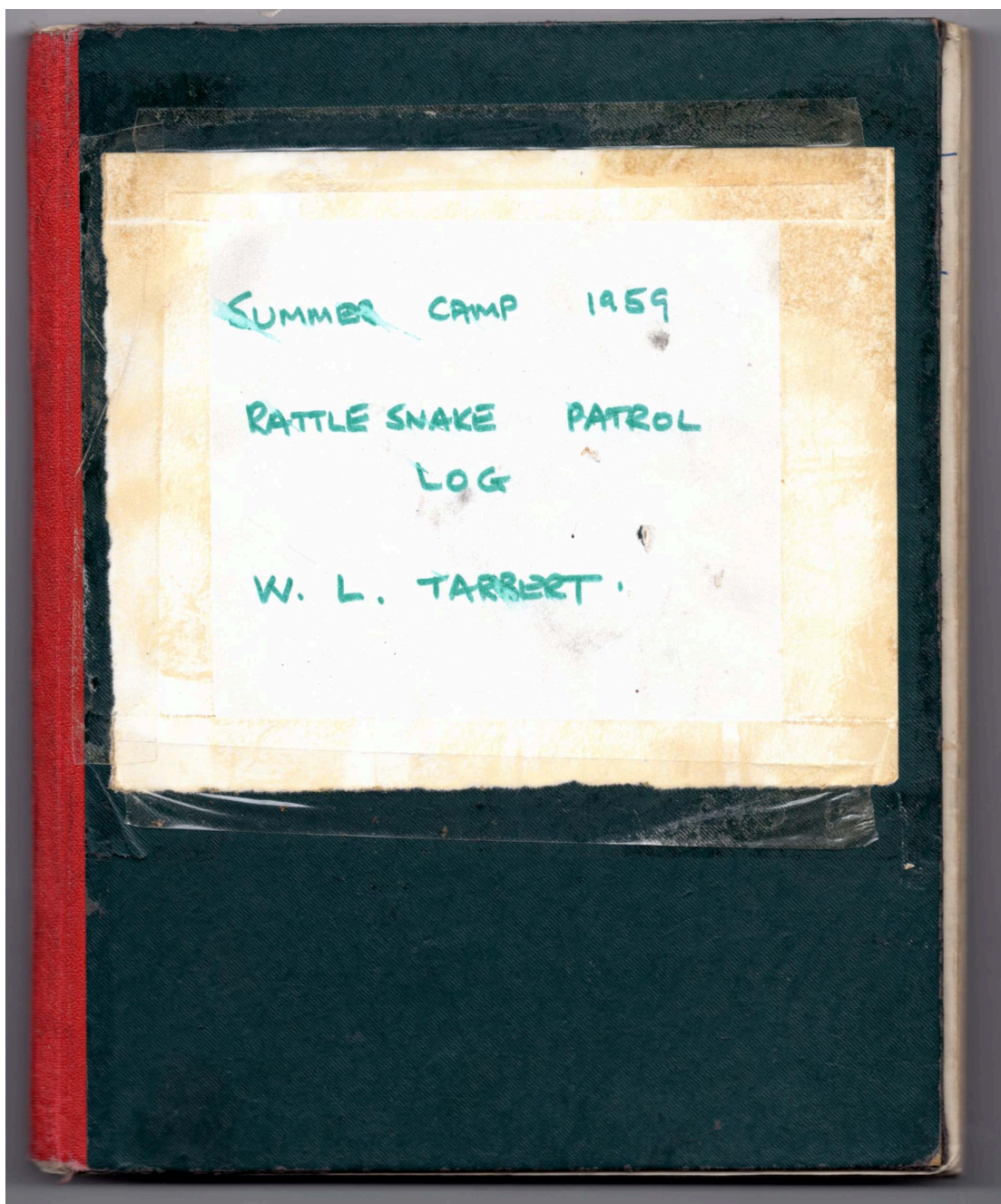


Summer Camp 1959 Rattlesnake Patrol Log



44444

Editorial Note:

Note that the Rattlesnake Patrol was led by Jim Blair who was normally Second of the Kingfisher Patrol. It was customary to change the names of patrols at summer camp, partially because most of these patrols were composite patrols containing Scouts who were in different patrols during the rest of the year.

RATTLESNAKE
PATROL
SUMMER CAMP
TARBERT
1959

Editorial Note

The Rattlesnake Patrol at Tarbert was composed of the following:-

<i>Patrol Leader</i>	<i>Jim Blair</i>	<i>(Second of the Kingfisher Patrol)</i>
<i>Second</i>	<i>Sandy Millar</i>	<i>(Second of the Curlew Patrol)</i>
<i>1st Scout</i>	<i>Philip Dry</i>	<i>(1st Scout, possibly of the Seal Patrol)</i>
<i>2nd Scout</i>	<i>Alastair Robb</i>	<i>(possibly of the Seal Patrol)</i>
<i>3rd Scout</i>	<i>Ronald Russell</i>	<i>(Seal Patrol)</i>

Wednesday 22/7/59

On arriving at Gourock Pier, we proceeded to load our gear¹ on to the “Loch Fyne”² which sailed at 9.45 am³. After arriving at Tarbert at 12.15 and unloading the equipment, a party on bicycles⁴ set off under the instruction of ‘Bob’⁵ for the camp site⁶, while the remainder waited at the pier for the lorry⁷.

When the party on bikes arrived, they chose campsites for their patrols and waited on the lorry coming with the rest of the boys and wur⁸ kit. The rest of the afternoon was spent putting up tents and kitchen shelters⁹ and was completed with a swim.¹⁰

After tea¹¹, which we managed to make in about two hours, we were split up into four parties¹²

1. for the lats¹³ which consisted of Tom¹⁴, Dry¹⁵ and myself¹⁶;
2. for the flagpole¹⁷ which consisted of some other blokes;
3. for the notice board¹⁸
4. for pitching the bike tent.¹⁹

Then after cocoa²⁰, we were persuaded to go to bed.

J. Blair¹⁶ P.L.

Editorial notes

1. The troop camping equipment might have been taken down to Gourock pier the previous day and stored in the Left Luggage Office. This was certainly done on a number of other camps.
2. The MV LochFyne was a passenger ferry capable of carrying 1202 passengers, and was built by William Denny and Brothers of Dumbarton in 1931 for David MacBrayne Ltd. During the 1960s, it sailed from Gourock to Ardrishaig and back again stopping at Tarbert en route. The ship was also designated as a ‘mail steamer’ as it carried the Royal Mail to Ardrishaig. The ferry was withdrawn from service in 1969 and scrapped in 1974. The ferry had two funnels but the front funnel was a dummy.
3. The Mouse Patrol Log stated that it left at 9.30 am. It’s not known which time was the actual one. Perhaps it was meant to leave at 9.30 am, but was delayed because of the Scouts loading their equipment.
4. Possibly most, if not all, of the PLs had brought their bikes. These were to prove useful throughout the camp in travelling between Tarbert and the campsite.
5. ASM Bob Miller was in charge of the cyclists and knew where the campsite was –indicating that he must have been part of a recce party that visited the site at an earlier date.
6. The campsite was at Grid Reference NR 835648 on the east side of West Loch Tarbert, about 3-4 miles south of the centre of Tarbert. It was on the other side of the road from Wood House (Wood Ho) close to the footbridge crossing the stream called Allt Tarsuinn.
7. In the 1950s, the majority of Clyde ferries were passenger ferries, and so piermasters usually provided a lorry to transport goods and equipment brought by an arriving ferry to their destinations. Passengers could also make use of this service to transport heavy luggage, presumably if they paid in advance and identified the desired destination. It is assumed that the troop hired such a lorry to transport the Scouts and the camping equipment to the campsite on West Loch Tarbert. However, it is likely that they would have had to wait until the lorry had made its routine deliveries from the arriving ferry and then returned to the pier. This could well explain why there was a delay in the lorry arriving at the campsite; the cyclists arrived an hour before the lorry. In the 1950s, there was nothing unusual in Scouts being transported in the back of a lorry. It should also be noted that coal merchants hired out their lorries during the summer when the demand for coal was low. For example, the 70th hired a coal lorry to transport Scouts and equipment to and from Pitlochry railway station during the 1950s and 1960s.

9. *Each Patrol was self sufficient throughout the summer camp in terms of camping and cooking arrangements. All meals were cooked over wood fires. It's not known what kind of fires were used (alter fires, pit fires, trench fires etc). However, pit fires seemed to be used at the previous year's summer camp at Benderloch.*
10. *It's not known where exactly the Scouts went for their swim, but it would be safe to assume that it was in the Loch – possibly close to the mouth of the Allt Tarsuinn.*
11. *Tea was the evening meal and dinner was the midday meal. The latter tended to be the more substantial meal at camp. The tea on the first day consisted of bangers and spaghetti, bread and jam, and a mug of tea.*
12. *Each party was responsible for building or creating one of the main communal features at summer camp.*
13. *'latrines'. This would have involved digging a pit. It is not known whether toilet tents were owned by the troop during this period.*
14. *Tommy Dow was aged about 15 at the time and was promoted to Second of the Seal Patrol after the summer. It is thought that he might have transferred to the 70th from another troop in 1957 or 1958 .*
15. *Philip Dry was probably aged about 14 or 15 at the time and was a member of the Rattlesnake Patrol in camp. His normal patrol was the Seal Patrol and he was promoted to Second of that patrol after the summer.*
16. *Jim Blair was aged 15 at this point and had been Second of the Kingfisher Patrol since 1956. He was promoted to PL of the Fox patrol after the summer, but took on the role of PL at Tarbert.*
17. *It was traditional to put up a sizeable flagpole at summer camp. The flagpole was usually obtained locally by cutting down a suitable tree or obtaining a tree that had been cut down and trimmed by the Forestry Commission. It's not known what the source of the tree was for this camp. According to Martin Blake, the flagpole at Tarbert 1959 was a Skylon flagpole which is suspended off the ground.*
18. *The notice board was usually erected close to the flagpole and the centre of camp. It is not known how it was constructed in 1959, but in more recent times it consisted of a breadboard tied to two Scout staves stuck in the ground. The kind of notices that might have been put up would have been the day's menu and the programme. There might have something related to Scout tests as well.*
19. *The 'bike shed' was also called the 'garage'. Presumably, this was a spare kitchen shelter. It was constructed on the same side of the burn as the Mouse Patrol's camping site, fairly close to the footbridge.*
20. *There was also a game of baseball and a campfire during the evening.*

Thursday 23/7/59

This morning after having an early breakfast²¹ we tidied up for inspection then we proceeded to make gadgets²².

We had a game of baseball²³. After this we were told to go for wood so while two of us went for wood for our seat²⁴, the other three made the dinner²⁵ which was nearly ready for us when we arrived back with two large pieces of wood.

After dinner, we tidied up and went for a swim¹⁰. At the beach, some of us built a raft²⁶ and had quite a time playing on it while the others lay on the rocks and laughed.

When we came back, we lit the fire and received our tea²⁷ from the store. Just before tea, Tommy's¹⁴ relatives²⁸ paid us a visit, but went after tea.

After we had tea, we were ordered to bring in firewood, which we cut up and put it into a pile under the shelter.

Then we had a game of football followed by cocoa and a sing song. Then at 10:30 pm we went to bed.

Sandy Millar (Second)²⁹

J.R. Blake S.M. 70th³⁰

Editorial notes

21. Breakfast consisted of slice and eggs, bread and jam, cornflakes with sugar and milk.

22. Each patrol 'furnished' its site with various gadgets made from natural materials. According to Martin Blake, his father was insistent that gadgets were built using wood and sisal/twine/string etc. Examples of gadgets included plate racks, mug trees, table and seating arrangements, basin rack etc. etc.

23. It's not known who first introduced baseball to the 70th but it was certainly a popular game during the 1950s and 1960s.

24. One of the gadgets designed to make life more comfortable in camp. This would be the seat used by the Scouts when eating their meals at the table (another gadget which had to be made)

25. This consisted of soup, mince and potatoes, jelly and rhubarb.

26. This appears to be the first recorded mention of a raft being built at camp. It would be interesting to know who the pioneering expert(s) were and whether raft building was a normal activity at previous camps. Certainly, the focus on pioneering projects continued into the 1960s when Bob Miller took over as S.M, suggesting that he might have been the Troop's 'lead pioneer'.

27. This consisted of corned beef and beans, followed by bread and jam.

28. Tommy Dow's father was the Rev. James L. Dow of Cartsburn Augustine Church. It's not known why Tommy's relatives visited the camp. Possibly, they were on holiday in the area.

29. Sandy Millar was aged about 14 at this point and had recently been promoted to Second of the Curlew Patrol. He was Second of the Rattlesnake Patrol at Tarbert.

30. John Blake added his signature to show that he had read the log book entries for the first two days.

Friday 24th July

Breakfast³¹ was late, dinner was early. Breakfast was late for an obvious reason and dinner, a mess of hard potatoes and scorching meat with overdone prunes³² following, was early because free time had been given and the only local bus ran at 12.15 p.m.

Result of morning game (ringstick³³). 'Bob's'³⁴ team 7, 'Skipper's'³⁵ team 20+.

In the afternoon, the scouts descended on the unwary people of Tarbert, eight or nine going by bus or car³⁶, the rest by cycling (+ backseaters). PL Jim Blair (Jim)¹⁶ & Scout Dow (Tom)¹⁴ each with a passenger were caught by the police a mile out of Tarbert. The policeman told them that if there was any more trouble he would report the matter to our Scoutmaster. Half an hour later, in *rode* no less a person than our scoutmaster³⁵ riding his son's bike with Martin³⁷ on it. The boats were the main attraction and at one stage we had three motor boats out, their crews fighting each other in a free for all.

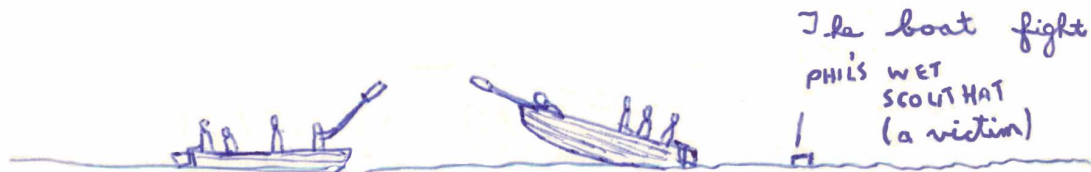


Figure. The boat fight.³⁸

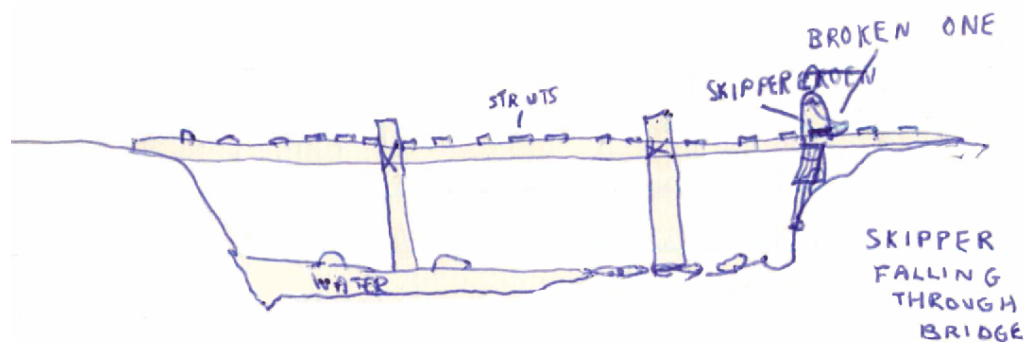
Ca'dora³⁹ did a roaring trade in chips and (small) 6d ice creams.

A notable event of the day was Tom¹⁴ getting something for his throat. He walked into a chemist's shop and said in a husky voice as low as he could, "Have ye anything frae a sore throat." Tom had to repeat this statement twice before the dumb blonde behind the counter caught on.⁴⁰

Some of us came home for tea (back to camp) while the rest had their tea in Tarbert, coming home later by the 7.30 bus or staying on to the pictures.⁴¹ The tea which 'Bob'³⁴ made was splendid.

After tea, when the dishes had been washed, we all went down for a swim¹⁰. We nailed on crosspieces to the raft to steady it, and it became the troop's official getting in machine. 'Bob'³⁴ for a joke ordered everyone onto the raft to see how many it would hold. When he had six people on, he pulled the raft over and it promptly turned right over depositing its occupants in the water.

After we returned to camp, we started making some hot soup. We had hardly lit the fire when Skipper³⁵ appears and starts to cross the bridge. When he was about halfway, the air became tense with expectation, then it happened; he fell through the last bar which had been broken by 'Bob'.⁴²



After the soup, a game of rugby was started but, as this proved rather too rough, it was abandoned for a game of football. Bob's team won 5-3. Cocoa, and bread and jam were served and we all rather tiredly went to our pits.

Scout Philip Dry¹⁵ (Dry, Drip, Wet, or Philip)

Douglas Brown (A.S.M., 1st Renfrewshire)⁴³

Editorial notes

31. Breakfast consisted of porridge, and ham and eggs.

32. There was quite an emphasis in the menu on beans, prunes and rhubarb, presumably to encourage regular habits.

33. One member of each team stood at opposite ends of the playing area holding a stick. The aim was for his team mates to throw a rubber ring such that the Scout holding the stick could 'catch' it on the stick. It is not clear whether this was played as a non-contact game like basketball, or whether the rules were 'anything goes'. The ring could not be placed over the stick and had to be thrown. This involved quite a bit of skill from the Scout holding the stick in order to judge the flight of the ring correctly.

34. ASM Bob Miller had been a Scout and Patrol Leader in the 70th troop during the early 1950s. He joined the ranks of the Scouters in 1954 and would become Scout Master when Ian Blake resigned in 1959.

35. Scout Master Ian Blake. Ian was a 70th Scout not long after the troop was formed in the 1930s. He was Scout Master from 1954 to 1959. Although he was called Ian, he always signed his name as John R. Blake or J.R. Blake.

36. This is the only mention of a car being at the camp and it is not known whose car it was.

37. Martin Blake was aged about 10 or 11 at this point and was still in the Wolf Cubs. He camped with his cousin Ronnie Blake at Tarbert. According to Martin, he and his cousin were dubbed the 'Midge Patrol' as they were 'small and irritating'. Martin moved up to the Scout Troop towards the end of the year, but did not stay long as the family moved to Trinidad in the new year.

38. The hat in the water was Philip Dry's

39. The Café Ca'Dora is still in business (as of March 2023) and is situated in Harbour Street.

40. It's not clear whether the sore throat was for real or not. It's also not clear why there was an emphasis on putting on as low a voice as possible. Tommy later developed toothache during camp.

41. This would have been the Regal picture house. It was still open in 1966, but had closed by 1980. The building was transformed into the Anchor Hotel.

42. It's not clear whether this was deliberately sabotaged or whether Bob had accidentally broken a bar. The footbridge bridge is marked on the OS map of the period and was probably quite rickety as there was another incident of someone half falling through it.

43. Douglas Brown was Senior Sixer in the 70th Wolf Cub Pack when the Group restarted in 1947. He then went on to become Patrol Leader and Troop Leader in the Scouts before becoming an ASM in 1954. He transferred to the 1st Renfrewshire at the end of 1955 but maintained close links with the 70th during the rest of the 1950s. The Mouse Patrol log states that Douglas Brown and Sandy Whiteford arrived on 'motor bikes' that night. In fact, they were more like scooters, but they served their purpose well. Both ASMs only spent the weekend in camp as they were in employment by that time.

Saturday 25th July 1959

This morning, after breakfast⁴⁴, we tidied up for inspection⁴⁵.

After inspection, "Gormless" Russell⁴⁶ had passed his cooking giving him his Second-Class⁴⁷. Then we had a game of baseball in which Dougie Brown's⁴³ side beat Sandy Whiteford's⁴⁸ team 4 home runs to 3.

After the game, there was a beetle drive⁴⁹ in which Trevor's patrol⁵⁰ won a bottle of lemonade, but we did not have much of a chance as we did not have a beetle.

After the Beetle Drive, Philip Dry¹⁵ passed his 1st-Class Birds⁵¹, giving him his 1st Class⁵².

Then we finished cooking our dinner as most of it had been preparing all morning⁵³.

After Dinner, we went for a swim¹⁰ and we had great fun on the raft. After the swim, Skipper³⁵ took photographs⁵⁴ of various people. After that, we headed for camp. When we reached camp, we cooked the tea which was macaroni and cheese, and spaghetti.

After tea, we went for a hike up the hills⁵⁵. We cut down, after reaching the top, onto the road during which Will Phil⁵⁶ lost his sheath knife and belt. When we arrived back, we had an extra treat in dumpling⁵⁷ as well as cocoa.

After that we had a singsong in which Ken John⁵⁸ made the evening a success by playing his banjo, and then we went to our pits.

A. Robb (second Scout)⁵⁹

Douglas Brown⁴³ (ASM, 1st Renfrewshire) (9)⁶⁰

Editorial notes

44. Breakfast consisted of Cornflakes, Black pudding and eggs, bread, margarine and marmalade.

45. Inspection was usually carried out by the Scouters every morning to ensure that the patrol sites were tidy and hygienic. Patrol tents were usually checked to ensure that they were pitched correctly and the Scouts had to lay out their personal equipment on the groundsheet in a uniform, tidy fashion. The kitchen shelter would have been checked to ensure that all dishes and dixies were clean and stored tidily. Any litter or untidiness would have lost marks. The Scouts were usually lined up in their patrol standing at attention and probably in uniform, and it was not unusual for hands to be inspected to check that everyone had washed.

46. Ronald Russell was aged about 12 at this time and was normally in the Seal Patrol. However, he was in the Rattlesnake patrol at Tarbert. The origins for his nickname Gorm/Gormless are not yet explained.

47. The 2nd Class Badge was the second badge in the Progressive Training scheme for Scouts (Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, 1st Class and Queen Scout Badges).

48. Sandy Whiteford was a former Patrol Leader and Troop Leader of the 70th. He was an ASM from 1957 to 1959. He would have been aged about 20 in 1959

49. There is an indoor party game called Beetle Drive which involves drawing a beetle depending on the throw of a dice, but this is more likely to have been a race between real beetles.

50. Trevor Jones was PL of the Mouse patrol in camp. He was P.L. of the Kingfisher Patrol from October 1956 to May 1960, and was aged about 16 at this point. He was particularly interested in adventurous outdoor activities.

51. One of the tests for the 1st Class badge was to identify 12 different trees and 6 different birds.

52. The 1st Class Badge was the third badge in the Progressive Training scheme for Scouts (Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, 1st Class and Queen Scout Badges). PLs were expected to have this badge.

53. Dinner included steak

54. Unfortunately, none of Ian Blake's photographs at this camp have survived.

55. This was up to the top of a hill. The hill was not identified but one possibility is Cnoc a' Bhaile-shios (1383'), which was south east of the campsite.

56. *Billy Phillips was called Will Phil almost as soon as he joined the troop. The spelling varied between Will Phil and Will Fil, but then evolved in later years to Wiffil, then Wif. He was aged about 12 at this point.*

57. *This camp is the first written evidence of dumpling being prepared and eaten at a summer camp. It was also prepared and eaten at the Easter Camp to Blairmore earlier that year. The dumpling was something of a camp tradition during the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. Usually, the dumpling was prepared in camp, and it is assumed that this was also the case at Tarbert. It has not been established who first introduced the dumpling treat at camp, although Bob Miller is a likely candidate.*

58. *Ken Johnson was probably aged about 16 or 17 at this point. He was PL of the Seagull Patrol from 1957 to 1959 and joined the Scouters team in the Autumn of 1959. At Tarbert, he was PL of one of the patrols, but the name of the Patrol was not recorded.*

59. *Alistair Robb was in the Rattlesnake Patrol. He was probably aged about 12 at the time and was normally in the Seal Patrol.*

60. *This was the score (9/10) given by Douglas Brown for the log book entry.*

Sunday 26/7/1959

On rising this morning, everybody was feeling rather cold, and, after breakfast⁶¹, it arrived! The RAIN.

After an unofficial sing-song at the Scouters kitchen, the flag was broken, whereafter P. "Wet" Dry¹⁵ and "Gorm" Russell⁴⁶ received their 1st and 2nd class respectively^{47,52}. For inspection⁴⁵, we got 5 and 7, even although inspection was 15 minutes late.

Skipper (Captain Blake)³⁵ for Sunday dinner give us all a piece of melon; he also told us a new recipe with fish and egg and milk and breadcrumbs,⁶² which "P. Wet"¹⁵ rather spoiled.

On the afternoon, nothing was officially done until hot soup was served.

Everybody rushed from the tents to the 'Scouters' kitchen.⁶³

After tea, everybody got spruced up and we went to church⁶⁴ on the usual transport.⁶⁵

After coming home⁶⁶, we had cocoa, munchmallow⁶⁷ and ginger bread. And so to pits⁶⁸.

R. Russell (third Scout) ⁴⁶

Answer⁶⁹ Height of Flagpole is 22 ft 9½ ins. (A. Robb⁵⁹ + Drip¹⁵ say it is 28 feet).

Today PL Jim Blair le??⁷⁰

R. Miller (ASM)⁷¹

Editorial notes

⁶¹. This consisted of porridge, ham and eggs, and bread, butter and marmalade.

⁶². This was presumably in order to make breaded fish.

⁶³. An indication that the Scouters had made the soup for the whole camp.

⁶⁴. This was to the Church of Scotland near the centre of Tarbert. It is not known whether this was a normal evening service or a service that that was organized for the Scouts alone. It's not known how they got there, but it was presumably by bicycle and on foot.

⁶⁵. Presumably by bike and on foot. It seems unlikely that public transport would have been available. It is also not known whether the car mentioned earlier was still available. It's also not clear whether the Scouts paraded to church.

⁶⁶. The Scouts had a little bit of free time following the service, but had to be back at camp by 9.00 p.m.

⁶⁷. Presumably marshmallow.

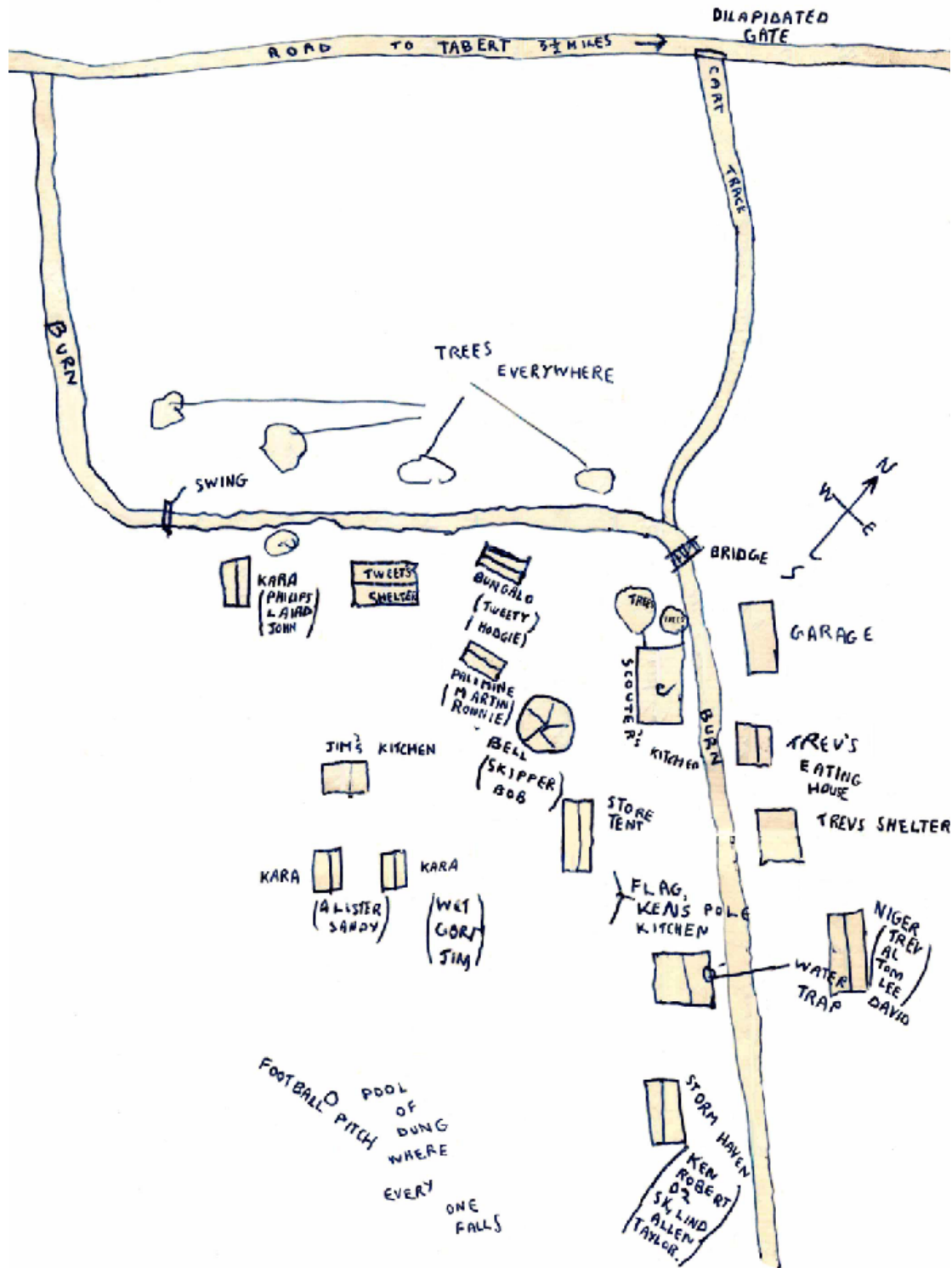
⁶⁸. The standard camp term for going to bed or one's sleeping bag from the 1950s until at least the 1990s. It may well have been used during the 1930s and 1940s as well, but there is no proof of that.

⁶⁹. Ian Blake set the patrols an STA (Spare time activity) where they were to estimate the height of the main flagpole in camp. Estimation was one of the tests for the 1st Class badge and there were a number of techniques that could be used.

⁷⁰. It looks as if this was an additional sentence that was started, but never completed.

⁷¹. Signed by Bob Miller to show that he had checked the log book entry.

Map of campsite



Editorial notes for Map.

The map identifies the locations of each tent and shelter. There are four patrol sites. The **Mouse Patrol** led by Trevor Jones (Trev) is on the right-hand side of the burn (Allt Tarsuinn), on the same side as the 'garage' where the bikes were stored. The patrol slept in the Niger – a patrol tent capable of accommodating 6-8 Scouts. This patrol was the only one that had an 'eating house' or shelter that was separate from the kitchen shelter. The patrol consisted of Trevor Jones, Alistair Cram (Al)

(Second), Tommy Dow, Ian Lee and a Scout known as 'David', who has yet to be identified. One possibility is David Friedman. Alan Conway was also part of this patrol for the first few days of camp, but is not named here.

The **Rattlesnake Patrol** site is on the left of the campsite and consisted of Jim Blair (acting PL), Sandy Millar (Second), Philip Dry (Wet), Alistair Robb and Ronald Ross (Gorm). The Patrol used two Kara tents, which were larger than hike tents but smaller than patrol tents. They could accommodate up to 4 Scouts.

The **patrol** at the top of the map was led by Hamish Rankin (Tweety) and included Michael Hodge, Billy Philips, Laird McFarlane and a Scout called 'John'. Unfortunately, his surname was not identified in either of the surviving log books. It is thought that this might have been John Gatherer or John Moore, both of whom were in the Troop in 1959. There is also the possibility that it might have been John Nisbet. However, he arrived on day 7 of the camp (28th July) along with his brother Michael. As Michael is not identified on this map, it seems unlikely that John would have been identified but not Michael. The patrol used a Kara tent and a Bungalow tent. The latter was a hike tent and was limited to two campers.

The fourth **patrol** was led by Ken Johnson and included Robert Harvey (Second), Albert Runcie (Oz), S.K., Ronald Lind and Allan Taylor. It is not known who S.K. was unfortunately. Kenneth's site is shown at the bottom of the map, with the patrol sleeping in a Stormhaven Patrol tent. Their kitchen shelter was closest to the main flagpole, on the opposite side of the stream from the Mouse Patrol's tent.

There was also an 'unofficial' patrol called the **Midge Patrol**. This consisted of Martin Blake and his cousin Ronnie Blake. Martin was Ian Blake's son and was aged about 10 or 11 at this point. He was still in the 70th's Wolf Cub Pack, but had already attended a Summer Camp (Benderloch 1958). This year, he camped in a Palomine hike tent with his cousin Ronnie who was the same age. Ronnie lived in Gourrock but was not in the cubs. Martin and Ronnie were no strangers to the Tarbert area as they spent a lot of their holidays with their grandparents who lived in Tarbert. The Blake connection with Tarbert may well explain why Tarbert was chosen as a campsite during the 1950s. As an additional note, Martin stated that he and Ronnie were called the Midge Patrol bto signify that they were 'small and annoying'.

The Bell tent was used by the Scouters, Ian Blake and Bob Miller. Douglas Brown and Sandy Whiteford would also have slept in the Bell tent when they visited over the weekend. The Scouters also had a kitchen shelter close to the burn. The Store tent was between the Bell tent and the main flagpole.

As stated above, John and Michael Nisbet arrived on the 7th day of camp, but it is not known which patrol(s) they joined.

The football pitch is identified as being at the bottom left of the campsite and this would also have been used for other games such as baseball. The 'pool of dung' was presumably produced by cows. The road at the top is the main A83 road leading to Tarbert (3.5 miles away), and West Loch Tarbert (not shown) was just beyond that. The campsite was accessed through the 'dilapidated gate' along a 'cart track' leading to the footbridge mentioned in several log book entries. The rope swing across the burn is also marked. It is not stated whether that was already in place, or whether the Scouts themselves put it up. However, the latter seems more likely.

Monday 27/7/1959

We got up rather later this morning since it was raining, but were in plenty of time for inspection⁴⁵ which was at the usual time. For breakfast, we were issued with five eggs with which we made French toast⁷².

For inspection⁴⁵ we got 7 points for the tents and six points for the kitchen. Immediately after the inspection, we were given rice so that it would have plenty of time to cook. The dinner consisted of spuds, steak, jelly and rice.

After dinner, we were given free time, but as there isn't much to do in Tarbert, most of us stayed at the campsite. Plate racing proved to be the main attraction, but as some of the plates were lost in a deep pool in the burn⁷³, this was stopped and the swing⁷⁴ became the best attraction.

After we had been playing on the swing for quite a while, we were all assembled for the three-legged race and the egg (spud)⁷⁵ and spoon race.

A swim¹⁰ was next in the programme, but after the swim most of us stayed down on the shore and sunbathed.

Tea which consisted of Haggis and beans was eaten quickly and the swing again became the popular attraction.

When we were all assembled at the flagpole, we were told that for the S.T.A. (Spare Time Activity), we were to draw a picture and make a musical instrument, both out of natural materials.

After a game of baseball, we assembled for a hill climb to a chapel.⁷⁶ When we got there, we were set off at ten-minute intervals back to the campsite by the hill and road resp⁷⁷.

When we arrived back at the campsite, we were all given lemonade, some wee cake things and cocoa, and then retired to our pits.

J. Blair¹⁶ (P.L.)
John R. Blake³⁵
S.M. / 70th (10)⁷⁸

Editorial notes

⁷². French toast involved dipping bread into a mixture of milk and egg then frying it.

⁷³. Presumably they were metal plates and sank when they filled up with water. It is doubtful whether plastic plates were readily available in the 1950s. The burn must have been pretty deep in places to prevent the plates being retrieved.

⁷⁴. The rope swing was tied to the branch of the tree which probably overhung the stream. It was situated quite close to the Kara tent occupied by Billy Phillips, Laird McFarlane and the so-far unidentified 'John'.

⁷⁵. Presumably potatoes were used instead of eggs.

⁷⁶. A chapel is marked as a historic site at grid reference 828623 on the hillside east of the farm called Kennacraig. According to Chris Foster who lived in Tarbert, local folklore has it that Saint Columba was sailing to Iona and was forced to go ashore due to bad weather. Legend has it that he spent a night in the 'chapel'. Chris visited the site and it seems to consist of a small cave. At the time he visited, there was a small glass flower with a plastic flower inside. The site of the 'chapel' is about 2-3 miles from the campsite at Grid ref. 835647. It would be possible to hike over the hills to the chapel or to take the road to Kennacraig and hike up to the chapel from there. The distance looks very similar either way. This is probably why different groups returned to camp either cross country or by the road to see which was faster. The most likely route to the chapel would have been to go up the hill to Bardaravine or Achnancarranan, then follow the edge of the forest SW before heading up

the chapel itself. The report mentions a hill climb, and there is always the possibility that the Scouts climbed to the summit of Cnoc a' Bhaile-Shios (Grid ref. 863628) first then descended to the chapel. However, this seems unlikely as the report talked about a hill climb to the chapel. Moreover, it is possible that the Scouts climbed this hill on Saturday 25th July.

77. The routes back were not defined, but see note 106. The route back by road probably involved descending to Kennacraig then taking the Tarbert road back to camp, while the cross-country route would almost certainly have followed the edge of the forest to at least Achnancarranan. From there, there would be an option to cut down to the main road for the last mile, or to continue to the stream leading down to the campsite. The latter seems a more likely possibility based on the description given in the log book.

78. Ian Blake awarded 10/10 for Monday's log book entry.

Tuesday 28/7/59

This morning, after breakfast⁷⁹, we tidied up for inspection⁴⁵, for which we got 8 for tents and 5 for kitchen. After inspection, as we were duty patrol⁸⁰. one of our boys was sent for stores to Tarbert, while we cooked the dinner of soup, mince and potatoes, custard and jelly. Just before dinner, John Nisbet⁸¹ and Michael⁸² came to stay for the rest of the camp⁸³.

After dinner, we went to the wood in patrols as the Scouters had laid a trail of string for us to follow blindfolded. When we completed this, we made a trail for the Scouters over a pot-hole and a high rock and into a cave, then there was an ordinary trail⁸⁴ for each patrol to follow in turn and we were about the only ones to finish it after quite a long time.

When we arrived back at camp, some went for a swim^{10,85}, while a few stayed behind to make whistles or pictures⁸⁶ for Camp Fire that night.

When the others came back, we prepared the tea of bangers⁸⁷ and beans³². A little time after tea, we had a game of baseball which was drawn, one home run each, followed by a game of football played by the same sides where Laird McFarlane's⁸⁸ crowd were beaten by 4 goals to five.

After this game, the shop⁸⁹ was opened by Bob³⁴ and assistant Oz⁹⁰, as Ken Johnston⁵⁸ and Robert Harvey⁹¹ were away⁹² on a fishing boat for the night.⁹³

When lemonade had been drunk and crisps been eaten, some went down to the swing⁷⁴ while others completed their tasks for the night Camp Fire.

At Camp Fire, apple fritters were served followed by gingerbread and cocoa, then we played our instruments and displayed our pictures. Our patrol had a whistle which didn't whistle, so somebody had to whistle into it to play the tune. The drawing was on a slice of log and was of PL Oz⁹⁴.

Then, while others went to bed, Jim¹⁶ Al⁵⁹ and I²⁹ carried milk bottles and lemonade crates down to the gate by the road for morning.⁹⁵

Signed

Sandy Millar²⁹ (Second)

R. Miller³⁴ (A.S.M.) (10)⁹⁶

Editorial notes

⁷⁹. French toast and cornflakes

⁸⁰. The Duty Patrol in camp were responsible for breaking the flag in the morning and lowering it in the evening. There were also a number of camp chores that needed to be performed like collecting the milk, into Tarbert for stores or taking empty bottles to the gate to be picked up.

⁸¹. John Nisbet was aged about 16 at this point and was PL of the Fox Patrol, as well as Troop Leader. A John is known to have camped with the patrol led by Hamish Rankin, but it is more likely that this was either John Gatherer or John Moore. Therefore, it is not known which patrol John camped with when he arrived.

⁸². Michael Nisbet was aged about 12 at this point. He was a member of the Curlew Patrol, but it is not known which Patrol he was in at Tarbert.

⁸³ It is assumed that the Nisbet brothers might have arrived late due to a family holiday.

⁸⁴. The third trail was actually a normal trail marked with woodcraft signs that the patrols had to follow. This was known as tracking and was one of the skills assessed in the Tenderfoot and 1st Class Badges.

⁸⁵. Further work was also done on the raft and Ian (Captain) Blake was persuaded to jump off the raft. It was not explained why he would wish to do this.

86. *These were Spare Time Activities (STA) that were set the previous day.*
87. *It was important to pierce the sausages before frying them to prevent 'explosions' – hence the name bangers.*
88. *Laird Macfarlane was aged about 13 at the time. He was normally 2nd Scout in the Fox Patrol, but at Tarbert, he was in a Patrol led by Hamish Rankin.*
89. *This might be the first recorded instance of the camp shop at summer camp. It is not known what was sold in the 1950s, but in later years it stocked crisps, sweets and fizzy drinks. A supply of such items were kept in the store tent and the sounding of four whistles announced when it was open for business. A queue of Scouts would then quickly appear at the tent door as potential customers.*
90. *Albert Runcie (Oz) was in Ken Johnson's patrol at Tarbert. Normally, he was 1st Scout in the Fox Patrol, and would have been about 14 at the time.*
91. *Robert Harvey would have been aged about 13 at this time. He was probably 1st Scout of the Seagull Patrol. At Tarbert, he was in a patrol led by Kenneth Johnson and may have been acting as Patrol Second.*
92. *The wording suggests that Ken Johnson and Robert Harvey might have been responsible for running the camp shop. On the other hand, there might have been a rota and it was meant to be their turn.*
93. *This activity may have been repeated on all subsequent camps at Tarbert. It should be noted that Martin Blake's grandparents lived in Tarbert, which probably allowed Ian to establish several useful local contacts, one of which involved the overnight trip on the fishing trawler.*
94. *Oz was the nickname for Albert Runcie who was actually 1st Scout in Ken Johnson's Patrol at camp. However, with both Ken Johnson and Second Robert Harvey away overnight on the fishing trawler, Albert was acting PL of the patrol.*
95. *This was one of the tasks for the duty patrol. Presumably, the empties were picked up by a van in the morning. Possibly a fresh crate might have been left to be picked up.*
96. *Bob Miller awarded 10/10 for Tuesday's log book entry.*

Wednesday 29/7/59

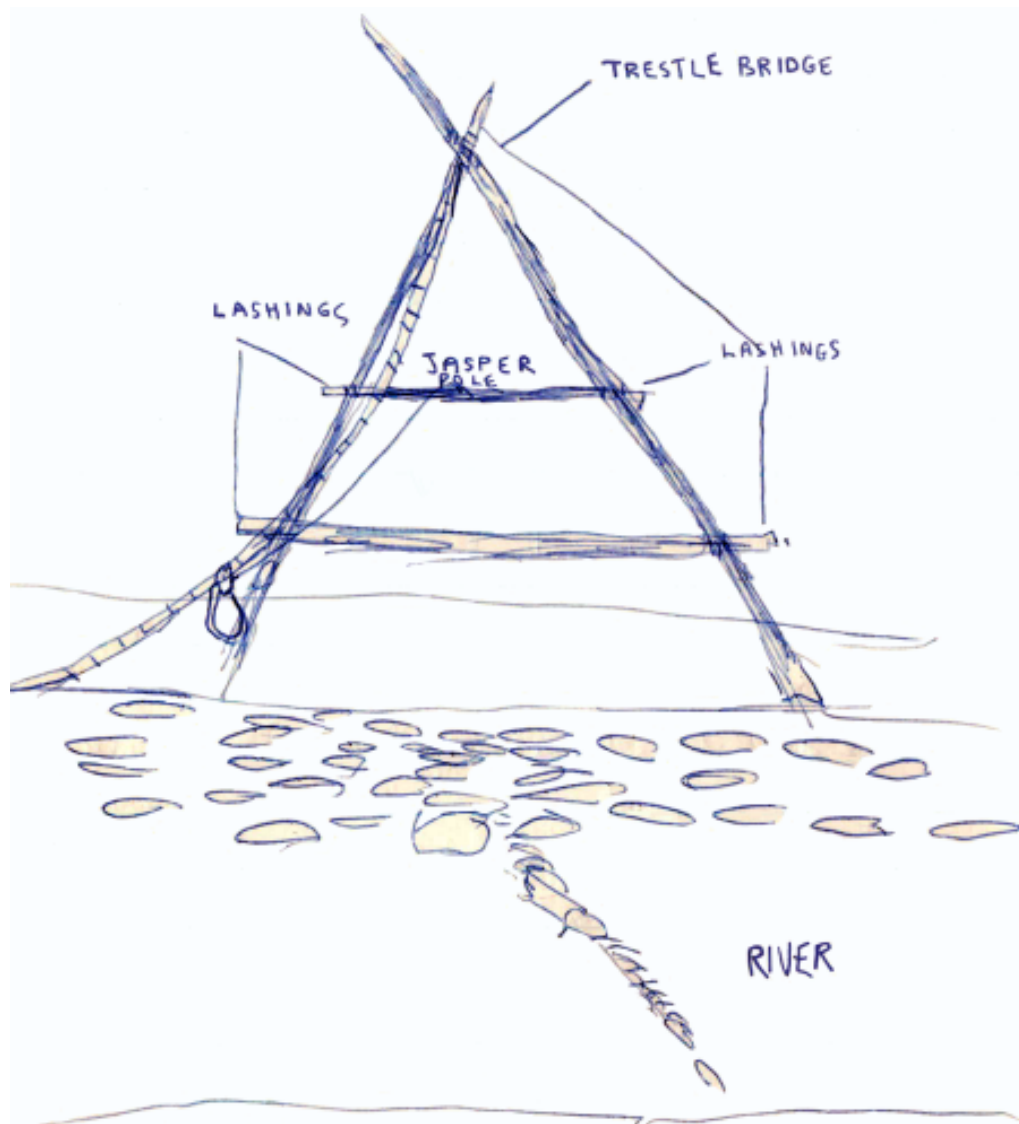
After having had a late breakfast (at about quarter to ten), we quickly tidied up for inspection⁴⁵. We worked like madmen as we had only 5 minutes to clean up the kitchen and, believe it or not, it worked as we got 10 for our kitchen (late breakfast will now become the order of the day).

Once inspection had finished, the Rattlesnake patrol went for wood (except for Phil Dry¹⁵).

Once we had wood, we stewed our prunes³² and made our jelly. Meanwhile, "The wanderers from the sea"⁹⁷ or P.L. Ken⁵⁸ and Second Robert⁹¹ arrived home and departed again, this time to the land of Nod⁹⁸.

As the potatoes had not been delivered,⁹⁹ 'Bob'⁵ set off on his bike to Tarbert to collect them. Because the dinner was going to be late, Skipper³⁵ and the rest of us started to build a trestle bridge.¹⁰⁰ A picture of it is shown below.

OUR UNBURNT
FIRE AT
9.30 A.M.



Before the bridge was properly tightened, anybody over 6 stone got soaked. But once the rope had been tightened by 'Bob' it became 'Fabby bah'.¹⁰¹

The Menu for dinner was Prunes, Jelly, Tatties, Stew, a very appetizing mess.

Dinner was finished at 3 o'clock (as the potatoes were late) and we started mucking around on the bridge.

At four o'clock, we set off for an official swim¹⁰. There were only 8 as the afternoon was free time.¹⁰² It was decided that we should take a voyage on the raft. Those who took part were Bob⁵, Niz¹⁰³, Tweet¹⁰⁴, Wet¹⁵, Jim¹⁶, Gorm⁴⁶, Tom¹⁴, and Will Phil⁵⁶. The voyage was very eventful. To start with, Jim had his clothes on and was sitting on the bow. He managed to stay on until we arrived at the point. However, on the way back, the raft suddenly tilted throwing Bob and Jim into the water. Wet (who is believed to have caused the tilt)¹⁰⁵ was half drowned as he got stuck between the out-rigger and one of the spars and forgot to close his mouth.



Voyage of SS Sinking - -.¹⁰⁶

As quite a few boys were away¹⁰⁷, we had our tea all together at EX SHERPA TWEV'S.¹⁰⁸

After tea, everyone buzzed off to have a yatter¹⁰⁹.

The day was finished off with a campfire and cocoa and pancakes.¹¹⁰

After this, we returned to bed for what we hoped would be a good night sleep. A 'Fabby but'day'.¹¹¹

Minutes later, sleep had taken over.

Scout P. Dry¹⁵ (a drooked¹¹² drip)

John R. Blake³⁰ SM 70th (10)¹¹³

I hope you enjoyed the Camp. J.R.B.¹¹⁴

Editorial notes

97. *Ken Johnson and Robert Harvey had been on a fishing trawler overnight (see the entry for 28th July 1959).*
98. *They went to their tent to have a sleep.*
99. *This is evidence that deliveries were left at the 'dilapidated gate' (see sketch map) each morning and that the empty bottles taken down the previous evening were taken away. It's not known who provided these supplies though. The log book covering a different summer camp to Tarbert identifies a Mr. Blair who might have been a local grocer.*
100. *The diagram suggests that this was actually an aerial runway or 'transporter' as it was called at the time, in which case the rope on one side to the stream would have been higher than the end at the other end. Attached to the main rope there appears to be a pulley wheel, possibly with a loop of rope attached to it. If so, the Scouts would have threaded a piece of wood through the loop then hung onto the wood as they slid down the rope across the stream. This technique was certainly used at the Summer camp held at Arduaine in the 1960s and there is evidence to back that up in the Mouse Patrol Log. There were far fewer rules regarding the use of aerial runways during the 1950s and the 1960s, and there was no requirement to build seats. The diagram also appears to identify a cross spar called a Jasper pole. The significance of this is not clear. 'Jasper' usually referred to the latrines. Another possibility is that the Jasper pole does not refer to the cross spar, but refers instead to the piece of wood that the Scouts hung on to when descending the rope.*
101. *The spelling is not that clear in the log report. It might be 'Fabby buh' or 'Fabby bah'.*
102. *It is not clear what everyone else did. Some of the Scouts certainly went into Tarbert, and others such as Trevor Jones went off on a cycle ride. Others may well have stayed in camp.*
103. *Either John or Michael Nisbet. They both had the same nickname, although Michael tended to be called Young Niz or YN to make the distinction.*
104. *P.L. Hamish Rankin. His nickname had initially been 'Sweetie' – a title which he earned at his first camp at Inverreck. However, this developed over the years to 'Twee' or 'Twee'.*
105. *It's not clear whether the capsizing was accidental or deliberate.*
106. *The diagram indicates that Billy Phillip hit his toe, but no details are given in the account.*
107. *This indicates that quite a few of the Scouts went into Tarbert for the afternoon.*
108. *'Twee' refers to Trevor Jones who was more usually called Trev. It is not clear what the significance is, either of the different spelling or the title 'Ex Sherpa'. Trevor was PL of the Mouse Patrol in camp.*
109. *Games of baseball and football were also played in the evening.*
110. *Quite possibly, these were cooked on the fire.*
111. *The significance of this is unclear. Perhaps it was meant to mean 'birthday', If so, it was probably Philip Dry's birthday as he was the scribe.*
112. *'Drookit' means drenched*
113. *The score given by Ian Blake for the log book entry (10/10)*
114. *Final comment by Ian Blake.*

Thursday 30/7/59

This morning after rising, we lit the fire with one match.¹¹⁵

After breakfast, we tidied up for inspection⁴⁵, for which we got four for the tents and 9 for the kitchen. When inspection was over, some of us went for kindling wood while the rest of us stoked the fire for dinner.

For dinner, we had mince and potatoes. For pudding, we had jelly and rhubarb.³²

Before dinner, Sandy²⁹ and Al Cram¹¹⁶ had been presented with the cup for the best camper of the year, each keeping the cup for six months.

After dinner, we had to clean the dixies. This was a terrible job for if there was the slightest dent in the Dixie, you couldn't get out with a brillo pad, but you could get it out by scraping with a knife. That took us about an hour and a half.¹¹⁷

After that, the transport bridge¹¹⁸ and the swing were taken down¹¹⁹. When that was finished, we went for a swim¹⁰.

We launched the raft and Michael Nisbit (having just passed his second-class⁴⁷) was made to jump from the raft before he was allowed in.¹²⁰ When the swimming was over, the raft was beached on the shore. Then we headed for camp.

We then proceeded to make our tea, which consisted of beans³² and slice¹²¹.

Directly after tea, the shelter was taken down along with the mug rack, the table, the knife, fork, and spoon rack, the plate rack, and the fence round the kitchen.¹²²

The wood from all of these things was sawn up and used as firewood.

After that we picked up woodchips.¹²³ Jim¹⁶ went away with Skipper³⁵ to see the farmer about something¹²⁴. When they came back, supper was almost ready.

For supper, we had a great feast. First of all, we had two apple fritters each, which were thoroughly enjoyable. Then came a dumpling⁵⁷ which also was tremendous. After that, we had two biscuits. The cocoa was then dealt out. Apart from not being sweet enough, it was quite good. When that was finished, we had a sing song in which David¹²⁵ sang the bubble car song¹²⁶.

After the sing-song, we were told we had to be up at 7 o'clock the next morning. We then all rushed to our pits and we were soon all sound asleep.

A. Robb⁵⁹ (second Scout)

Editorial notes

115. Scouts were expected to light a fire without using paper and using no more than 2 matches.

116. Alastair Cram was aged about 14 at this time. He had been in the Kingfisher Patrol until he was promoted to Second of the Fox Patrol in June 1959. He was Second of the Mouse Patrol in camp.

117. After several days of use, the outside of the dixies and the boiler had turned black because of the wood fire, and it was hard work cleaning them back to the shiny metal. The tradition of cleaning the offending objects with brillo pads at the end of camp continued for many years after 1959 and many Scouts remember it well. One trick at later camps was to coat the outside of the Dixie with a paste of water and Daz powder at the very beginning of camp. This proved quite effective in protecting the metal from getting too black.

118. This was the aerial runway (see note 110 for the previous day).

119. This is taken as evidence that the Scouts put it up in the first place. See also the notes accompanying the sketch map of the campsite.

120. It is not entirely clear what is meant here by being 'allowed in'. Presumably jumping into the water was a mandatory 'reward' for gaining a badge at this camp.
121. Sliced sausage. This might be a particularly Scottish piece of cuisine.
122. This is rather valuable information on what gadgets were usually expected in the kitchen shelter during the 1950s. However, it's not clear whether an altar fire was used for cooking during this period, or whether cooking was carried out on fires on the ground (trench fires, pit fires etc).
123. Woodchips were always a bit of a headache as they took ages to clear up. They were small slivers of wood that always resulted from chopping wood. They were formed in greatest quantity when using an axe to make wooden stakes. The problem could be alleviated by placing the chopping block on an old ground sheet or some other surface in order to catch the wood chippings. However, it is not known whether this was done at Tarbert.
124. This was possibly to thank the farmer for the use of the field and/or to pay any bills.
125. The Rattlesnake Patrol log book has a campsite plan that identifies a 'David' being part of the Mouse Patrol. Unfortunately, his surname was not identified. David Friedman (15) and David McQuat (15) are two possibilities, but there may well have been another Scout called David who has not been mentioned in the available records.
126. This was also called the 'Beep beep' song and was first released in the USA in 1958, less than a year before summer camp. The US version had lyrics relating to a 'Cadillac' and 'Nash Rambler'. However, the BBC would not play songs containing brand names in the lyrics and so the lyrics were changed for the UK market to 'limousine' and 'bubble car'. The single sold over a million copies world wide.

The Lyrics for the 'Bubble Car' song
Starts very slow and slowly speeds up

While riding in my limousine
What to my surprise
A little Bubble Car was following me
About one-third my size
The guy must have wanted to pass me out
As he kept on tooting his horn
(sound of horn - beep beep!)
I'll show him that a limousine
Is not a car to scorn

Beep beep, Beep beep
His horn went beep beep beep

I pushed my foot down to the floor
To give the guy the shake
But the little Bubble Car stayed right behind
He still had on his brake
He must have thought his car had more guts
As he kept on tooting his horn
(sound of horn - beep beep!)
I'll show him that my limousine
Is not a car to scorn

Beep beep, Beep beep
His horn went beep beep beep

My car went in to passing gear
And we took off with gust
Soon we were doing ninety
Must have left him in the dust
When I peeked in the mirror of my car
I couldn't believe my eyes
The little Bubble Car was right behind
I think that guy could fly

Beep beep, Beep beep
His horn went beep beep beep

Now we're doing a hundred and ten
It certainly was a race
For a Bubble to pass a limo
Would be a big disgrace
The guy must have wanted to pass me out
As he kept on tooting his horn

I'll show him that a limousine
Is not a car to scorn

Beep beep, Beep beep
His horn went beep beep beep

Now we're doing a hundred and twenty
As fast as I could go
The Bubble pulled alongside of me
As if we were going slow
The fellow rolled his window down
And yelled for me to hear

"Hey buddy how can I get this car out... of... second gear!"