln (all vital Scouting knowledge) it is dismal to see their blank expressions and quizzical looks.

Finally, they are released, and the real fun can begin. They are introduced to their host, who is seen to shake when he stands unsupported, and he thrusts them in the direction of the swimming pool and braai, before heading for the medicinal brandy, whisky, gin and rubbing alcohol.

The braai fire was sizzling nicely, a grid was procured, and the meat was quickly arrayed for flambéing, roasting, scorching and ultimately consuming by a band of ravenous teenagers. The pool turned out to be too great a lure, and even the Decoy was seen to be 'bombing,' spraying water near and far.

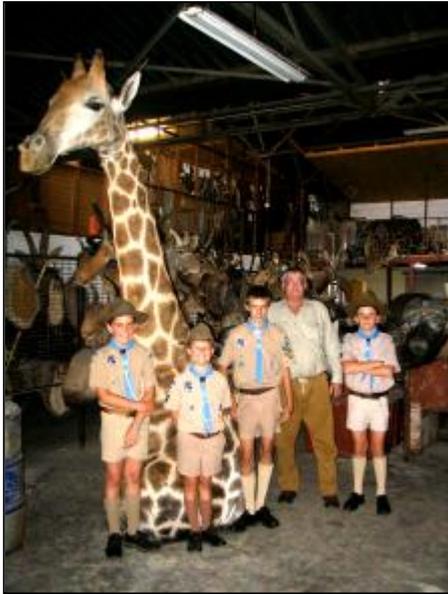


The entire Troop gathers together at the end of the Sausage Sizzle.

With happy conversation round the braai fire as the oldies chatted about this and that, and screams and shouts from the pool as the younger chaps engaged in similar rapport, the night soon passed, and nine o'clock drew close. Barry had since recovered, and had managed to wend his way out to the pool, eager to see us off and call up his insurance brokers.

We expressed our sincere thanks to Barry and his wife Lara for putting up with the noise and disarray, before a final photo by the pool, and a quick clean-up of the braai-place. It wasn't long before the Scouts had clambered into the back of the landy, still chattering furiously, and rumbled down the hill, with Barry and Lara waving goodbye ecstatically. Don't worry, Barry, you can reconnect your phone again: we only have Sausage Sizzle once a term.

The Decoy



Taxidermy Enterprises

Five members of the Troop were joined by Mr Sanderson in a visit to a taxidermy factory in town on Friday 16 November. During the afternoon we were shown the various stages an animal's skin goes through in preparing it to be mounted as a trophy for either a personal home display or for a museum. The most interesting part was the shaping of the mould over which the skin had to be stretched, sewn and touched up with filler before final "painting". The eyes are made of glass and even the tusks of elephant are moulded, but look so realistic. There were all sorts of animals, birds and fish in various stages of preparation.

Our thanks to the staff of Taxidermy Enterprises for allowing us to visit their factory and to Trevor for taking us around.

A visit to the True Heart of Scouting

25th November 2007

To celebrate 100 years of World Scouting, the Matobo Conservation Society decided to hold their Annual General Meeting at Gordon Park. The one day event was scheduled for the Sunday, though Gavin Stephens, the chairman, and several members of his family, came out to the Park on the Saturday night.

To commemorate this event, the Matabeleland Scout Museum was re-installed at the Lodge, albeit briefly, so the first visitors had the delight of viewing the relics of past Scouting years. Soon, a sizeable crowd had gathered, assembling in the Lodge, where the meeting was to be held. The meeting was soon under way, and once all the formalities had been completed, all the speeches read and the meeting finally closed.

It was followed by a short talk by Leon on the rainfall patterns of the Matopos and Gordon Park in particular, with a slideshow to show all the graphs and tables; with thanks to Gavin the loan of his projector. This was followed by a talk by Norman on Scouting in general, and what Scouting achieves in the development of the Boy. To add to this, Norman then showed a movie entitled 'Bush and Boulder Land' detailing the exploits of Lord Baden-Powell in the Matobo Hills during the 1896 Matabele Rebellion. Unfortunately the sound was malfunctioning, so Norm gave us a verbal account.

Once these presentations had been completed, the important business of lunch could begin, and the Conservationists settled down to relax for the rest of the afternoon. Little did they realise that Gordon Park, the Heart of Scouting, is a place of constant action and adventure, and seeing all these people sitting and relaxing makes the Silent G.P. Observer's skin crawl.

And so, when a plucky band of Members marched off to the Skipper Knapman Training Ground, only to return two hours later clinging to each other, gasping for breath and demanding alcohol in vast quantities followed by a swift escape home, the following story came to light.

It seems that an Obstacle Course had been prepared for them. On arrival at the Training Ground, they were swiftly showed through the Course, commencing with an acrobatic feat, to a balancing contest, to a rope challenge, to another balancing performance, to a tyre exploit, to a crawling struggle, ending with a breathtaking wheelbarrow race leading them right back to the beginning so they could do it all over again.

With much arguing over whom was going with whom, they were finally cowed into submission, and began the tortuous journey around the Course, with much hilarity and laughter along the way, not to mention the rampant cheating shown by some rather high-ranking officials within the Society, to be investigated at the next Meeting!

As if this wasn't enough, no sooner had they recovered from their exploits than they were whisked off for a quick 'go' through Piglets, the cave system just behind Headquarters. It wasn't surprising therefore, that the band of plucky Members who left with such bravado beat a hasty retreat into town, abandoning the rest of the Society to leisurely return to civilisation, leaving this wonderful Bush and Boulder Land to the animals and birds, the small rustling noises in the undergrowth, and the silent throb of the True Heart of Scouting.

Leon Wuyts
Patrol Leader

The Centenary Chimanimani Expedition

9th – 15th December 2007

Thanks to Dominic Eames and Ian Harmer, for their sponsorship of two hundred litres of fuel, five Scouts and Norm returned from a fantastic hike in the Chimanimani mountains. Wet, tired, dirty, but bubbling over with excitement following the expedition, especially the three who had never been on an expedition or even to the Chimani's and places we visited enroute. We left Bulawayo on Sunday 9 December at 6.00 pm, it had been a service Sunday at the Park, and headed off for a night stop outside Zvishavane, where we arrived at about 9.30 pm. The journey had to be taken slowly as Norm had only the day before completed over-hauling the motor of his Landy, the station wagon, Ingulungundu. Rebore, new rings, seals etc. Jon had supervised him, slapped him over the knuckles, made him an apprentice to his "garden boy" who was his foreman, and was a great help in seeing that Norm did the job to his satisfaction. Whew, a steep learning curve!

Our journey from Bulawayo took us to Manyuchi dam at the confluence of the Mwenezi and Manyuchi rivers near Rutenga over the most atrocious of roads Africa could provide, raining all the way didn't help. On this section we were held up for some time by a rural bus that had skidded off the muddy road and had effectively blocked it when it had ended up in a ditch. Then through Triangle, Chisimbanje and Tanganda junction. As we were going so slowly, road conditions the biggest cause, we had to spend a second night on the road just past



Anyone for a swim? – Digby's Falls in flood

Tanganda junction. We arrived in the Chimanimani's at 11.00am on the Tuesday and began hiking, taking the Banana Grove route. Tuesday night we slept in a small cave adjacent to Terry's cave. It rained all night, causing the Bundi river to come down in flood which we had crossed to get to our cave, and now we were trapped on the wrong side of the river. We had no option but to hike up stream for about five kilometres over some difficult terrain to a crossing place Norm knew of. He had used the some 'path' eighteen years ago when he took Father Odilo and Mrs Moloney on a hike, because the river had flooded on that hike. It was still raining lightly and in the course of crossing one of the many raging streams he fell in drowning both his cameras and cell phone, not to mention his dignity. After a few days of drying out, his cell phone and print camera, him included, have come back to life, but his digital camera has not.



The Lundi River in full flood – the old low-level bridge across

Having got safely over the still raging Bundi river via "The Bridge", a natural crossing where the river goes through an underground tunnel to emerge as Digby's Falls, which by the evidence of debris had also been under water by four metres, we made camp in Fisherman's cave. This cave is next to a ten metre high waterfall, at the head of the Bundi plain. During the night another heavy storm caused the Bundi to flood even higher. The waterfall was a spectacular sight.

Although a heavy mist came in, the rain had stopped during the night, so we decided to take a very steep and dangerous route down out of the mountains, Hadange route, to the Outward Bound School. It was a slow cautious decent, fortunately we made it safely and were at the school for lunch and a much appreciated hot shower.

Having had lunch and a swim in Tessa's pool we headed for Chipinge and then proceeded to a campsite in the Chirinda forest for our night stop. A really spectacular campsite in the heart of the rain forest. A fantastic blue sky greeted us at dawn, which allowed an early morning start to see the "Big Tree", the tallest tree in the country, a *Khaya nyasica* standing at 65 metres and estimated to be at least 1500 if not 2000 years old. Then off to Lake Mutirikwi, via Birchenough Bridge, where we slept the night in the campsite of "Inns on Zimbabwe". Another fantastic morning allowed us to visit the wall of the dam and the little twelve seat chapel, followed by two hours exploring Great Zimbabwe, before heading for home. Three more stops were made, one at the Italian Chapel outside Masvingo, the Kongesi ruins near Filabusi and Filabusi war memorial of 1896. We arrived in Bulies at 6.15 pm on Saturday 18 December 2007.

In the seven days we were away we travelled 1530 kilometres, used 210 litres of fuel, had hiked for 35 kilometres in the mountains and had seen some of the most spectacular scenery that Zimbabwe has to offer. This not to mention places of natural and historical interest and seeing a rare sight, every stream from the smallest to the great Save river were in full spate. All this was made possible by the donation of fuel, for which we all Thank You most sincerely. Also, we Thank Jon for his time and expertise in ensuring that "Ingulungundu" was fit for the journey, a journey that was trouble free. All in all, an expedition made possible through a team effort.

Leon Wuyts, Christopher MacKenzie, Dale van Aarde,
Brendon Judge, Declan FitzPatrick and Norman Scott



1st Bulawayo (Pioneer) Scout Troop

Troop Programme of Activities for January to April 2008

January

1	New Year's Day
4 – 5	Monthly Hike
11	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
13	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
14	Schools open
18	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
25	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

February

1 – 2	Monthly Hike
8	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
9 – 10	Parent's Camp: Gordon Park
10	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
15	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
23 – 24	B-P Camp: Gordon Park
29	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

March

7 – 8	Monthly Hike
9	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
14	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene: Sausage Sizzle
17	Schools close
21 – 24	Easter
27	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

April

4 – 5	Monthly Hike
11	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
13	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
18	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
25	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

Additional Activities may be added to the Programme