



CAMP FIRE YARN No. 6

SEA AND AIR
SCOUTING

Lifeboatmen – Swimming –
Boat Cruising
Air Scouting – Sea Games

There are perhaps no greater heroes and no truer Scouts than the sailors who man the lifeboats around the coasts of the oceans of the world. During dangerous storms they must BE PREPARED to turn out at any minute, and risk their lives in order to save others. Because they do it often and so quietly we have come to look upon it almost as an everyday affair, but it is none the less splendid of them and worthy of our admiration.

I am glad that so many Boy Scouts are taking up Sea Scouting, and by learning boat management and seamanship are also learning to take their place in the service of their country as seamen in the navy, or in the merchant service, or as lifeboatmen along the coasts.

A ship can be either a heaven or a hell — it depends entirely on the fellows in her. If they are surly, inclined to grouse, and untidy, they will be an unhappy ship's company. If they are, like Scouts, cheerily determined to make the best of things, to give and take, and to keep their place tidy and clean, they will be a happy family and enjoy their life at sea.

Swimming

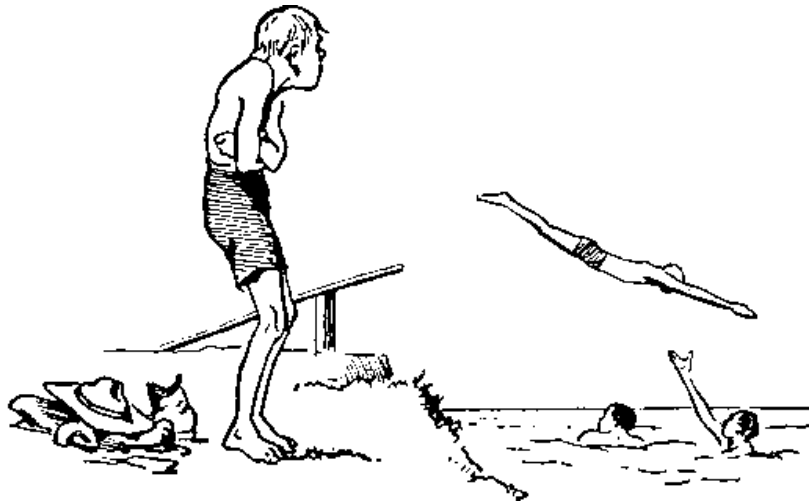
Every boy should learn to swim. I've known lots of fellows pick it up the first time they try, others take longer. I did myself—I couldn't at first get the hang of it. In my heart of hearts I think I really feared the water a bit, but one day, getting out of my depth, I found myself swimming quite easily. I had made too much of an effort and a stiff struggle of it before—but I found the way was to take it slowly and calmly. I got to like the water, and swimming became easy.

All you have to do is at first to try to swim like a dog, as if crawling along in the water. Don't try all at once to swim with the breast stroke. When paddling along like a dog, get a friend to support you at first with his hand under your belly.

There is jolly good fun in bathing—but ever so much more if the bathing includes a swim. What a fool the fellow looks who has to paddle about in shallow water and can't join his pals in their trips to sea or down the river.

But there's something more than fun in it.

If you go boating or sailing it is not fair on the other chaps to do so if you can't swim. If the boat capsizes and all are swimmers, it is rather a lark. But if there is a non-swimmer there, the others have to risk their lives to keep him afloat.



TOMMY THE TENDERFOOT NO. I

— TOMMY AT THE LAKE

Tommy sees all of them happy but him.
They are plunging and diving—but Tommy can't swim.

Then, too, there may come the awful time when you see someone drowning. If you are a swimmer, in you go, get hold of him the right way, and bring him ashore. And you have saved a fellow creature's life! But if you can't swim? Then you have a horrible time. You know you ought to do something better than merely call for help while your fellow creature is fighting and struggling for his life and gradually becoming weaker before your eyes. I won't describe it—it is a horrible nightmare, and will be all the rest of your life when you think that it was partly your fault that the poor fellow was drowned. Why your fault? Because if you had been a true Scout you would have learnt swimming and would have been able to save him.

Managing a Boat

Also, if you live near water you should be able to manage a boat. You should know how to bring it properly alongside a ship or pier, either by rowing it or steering it in a wide circle so that it comes up alongside with its head pointing the same way as the bow of the ship or toward the current. You should be able to row one oar in time with the rest of a boat's crew, or to use a pair of oars, or to scull a boat by "screwing" a single oar over the stern. In rowing, the object of feathering or turning the blade of the oar flat when it is out of the water is to save it from catching the wind and thereby checking the pace of the boat.

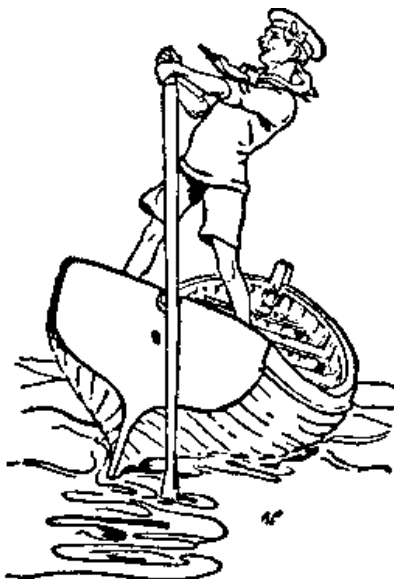
You should know how to throw a coil of rope so as to fling it on to another boat or wharf, or how to catch and make fast a rope thrown to you. Also how to throw a lifebuoy to a drowning man.

You should be able to make a raft out of any materials that you can get hold of, such as planks, logs, barrels, sacks of straw, and so on. Often on a hike you may want to cross a river with your food and baggage where no boats are available.

Boat Cruising

Instead of tramping or cycling, it is an excellent practice for a Patrol to take a boat and explore a river or make a trip through the country, camping out in the same way as in a tramping camp. But no one should be allowed in the boat who is not a good swimmer, able to swim at least fifty yards with clothes on (shirt, shorts, and socks as a minimum), because accidents may happen, and if all are swimmers it does not matter.

One of my most enjoyable Sea Scouts experiences was a river cruise I made with two of my brothers. We took a canvas folding boat up the Thames as far as we could get her to float. We got right up in the Chiltern Hills where no boat had ever been seen before. We carried our cooking kit, tent and bedding with us and camped out nights.



Learn to row a boat properly, and to “scull” with one oar

When we reached the source of the river we carried the boat over the watershed and launched her again on the stream which ran down to the westward and which in a few miles became the Avon.

Through Bath and through Bristol we journeyed, rowing, sailing, poling, or towing, as circumstances required, until we reached the mighty waters of the Severn.

Across this we sailed with centre board down, till we successfully reached Chepstow on the other side. Here we made our way up the rapids of the Wye through its beautiful scenery, to our home near Llandogo.

From London to Wales, almost all the way by water, with loads of adventure and lots of fun!

But it was no more than any of you could do if you liked to try.

So, come along, Scouts—make yourselves efficient, and if you enjoy your Sea Scouting as much as I enjoyed mine you will have a wonderful time.

Air Scouts

When the first Scout camp was held at Brownsea Island in the English Channel in 1907, very few people thought that the aeroplane would conquer the air. They had heard of some queer experiments carried out in America by Wilbur and Orville Wright with gliders and of their ‘attempts with some kind of air-machine. But no one dreamt of what the aeroplane would mean within such a short span of time.

With good reason we are apt to think of the aeroplane as a weapon of destruction. But it has many valuable uses for civilisation:

For instance, in Canada vast tracts of unexplored territory in the north have been photographed and mapped. Mining machinery has been transported to out-of-the-way places. Traders and settlers, who are cut off by great distances from supplies and friends, can receive food, letters and newspapers by plane.

In Australia, doctors travel enormous distances by plane to help sick people, and flying ambulances bring them to hospitals.

Fires in great forest areas can be spotted quickly by the airman and the best means devised for fighting the fires. Even fishermen can be helped because from a height it is possible for the airman to see where the shoals of fish are to be found.

Insect pests which attack and ruin crops can be killed by dusting from the air. Rice and grass seeds have been sown over vast areas in a short time.

All kinds of interesting discoveries have been made not only about unexplored parts of the earth, but about the past, for some things—markings of ancient dwellings and settlements, for instance—show up more clearly when seen and photographed from the air.

So you see there is plenty of pioneering and romance in the new element man has conquered!

Air Scouts are now part of our Scout organization in many countries. But just like Sea Scouts, they have to be as well trained as all other Scouts in ordinary Scouting on land, for all Scouts need to be observant and resourceful.

SEA GAMES

Smuggler.

(For night or day)

One party of smugglers from the sea endeavour to land and conceal their goods (a brick or stone per man) in a base called the “Smugglers’ Cave”, and get away in their boat again. Another party of revenue men is distributed to watch the coast a long distance with single Scouts.

As soon as one revenue man sees the smugglers land he gives the alarm, and collects the rest to attack, but the attack cannot be successful unless there are at least as many revenue men on the spot as smugglers. The revenue men must remain bivouacked at their station until the alarm is given by the look-out men.

Whale Hunt

The whale is made of a big log or wood with a roughly-shaped head and tail. Two boats will usually carry out the whale hunt, each boat manned by one Patrol—the Patrol Leader acting as captain, the Second as bowman or harpooner, the remainder of the Patrol as oarsmen. Each boat belongs to a different harbour, the two harbours



being about a mile apart. The umpire takes the whale and lets it loose about half-Way between the two harbours, and on a given signal, the two boats race out to see who can get to the whale first.

The harpooner who first arrives within range of the whale drives his harpoon into it, and the boat promptly turns round and tows the whale to its harbour.

The second boat pursues, and when it overtakes the other, also harpoons the whale, turns around, and endeavours to tow the whale back to its harbour.

In this way the two boats have a tug-of-war, and eventually the better boat tows the whale, and possibly, the opposing boat into its harbour. (The game is similar to one described in Ernest Thompson Seton's *Birchbark of the Woodcraft Indians*.)