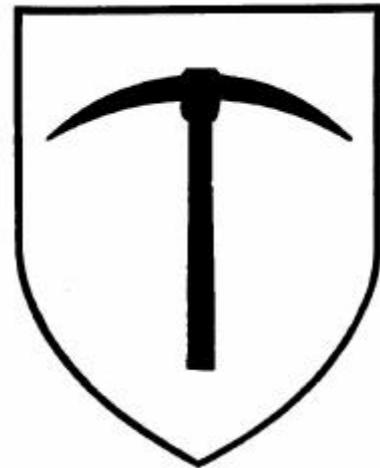


**Jan - Apr
2003**

**PIONEER
TRAIL**



**Meeting
Mabukuwene Nature Reserve
Fridays 19:00 - 21:00 hrs**

**Scout Leader
Norman Scott
P O Box 129, Bulawayo**

1st BULAWAYO (PIONEER) SCOUT GROUP

UNDER THE PSEUDOLACHNOSTYLIS MAPROUNEIFOLIA

Some weeks ago whilst I was at Gordon Park, it started to rain so I made my way to Headquarters and watched the storm break. Brilliant bolts of lightening flashed followed by heavy cracks of thunder which rolled and echoed amongst the hills. The rain literally poured down, pounding the trees, rocks and earth, running off in ever growing rivulets draining into dongas which in turn fed into the Mtshелеle river. It was exciting, no exhilarating sitting under the shelter by the outdoor stove. And then the storm blew past onward to the north and before long the sun came out. What a marvellous sight revealed itself. The trees now a brilliant fresh green were dripping with water which glistened in the sun. The lichens on the rocks having been freshly washed looked so vivid as the sun started the long drying out process and even the ground was a richer colour due to its wetness and as the rushing waters subsided only water in the shallow depressions remained awhile. All this against the backdrop of dark menacing clouds, lit up by flashes of lightening away to the north and east beyond Shumbashaba, which by now was bathed in an ethereal light making it somehow look more majestic as it stood guard over the Mtshелеle vlei.

The rain having stopped, I decided to wander around the park to enjoy the freshness and as I did so, I thought how fortunate we are in having the Matopos on our doorstep, so readily available to us. It is a place of tranquility for the camper, fisherman and photographer, yet provides a good and safe challenge for the hiker, climber and explorer - whatever, it revives the spirit and consoles the soul.

As I wandered around, I meditated on the hikes our Scouts undertake each month in these hills and I could not help chuckling about the last two, February and March, in particular. We had underestimated the distances involved (or was that on purpose, so we could stay longer in the hills ?). The results however were well worth it for we were so proud of completing those additional kilometres, one hike in scorching heat, and one hike in the middle of Cyclone Japhet (which resulted in us being drenched throughout the night and having to wade at times chest deep through swollen rivers - notably the Tuli and Mazhowe - along the hike route). Then there was the new territory that we are now familiar with and the knowledge that we could push ourselves physically if the need ever arose. Sore feet, sore legs, sore back - but hey, that is what memories are made of and the basis of stories to tell in the years to come. I think I had better recondition my ear muffs for the stories are bound to grow into real whoppers.

That evening, I was alone at Gordon Park, for I go out during the week when everybody else is either at work or at school, to undertake some chore such as maintenance of equipment and buildings, checking and packing of kit used on training courses, pumping water into storage tanks, or just to enjoy the solitude of the hills. So the evenings next to the cooking fire are quiet, but I am not alone but for my faithful mongrel Emma is with me, but it is quiet save for the night sounds of the bush.



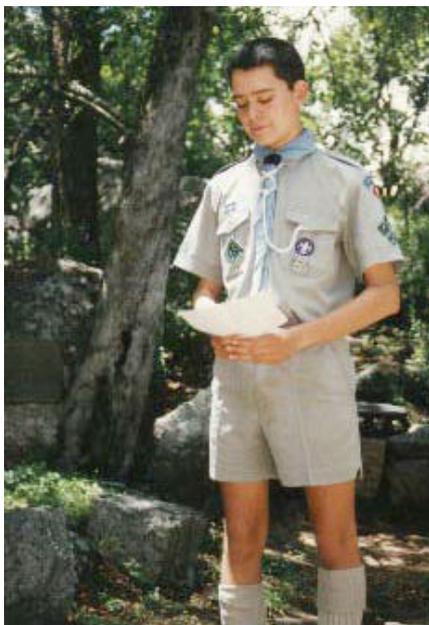
Space Men ? No, just the Troop helping to move a beehive to Joe's house (that's Joe popping up, out the hive).

Earlier in the afternoon I had picked up a book off the floor of the lounge in the Stables and I had unconsciously taken it to the shelter by the fire when the storm broke. I now picked it up and was surprised by the title “The Gentle Art of Tramping”. Surprised ? Well, Maurice Hutton (one of our Scouts who now lives in New Zealand) had written to say that he was considering joining a Tramping Club or, as we would call it, a Hiking Club. And now the word “tramping” came up again.

The book was one of a series published by the Scout Book Club in England around 1938. The coincidence of this particular book having fallen from the bookshelf onto the floor and my picking it up on that particular day was quite amazing, considering that I had been thinking of our Troop hikes and camps that very afternoon. The difference only lay in the duration and scope of the journeys, for the book told of hikes across countries and continents, and what kit to take from boots to knapsack and all about routes and the foods to be enjoyed. All very interesting but the one chapter entitled “Emblems of Tramping” was more philosophical and I thought being applicable to hiking in general, I should share this one chapter with you and so it appears in this edition.

Still on the same theme of hiking, I take this opportunity of congratulating Maurice Hutton on winning the *2002 Mike George Hike Project*. I read Maurice’s logbook which I found to be to a high standard, interesting to read and full of detail some in humorous vein. He will certainly treasure his work in years to come.. Excerpts of his logbook are reproduced in this edition of Pioneer Trail.

Our Parents’ Camp this last term only attracted two families but nevertheless was most enjoyable. Apart from getting families into camp for two days as a social gathering, this camp had a particular project; to move a metal hut from the troop’s previous campsite of several years ago to our present site. As Bill Rose has written about the camp all I would like to add are my congratulations to Mark Perry on his appointment as Patrol Leader of Eagle Patrol following Maurice’s departure, and to Joseph Rose on his appointment as Assistant Patrol Leader. In addition, both received their Ambulance badges after 9 months of training initially by attending a first aid course conducted by MARS (Medical Air Rescue Service) and then practicing at Troop meetings. Well done to you both for persevering for so long on what is potentially the most useful and important badge you will gain in Scouting and which is also a requirement for the Sable Award. Jonathan de Jong, although not on the camp, received his Camp Cook badge, which he had completed a few weeks earlier. Well done.



And now until the next time, it is back to my hammock beneath my favourite *Pseudolachnostylis Maprouenofolia* with a floppy hat pulled over my eyes as I contemplate our future adventures, explorations and magical campfires in the Matobo Hills.

Norman Scott
Scout Leader

Patrol Leader Mark Perry giving his sermon in St. George’s chapel, Gordon Park during the Scout’s Own he conducted as one of the monthly church services held in Gordon Park.

Chimanimani Ramble 2003

02.01.03

Thursday

We met at Joe's house at 7.00 on Thursday morning, packed all our bags and the food onto the landy and left around 8.00. It was a lovely, clear, bright morning in Bulawayo, going to overcast in the afternoon towards the Chimanimanis. We passed through Zvishavane and Masvingo, stopping to get cokes and new fan belts for the Landy there. We were shocked to find that one 5mm bigger than the first was \$3000 cheaper! To pass the time which seemed to drag on endlessly, we tied plastic bags to the end of the line on Paul's fishing rod which he takes with him wherever he goes, and flew them out the back of the landy. As there were four of us and the fuel tank took up lots of space in the back of the short wheel base Land Rover, we alternated sitting positions - three in the back and one in the front, usually the one to get some sleep, as we were all tired from the new year's festivities. When we were nearing the Eastern Highlands the bag-flying was a whole lot more fun, because of the sharp hairpin bends where the bags would veer off the road and get caught in the trees. When we got to the village of Chimanimani a friendly postman helped us find our way to one of Norm's old scout's place. Viewing the house, Paul spotted a fish tank through an open curtain, so he immediately asked to see it. It was of moderate length, in a lovely wooden case which included a light. It had a nice variety of fish in it but was spoilt by the fake plants in it. Havelock and his wife Melanie were very hospitable and we slept on their lawn seeing as they lived in a small double storey house with only two rooms on the ground floor.



Stuart McNeilage, son of Havelock and Melanie, joins us for our team photo' on Mrs Bailey's lawn, Dombera Fram, Chimanimani.

03.01.03

Friday

After breakfast (of oats) where we met Havelock's friendly son Stuart who woke us bright and early, we left the little village, after stocking up with fresh apples from the farm Melanie works on, at 8.00 to base camp which we left at 9.00 after meeting the donkeys and hopping on for a quick ride, and the hike began. The weather was fine and we hiked cheerfully up Banana Grove, stopping in at Photy Halt for photos and a rest after the tiresome climb as usual. We then took the lower path which was rather flat, short and easy, across planes directly to Terry's cave which was at the top of an awful climb straight after crossing the Bundi river, where we had lunch of my mum's delicious pizzas. That afternoon we left our bags with Norm at Terry's and swam down the Bundi to Southern Lakes. Just floating downstream checking out the underwater scenery with goggles on was great and Paul being a real fish fanatic went ecstatic when he discovered that there are actually fish in the Bundi - small catfish that look a lot like squeakers. What was wonderful was the fact that we could just drink whenever we wanted, and the Chimanimani water is so clean, fresh and delicious. In Southern Lakes, which are gigantic, dark pools which give you the shivers just swimming over them and feeling the fathomless depth underneath you, we all dove down in a group as deep as we could go which was absolutely terrifying because all you saw was the other guys and blackness. When the afternoon was wearing away we got out and ran back along the path taking full advantage of the fact that there was hardly anyone else in the mountains and whooping with joy and enjoying ourselves loudly. After a lovely warm supper with the rain patting outside we had a reasonably warm night.

04.01.02.

Saturday

We left Terry's cave at about 8.00 to a beautiful morning with diamond studded grass on either side of the path on the west side of the Bundi. Paul and Gumbee were being road hogs and Gumbee was racing on ahead and before he knew it he had lost the path, dragging us all down with him. So we had about an hour of tough bundu-bashing through steep, rocky terrain before Norm came to the rescue and found us the path again just before it went through a pass to join the Binga path. As soon as we were back on a smooth, wide path Gumbee raced on ahead and sure enough in no time he had baled over, wheels up. We had lunch at a nice shady spot at the bottom of the steep, daunting pass to Hidden Valley, which turned out terribly tiresome. Before proceeding we hid our bags and headed off up the steep pass into the beautiful hidden valley where we stopped once more for a quick, freezing swim before tackling the massive Binga/Kweza, the highest peak in the Chimanimani range which was awful even without bags. At the top our heads were in the clouds so we could see hardly anything below us. It was quite an experience being up in the clouds, because it was cold and damp, and we could see the wisps of cloud rushing towards us and engulfing us. The climb down was perilously steep and had to be taken slowly, well at least I thought so. The others seemed to have a different attitude! .but when we looked back from the Hidden Valley we saw a magnificent arc rainbow in the drizzle. After that we found our bags again and hiked east to the Bundi plain where we were caught in the rain just before we got to North Cave at sunset. That night it drizzled again so we were grateful for our warm supper. I didn't sleep well that night because Paul kept elbowing me.



Having lost the path, Gumbee is demoted from pathfinder to second place. Joe leads as we head for the Bundi plain.

05.01.03

Sunday

We slept in, and left North Cave around 9.00 after a quick swim under the waterfall, crossed the Bundi plain to the hut where we saw our first people in the Chimanimanis, and our last view of the Bundi plain with Binga and the other mountains behind it. Then down the steep, treacherous Bailey's folly especially treacherous if you were, like us, unfortunate enough to have Paul in the lead frequently losing the path. We got down at 11.00 to rest our weary and aching feet after an adventurous climb down Bailey's Folly and I got to drive to Tessa's pool where we all jumped off the 5metre jump. We got back to Havelock's place late -about 1.15- and cooked lunch. We then went to play at two tiny muddy dams where there was a foofy slide where we had competitions as to who could go furthest without hitting the water, and Paul caught plenty bream (so the rod did come in useful!). We then went and saw the farm where Melanie works, it was called Dombera and it produced flowers and fruit for export. The farm was really interesting because on it they grew special hybridized flowers which require a licence to grow and sell and apparently only five farms in the world grow them, they are called Super Nova's and they look a bit like thistles with elongated, iridescent blue flowers. These flowers are sent to the farm from Holland in test tubes and they need a certain amount of light each day, so they have lights over all their fields. We then went to visit the owner's mum Mrs Bailey, the wife of Mr Bailey who made Bailey's Folly. We stayed there until sunset and she invited us to stay in their guest house next time we came. We then went 'home' and cooked the bream etc for supper, had a late bath and then I slept in the hammock - not very well !

We slept in late again and packed up after a breakfast of oats. Paul had a nice big bowl of oats which Joe had so diligently cooked and he covered it with fine, white sugar whilst we all watched inquisitively, Paul not noticing us. As we all watched eagerly, in suspense, he took the first bite and as he chewed, we watched amused, his facial expression changed from delighted and self-satisfied to anguished and disgust. He had added salt, not sugar! Then we left at around 9.00 to collect some apples and peaches from the cold room at Dombera, which was about four degrees Celcius, after the warm morning air so we couldn't stay in for long, before leaving to Bulawayo through Birchenough, Masvingo and Zvishavane. A while after passing skyline junction we visited Thomas Moody's grave which, we were delighted to see, was being nicely kept up which was a change from previous years. After that I got the front seat in the landy and slept well, after my two bad night's sleep, all the way to just before Birchenough bridge, where we stopped because the tread on the tyre had come off. We had lunch by a river near Masvingo and Paul was urging to go fish in the river but Norm didn't allow him. We then visited the beautiful St. Francis church built by the Italian prisoners of war, surprisingly it was really well kept up and there was very good service. When we rang the bell someone came immediately. We got back to Bulawayo at 7.00 and my dad had mistakenly locked the gate so I had to climb over and get the keys. The flowers which I had collected for my mum from Dombera were very wilted but she still liked them.

Mark



The Long, Hot Hike

On Friday we left Bulawayo at about 16.30hrs, for what was supposedly a 20km hike. After a peaceful drive out to Mtshelele dam via Gordon Park, Paul and I headed off to try and do some fishing before the sun dipped below the horizon. Five minutes later, we came back complaining about the poor light and that we didn't arrive early enough. We settled down for the night, choosing our sleeping spots and getting a fire going before having a beautiful meal which had been precooked by Mrs Carlsson, Paul's mother. After that we nipped down to the ablution block to have a quick shower. When we got back we all huddled up in our sleeping bags and eventually after seeing so many amazing shooting stars, dropped off to sleep.

The next morning we woke up bright and early and wolfed down a good breakfast before packing up and heading off on our hike. Mr Perry hiked with us and he managed to keep us on our toes throughout the day, telling us the names of many trees such as the Kirkia Acuminata, Strychnos Spinosa, Pseudolachnostylis Maprouenofolia and the Pterocarpus Rotundifolia. We also learned about and saw Dolorite and Quartzite intrusions in the Granite rocks. We walked along the Mtshelele river before cutting across onto one of Norm's famous bush tracks that Mark, Joe and Maurice had cleared up a few weeks earlier. We continued our hike and managed to get to Inanke

cave almost on schedule, at about midday, only to find that the predicted 21km hike was now going to be closer to 30km and that the 14km we had already hiked was only halfway. Mark, Paul and I managed to find some water on Inanke and all were drenched by the time Norm and Mr Perry had recovered from the morning escapade.



Rest stop - Toghwana dam area

We then climbed over the top of Inanke and headed off towards Shumbashabe following a straight line almost all the way there, cutting through the communal lands. Joe and I managed to keep Norm going with many projectiles aimed in his direction - Norm made a poor attempt at retaliation. We crossed over the National Park boundary fence before Shumbashaba and then had to cross over a river which we did over a natural bridge; a huge cylindrical rock which had fallen.

Gordon Park was now in sight and we were all psyched up by the promise of cold cokes ahead and fairly flew the last portion of the hike across the vlei and towards Headquarters. All in all, it was a most enjoyable, although tiring, hike. We all have to say thank you to Mr Perry for telling us about the trees and rocks and are all very proud to have completed what must have been one of our most difficult hikes to date.

Gumbee



The Cold, Wet Hike

As we were travelling to our hike area, we saw the most amazing sunset. There was a magnificent array of colours - the brilliant sunset gave us a reassuring feeling for there were massive grey clouds forming on the horizon.

We arrived at our campsite just after sundown and said goodbye to Mr Perry who was going to take the Landy back to Bulawayo and pick us up at our destination, Toghwana dam, the following day. By this time we had an exceptionally great dinner, cooked beforehand by Mrs de Jong. Feeling satisfied we set up a bivvie and went to sleep. During the night we all got drenched as there was light rain and drizzle on and off all through the night.

After waking up we had breakfast and packed up our things and started the hike. The vegetation was all green and full of life. There were many little rivulets riddling the landscape and we had to cross a river that was not very deep but had a very swift current. We saw a side of the Matopos not many town people get to see.

We came across many rural people who were very happy with this rain which brought long awaited relief and all were very happy and welcoming. As Norm didn't know where we were, we were very lucky to meet a person who willingly led us to the Tuli river nearby. He was supposed to lead us to a particular gap in the Tuli valley but instead led us a few kilometres too far south. The Tuli river was quite deep, coming up to my waist and was fast flowing - it was quite an experience crossing this deep river. We all crossed safely and walked northwards upriver for a little while until we found the gap in the mountains.



Where did this river come from ? It wasn't here when we set up camp.



Sun, glorious sun. At the end of the day5, at the end of our hike, the sun came out to warm our cold bodies

After hiking for a little while away from the Tuli river, we had lunch which we ate quickly as we were all ravenous. We said goodbye to our friend who had helped us find our way down into the Tuli river gorge. Having had our lunch, we headed towards Inanke cave and when we arrived just below the cave we met Mr Perry. We also got some welcome sunlight, the first all day as it had continued to drizzle until lunchtime. After taking a little break, we pushed towards Toghwana dam which we soon reached. After a cup of tea or coffee with rusks, which Mr Perry had brought with him, we left to go back to Bulawayo.

This hike was an amazing experience - thanks Norm.

Paul

The Mike George Hike Project

Patrol Leader Maurice Hutton entered The Mike George Hike Project and was the winner for 2002. Below are excerpts from his logbook. The hike which had to total at least 80km, could be done as separate hikes, each of not less than 20km with an overnight camp. Maurice chose three of the hikes to be completed during the year for his logbook. The January hike in the Chimanimani mountains was of three days duration and 40km in distance. The March and July hikes were completed in the Matopos; both were overnight and 24km and 21km in length respectively.

Chimanimani Hike - January 2002

..... by 07.30hrs we were on the road racing along in Norm's Landy "Nguluvane" to the east. All the canvas sides were rolled up, so the wind blew in our faces and refreshed us for adventure. We passed by rolling hills and plains of massive expanse, yellow as corn. Occasionally we drove through road side villages (now you see it, now you don't) such as Balla Balla, Filabusi and Shabani.

..... everywhere dusty children, old men that looked as if they'd been carved out of wood, cheerful women carrying babies like satchels on their backs and proud boys driving donkey carts waving out of friendliness and shouted a greeting. When we replied or waved, half of them became ecstatic.

..... it was 17.45hrs when we finally bumbled up the red earth road to base camp. The mountains towered up majestically before us. The air, laced with mist and the smell of lichen filled my lungs. Ever since Silverstream the sensation had been building up and had now reached its climax. A pang for adventure boiled up inside me, a tremendous urge to hike off into the mountains. Not now, time to sort out supper instead.

..... Norm's helpless attempts to take control of the situation were quite amusing:

"Joe, stop fooling around";

"Maurice, get down from there!"

"Mark, go and get some water from the ablutions!"

"No, Paul, you may NOT go fishing"

"Whose katunda is this lying all over the place ?"

"Chappies, it's time to sort your lives out"

"Now why isn't this darn cooker lit"

etc, etc

..... The next day we packed our soggy kit tightly into our rucksacks having divided our food, trying to be as economical as possible without actually starving. We found our bags to still be quite heavy. Oh well, we're "rugged pixies" so we started off on the trail.

.... Usual chaotic breakfast, but soon we were on our way. It was about 10.00hrs, because we had spent the whole morning swimming in a MASSIVE waterfall nearby. We carried on northwards to North cave at Digby's Falls where we had lunch. We then swam for about half an hour, finally succeeding in the ultimate challenge to swim right up to the falls - this was much trickier than it sounds because they were so strong.

..... Then came the long walk down. It was sad to be leaving the mountains. Peza's grassy peak, haloed by cloud stood, magnificent on our right. We rested under some flat topped Msasa's at the top of the Slave Trail, then began our descent down the treacherous trail. It was a knee breaking walk and we were relieved when we reached the forest a hour or so later.

..... I had left there a week beforehand with a sore throat and returned home healthier than ever. The Chimanimani air had done the trick. My parents came to pick me up. I said bye to Norm and then went home and toddled inside, clutching my bottle of Chimanimani water (very precious).

Chiming Rocks, Matopos March 2001

..... The road was rough and very overgrown. At 19.45hrs we reached the point where the river crossed the road - here we were dropped off with our food and kit. Having divided the food amongst ourselves, we shouldered our packs and waded across the river. On the other side, we put on our shoes and set off at a brisk pace.

..... It was a clear night, the sky speckled with stars. I was relieved to get out of the hectic town and breathe the fresh Matopos air again. The Southern Cross lay directly in front of us, therefore we were heading south east.

..... The moon finally came out at 21.00hrs. It was a fiery orange ball on the horizon and we watched it rising above the gigantic gomos and listened to the night sounds. Within 5 minutes, it was up in the sky, lighting our way and reducing the fumbling, mumbling and grumbling !

..... Michael hit the sack, in ten seconds he was asleep and slept like a log. Joe, Norm and I did not have such good fortune. The moon blinded us and the mosquito's whining and biting never ceased.. By midnight I could stand it no longer and moved to a completely different spot. Norman complained about the heat and Joe spent most of the night awake, lighting fires or skipping across the rocks. Michael, lucky him, slept on in bliss.

..... A backtrack of 2km brought us to the top of the escarpment. We turned off to the north east through thick bush. The distance from that point, Zvimbi, to the Maleme river was only about a km on the map, but it took us a while with the high grass.

Mtshелеle, Matopos July 2002

..... It was about 19.00hrs by the time we'd found a suitable campsite and got a fire going. Luckily we had pizza, generously given to us by Michael's mom which didn't need cooking, just a bit of warming up.

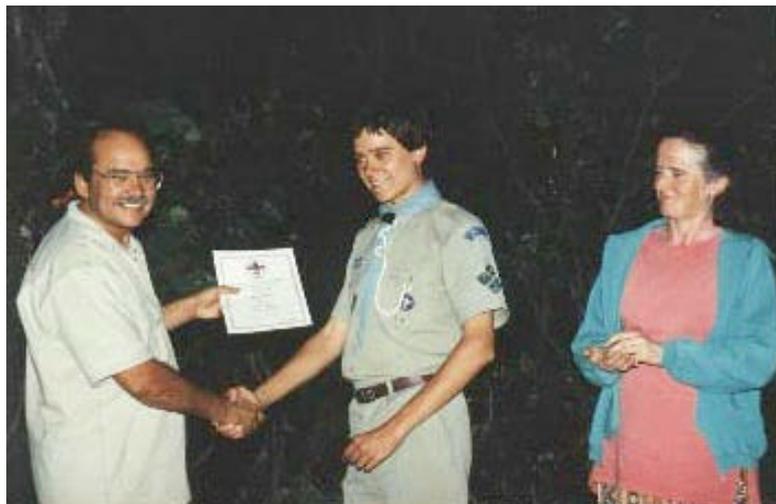
..... At the end of the valley there was a sort of vlei, where we found a protruding rock and had breakfast. It was a warm and cloudless day. we got onto the topic of bungee jumping, wondering if we would be able to do it on our upcoming trip to Victoria Falls.

.....We turned south east along an old bundu-bash Land Rover track which hadn't been used for twenty years. It was stunningly beautiful and ran between Mt. Gulungudza and Mt. Bena - the scenery never stopped changing.

..... The last stretch of the hike was covered in aloes and trees full of indigenous orchids. We came over the back of Shumbashaba on the left side and descended onto the vlei we reached Gordon Park with hardly anytime left to do anything. I was finished.

Maurice's logbook contains maps and photographs of the hikes as well as an account of the troop's Victoria Falls excursion. And this is what winning logbooks are made of.

Congratulations, Maurice, on winning the 2002 Mike George Hike Project.



Mark Perry receives his Patrol Leader's stripes from his father, whilst his mother looks on - Parents' Camp, 15 - 16 February 2003.



EMBLEMS OF TRAMPING

The fire is the altar of the open-air life. Its wandering smokes go upward like men's thoughts; its sparks are like human lives. The coffee pot is the emblem of conviviality. The rough hewn staff, the tramp's third leg, is the emblem of his will to jog on. The knapsack, like Pilgrim's burden, is the confession of mortality, and of the load which every son of Adam carried on his shoulders. Every door and gate which he sees means the *way out*, not the way in. There are three emblems of life: the first is the open road, the second is the river, and the third is the wilderness. The road is the simplest of these emblems - with its milestones for years, its direction posts to show you the way, its inns for feasting, its churches for prayer, its crossroads of destiny, its happy corners of love and meeting, its sad ones of bereavement and farewell its backward vista of memory, its forward one of hope.

Life certainly is like a road, or a network of roads like a highway for some, like a pleasant country road for others, like a crooked lane for some, like a path that bends back to its beginnings for most. There is the narrow way of the Puritans, a passage between walls of righteousness there is the broad way of the Epicureans, so broad they mistake the breadth for the length and lose themselves on it. But, broad or narrow, the road seems inadequate as an emblem of the tramping life. There shall be roads in our life but our life shall not be always in roads. The road smacks rather of duty and purpose, of utility, and of "getting there". Our penchant is to get off the road. I do not care to link tramping with utility. It may be good for the physical health, but that shall not be its object; it may be good for broadening the mind and deepening the sources of pleasure, but these are not the goal. Tramping is a straying from the obvious. Even the crookedest road is sometimes too straight. You learn that it is artificial, that originally it was not made for mere tramping. Roads were made for armies and then for slaves and labourers, and for transport. Few have been made for pleasure.

But was life merely meant for pleasure. Perhaps not. But it was meant for happiness or for the quest of happiness. You are more likely to meet your enemies, if you have any, upon the road than off it. But then also you are more likely to meet friends there, too. You may seek your friends with success on the road. And if you wish counsel they are there to help you.

Life is like a road," says a Kirghiz proverb. If you go astray it is not your enemies who will show you the way, but your friends."

Still, where the Kirgliiz live, in Central Asia, there are few roads and you cannot go astray on them. The proverb must refer to mountain tracks. Life is like a mountain track." Yes, that is better. Let the mountain track be our first emblem of life.

For the Sokols and the Scouts, the roads shall mean much more, because their lives are auxiliary to military efficiency. They learn to be ready to resist an enemy of their homeland. A good scout becomes a good volunteer soldier, a good route marcher. But scout and sokol are transitional. The scout movement is like a tug to take an oceangoing ship out of harbour. There comes a point when the ship can make its destiny under its own steam. The scout and guide movement helps boys and girls out of the rut of village life, starts them moving, and once set going, many of them keep moving all their lives and never once stagnate. On the roads that lead out into the great world they march in their companies, with scoutmasters and commanders. Then the road is a glorious symbol of freedom and life.

The second emblem is the river, which, clear and innocent, finds the easiest and most charming way from birth to eternity. We were born on an invisible river which keeps gliding and singing and filling and flowing. We do not know where we go, but we know we are on the stream. We do not always perceive the movement, but we observe that the landscape has changed.

So when we look on a river we are affected by its hidden relationship to our own life. The river interprets our mood. The road suggests God as a taskmaster who would have us work the river suggests Him as a poet who would have us live in poetry. The Creator must be a poet - not a General or a Judge or a Master Builder; there is so much of pure poetry in His creation. The river, like a child's definition of a parable, is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

When we look on a river with a poet's eyes we see in it die reflection of an invisible river, the river of Time, the river of man's Life, the river of Eternity: 'Man may come and man may go, but I go on for ever'.

There is a strange and wonderful vigilance about the river which rolls past us where we sleep in the grass, murmuring and calling the whole night long, something of the vigilance of the starry sky. You sleep but an eternal sleepless sentry paces by all the while. Then in the morning, when we bathe in the river, we are our own john the Baptists, out in the wilderness, baptizing ourselves with water, and saying "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Turn away from the road for Heaven is near by." And we eat that wild honey of the wilderness, which the prophet ate when his baptizing was done.

When we wash in the stream we are washing ourselves with life. When we swim in the stream, especially against the stream, we are joying the heart of an unseen Mother who takes pride in us all, knowing that, although we must at last flow out with the stream, we can triumph over it for moments. And, drinking from the stream, we partake of the water which flows from the mountain of God - Nature's communion cup.

The third emblem of life is the wilderness - that place to which wise men and poets and saints are driven in the last resort. "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods," wrote Byron. There is society where none intrudes." The wilderness tells you more, when you are attuned to it. That is seldom the experience of the tramp on his first long divagation from the beaten track. The wilderness tires him, the forests blind him the mountains wear him down, the endless plain rises under him and he smites his feet.

But there comes a point when there is a symmetry even in the wildest disarray of Nature when man's symmetry of parks and garden cities and roads and rides is a poor joke, a strange aberration of the human mind. The universe is a most complicated lock with innumerable wards and windings and combination numbers. If the starry sky at night is a lock - you would say there is no key in the world to fit it. No key in the world truly - but in the human heart somewhere there is a wonderful key. "Have I not in my bosom a key called 'Promise'" said Pilgrim. When you find that key you can plunge it into the cunning aperture of Nature or Night. But you must know the combination numbers, and even then it will not turn if you do not first sing a verse of the Song of the Heart.

Quite a fairy tale even so Life is a fairy tale, one of a series, like the *Arabian Nights*. And if it is a fairy tale rather than what Darwin and Herbert Spencer and Einstein have averred, how much more important to us all the fairy tale becomes. Fairy tales are begun in the midst of woods, in strange, forgotten glades, and at moments between dawn and the morning, and sunset and night.

"Fairy tales", wrote Novalis are dreams of our homeland - which is everywhere and nowhere." And to be everywhere and nowhere at the same time means to be in the wilds, and preferably quite lost. The absolute tramp, whom, I may say, I have never met, is a man with no address, no card, no reliable passport, no recognizable fingerprints. But of course he is no ape-man, no Tarzan, or son of Tarzan. Choice, not accident, leads him to the wilds. The starry sky is the emblem of home, the highest roof in the universe. The sun is the mind. by whose light man seeks his way; the moon is the reflection of the mind on the heart, and is the emblem of melancholy and poetry.

However, of all these emblems, the coffee pot is apt to be the most real and vital. You will be on your knees morning and evening before your altar fire, abasing your brow and blowing the flames which are beneath it. Sun, moon, forest, river, road - these pass, hut the coffee pot remains. It is so in life generally, and the tramp, however much a poet he may be, is a mortal like the rest of us. The moon may be hidden by a cloud, but that is not nearly so calamitous as having left the coffee pot at the last camping place.

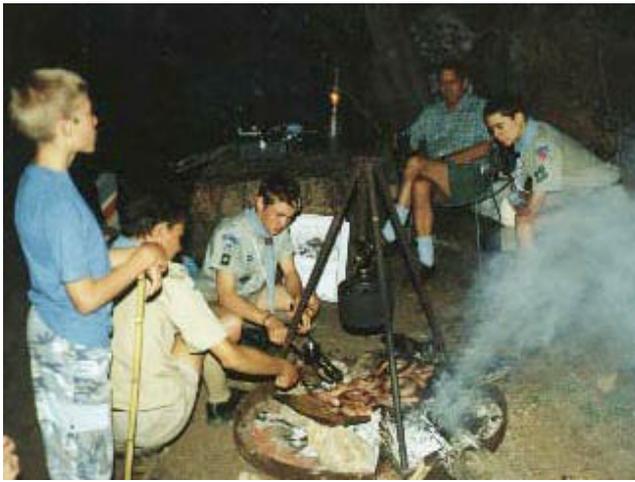
The Gentle Art of Tramping, Stephen GRAHAM, The Scout Book Club c1938



The Sausage Sizzle

Mark, Paul, Gumbee, Michael and myself, together with a few of his friends including Carl met at my house at about 18.50hrs in the evening. After we had squashed ourselves into the Landy, Norm told us to blindfold ourselves with our scarves - this was part of the little surprise he had in store for us. Our job was to try and keep track of where we were going despite all his lame efforts to disorientate us with his three sixties and detours.

We would all suggest our possible location which was easier for me because I knew the area so well, although I did have some difficulty in remembering the road names especially Weir Avenue. When we finally got to our destination, Mark and I both suggested it to be Martin Sanderson's house. I thought to myself, "If I walk a few metres in a straight line, I should bump into a car or some old collector's item which would prove to me that this was Martin's house". This I did and guess what - three or so metres in one direction and BUMP! I had walked into something big, which after much feeling around turned out to be the large front of a bus. I knew it was a bus because I often ride past it on my bicycle - I even know the colour, blue, no, I couldn't feel it, I just knew from seeing it over the garden wall.



Martin Sanderson wondering how Joe ever managed to gain his Cook's badge.

We were then arranged so that Mark (the Patrol Leader) and I (the Assistant Patrol Leader) were on either end of the line. We were then all given bits of bamboo which joined all the people in the line sort of like how young baby mice hold onto their mother's tail. Well, in this case Mark was the mother mouse and I was the last baby mouse with all the rest between us. Then we were led up a flight of stairs and some very overgrown paths, that's if I was on the path, through rocks and what to me felt like a cactus plantation, all this still blindfolded by something which I thought was to be worn around your neck, not your eyes. Finally after what seemed like a hike through hell, we were allowed to remove our blindfolds. Yes, we were at Martin's house, which was proven by the presence of Martin himself, much to the embarrassment of some of us who had been uttering rude remarks about him (not me).

After everyone had adjusted their eyes to the blinding light of the stars, we lit a fire. While it was burning down we all climbed onto a large rock from where we could see an almost three hundred and sixty degree view of Bulawayo. We climbed down and started sorting things out for our supper and spent quite a long time just chatting to each other, drinking cokes and what not, until the fire had burnt down enough for us to start cooking our sausages. While we were tending our dinner, Norm who obviously has no idea of how expensive cell 'phone calls are, decided to call Maurice in New Zealand. When he had got through, he handed the 'phone to me. After telling me about New Zealand life, paying particular attention to the word "chicks", I then handed the 'phone to Mark. While everyone was chatting to Maurice, we all seemed to forget our food so that when we finally ended the call we returned to what were quite well done, slightly charred, oddly shaped sausages. Seeing that our supper was ready we ate and drank all in good humour with Norman criticising Maurice's adoption of the tendency to say "yeah" quite often.

Well, when we had all finished our wonderful food, Martin proceeded to tell about the history of two very old buildings; one being a house designed and built out of paper mache, which was a sort of prefabricated thing brought in from Europe and erected here in Zimbabwe. He then went onto tell us about an old, four walled ruin in the middle of nowhere. There were even illustrations of both for people like Norman who find it hard to cope with lots of long words. After the interesting lesson, we had to start packing up. We had a closing parade and thanked Martin for his interesting talk and for the lovely venue. Then it was all into the Landy and back home to spend the rest of the night relaxing in a warm bed away from the hostile cactus ridden, mosquito infested African beauty.

Many thanks to Norman for making this very enjoyable and also to Martin Sanderson for providing such a beautiful area.

Joe Rose

1ST BULAWAYO (PIONEER) SCOUT TROOP

TROOP PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

MAY - AUGUST 2003

APRIL

29-30 Matopos Challenge hike

MAY

1-2 Matopos Challenge hike
13 Schools open
9 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
10-11 Parents' camp
11 Gordon Park service: 12.00 noon
16 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
23 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
25 Africa Day: Mt Inungu service
30 Troop meeting: Mabukwene

JUNE

6-7 Monthly hike
8 Gordon Park service: 12.00 noon
13 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
14-15 Colin Turner Pioneering Competition
20 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
27 Troop meeting: Mabukwene

JULY

4-5 Monthly hike
11 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
13 Gordon Park service: 12.00 noon
18 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
25 Troop meeting: Mabukwene (sausage sizzle)

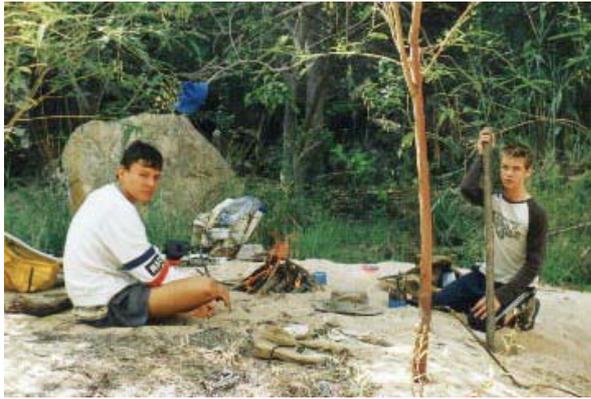
AUGUST

1-3 William Arnold Carnegie Assegai Competition
7 Schools close
8-9 Monthly hike
10 Gordon Park service: 12.00 noon
11-13 Mini expedition
15 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
22 Troop meeting: Mabukwene
29 Troop meeting: Mabukwene

The Coke and Chocolate Guided Stroll 4-5 April 2003

Having completed three gruelling monthly hikes in a row, it was decided by popular vote that the April hike was going to be short and sweet. Just to make sure, Gumbee stated that as he had not been to the Mshashasha Falls before, it was his wish that the hike route should pass by these falls and so it was decided: the short route via Mshashasha falls. Hike weekend came but unfortunately for Gumbee he had a sports fixture in some foreign town named Gweru and Mark was still nursing a wrenched knee muscle, so that left Joe, Paul and myself to go hiking.

Having driven out the 60km or more on the worst of worst roads in Matabeleland to where we were to leave Nguluvane the Land Rover, near the headwaters of the Mshashasha river we made our camp, cooked a really scrumptious meal and fell asleep under a brilliantly star studded sky.



Teatime on the river sand, at the bottom of Mshashasha Falls

Low cloud cover and a fresh south easterly wind greeted us on Saturday morning. Flash back to March - another wet hike ! As it turned out, it did not rain, in fact the sun broke through the cloud cover a number of times so hiking was neither too cold nor too hot. Having had a hearty breakfast of oatmeal porridge and tea, it was time to set off along the well worn path, now marked with white arrows, for the falls. At our starting point on the river, there was very little water flowing which was an indication that there would not be very much water going over the falls. But the decision had been made, so off we went.

coloured, tree climbing caterpillars and also to sample some wild fruit. Paul and Joe must have been weaned on the latter, for they gobbled up all the berries they could find. With my more refined taste, I, after sampling various different delicacies offered, politely stated that as they were so dry I might end up looking like a prune and so that was the end of my venture into bushman cuisine. At last we arrived at the falls only to find that civilisation had caught up with this area of paradise for a “long drop” was being constructed in anticipation of the hordes of money paying tourists that were expected to flock to the area. We made our way down to the foot of the falls to have our tea and to swim in the small pool. Tea was supplemented by braaing some fish fingers so thoughtfully provided as a tea time snack. Whilst we were enjoying our tea break, Themba, one of our friends from the area, joined us. We had passed his village the previous evening and he had recognised the Landy, and knew who it was and to where we were headed.

The path descends several hundred metres in the 4km hike to the falls, so our progress was reasonably fast. We only stopped a few times, once to prod, annoy and generally confuse some very large, hairy bright orange

Our journey back was uphill all the way and whilst our rucksacks were not very heavy, the pace was slow. Joe and Paul found some large quartzite crystals with their characteristic hexagonal shape and pointed ends, along the way. The bushman paintings were visited as was the cave with the sixteen complete grain bins. At both places, wood carvers had camped and carved bowls out of the trees they had cut down in the area. Proceeding onto the top of a large castle kopje at the head of the last escarpment we had to climb, we decided that as it was 13.00hrs we would have our lunch here. Out came the bread rolls, delicious precooked fillet steaks and salads all this topped off with cokes and a slab of chocolate. Adding to our feast fit for a king was the magnificent view down onto the tops of the Mountain Acacia below and stretching out in front of us to the Mtshabezi river and in the middle distance the sparkling waters of the Mtshabezi dam. Naturally the rugged granite kopjes added depth and tranquility to the view. On returning to Nguluvane, Themba invited us to his house to have lunch of Mxanxa kindly cooked by his wife. Before returning home, we went by Landy to Mtshetshe dam some 6km away.

All in all a great hike.

Norm

To Really Live, is to Give and Forgive !

Since GOD forgives us, we too must forgive
And resolve to do better each day that we live
By constantly trying to be like HIM more nearly
And to trust in HIS wisdom and love HIM more dearly

Helen Steiner Rice