

The Stalker April 1913

12 page booklet
green cover
21x13 cm (approx)

Frank Rump & his friend Clifford Laskey have recently gone to Canada. Samuel relates a trip to Mexico as well as an introduction detailing the troop's activities.

Reference made to Granville Troop in N.S.W., presumably in Australia?

Janet Archer Reepham Archive Volunteer



Market Place, Reepham, Norfolk,
NR10 4JJ
01603 879 242
admin@reephamarchive.co.uk
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AUGUST 2001

The Stalker.

The Official Journal of the Hackford House Troop.

APRIL, 1913.

HACKFORD HOUSE TROOP.

VARIOUS things have contributed to delay a further issue of our Magazine: among other things the loss of three members whose exertions and talents really made the first issue possible. those three being George Anderson, who no longer resides in Reepham, Frank Rump, who has gone to Canada, and Donald Chapman, whose work at the Reepham Post Office allows no time for other things; and volunteers not being at the moment forthcoming I will try, with what help I can get, to fill the gap "for this occasion only."

Perhaps the best way of beginning is to refer to my address at the Annual Meeting of Residents held in the Boys' Club Room on February 10th last, at which were present Mr. W. Collyer, J.P., Mr. and Mrs. D'Arcy Collyer, Mr. and Miss Kendrew, Miss Wilkinson, Mrs. Berry, Mr. Hudson, Dr. Perry, a few tradesmen and parents, but not one of the Committee! I will set out the address (for I read what I had written) not quite *in extenso*, but at some length, in the hope that it may catch the eye of some who were not present and may stimulate interest in the Troop. I read:—

"Let me say how grateful I am to you present for attending this meeting and giving me the opportunity of saying a word or two on Scouting generally and our Hackford House Troop in particular.

Referring to the latter first, just a word as to finance for the year 1912. To Canon and Miss Wilkinson, Mr. Kendrew, Dr. Perry and several of those engaged in trade or business we are indebted for contributions in money, while we thank donors of sacks, two metal teapots for our camp use, of oil, of a flagstaff and various kindnesses in carpentry, etc. Mrs. Duncombe Anderson was a generous contributor to our Reading Room. We must thank Miss Kendrew and Miss Scotton for their frequent and kind instruction in First Aid, Mr. Storey for a Lecture on Painting, Mr. Overton on Baking, while Mr. Duncombe Anderson has kindly offered instruction on the Use and Management of the Rifle, of which we shall avail ourselves presently. In money we have received some £6 odd, to which I must add £7 1s. 4d. from the Committee of the late Lads' Brigade, a welcome windfall which went a long way to defray the expenses of our camping out at Sheringham, but this will not occur again! The boys' pence met to a great extent, not wholly, our expenses in

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lamps, oil, breakages, firing, etc., always recurring expenses. Contributions however have not by any means covered our outgoings, but we Scouts are not beggars and we can only look hopefully to a repetition of the kindnesses of 1912 to meet our expenses of 1913. We are trying to get up a "performance," but it is beset with difficulties, particularly where the boys are the sole performers, but Miss Kendrew has been most kind in helping, and possibly by Whitsun we may be in a position to ask our friends to buy tickets. We have a capital Club Room which has cost me a good deal to put in a proper condition for use by the boys, but so long as the boys use it properly they are, during my life, heartily welcome to it. I conclude finance with expressing a hope that those around us may recognise that a good work is being carried out and help us. The Treasurer, Dr. Perry, will gratefully receive any contributions.

As regards the Troop, we began the year with three Patrols, but from various causes our numbers are now seventeen. To say that our two years experience is everything I had hoped would be going too far, but I honestly believe that good has been done. Boys will be boys and God forbid that they should be old men before their time, but they need to recognise (to use a cant phrase) that life is not all beer and skittles. They have now an opportunity of preparing themselves to become good and useful citizens of their country in whatever sphere it may please God to call them. Let them recognise that their country has done a good deal for them, let them try and do a little for their country. We will try and do what we can by reasonable drill and exercise to develop their thews and sinews, but alongside of that, and paramount to it, is the improvement of their minds and characters. True Scouting is individual character training. The Club Room for physical and mental recreation offers an antidote to that all too prevalent habit of the boy of the present day—loafing. Let the older boys set an example in the use of their Club Room for proper recreation of mind and body. Let the younger boys practice self-denial and obedience and let all hold steadfast to the three promises they made when they joined the Troop:—

"Honour God and the King."

"Do good turns to others."

"Keep the Scout Law."

I want boys to understand that these promises were serious, solemn promises, containing nothing they cannot carry out. They must give up something of self, and attend meetings when they can. For myself I will give what time I can to the boys, and try by instruction and example to train them in the way they should go, but they must meet me half way. The principle of Boy Scouting is so absolutely good that I will not for a moment admit any question as to its desirability. The

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boys can help me by sticking to obedience, punctuality and discipline, and this word "discipline" leads me to refer to an intimation which reached me a short time since that "The form of discipline in Country Troops does not appeal to me at all." I don't know what was meant, but I felt it was a slur on my Troop and a reflection on myself. I ought not to have minded it, for it was quite unjustifiable, the boys can maintain their character against any such assertion. I will say this in favour of my boys. If I have had reason to complain of anything and asked the Troop assembled—as I have done once or twice—who did this or that, instantly the boy has come forward and given himself up. I have never found any guilty of a lie.

Let it be understood that we do not for a moment interfere with religious views. All we require is that a boy must follow *some* form of religion, Established Church, Chapel or "Army," and must follow honestly one or the other. We will not have any Godless spirit among us. I wish to emphasise the great good done by the one or two kind persons who have taken the trouble to give instruction in one form or another. The boys like it, they feel that an interest is being taken in them and their improved character will reciprocate. Good seed is being sown, in time a good crop will follow. But there are those who are content to stand idle in the Market Place and do nothing. I venture to say it is not a matter in which you can please yourself. If you have not read the Scout Law, get it, read it, digest it, it will do you good, and if after reading it and knowing what we are trying to do, I believe you will fail in your duty as an Englishman, if you stand by and do nothing.

I would like to add that our Sheringham Camp Out was on the whole a success. We learned something. The lady visitors at the Grand Hotel were much pleased with the boys, invited them to take part in some sports, and by a sale of flowers at a dance in the hotel made £2 which they presented to us next morning to be invested in the purchase of a rifle, which I have, and which will presently be brought into use with Mr Duncombe Anderson's help."

After the Scoutmaster's address, the boys gave a short exhibition of First Aid, and some songs and the National Anthem concluded the business.

REPORT OF THE PEEWITS.

SINCE the last issue the Leadership of the Peewit Patrol has changed. D. Chapman who has been Leader for nearly two years has left us. During his Leadership I was second for about one year and my present second,

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W. Gaskin, for the rest of the time. Of this season's Football Team we supply four men.

On November 2nd, 1912, the patrols had a Relay Race, which the Wood Pigeons won. We were much below full strength, but we do not grudge them their victory which they won easily. The distance ran was from Eades Mill, via Pettywell Hill, Mr. T. Sharpin's white gate, Sall Patch, Booton Hill and from there to the Club Room.

Miss Scotton is giving First Aid Classes again this winter, which helps us a great deal.

On Boxing Day Mr. Bircham treated the boys to the Watts Naval School Annual Concert. As the football team were playing at Norwich only about seven boys went, and they had a very pleasant afternoon. JOHN RUMP, *Leader*.

REPORT OF THE WOODPIGEONS.

IT is now some time since our last issue and many changes have taken place in the Troop. D. K. Chapman has left us and J. Rump has taken his place as Leader of the Peewits. The Troop has lately been preparing for badges. We have also had three outings to Whitwell Common for the purpose of bridge building. The framework of the bridges were built entirely of staves and were really quite a success, the second one bearing easily a weight of 70 stone. Several Scouts have given in their names for badges and we trust will soon be ready for them. As we are practising for an entertainment we have had little time lately for anything else. During the last few weeks we have had several new recruits and we hope they will soon be second class.

In a Relay Race which took place in December last the Wood Pigeons won easily, their man coming in 15 minutes before the Peewits. BERT HALL *Leader*.

ON Palm Sunday, March 16th, the Troop attended Service at Reepham Church, a Farewell Service previous to the departure of Frank Rump and Clifford Laskey for Canada. Rev. Corke, of Alderford, preached a capital sermon to the boys, short, and to the point, and gave them an anagram to remember. The word Scout he said was full of meaning. S stood for Service, C for Courage, O for Obedience, U for Unselfishness, and T for Truth.

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GOOD Friday, March 21st, will long be remembered by the Hackford House Troop as being the day on which two of the Troop, Frank Rump and Clifford Laskey, left for Canada. The Troop will miss them both, and miss too a genial Assistant Scoutmaster in Frank Rump, one who gave time ungrudgingly and did his useful best to further the welfare of the Troop. They leave with the hearty good wishes of all and the confidence that the Troop has sent out to the "Dominion" two representatives who will do their duty and prove their worth. That every success may attend them is the earnest hope of the Hackford House Troop. God bless them.

A STRAIGHT TALK.

By an Ex-Patrol Leader.

HAVING been approached with a view to giving a short article for insertion in your Magazine, which I am glad to note is being continued, I welcome this opportunity of saying a few words on practical Scouting generally. While Scouting is essentially individual character training, it behoves all connected with Scouting to see that this individualism is effectively combined in order to develop the abilities of the Scouts comprising the various Troops to the best advantage.

A Troop of Scouts must not, for the general good of the movement, be a one man concern. The Scoutmaster should have the whole-hearted and earnest sympathies of his Assistant Scoutmaster and Patrol Leaders, while an interested Committee is most essential. An apathetic committee is worse than useless; but boys, remember that *you* may be responsible for the state of your committee, which reflects the doings of a Troop, and if the boys comprising a Troop do nothing for themselves to enthuse over how can its committee be an enthusiastic and an interested body? Remember nothing succeeds like success, and that if a combination is not doing well, every one is ready to grumble at its management. That must not be the case with our Reepham Scouts.

Take a case in point. Doubtless most of you are now familiar with the members of the Granville, N.S.W., Troop. What is their condition as a Troop? Is it not a very flourishing one? The reason is not far to seek. Their Scouts are brimful of determination (or grit if you like) and esprit de corps. Their splendid record has not been achieved as a one man show. Certainly not! All the Granville Scouts are responsible for this, under their Scoutmaster, who is a whole-hearted and ardent supporter of the movement, and who is also ably enthusiastically supported by his "Staff," which is,

I take it, his Committee. His staff has heaps of individualism, which is "pooled" so to speak, the combination making itself very obvious in the amelioration and advancement of the Troop.

So boys, by all means cultivate and use your individual characteristics but if used judiciously with combination, you will find your abilities as Troop will advance a hundredfold.

BEAUTIES OF SPRINGTIME.

AFTER the short and dull days of winter one looks forward to the spring which gives birth to almost everything growing on the earth. The pastures are green with the springing grass and many wild flowers in April. Towards the end of May, if the weather has been warm the hedgerows are bright with hawthorn or "May Blossoms." Birds of song revisit and enliven us, and in April swallows build in their old haunts. Insect life takes a new lease and the humming of the bees is particularly noticeable towards the end of May. Spring commences on March 21st and continues till June 21st, and is the season to witness the commencement of the Cricket season.

SCOUT W. R. HALL.

A "WASH-OUT" IN MEXICO.

IDARE say you boys think a railway journey of 100 miles or so a pretty long expedition. Well, I have travelled three or four days at a stretch in India and several times between the East and West coasts of the United States of America and of Canada, but the longest time I was on the line was from Mexico City to New York, now nearly twenty years ago, and I'll tell you why we were eleven days in the train. On that occasion, which is usually, or was in 1885, an eight days' journey, I spent a very interesting ten days in Mexico City and the neighbourhood, of which I'll tell you some other time, and left Mexico City on the evening of the September 21st, got to Aguas Calientes on the evening of the 23rd, and to Soledad early on the 25th, but this was to be our limit for two or three days, for the autumnal rains came down and in a very short time converted what were dry channels on either side of the railway into rushing torrents and presently the whole country round into a lake. Watchers at this season of the year are placed along the line, and we were warned that a "Washout" had occurred, and soon saw what it was. A timber bridge

had been washed away and the rails, kept together by the ties (or sleepers as we call them here) hung suspended in the air from point to point. There was no going on, that was quite clear, and what was to be done? The guard of the train got a telegraph wire detached and fixed it to the instrument in his car and wired back to Aguas Calientes for a train of ties or sleepers, but meanwhile how were the passengers to be fed? We caught two fowls which had taken refuge on a piece of high land close by, plucked them and cooked them in a pot over the engine fire. But what were they among so many, twenty-five or thirty people! So it was decided to send us back to Aguas Calientes, and get provisions and come out again next day with materials for relaying the line. So back we went, got in stores (I got tobacco which was running short) and left again next day with several trucks of ties and a gang of men. When we got back to near Soledad the rain had abated and the water sensibly diminished and we all set to work, passengers as well as gang, and built up the ties, crossways, just as a child builds a wooden brick tower, till we got up to the rails level.

It was almost touching to watch the emotion of three Sisters (Nuns) who verily believed their last hour was at hand, and kept walking through the cars each bearing a lighted candle, and muttering prayers. Poor things, they talked Spanish and I could not console them except by gesture, and one didn't like to appear interfering.

Well gradually the ties were packed up to the rails and the rails fixed to a line of ties placed longitudinally, and then came the trial. First came the engine, and it was an anxious time as it approached the new construction. The men on the engine stood as near the side as they could, ready to jump off if anything went wrong, and amid creaking, groaning and straining of timbers and swaying a little from side to side it eventually got over. If the engine got over, it was reasonable to expect all the rest of the train would pass over safely, and by evening the Pulman, always the last car and the heaviest, passed over all safely, and we sped on our way three days late.

I had arranged to spend a couple of days in Philadelphia, but this "washout" made that impossible, and for the last three days after El Paso, the frontier post between Mexico and the United States, it was a race against time to catch the Cunarder leaving New York on October 3rd and I caught it by two or three hours only. So ended my eleven day rail journey.

I must tell you one story about the gang of men who came out from Aguas Calientes to mend the road. An English navy was in charge and many of the gang were Italians and didn't work to the satisfaction of their boss. "These men are no good," he said, "they can't work, they're the sort of men they make Popes of." SCOUTMASTER.

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THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

THE following few facts every boy should know. The Solar System consists of the Sun, which does not move, with eight planets circling round him at varying distances. The eight planets are: the Earth, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Neptune, Saturn, Uranus and Venus. The Earth has one satellite called the Moon revolving round it, Jupiter has four satellites, Mars has two, Neptune one, Saturn ten and Uranus four.

The Sun is 93 million miles from the Earth. Mercury is 57 million miles from the earth. Venus is 26 million miles from the earth. Mars is 49 million miles from the earth. Jupiter is 390 million miles from the earth. Saturn is 793 million miles from the earth. Uranus is 1700 million miles from the earth. Neptune is 2700 million miles from the earth.

The Sun is 870,000 miles across. The Earth is 8,000 miles across. Jupiter is 87,000 miles across. Mars is 4,300 miles across. Mercury is 3,000 miles across. Neptune is 33,000 miles across. Saturn is 71,000 miles across. Uranus is 32,000 miles across. Venus is 8,000 miles across.

CANADA.

THE Hackford House Troop is interested in Canada now, let us learn all about it and be able to follow our friends out there. It was discovered only 400 years ago, and we know nothing of it till 50 years later, or 1534, when the French took possession of it. They founded Quebec in 1608, which 150 years later was taken by the British under General Wolfe, and shortly afterwards all Canada became British property. It contains $3\frac{1}{2}$ million square miles. The British Isles contain 121,000 square miles, but the population of the latter was in 1912 nearly 46 million, while that of Canada was just over 7 million, so that while Canada is nearly 40 times as large as the British Isles the latter has a population nearly 7 times as large as that of Canada. More of this another time.

GUESS THESE.

What is the opposite to Cock-a-doodle-do?

What has a cat which no other animal has?

If—I don't say he was—but *if* Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter then it follows, does it not, that he was the daughter of Pharaoh's son. Of course he must have been.

Good-bye is an abbreviation of God be with you.