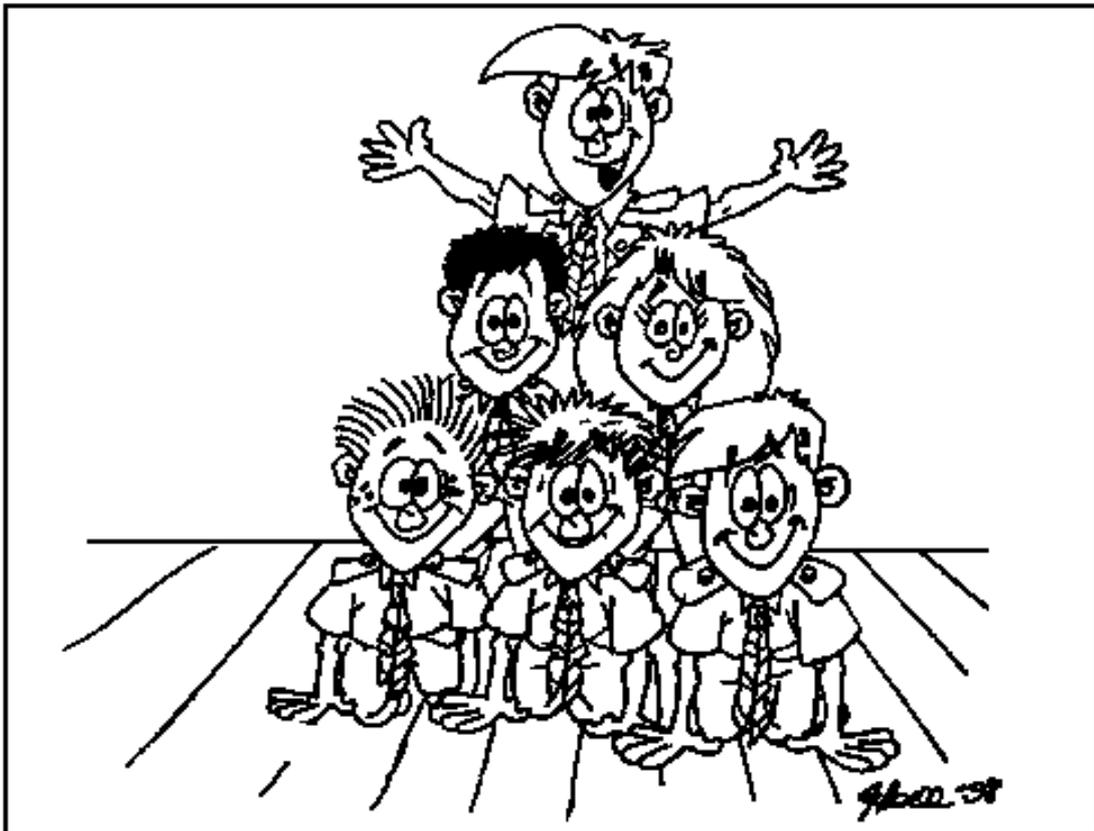


Book 9 in a series of practical ideas for Scout Troops

Developed for the Branch Scout Council Victorian Branch
Scout Association of Australia



Practical Ideas and resources
For operating

The Patrol System

COMPILED BY
Peter Marriott

NOTES

We are always searching for new and exciting programming ideas. If you have some material that might be useful to other leaders, which could be included in further editions of this book, please send a copy to:

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Introduction

Out there in scouting land there are some vibrant, exciting troops. They are bulging at the seams. As the word spreads kids flock to join. Without exception these troops operate a very strong Patrol System.

This book seeks to pass the secrets on. And it is not all that hard. Every Troop is operating the Patrol System. Just by changing a bit here and there any Troop can become more effective and easier to manage. The spin off will always be more kids, happier kids and better training in Scouting for life.

There has been much written about the Patrol System and this can be confusing, even daunting. Some leaders believe just because they are doing one bit but not another they are not real Scout Troops. Rubbish! Keep going but do so critically. Ask if you can do it better. Are there aspects, which you need to introduce? It is time to mine the rich heritage and use the raw material to forge a modern application. There are hundreds of ideas here. Forge your own glittering prize - a fantastic Troop.

AND ... wait for it!! The cards on pages 14-19 are available as a real set.

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by Peter Marriott

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For additional information check out the Patrol System Video available from Branch

What the kids say

Why do we have the Patrol System operating in the Scout section? It is certainly a very successful way of operating and sets Scouts in the forefront of personal development programs.

It is interesting to see what the Scouts themselves think. The following paper come from a State Forum held in August 2000. It hasn't been changed (apart from the spelling!) and has many interesting insights.

Troop and Patrol System

Introduction

Scouts at this Forum decided we must retain the Patrol System because we think that it works, and works well. We like the method in which it works. It is officially our Method of Operation.

Patrol Structure

"A little community in a big community (Patrol System)" The reason we think we need to retain the Patrol System structure is that it develops leadership, discipline, friendship and communication. There would be unfair groups of people if we had patrols without of an even spread of age and skill. The Patrol system doesn't always work because of some scouts lacking discipline.

Troop Councils

It is very important to have Patrol /Troop Councils Monthly or when needed to fix issues in the Troop / Patrol. Troop Councils should mold their Troop program to suit the type of people they have,(eg: A Troop with lots of Scouts who go to private schools needs to program around things like weekend sport etc.) Troop Councils must be promoted until all Troops have them.

The Leadership Roles and responsibilities of Adult Leaders and Patrol Leaders

Patrol Leaders Role:

- To control his/her patrol and other people in the group.
- To be a responsible person
- Be a step ahead with badge work
- be organised with things
- lead by example, wear full uniform
- Handle kids' problems
- be kind and considerate and trusted
- be a team member of Troop Council
- PLs need Self Discipline PLs have to take their own oath / promise

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Leaders Role

- To help PLs and APLs in Troop Council and on group activities
- Leaders need to be active
- Leaders are not using Patrol System to full advantages.
- Leaders need to get information to Patrol Leaders and to the group
- Leaders need to have stronger Communication with Patrol Leaders
- Leaders need to get information about camp, activities to the group.

PL Courses

We believe that PL courses must be run because they teach the PL how to manage, control and discipline within their Patrols as well as teaching the PLs valuable leadership skills. It should be a rule that Scouts pass a PLs' course before becoming a PL. These courses would be promoted through magazines such as "Squawk" and "Kaboom" by telling PLs and Leaders that courses **MUST BE RUN**.

Control and Discipline

A lot of scouts have decided that they are not happy with the discipline in their troops and have confused thoughts about control. So the Scouts of this forum propose the following:

A code of behaviour and operation for all Scouts and leaders to abide by needs to be developed. This code would include the jobs of each Scout and Leader and their limitations. This code would be made fair for everyone and could be included in the green book.

The fact that PLs need self-discipline came up in discussion. They also play a part in the discipline of others. Respect towards leaders was an issue that may need to be addressed because without respect, it is hard to operate. Leaders become leaders voluntarily and do not need bad behaviour. This could also be included in the code with outlines of punishments.

Point System

The point system as it is only rewards people for winning things or run things. We think the point system should also be an incentive toward good behaviour.

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An overview - The Patrol System Continuum

Most troops use the Patrol System in some form. It is simply not true to say that a Scout Troop does not use the Patrol System. No two Troops do it the same way and there is no perfectly right or wrong way.

That is not to say we cannot improve how we run our Scout Troops.

A better way to think about it is as a line - a continuum.



At one end of the line (say the left) Patrols are an administrative convenience - Scouters run the Troop completely with no more involvement from the Scouts than having them line up as Patrols at the start of the meeting.

At the other end (say the right) the Patrols are completely independent of adults and do everything themselves.

Neither of these extremes is real. Every Scout Troop lies somewhere between the two ends. What is more the Troop probably moves along the line one way or the other all the time depending on the circumstances at the time.

If we're serious about training our Scouts to be good citizens, leaders, independent self-starters and so on we should always be striving to move further to the right.

A very experienced group of Patrol leaders will move the Troop to the right. A young, inexperienced lot will move you to the left. If you start a new Troop you'll begin near the left. Your location, the number of adults, the enthusiasm of the Scouts will all affect how well you operate. When your fantastic PLs move on to Venturers you will probably slide back to the left. Different Patrols might even be at different points along the line.

What is important is that the good leader is constantly thinking about moving along the line. The further to the right you are, the longer you will keep the Scouts, the better their training and the more Scouting they will do.

See the Patrol System, as the key to what Scouting is all about and develop strategies to move you along.

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Always ask yourself:

- How can I use this activity to move to the right?
- How can I capitalise on the interest of this group of kids?
- What is our next step?

It isn't really all that hard. Taking small steps is relatively easy. For example in camp it is a step forward if:

- The Patrol routinely writes its own menu.
- The PLs do their Patrol shopping with members of their Patrol.
- PLs delegate stuff to their APLs
- A Patrol burns its mashed potatoes together.

It's a step backwards if:

- Scout leaders routinely do the cooking.
- Patrols share an eating shelter.
- Patrols mix around their sleeping arrangements rather than in Patrols.
- A PL can't name every Scout in his/her Patrol

Lots of organisations work at the left of the continuum. That's fine – for them. In fact, that's what the 'pick-up - sample - throw-away-society' encourages. Kids go bowling, go climbing, go hiking, and go to Scout Camp. Done that! Lets move on to the BMX track, the Movies - let's consume!!

What to do about it?

Well having read this far is a start! Later in this book is an activity with cards where you can work out where your Troop is on the line. Each of those cards is something that you can do to move your Troop along.

It is really a state of mind for Leaders. Think clearly about why you do things and then carry them out in such a way as to encourage Scouts to work and act in their Patrols and there you have it.

Simple!

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Patrol System at Troop Meetings

Have another look at the other books in this series. There are many references to operating a Patrol System in them.

It is all to do with working out ways to put together the three main parts of an effectively operating Scout Troop: The Patrol System, the Award Scheme and the Program of activities.



All of the following actions can strengthen this process:

A leader who is thinking Patrol System will address the Troop in a certain way -most often through the PLs.

Program planning is vital. In fact this is the way forward for the Patrol System. Leaders who turn up on Troop night and run things off the top of their heads are definitely moving to the left of that continuum. As adults we value people who can work and plan in teams. This is excellent training for life. Think about where else young people can get that sort of training without paying mega-bucks.

Information can be handed to the PLs who then distribute it to the Patrol members.

Instruction will most often be within the Patrol rather than splitting the Patrols up so that all of the Scouts at a particular level will be together.

Keeping the senior members of the Troop ahead of the rest of the Troop can be handled at special PL/APL--- activities such as a First Aid course, hike, camp or following a Troop Council.

Every Patrol Leader should be organising the Scoutcraft tests for newer Scouts and time may need to be set aside in the program for this.

There is no reason why an experienced and knowledgeable PL cannot pass many of the Pioneer tests. Explorer and Adventurer level tests often include a requirement for instruction to younger Scouts by the more experienced.

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Patrols can be encouraged to do separate Targets for their third choice. This could lead to opportunities for Patrol Activity Badges. For example Eddy the Eagle was interested in Air Activities and his enthusiasm fired the others in the Patrol. He organised for them to have a special Air Activities course, which included a visit to an airfield and a flight. All this was done within the Troop but separately - they went off to a different place to do the instructional bit on Troop nights. The field trip was for that Patrol alone. The Troop Council for the requirements gave careful consideration for the PA Badge. The younger Scouts attained their Pioneer Air Activities, Eddy worked on his Adventurer and his APL and one other kid did Explorer. Meanwhile the rest of the Troop got on with the Environment Target.

One of the Environment Target tests for Pioneer is to take part in a two hour Environment Activity. Enterprising Alastair organised for his Patrol to do this at a metropolitan Children's Farm. They worked for 6 hours, planting trees, got to muck around at the farm, organised their own transport and so on. As well as the Environment Target bit there was a service component and a PA badge but, most of all a practical application of the Patrol system.

Plan on having some Patrol time each meeting. Things don't always settle down quietly for this so it is often useful to plan with the PLs what will be done during this time. They can be planning an activity, doing test work, playing a game, cleaning Patrol gear, and preparing for a camp. The PLs need to know about this well before the time. It can be set the week before or suggestions emailed to the PL a couple of days prior. PLs can be encouraged to plan a series of small programs for their Patrol time. Talk about this at Troop Council. Give them some ideas about having everyone occupied, delegating to the APL, swapping activity with quiet work and so on.

Having a special place in the hall helps develop Patrol identity - especially if they decorate it themselves. Have the Scouts' Patrol name up and members' names. Record Patrol achievement on a Patrol chart (see book 8). Get the Patrol to put up pennants they have won and souvenirs of their own special camps.

Publicly recognise Patrol achievement. At final parade praise a Patrol's efforts - if everyone else is jealous, so much the better.

Think Patrol System, use the Award Scheme and develop activities that appeal from there. It's worth doing. And you end up batting kids away from the Troop as the word spreads.

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Patrol System in Activities

Why do Scouts go camping?

Because they enjoy it. Why? To getaway from home (be independent), to learn things, to muck around with friends, see new places, have adventures.

And those are the reasons Scouts do most activities. Sailing, hiking, bowling, cycling, skiing Think about it

And what's the best way to do that to get the maximum out of it (fulfilling those reasons). Well, do it with your mates. of course. And, in Scouts that means as Patrols.

Believe it or not the camps the Scouts enjoy the most are the simple ones where they act as Patrols. And it's where they learn the most too.

When a Troop goes away, the Scouts should be in independent Patrols and do it right from the word go.

The Scouts, in their Patrols

- Make up the menu
- Collect the money
- Buy the food
- Get their gear together; pack it on the trailer or in the car/bike/pack
- Have their own Patrol sites each with tents, eating and cooking areas
- Cook their own meals
- Do the camp activities in patrols
- Clean everything up
- Pack everything up
- Unpack and put away neatly

What do the adults do? Plenty because the Scouts need support to get through it. But it doesn't help to do any of those things for them. The leaders need to know the process and make sure the Patrol leaders are prepared for it. The other books in this series have hints for camping (Book 5 28-3 1; Book 6).

Think Patrol System as you prepare for any activity and you will find the task easier and it will be more enjoyable for the Scouts.

When you look at the Award Scheme you see that the levels are structured to reward this way of doing things.

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Here are some examples:

The menu:

About a month before remind the PIL about it and suggest s/he get one or two Pioneer level kids to do one (Pioneer Test). They can do it at home or have half an hour during the Scout meeting. The Patrol can then check it during Patrol time. PL (and Scouter if necessary) can check it again to see that it is comprehensive enough. It's common for a Scouts first menu to read Coco Pops, sandwiches and sausages! Experienced PLs will know how to extend it out to include the full meal (e.g. cereal, milk, toast, margarine, Vegemite, Milo, piece of fruit for breakfast).

The food:

Older Scouts should make a shopping list for camp. Some items may already be in the Troop store (detergent, UHT stuff, etc). Scouter can check with PL two weeks before camp.

The money:

PL should have a designated Patrol member to collect the money from Patrol members. It is a good idea to keep a record with date, name, and amount.

Buying the food:

The PL and the Scout who made up the menu should be in this group - more if the Patrol wants.

Packing the gear:

Get the Patrol to get out their gear the Scout night before. Don't interfere - if they forget something too bad, they'll remember the next time. It will help if they have a list to check against.

Loading the trailer:

The job for the PLs - they can turn up an hour earlier (with APLs if necessary) and do it under the eye of the person dragging the trailer.

Setting up camp:

Intervene with the parents who want to help. Send them home, get them to make you a cup of coffee, have a game of cards, anything but help the Scouts. This may be a major learning time for the Scouts - if they get it wrong, well they'll do it again and then they'll be fine. Best learning is by doing.

Fires, Cooking:

Fires are great - the kids love them. Make sure the regulations are followed strictly. If you can have a cooking fire for each Patrol that's great. If you have to use gas, well that's life these days but each Patrol will still need their own set up. For a Troop camp there should never be Jamboree style cooking. NO BUTS!!

Feasts:

On longer camps be daring, cook up a roast, fancy meal or cake. You'd be surprised at the number of Scouts who really like cooking. It's the cleaning up they hate!! See Book 6 for some ideas. Photocopy the pages and give them to your PLs.

If the Troop wants to go hiking, snow camping, island adventuring, flying always think Patrols and ensure that's how they do it. All of those things can be a Patrol Activity Badge and watch how the Patrols grow as they learn to work together.

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On the Age of Patrol leaders

For those of you who are interested in the whys and wherefores read on; for the answer skip to the second last paragraph.

There is, you may have noticed, a great difference between an eleven year old and a fourteen year old. It's not always height or weight either. It's in the head. The reason we use the Patrol system and why it works so well is all to do with what's going on with this change.

Sexual maturity hormones are seething away it's true but there are other things going on too. It's a sort of social sense. At around about eleven children move from a black and white world to one where moral judgements can be made from another person's point of view. They are able to think more abstractly or theoretically about the world.

After about 13 1/2 this social sense matures into a sense of responsibility towards others. The leadership and responsibilities inherent in the Scout training help the young person make sense of and develop these abilities.

Everyone will recognise the kid who at 11 or 12 is always active, always jumping in interrupting, noisy and social. At one youth forum the Scouts there described it as 'the obnoxious, hyperactive, red cordial, immature 10 year old stage' Ah, that's 14 year olds for you!

The experienced leader will see the same person at 14 whom, while still very physical, will be helping younger kids, planning detailed activities, talking reasonably to adults and confidently at forums. The 14-year-old Scouts at the youth forum recognised themselves as perfect!

Parents, by the way, seem to have a completely different person living with them! That is the unfair caricature that is pictured on all those ads on TV.

Now of course it is different from Scout to Scout when it actually happens and it is a bit different between boys and girls. The most effective Patrol Leaders are going to be those who have passed over the invisible line. The best time for them to become PLs is before they come to the line. And you can't tell when that is. I suppose there are a few markers that an experience leader will recognise. Probably about the time you stop yelling at them!

As a rule of thumb though, somewhere between 13 and 13 1/2 is a good time to appoint and 12 months is a good time for them to be in the job because most will be well and truly over the line by 14 1/2. Beware if you have a younger Scout - no matter how smart and conformist they might be. They will not be even able to compete with the older kids.

Strange all of that really - they become truly effective and we pass them on to Venturers! And that's another stage altogether!

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Troop Council

Why

The Troop Council provides a democratic, representative youth council, which provides direct youth participation in the programs and activities of the Scout Troop. As such it provides direct training for its members in shared decision-making, consideration and representation of others. It is central to the operation of a Scout Troop

Who

This may vary according to the size of the Troop but generally comprises the Patrol Leaders (or their representatives) and the Scout Leader. Assistant Patrol leaders may also attend. Even if a Troop has only one Patrol **there must be a Troop Council.**

A Patrol leader will normally chair the Council with the minutes being taken by another Patrol leader. The other Patrol leaders will take other roles as required.

The Scout leader normally acts in an advisory capacity but will also take due care of legal and safety issues.

What

There are two main types of business - program administration and human issues.

The Administrative matter will be to do with program planning, Patrol Activity Badges, detailed planning of camps and other activities, money management, Patrol composition, gear purchase and maintenance and so on.

Human issues would include linking matters, Patrol composition and dealing with conflict and behaviour management. From Scouting's earliest days this Council has dealt with appropriate management of Scouts who might be disruptive or not living by the Scout Law.

When

Troop Councils are held whenever needed. In practice there are two sorts of meeting- informal, short meetings and longer more formal meetings.

The more formal meetings should be held every 4 - 6 weeks. Time for this can be awkward fitting them around the Scouts' busy lives. Sundays from 4 to 6 can be OK or an hour or so before Troop meeting over a Pizza is also fine. Whatever, it is best to work them out in advance and schedule them into family calendars

The less formal meetings can be held for five or ten minutes when an occasion crops up at Troop night or in camp. It might be to ratify a RA. Badge or pass money for payment or deal with a personnel problem. These do not necessarily need the Scout leader present if the issue is straightforward.

Keeping Minutes

There is a sample sheet on the following page. This can be copied and kept in a folder. Encourage the Patrol Leaders to quickly note every decision and main points of relevant discussions. If actions are required names should be attached and at following meetings these can then be followed up.

Don't worry about spelling or grammar though legibility is handy. It is much easier to have dot points and keywords rather than complete sentences.

A basic agenda can be developed before the meeting and added to at the beginning of the meeting.

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Troop Council Minutes

Troop		Date
Location		Time
Members Present		
Chair	Minute Taker	
Record of Reports and decisions		

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Action Cards

The next seven pages has a set of cards which can be used to really help improve how the Patrol System operates in the Troop. There are many ways to use these and some suggestions are set out below.

Where are we at?

At the Troop Council, ask the youth members to decide which of three stacks to put the cards. One stack is for 'Yes' we do that, one stack is 'No we don't do that' and the third stack is 'Well sometimes we do and sometimes we don't. It's handy to add up the score. Give two points to 'Yes', one point to 'sometimes' and no points to 'No'. There is no magic number to pass if you are doing it right -remember the continuum back on page 4.

Make a note of the score and you will be able to redo the exercise in six months time.

Just by doing this activity the Troop Council will have had a valuable lesson in what the Patrol System is about. It helps orient them towards their job. Give yourself a bonus two points for doing it

The leaders could also do the activity to see how they would rate the Troop. This gets very interesting if you check the Scouts perceptions against your own. Don't get defensive if there is a difference. Remember that no one is right or wrong - it's just how people see things. Some of the statements are pretty woolly anyway. It is interesting to see what the difference really means.

Action Plan

Use the 'Sometimes' or 'No' piles to make a Troop action plan. Choose a number of the things you or the PLs think will be easiest to change. Five is a good number though if you score highly then perhaps a smaller number is a better option.

Then make a conscious effort to do it.

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Troop is divided into permanent groups called Patrols

PL stands out in front of the Patrol

Patrol completely independent, and does not, need an adult around

PLs involved in parade

Constructive activity is occurring without, an adult, present

PL is running an occasional training session

PLs run training sessions over several weeks

Patrols meet as Patrols at some time during the Troop meeting

Patrols
sometimes meet
together away
from the Troop
meeting

SL consults with
Patrol Leaders,
over some issues

Formal, regular
Troop Councils
are held

Patrols are
responsible for
their own money

Patrol members
have
responsibility for
some things the
Patrol does

At some meetings
Patrols sometimes
do different things
to the rest of the
Troop

Individual Patrols
often do different
things to the rest
of the Troop

Patrol selects,
their own PL

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Peer Patrols
are allowed to exist

Patrols are
allowed to reform
if they are not
viable

Activity patrols
are allowed to
exist new

PLs discuss into
which Patrols
Scouts are
to be placed

PLs decide to
which Patrol new
Troop members
will belong

PLs have a say in
how behaviour
problems are
handled

PLs decide how
Behaviour
Problems
handled

The Troop usually
keeps older
are Scouts

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Younger kids
want to join
Scouts

There is
competition
between Patrols

There is no rivalry
between Patrols

Patrols are
running games
successfully

Patrols are
running their own
games

The Troop usually
camps in Patrols

Patrols work
independently in
camp

Patrols cook as
Patrols

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Each Patrol has
an identity
(badge/pennant,
etc)

Patrol has a
regular place in
the Scout hall to
meet

Patrols make up
their own menu
for camps

Patrols buy their
own food for
camp

PLs participate
in Link Badge/
Yellow Cord

Scouter is
relaxed with
organised chaos

Patrol members
are happy to be
with their Patrol

PL has control
of the Patrol

Patrols achieve things as a unit

PLs do inspections

Patrols manage their own money for each camp

PLs discuss Patrol restructures at Troop Council

Patrols in camp have their own tents and eating areas numbers

PL has a list of Patrol members and their phone

PL knows where every member of the Patrol lives

Every PL has met the parents of every Scout in the Patrol

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Every Patrol has organised a Patrol Activity Badge in the last year

Scout Leader appoints PL after decision made by Patrol and Troop Council

PL cares about every Scout in the Patrol

PLs choose their own Assistant Patrol Leader

PLs are ahead of their Scouts in the Award Scheme

PLs are always punctual

Patrols sometimes decide where they will camp

Each Patrol is keen to camp as a Patrol somewhere

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Patrols

Time for a few definitions..

Family Patrols

Scouts in this sort of Patrol represent an even range of ages.

Peer Patrols

Scouts in this sort of Patrol are all within about 12 months of one another age wise.

Standing Patrols

These are the Patrols that are the permanent ones of the Troop and are the basis for most of the activities. It is often best to maintain these groupings even if there are only three or four members turning up to an activity. Sometimes you might combine two Patrols into one.

Once you get up to eight in a Patrol at camp though, it can be very difficult. Nine can be a disaster - especially if it is a competition camp or such like. There will be a jostling for power and the kids will split into small groups who will wander off or become bored. Trouble!

Ad hoc and Activity Patrols

These form temporarily for special purposes. A Jamboree Patrol is a good example. The Troop Council is one sort of a special Patrol. When Cub Scouts move into Scouts they may form a temporary settling Patrol with an experienced Patrol leader who teaches them the Scoutcraft Badge and takes them on their first camp. Other Patrols may form for a special activity. In each case there should be a person nominated as the Patrol Leader for communication and organisation purposes.

How Many in a Patrol

The official books say five to eight. These days, with competing time pressures, it is often difficult to go away with every Patrol member. One solution is to make the standing Patrol large (7 or 8). When it comes to camps or weekend activities, the Patrol can still field an operational unit.

Who decides who is in a Patrol?

The Troop Council. But this should be in consultation with the Scouts themselves.

Many things influence this: good friends, kids who should be separated, leadership opportunities, common interests, homes clustered together, and kids with special needs. The Troop Council can and should consider all these things.

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Patrol Leader Investiture

Ceremonies are important in the life of a Troop. They can make a Scout feel important, impress the importance of occasions, confer authority and reinforce understandings about what Scouting is about.

It is vital that Patrol Leaders are seriously and publicly invested into their position. This should occur in front of the Troop and with parents and significant leaders present. The ceremony should be short and simple but meaningful. Discuss the ceremony with the future PL beforehand so that s/he understands what the job is about and is prepared to state that publicly.

The following is a suggested format:

If it's felt to be too long for the Troop or a particular Scout then edit it down.

Troop falls in on parade. The PL should be in full uniform.

S L (Name)_____ has been chosen by his/her Patrol and endorsed by the Troop Council as the Patrol Leader of the_____ Patrol. This ceremony is important in _____'s life as a Scout. _____ Please come forward.

SL: Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of a Patrol Leader?

P L. Yes I do.

S L. Then as a sign of your commitment to the Troop and your Patrol, and in the presence of your fellow Scouts repeat the Patrol Leader's oath with me.

(Note. It is suggested that you make a photocopy of the PL 's Oath (page 32) for the PL to read from)

As a Patrol Leader I promise to do my best to:

- Act at all times as leader of my Patrol to ensure the highest standards.
- Be a responsible person and be organised with things.
- Be a step ahead with my badge work and Scouting knowledge.
- Lead by example, wear my uniform properly and live by the Scout Promise and Law.
- Be kind, considerate and trusted, and stand by my Patrol members when they need support.
- Be a team member in the Troop Council and fairly represent my Patrol.
- Chair my Patrol's Council and delegate to Patrol members.
- Help the Scouts in my Patrol with their Scouting.
- Make the Patrol a lively, independent unit with a mind and a program of its own while remaining an essential part of the Troop.
- Have fun and make sure my Patrol do too.

S L. As a Scout, I trust you to follow that promise to the best of your ability.

Patrol Leader insignia (stripes, lanyard and certificate) is then presented. New PL can shake hands with Leaders and perhaps other Scouts, though this can become a little unruly if not careful.

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Scout Investitures

Patrol Leaders should also take a prominent role in the investiture of the members of their Patrol when they become Scouts. PLs should present the Patrol Badge and say something like: Congratulations on becoming a Scout and welcome to the _____ Patrol. This badge is the symbol of our Patrol and we hope you will become a worthy member.

APL Investitures

The Assistant Patrol Leader is selected by the Patrol Leader.

An appropriate ceremony would be.

S L. The _____ Patrol has a new Assistant Patrol leader. _____(PL) step forward.

PL _____ (new APL) is to be the Assistant Patrol leader of our Patrol. Come forward _____. As I present you with this stripe it is a sign that you are now one of the leaders in the Troop. I depend on you to support me in helping to make our Patrol the best that it can be.

PL presents A PL insignia.

Youth Forums

Youth Forums and Youth Councils are really an extension of the Troop Council role from the Troop into District through to National decision-making. Scouts are chosen in a variety of ways for these but it is best if they are representative - through election by the Troop or selection by the Troop Council.

Forums discuss issues that directly affect Scouts. These can range from Troop issues through to input on matters concerning uniform, image, award scheme, leaders, leadership training, activities and on and on.

Properly facilitated these forums are a very effective way of providing feedback to the various levels of Scouting. Invariably, proper forums lead to well thought through and excellent recommendations and insightful commentaries. Branches where they are taken seriously, carefully consider and usually act on the recommendations.

This book itself is a direct response to the Forum paper quoted on page 2. The PL's 'promise' has been drawn substantially from their statements and supplemented from other sources. The need for promotion of the Patrol System is being partly addressed in this book and will be followed up with video and other promotional materials. Already Districts are sharing dates for leadership courses and inviting Scouts from other Districts to participate.

For every Scout Leader who reads that report and seriously considers the implications, there is a very strong motivation to do something. Material presented in this book is a resource for leaders to do something.

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Using the Patrol System at Jamborees and large-scale camps

Organisers of Jamborees and similar style camps usually think in Patrols. Patrols are the units for activities, of general organisation and effective teams. Patrols that work together get far more from the experience.

One danger in these large camps is that the line leader will focus purely on getting the kids to activities. Some leaders forget that these camps are part of the overall Scout program of leadership and personal development.

"My mum didn't pay all this money for me to do the dishes", complained one sweet little girl. On the contrary, that's is exactly what her mum did pay for - self-reliance, independence, personal responsibility, teamwork and all that.

By thinking Patrols at all times a good leader makes their job easier and does heaps for the Scouts' personal development. What is set up in the first day will become an entrenched pattern for the whole camp - good or bad. Think Patrols from the very beginning or leaders will end up doing all the work while the kids just sit around and give cheek.

Shakedown camp or meeting

This is the time for setting up the Patrols and sorting out Patrol Leaders as well as getting to know parents, kids and so on. Plan on organising a range of getting to know you games or Patrol challenges first, before firmly grouping the kids.

Making up Patrols

The Scouts will accept whatever the leaders say about this - after all they will usually have had no experience of a this sort of camp before. It is good to mix up the Scouts from different Troops if you can - this reinforces the idea that Jamborees are a great opportunity to meet and make friends with people from all over. It can also avoid importing some social problems from existing Troops.

One way is to ask the Scouts to form pairs with kids they would like to be with. Be persuaded to form a three if there appears to be an odd one out. Where you know a bad combination exists have a chat to the kids concerned and suggest they will enjoy things more if they split up and meet socially during the camp. Patrols can then form themselves with some rules. For example you could ask for no more than three from any one home group, at least one kid of each age, a certain proportion of boys and girls, at least three girls or no girls in a Patrol and so on. Patrols that form themselves will be more stable and more committed and therefore less troublesome.

Choosing the Patrol Leaders

The absolute best way is for the Patrols to elect their own PL who is then confirmed by the Scout leader. But the leader needs to control the process. Here is one way. Once Patrols are formed at the shakedown camp they are give one or more group activities such as putting up their tent, initiative task, and scavenger hunt. The natural leaders will become obvious if you watch closely not only to the adults but also to the Scouts themselves.

Sit all the Scouts down and ask them to make a list of the sorts of qualities the Patrol Leader needs to show (e.g. has knowledge, thinks and cares about others, makes considered decisions, uses members of the team, delegates, respects other kids etc.) This gives you an opportunity to emphasise what is expected of a PL and you can call on your own experience to prepare them for the role.

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Next send the Patrols off to elect their own PL. A bit of a gamble? Not at all. Kids are not stupid; they size one another up quickly and will choose just as successfully as an adult. (They make mistakes like leaders do too.) The big advantage is that you will already be forming strong cohesive Patrols with PLs who have a strong motivation to do the job properly. It is also a very good exercise in democratic processes.

Patrol Names

Have each Patrol select its own name. Leaders can give some limits -e.g. all animal names, names related to the theme of the Jamboree, only adjectives, and so on.

Camp Tasks

Involve PLs in layout decisions if you can. Have the Scouts do as much of the camp erection as possible starting with their own tents. Some leaders think they are doing their Scouts a favour by getting the camp ready before the kids arrive. Not so - it's just a lot of work that the Scouts don't appreciate. It's the Scouts' camp. They value it more if they do the work.

Allocate Patrols tasks right from the beginning. Have one Patrol put up the Q-tent, two help with the dining fly one for the leaders' tent, one or two for the gateway, one for the kitchen and so on. Even better, have a meeting of PLs at the shakedown camp and get them to sort out which Patrols are doing what. Don't ask for half a dozen volunteers for any job –ask the Patrols through the PLs to do everything. "John, would you get your Patrol to go to the Q-store and get the initial supplies"

Duty Patrol will always have something to do. It is a good idea to have these tasks listed from the beginning (e.g. tidy up mess, clean down tables, check guy ropes, kitchen duty, cooking etc.).

Cooking

This is awkward because Patrols can't realistically cook their own meals. There is no reason though that the duty Patrol can't cook the whole meal under the supervision of an adult. Begin by explaining the meal to the PL and APL, then have them allocate kids to certain tasks (collect water, put out hand washing stuff, cook the meat, prepare the vegetables, set the table, clean down the table, prepare wash-up water, wash pots, tidy up food scraps etc.)

Troop Council

It is sometimes difficult to have a time to meet with PLs regularly but it is essential to the smooth running of the Troop. Perhaps you could meet for 20 minutes each night after the rest of the Troop goes to bed. Discuss openly behaviour issues, health, homesickness and jobs. As always a happy and well-organised Troop works through the Troop Council. In doing so it trains the PLs in crucial life skills AND makes the Troop Leaders' jobs easier.

Recognition

Jamboree Patrol leaders are often recognised by special stripes or badges. If these are not in place, try something yourself - a colour patch or a special badge for example. A special certificate at the end will be a valued inclusion into future CVs. was a Patrol Leader at the Jamboree. S/he was required to lead a team, make group decisions, be responsible for the management and behaviour of Scouts, organise and supervise meal preparation for the whole Troop, work as part of the management team ... etc. Congratulations for your excellent effort.

*Remember the Patrol Method is what the Scout section is
- if we don't use it at any camp, even Jamborees, then we are not running
a Scout Troop, we are just entertaining the masses for about two years!*

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From the Past...

Captain, the Hon. R.E. Philipps was killed in action, still a young man on July 7, 1916. Before he enlisted he wrote three small books for Scouts. One of these, called "The Patrol System" must be second only to Baden-Powell's Scouting for Boys in its impact on us today.

On dusty shelves in many Scout halls there will be a copy, stained and tattered like the one I'm looking at the moment. It has a dull green cover and also contains his other two books about the test work of the day. If you can find it, have a long look - it's worth the translation.

We have taken large parts of his Patrol System Book and presented them in Scout magazine with a 'new millennium' commentary. These articles (slightly edited) are collected here.

Philipp's uses terms and phrases that have changed over the years. In some cases these have been left in the text below but are usually altered to avoid confusion. A Scoutmaster is now Scout Leader or simply Leader. The Leader in Philipp's books refers only to the Patrol Leader (PQ, Patrol Second to the APL. Our present day Troop Council was called 'Court of Honour' in 1915 but even then they had 'Patrols in Council'

Philipps' text is always in Italics.

The Patrol System

"In all cases I would strongly recommend the Patrol System, that is, small permanent groups, all under responsible charge of a leading boy, as a great step to success."

These words are to be found in the "Forward" for instructors at the beginning of the first edition of "Scouting for Boys." which was published in 1908.

Many things have happened since then, one of the most striking being that "Scouting for Boys" has seen seven editions and is now in its eighth (in 1915 remember). One opens the seventh edition and finds these words:-

"Scouts generally go about Scouting in pairs, or sometimes singly; if more go together they are called a Patrol. "

It is from the fundamental idea contained in these two passages that by far the greater part of the successful work done by Scoutmasters in different parts of the country is evolved . . . It is necessary to point out at the start that the Patrol System is not one method which Scouting for boys can be carried out, but that it is the only method.

The Patrol System may be adopted and utilised in a greater or in a lesser degree, but the essential thing is that there should be small permanent groups, each under the responsible charge of a leading boy, and that such groups should be organised as Scout Patrols. "

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The Patrol Leader

“Here is the Patrol, consisting of six, seven or eight boys. As it is to be a unit for purposes of work, games, discipline, camp and good turns, it is essential that a capable scout should be appointed to the position of Leadership. By capable it is not meant that he must be clever It is meant that he should be able to lead. Qualities of leadership are partly natural and partly acquired The natural qualities are important, for however excellent a boy may be, he cannot hope to be really successful as a leader unless he possesses something of that peculiar quality - that personal magnetism -which draws his fellows in work and in play. The acquired qualities can be rapidly developed by the ordinary Scout training under the Patrol System.

If a boy is to be appointed Patrol Leader it is important that his age should not be against him. This does not signify that a boy of twelve cannot be just as successful as a boy of sixteen or eighteen, but it means that a boy, unless quite exceptional, is unable to lead other boys older than himself Young boys follow an older one even if he is stupid. Old boys do not follow a younger one, even if he is clever In this respect muscles have a more cogent influence than brains. Boys have a respect for biceps without being interested in phrenology. ”

It is interesting to translate this into 1990s operations. Basically what Philipps has to say still holds true today though there are some major changes in structures. Scouts are no longer a section for 11 - 18 year olds; the difference in age between a younger and older member of the Patrol will not be as great but is often just as obvious. Girls and boys in Troops still act in similar ways with respect to reaction to leadership though the hormones play a part as well - I wonder how Philipps would have written about that.

I often see that taller, 'spunky' boys are often those who are seen as the charismatic leaders chosen by boys and girls to lead them. Girls are chosen more moderately, though once again, boys' choice of girls is not always ruled by the head - other parts of the body have an effect. In Youth Forum elections the younger boys and girls rarely get a look in. I wouldn't be surprised if every Troop finds the same thing.

In the seventies many leaders experimented with 'peer Patrols'- that is all members of the Patrol were roughly the same age. My observations then were that the Scouts were still swayed by personality, drive and physical ability. Brains, whilst part of the equation, could not always be relied on to win votes.

I have also observed that natural leaders of Scout age are not always chosen by adults. Some adults look for compliant, well-behaved, courteous, good representatives' to be leaders. Good leaders have independent views and can be confrontational and may question adult leadership. The choice of the compliant Scouts can lead to the circumstance where the adult leader needs to be constantly propping up their chosen few. Where the best leader is not chosen it works against good Patrol operation and the unrecognised natural leaders either cause disruption or leave.

“--- the work of patrol leadership is so important that it is too much for any boy to expected to do by himself An APL' is therefore appointed to help him.

The APL' is a boy selected by the Patrol leader to be his assistant and take command of the Patrol when he himself is away. It is essential to the successful organisation of the Patrol that the PL' and APL' should be on terms of intimate co-operation. It is for this reason that a Scoutmaster who chooses the APLs without consultation with the PLs is making an initial mistake, which it may be impossible afterwards to rectify. A Scoutmaster will certainly talk it over with his PL' who the APL is to be, but unless he can convince his PL by argument, he must not use his powers as Senior Officer to appoint an APL against the PLs wishes. The Chief is in favour of leaving the selection of the APL practically entirely in the hands of the Patrol leader, and of letting him make his own mistakes if he wants to. ”

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This writing of Philipps is astonishing when you realise that ninety years ago young people of the age he was writing about were often working in employment where they were never given any responsibility. If they were still at school the masters 'rule was very firm or prefect systems were set up to support the institution rather than the training of leaders - especially so when applied to 'the lower classes'

It is insightful and just as good advice today as it was then. It advocates the adult's role be supportive and facilitative through advice and discussion but gives full responsibility to the PLs and allows them to learn leadership and delegation by doing the leading and delegating.

Scouting has the benefit of constant youth. it bubbles away and explodes in unexpected directions. That is the joy of adult leadership (and the source of all our worries). In looking at the early writings our task is not to follow slavishly but to learn and translate it all into today's words. All things change and all things remain the same.

"A Scoutmaster frequently says I have appointed my (Patrol) Leaders as the Chief wishes, but they are not able to lead their Patrols in anything but in theory. In practice I have to do the leadership myself"

Now that sounds familiar!

Philipps has quite a long response to this, which is summarised below. These are direct quotes and the language and content has changed but the underlying message is clear.

- * *Knowledge is power - this is especially true in the case of boys (read: young people). (A young leader) if not born can be created... by giving (them) special facilities for acquiring knowledge*
- * *Knowledge can only gained in one-way - from experience ... either personal, or obtained from other and from books.*
- * *It is quite a good idea to have a small library of technical books especially for the use of (Patrol) Leaders and (APLs) ... If the books get dusty, the brains of the Patrol Leaders will do the same.*
- * *The Headquarters Gazette, price 3d.per month should also be taken and Patrol leaders influenced to read it. (Think our modern publications)*
- * *(They) should have special opportunities of asking the Scoutmaster any questions. They should have special opportunities of access to their Scoutmaster, either at his home, or at a special parade ... held once a week.*
- * *They may be formed into a special Patrol, of which the Scoutmaster is himself Patrol leader Such a Patrol specialises in First Class work (Adventurer Level), in camp organisation, in woodcraft, and in other outdoor practices.*

'When should a leader lead?'

The answer is simple - always. "

Ve leads in games by being the captain of the team (the team being, where ever possible, the Patrol). He leads in general authority by being privileged to attend (The Troop Council), by being chairman of his (Patrol Council) and by being organiser of competitive work for the Patrol Competitions.

Philipps speaks at length about the value of the PLs reporting regularly about their Patrol's attendance, punctuality, fitness, service and Scouting progress.

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'Apart from these (there are) many methods of increasing his own authority. One is by knowing all the parents of all the boys in his Patrol, and by knowing where (the Scouts) work, and what are their prospects and opportunities.

(The PL) may further increase authority by developing original and resourceful ideas which are eagerly carried out by (the) Scouts."

The example Philipps using seem quaint to my 'new millennium' view but the principals of identity and service are sound:

'A leader of the Lions in London may take his Patrol off to the Zoological Gardens to practice their patrol call, while a Leader in the country may hear that a road is flooded and take his Patrol one evening to clear out the blocked pipe or gutter which is the cause of the trouble. "

The Troop Council

The operation of Troop Council has always been an essential part of the way Scouts has operated. It is interesting to compare composition and roles with today's operations. The age range was 11 to 18 years and the formal relationships between adults and young people have changed.

"The Court of Honour may be variously constituted but ... it should be the most important council in connection with the Troop. It has seen considerable developments since Scouting started. It was originally designed to be a body designed to ... decide on punishments, to make awards and to deal with any important matters in connection with the running of the Troop.

... the Scoutmasters found it desirable to have a ... Council to transact and carry on the ordinary and routine business. After a time it seemed to be rather unnecessary to have two separately constituted bodies, whose functions overlapped and whose affairs would be all the easier if they might be combined. For this reason there sprang up what might be described as the latest development, and a very helpful development, of the Court of Honour

This Court consists of all the Leaders and Seconds, with the Scoutmaster in the chair It may consist of all the Leaders and some specially selected Seconds, or it may again consist of all the Patrol leaders, and Scouts specially elected from each Patrol. It is usually helpful to have the Scoutmaster in the chair, but in some cases a Patrol leader takes the chair and the Scoutmaster himself is not present.

A Court meets in two capacities, its executive capacity or its judicial capacity. As an executive it should meet every week, even if only for five minutes, to transact ordinary Troop business. The Court only meets in its judicial capacity if some breach of the Scout Law has been committed.

Patrol Spirit

"The Scout master should do everything to foster the Patrol Spirit. The Patrol Spirit means that each boy in the Patrol feels he is an essential part of a complete and self-contained unit - a body in which every member is expected to carry out his own individual part in order to attain the perfection and completeness of the whole. "

Philipps outlines a number of simple ways that the individual is encouraged to quickly identify with the Patrol and the Patrol is encouraged to develop an individual identity:-

Scouts are welcomed into the Patrol on their investiture. Each Patrol has its own name, emblem, call, motto and Patrol corner.

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Simple enough.

The final paragraph is astonishing:

"There is no reason why Patrols should meet on the same evening. Three of them may meet on Tuesday's and Fridays, and three more on Mondays and Thursdays. The whole Troop in this case only assembles together on Saturday afternoons, and possibly for a Scouts "Own on Sundays. "

That left Wednesday evening for the Scoutmaster to have District meetings and do his training I suppose! Perhaps the Scoutmaster wasn't always there.

Boys and girls of Scout age want to belong. Things in common (badges, uniform, secret signs) help them identify with the group, which in turn puts them at ease and helps them learn.

At a competition camp or field day you often see evidence of this. The experience of taking part is designed to build identity or Patrol spirit. The actual activity is of secondary importance. Standing Patrols make sense in these sorts of activity. It doesn't matter how well the Patrol scores but rather how well the Patrol dedicates itself to meeting the various challenges. That is why all Patrols have a chance to achieve a standard rather than having only one outright winner.

The best 'assessors' seem to understand this in the way they work through the PLs, support young, inexperienced Patrols and take the Scouts seriously. The discipline and order of 1915 Patrols may have looked very different to today but the essential idea remains the same.

Patrol Discipline

Over the years thinking about discipline has changed. The cane and the strap have disappeared from our schools, children are encouraged to be assertive rather than aggressive and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Philipps presents a surprising view from 1915. These points are either quoted directly or paraphrased for brevity.

If the Troop meets from 8 to 9.30, it is essential that the Scoutmaster be (there) at precisely 8 or before.

It is essential that the Patrol leader should be punctual (or) if this is not possible he must ask his Second to take his place.

At 8 O'clock the Scoutmaster gives the order fall in' Led by the Patrol Leader each Patrol is ready within 12 seconds.

After saluting the flag the Scoutmaster will briefly inspect the Patrol to see who is absent. The Patrol Leader is expected to account for absent members.

The Patrol Leader takes the Patrol from the Parade to their corner and gives out whatever instruction is needed.

Philipps speaks similarly about the final Parade where the Patrol leader takes much of the responsibility.

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We could analyse this through new millennium eyes but it still holds true.

The point of It all is to give responsibility to the Patrol leader and to give individuality to the Patrols. The Scoutmaster should never give orders to his Scouts except through his Patrol Leaders. Those who say that this does not work have not tried it.

Patrol In Council

It is an excellent thing for each Patrol to have a 'Patrol in Council', 'consisting of all its members with the Patrol leader in the chair

The principal objective of this Council is that the Leader should be in touch with the wishes and aims of the Scouts under him, and that he should act as far as possible in accordance with them. He has a seat on the (Troop Council), not so much to express his own personal views, but rather as the representative of his Patrol.

There is practically no limit to the questions, which maybe discussed at the Patrol in Council. If there is a Patrol Competition in which each Patrol may enter only three Scouts, these three Scouts would be selected at the Patrol in Council.

Philipps goes on to identify Patrol Good Turns, irregular attendance, new recruits, camps and inter-Patrol visits as matters for the Patrol Council.

He makes the point that; in some Troops there might be only one Patrol, which can be operating very effectively. (His example is a village in North Wales!).

It must be remembered, (he goes on), that every Patrol is in many respects a Lone Patrol – that is to say, that it is a self-contained, self-reliant community.

Often Philipps' expression is quaint and old fashioned but that final sentence is in the jargon of today! That this sort of organisation is still effective probably reflects the basic nature of young people and their natural social inclinations. It was (and still is) effectively building on the way humans develop.

There is much more in this small book. If you can find a copy and read it carefully many more things will stand out with surprising relevance to today's Scouting. Indeed what has changed is only the particular activities and outward trappings. What was innovative and successful in 1915 is still sound, progressive education today.

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Patrol Leader's Oath

As a Patrol Leader I promise that I will:

- ❖ Act at all times as a teacher of my Patrol to ensure the highest standards*
- ❖ Be a responsible person*
- ❖ Be organised with things*
- ❖ Be a step ahead with my badge work and Scouting knowledge*
- ❖ Lead by example*
- ❖ Wear my uniform properly and live by the Scout Promise and law*
- ❖ Be kind, considerate and trusted*
- ❖ Be a team member in the Troop Council*
- ❖ Run my Patrols Council and delegate to Patrol members*
- ❖ Help the Scouts in my Patrol with their Scouting*
- ❖ Standby my Patrol members when they need support*
- ❖ Organise things for my Patrol*
- ❖ Make my Patrol a strong, independent group with a mind of its own but still remain an essential part of our Troop*
- ❖ Have fun and make sure my Patrol do too*

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