

Harpenden and Wheathampstead Scout District



Eighteen Wide Games

Re-engineered from selected B.-P. and other archives

Ray Vassie

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Re-engineered from selected B.-P. and other archives

Dedicated to the scouts
of the 2nd and 5th Harpenden Troops
who put up with me during their start-ups

Ray Vassie

District Scouter and Trustee

April 2015



New life for old games

I found a copy of *Scouting Games* by Sir Robert Baden-Powell that is now about 100 years old. This book, widely read in former days, has gathered dust probably because the game descriptions are dense and wordy to modern eyes and the games have a hint of the military which is out of kilter with modern Scouting. Also, when B.-P. referred to wide-games he often implied miles: he thought nothing of sending a patrol off two or three miles in one direction and another patrol same distance in the other and his games could occupy a whole day.

Also, some of his wide-games used the Game Leader's authority instead of an internal logic of play to make them 'go', which I suspect caused difficulties even then. For these reasons, B.-P.'s *Scouting Games* is today difficult to use as a source for wide games.

The idea of re-engineering them seemed worth a try and out of 60 wide-games in the original, I thought 16 would appeal to modern Troops. The essence of the games is retained but distances are reduced generally to within earshot of a whistle, run times are arranged to fit normal scout meetings and game descriptions are updated. Kit requirements and preparation are added at the head of every game. B.-P.'s titles are retained so his originals can be referenced if desired.

I found two further wide-games in a 1978 'Scout Games' SA publication and these have been given the same treatment and added to the list. So that makes 18 wide-games.

As with all scout games, the fun and benefits blossom when scouts play to a high standard; wide-games are just the same except trust and fair play are mostly in the scouts hands: they play, and even when the umpire is out of sight, they still honour the rules.

rv April 2015



What's in a Game?

Scout games played formally by the Troop are tremendous fun but they are also vital moments of training. Run well, games promote self discipline where scouts surrender to fair rules for the joy of good play. When the games go well, there is friendliness and the scouts feel equal and safe so that both the timid and bold participate alike. Games build confidence and promote strength; they develop skills and enable expression. In a very short while, games can bring unity to the Troop and drive its ethos.

These qualities are in the gift of the game leader and so running games is a serious pursuit: there is an art to having fun!

A few tips on running games: be interested in the scouts' development and the Troop's ethos; know the game so you can organise with confidence; never waste time; be very fair; insist on order and quiet whenever you marshal the game; be fun to be with; maintain a momentum; don't break the spell at any time; be inclusive and neutral; stop before their energies wane.

Final thought: If we play scout games well, much of what being a scout is about comes into focus. It will make a difference to them, and as they go about their private lives the know-how of playing the game goes with them. And then, ever so slightly, they will change the world. rv.

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Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Rival Dispatch Bearers

Kit required: Two coloured batons; markers for an exclusion zone; 'life' tags.

Preparation: Mark two distant camps; mark exclusion zone; denote a place for retired scouts.

No. of players: Two Patrols (or more depending on terrain).

Site: Wood. (E.g. The Ups and Downs, Harpenden).

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Be first dispatch bearer to deliver dispatch to Game Leader.

Gamesmanship: Scouts are on their honour to retire when they lose their 'life'.

Set up patrol camps (marked areas to establish start bases) at either side of the wood. At the centre create a zone using trees, bushes, coloured cones or coats or rope, etc. that only dispatch bearers and the Game Leader may enter; no other scout is allowed to enter this exclusion zone which should be around 20 metres across.

Patrols must decide who their dispatch bearer will be and he /she is given a coloured baton (the dispatch). On the right upper arm of every other scout bind a life tag (an easily removed token but which stays fast when running).

Patrols go to their base camps. The Game Leader goes to the centre of the exclusion zone.

Patrol A repeats 2 short whistle blasts to indicate 'in position and ready'. Patrol B repeats 3 short whistle blasts to indicate 'in position and ready'. Game Leader starts game with one long whistle blast, counts to 30 and sends another long whistle blast.

On hearing the first long whistle, all scouts leave their base camps, except the dispatch bearers, and they spread out wherever they choose. The dispatch bearers leave on hearing the second long whistle.

Scouts can only play so long as they have their 'life'. If an opposing scout removes the life token from the shoulder, that scout is honour-bound to retire from the game.

The task is for each dispatch bearer to reach the Game Leader first while their opposing patrols will try to stop them by taking the dispatch from them. If a dispatch bearer loses his/her dispatch, that scout is honour-bound to retire from the game.

As the game proceeds, the dispatch bearer sees the advantage in hiding and quickness while their patrol gains advantage by taking the lives of the opposing patrol. The exclusion zone makes it possible for the dispatch bearers to get home.

Retired scouts should be near the exclusion zone to enjoy the win.

Game leader declares game over with 3 long blasts on a whistle. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Scout Meets Scout

Kit required: One mobile phone per team and Game Leader; identifying scarves (or equivalent) sealed in 2 packages; wrist watches. Possibly a compass for each team.

Preparation: Sealed identities for each team. Synchronise watches. Share phone numbers.

No. of players: Two + two scouts; or Patrol + Patrol.

Site: Wood. (E.g. The Ups and Downs at Harpenden).

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Be first to spot the other team.

Give each team a sealed package containing coloured scarves (or anything to identify the team players); these packages may only be opened when they get to their agreed starting places. All team members must wear the scarves, and they must be visible, for proof of being spotted. Starting places should be far enough apart that there is no possibility of being seen by the opposing team (but close enough to prevent scouts getting lost).

At a given minute by the watch, scouts head off towards each other (perhaps each team is given a compass bearing with in their sealed package) with the aim of spotting the other team first. When seen, the mobile phone user calls the Game Leader, confirms the scarf colour, and if correct wins the game. Game leader blows three long whistle blasts to call all players to base.

Note: teams need to move stealthily and stay close enough for all to communicate to the one mobile phone. ■

Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Scout Hunting

Kit required: Blacking/ camouflage (if scouts are minded to take it seriously).

Preparation: Talk about how to hide and move without detection.

No. of players: A patrol or Troop.

Site: A wood (E.g. the Ups and Downs, Harpenden).

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Hide and seek.

Establish a base in the wood so that there are hiding places all around. One scout is given time to reduce his/her visibility and then go out in the wood and hide. After a suitable delay, the entire Troop/Patrol start out to find that scout. The object of the hidden scout is to get back to base as soon as he/she can without being caught (physically touched). The seekers advance from base in a circle, gradually expanding outward so the further the Scout goes from home to hide him or herself, the further apart the seekers will be when they reach his hiding-place, but he/she will then have a longer distance to go to reach base. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

The Traitor's Letter

Kit required: A letter; a compass (if bearings included); fir cones or similar; team colours.

Preparation: Write instructions to find a letter hidden in a tree.

No. of players: One Troop in two halves. (Or two Troops).

Site: Wood. (E.g. The Ups and Downs at Harpenden).

Leaders (for game): Game Leader and a helper.

Aim of the game: Be first to spot the other team.

Gamesmanship: Scouts are on their honour to 'die' when hit.

Divide the Troop into halves and give each scout a team colour for recognition; one half camps one side of the wood and one half the other. These halves are called respectively 'French' and 'Prussians'. In the Prussian camp is a traitor Scout Leader who has made an agreement with the French that he/she will place a letter containing important Prussian secrets in a tree (which should be near the centre of the wood). The traitor gives the French instructions on how to find the tree, (compass bearings, landmarks, paces from something known, etc.,) and hides the letter in the tree and returns to the Prussian camp. The treachery is supposed to have been discovered, and on arrival is arrested. The traitor is interrogated but all the Prussians can learn is that the letter is near the centre of the wood. The traitor is sentenced to be shot, which is supposed to be carried out, and henceforth takes no further part in the game.

At a given signal from the Game Leader (somewhere mid-field blowing a whistle), the Prussians set out to recover their letter, and try to prevent the French obtaining it, while the French simultaneously leave their camp (with instructions to find the letter) and watch out for the Prussians.

Each scout is armed with three fir-cones. When two opponents meet, the one first hit by a fir-cone will be 'out of action', and the scout so hit is on his/her honour to find the Game Leader and to take no further part in the game.

Game leader decides how long the game will last and ends it by blowing 3 long blasts on a whistle. Award one mark for every French or Prussian scout still in action; and four marks to the side who obtains possession of the letter. The side with most marks wins. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Plant Race *(and photo competition)*

Kit required: Digital camera per pair of scouts; two small photographer's flats (A4 card, white one side and black the other). Possibly a pictorial guide of the target plants.

Preparation: Leader survey of plants. A short(ish) list for every scout.

No. of players: Patrol or Troop.

Site: Open space with trees and flowers. (Rothamsted Park, Harpenden, is ideal). Also consider a cycling journey.

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Competitive photography.

Demonstrate how two scouts can take excellent pictures of living plants using a digital camera and photo flats. Pair off the Troop: each pair to have a camera (that will take close-ups), photo flats, list and guide.

Start the scouts off in any direction they like, to get a picture of each plant on the list. Candidates might include the berries of yew, a sprig of holly, the horseshoe marks on a chestnut bud, a briar rose, or something of that kind. Choose ones that will develop their knowledge of plants and also ones that are fun to picture. Quickness should be encouraged by awarding the first successful scout who arrives back at base an advantage point to be added to points for best picture. Leader should ask for each image to be shown and declare points. Keep it simple.

Updated
from a
1921
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“Sharp Nose”

Kit required: Squeezy bottle full of onion juice; 'treasure' to hide and a token marker.

Preparation: Mark a trail for the nose to follow. Hide treasure and place token marker.

No. of players: Patrol or Troop

Site: A wood (E.g. the Ups and Downs, Harpenden)

Leaders (for game): One

Aim of the game: Use nose to find treasure

Lay a zigzag trail by dribbling onion juice on gateposts, stones, tree trunks, posts, etc. and hide a 'treasure' at the end of the trail. Mark the place with a token such as a tent peg, sprig of holly or strand of coloured wool, etc. (Avoid revealing the trail's path or end by being seen setting it, or walking from it).

Explain that the trail is invisible and only their noses will direct them in the hunt to find the place of hidden treasure [demonstrate smell]. Explain that the place is marked by a token that is not easy to see [show token]. On the signal to start, scouts or patrols must pick up and follow the trail (quite soon, for the scent fades) and the Scout or patrol that finds the treasure wins the game. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Where's the Whistle?

Kit required: Blindfolds.

Preparation: None.

No. of players: Any number.

Site: Any safe open space (E.g. Rothamsted Park, Harpenden).

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Walk/run blindfold to a distant whistle. First to touch wins.

Blindfold the scouts and place them in a line at one end of the field. Then a leader (or scout) goes to the other end and blows a whistle every now and then. The blindfolded scouts' aim is to walk (or run) towards, and finally, touch the whistle-blower. The whistle-blower may stoop down, but must not move about.

The first to touch the whistle-blower is the winner and then 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th etc. When scouts reach the whistle-blower, they remove their blindfolds and retire from the game (and watch quietly!).

The whistle-holder should see that no scouts stray into hedges by blowing the whistle often enough for all scouts to orientate correctly. ■

Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Snatch The Handkerchief

Kit required: Rag (or equivalent)

Preparation: Mark two lines, 15 metres apart

No. of players: Two patrols

Site: Any open space (Camp, park or Troop room)

Leaders (for game): One

Aim of the game: Dash for the rag; take prisoners to eliminate opposing patrol

Line up two patrols behind lines 15 metres apart. Half-way between them place a rag. When the Game Leader calls GO, the first scout from each patrol dashes forward to be the first to snatch the rag and return to the line.

The scout who fails must pursue the snatcher back to the snatcher's line, and try to tag him/her before the line is reached. If the successful snatcher regains his/her line without being tagged, the pursuer becomes the snatcher's prisoner. However, if the pursuer does tag the snatcher, the snatcher becomes the pursuer's prisoner.

The game continues until the whole of one patrol has been captured by the other. If this end cannot be reached within a reasonable time, the patrol with the greater number of prisoners wins. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

One Tree Away

Kit required: Chair (or similar); markers for a circle of trees and a 'prison'.

Preparation: Create a Defense Line (a circle of trees).

No. of players: One Troop split in two, or two Troops.

Site: Open wooded area. (E.g. the Ups and Downs at Harpenden).

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Stormers to reach chair untouched. Defenders to touch stormers.

Gamesmanship: Scouts are honour-bound to go to 'prison' when touched.

Mark out an area, e.g. a circle of trees with scarves attached, to create a Defense Line and then place a chair (any visible object) at its centre. Within the Defense Line denote an area to be a 'prison'.

Divide the Troop into two sides, stormers and defenders. For identification, arrange for one side only to wear scarves,

At the start of the game the defenders remain inside the Defense line while the stormers retire out of sight.

As soon as the stormers have taken up their positions, the Game Leader blows a whistle and the attack commences.

All defenders must leave i.e. go outside the Defense Line and seek the stormers, to touch them (and so capture them) if they can.

The object of the stormers is to get through the Defense Line to reach the chair, untouched by the defenders.

Each stormer reaching the chair untouched scores a point, and then sits down, out of the way, inside the Defense Line.

When stormers are touched they must at once go to the 'prison'. Scouts are honour-bound to go to 'prison' when a defender touches them.

At the Defense Line, no stormer may be touched so long as he/she has one hand on the trunk of a tree, and should a stormer be crowded by two or more defenders he/she may order them all "One Tree Away." However, a tree affords protection to only one stormer at a time.

No defender may enter the Defense Line except in actual pursuit of a stormer; on missing or touching a stormer, a defender must at once go outside again before attempting to tackle another.

The game ends when all stormers are inside the Defense Line either as triumphant point scorers or prisoners. The sides are then reversed and the team with the greatest number of points is the winner. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Finding Places

Town Game

Kit required: List and pencil (per pair of scouts).

Preparation: SL visits local buildings and lists distinctive features.

No. of players: Any number

Site: Town with buildings and shops. (E.g. Harpenden High Street)

Leaders (*for game*): At least two

Aim of the game: Explore town to find locations of described items.

Before the game, somebody goes for a walk through town with notepad and camera taking details of distinctive door handles, architectural features, man-hole covers, gargoyles, etc. From the collected data a numbered list is created, with pictures if possible, with the question 'Can you find where these items are'? A space is provided to enter the location.

On the day of the game, assemble the (uniformed) Troop at an agreed meeting place in town, count them, pair them off and give each pair a list. Set a time limit, a boundary and side of the road (remember they will be beyond communication) and on the word GO! give them leave to scatter where they will to find the locations of the items on the list. First pair back wins a bonus point. Score a point for every correct location. Meeting place is to be manned throughout the game. ■

Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Deer Stalking

Kit required: Blindfold for 'deer'

Preparation: None

No. of players: Any number

Site: Quiet location; gravel or twigs and dry leaves underfoot.

Leaders (*for game*): One

Aim of the game: Move with stealth to touch the 'deer'. A scout's challenge.

A scout, standing still, acts as a deer and is blindfolded so hearing is all that matters. Each scout tries in his own way to get close enough to touch the deer unheard. Directly the deer hears a scout the deer points to the sound. If the Game Leader judges that the deer points to the noisy scout, that scout is out. A quietly spoken 'miss' is useful when the deer fails.

Scouts that touch the deer can pride themselves in being excellent stalkers. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Treasure Hunt

Kit required: Treasure; markers for trail (2nd variation)

Preparation: Hide the treasure and prepare instructions or set trail

No. of players: Patrol or Troop

Site: A wood (E.g. the Ups and Downs, Harpenden)

Leaders (*for game*): One

Aim of the game: Hunt treasure using instructions or following a trail

Any number can participate (but count them so no one is lost). Arrange a meeting place that all return to on an agreed signal. Two ways of playing the game:

- 1) The treasure is hidden and the scouts are given the first clue; from this all the others can be traced. Such clues might be
 - a) (Found on a gatepost): 'Go west and examine third gate on north side of stream';
 - b) (On that gate) see Scout signs pointing to a notice-board on which is written: 'Strike south by south-east to telegraph post No. 22',

and so on. The clues should require a little skill to understand, and the locations a little difficult to access.

- 2) (Variation): The clues may be tiny bits of coloured wool tied to gates, hedges, etc., at about three metre intervals, leading in a certain direction, and when these clues come to the end it should be known that the treasure is hidden within so many metres. To prevent this degenerating into a mere game of follow-my-leader, several tracks might be laid working up to the same point, and false tracks could be laid, which only lead back again to the original track. ■



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Shooting

Kit required: Tennis ball (and a stop-watch for the variation)

Preparation: Mark a circle (size is a judgement but for twenty scouts try metres diameter). **ADD METRES**

No. of players: Any number (in two teams).

Site: An open space

Leaders (for game): One (or scouts can self organise)

Aim of the game: Hit players with ball to eliminate

Mark out a circular area; all the scouts but two take up positions inside it. The two remaining scouts have one tennis ball to throw at and to hit the scouts inside the circle.

Each scout who is hit comes outside and helps to hit those inside but only one tennis ball is used throughout the game.

The scouts inside the circle, by rushing from side to side, dodging or jumping, can delay being hit for some time, and when their numbers become few, the fun is fast and furious.

The scouts outside should arrange themselves round the circle, so as to pick up the ball quickly.

Variation for an inter-patrol contest: One patrol takes up its position inside the area, the P.L of other is outside and has the ball to start. (Start a stop-watch on GO!) For every scout the patrol leader hits, one of his/her patrol members assists, and the scout who was hit retires. The time taken to remove all the opposing patrol is noted, the winners being the patrol taking the shortest time.

Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Tails

(Not a wide game but an excellent tie-breaker)

Kit required: Coloured tail for each scout (Separate colour per team).

Preparation: None.

No. of players: Any number (in two teams).

Site: Any safe space.

Leaders (for game): One (but scouts can self organise).

Aim of the game: Each side to capture as many tails as possible.

Scouts on both sides tuck their tails lightly in their belts behind them and then the object of each side is to capture as many of these tails as possible. When scouts lose their tails they must retire.

Because this game can be decided so quickly, it serves well as a tie-breaker contest.



Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Hit The Bucket

Kit required: A ball; bucket (or chair); something for a bat about 500mm long.

Preparation: Place the bucket upside down somewhere sensible. (Ensure steadiness).

No. of players: Any number.

Site: Any clear, flat ground, inside or outside.

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Scout stands on bucket and defends it against balls thrown at it.

Decide who is to occupy the bucket first. The chosen scout, holding the bat, mounts the bucket. The rest of the scouts try to hit the bucket with the ball, whilst the one on it defends it with the bat. When the bucket is hit, the scout who hit it takes the place of the one on the bucket. If the one on the bucket loses his balance and falls off, the scout who threw the ball last takes his/her place. The ball must be thrown from the spot where it falls after the defender has hit it.

Updated
from a
1921
B.-P.
original

Flag Raiding

Kit required: Two flags; Gaffa tape for 'lives' (or equivalent system).

Preparation: Scouts establish two bases, say 100 metres apart.

No. of players: 2 Patrols; a divided Troop; or Troop v. Troop

Site: Any safe ground. (E.g. the Ups and Downs, Harpenden)

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: To present the opponent's flag to the Game Leader.

Gamesmanship: Scouts are on their honour to 'die' on losing their 'life'.

Divide the Troop into two teams. Each chooses a base about 100 metres apart and plants their flag in the ground. The Game Leader (stationed exactly between the teams) signals the start of the game and teams defend their own flags and try to capture their opponents. Every player wears a strip of gaffa tape as their 'life' on the right arm. A Scout who loses his 'life' (by having the 'life' snatched away by an opponent) must instantly go to the Game Leader and spend 2 minutes resting* before rejoining his team with a fresh 'life'. The team that presents their opponents' flag to the Game Leader is the winner. Scouts are on their honour to 'die' when they lose the 'life'.

* Resting could mean doing something that takes time such as filling a jar using a spoon from nearby pail of water/ sand, etc. to earn a new 'life'



Updated
from
'Scout
Games'
SA 1978

Computer Programmers

Kit required: Two 15 metre ropes; 30 bean bags (or equivalent).

Preparation: Establish 2 bases a convenient distance apart

No. of players: Two Patrols; a divided Troop.

Site: Ideally, a rough or wooded site..

Leaders (for game): Two.

Aim of the game: Each side tries to get 20 beanbags in its 'computer'.

Divide the Troop into two teams and station them some distance apart in rough or wooded terrain. Each team is to create a 'computer' using a circle of rope on the ground with 15 'programs' (bean bags) within it. 'Programs' should be in a straight line.

The object of the game is for each team to get 20 'programs' in its own 'computer'. Scouts may only carry one 'program' at a time, and the 'programs' may only be deposited in a 'computer' or passed to another scout: they may not be hidden in other places.

A Leader is stationed at each 'computer' so that the instant 20 'programs' are in a line (a condition that might occur for just a fraction of a second) a blast on his/her whistle declares the winner.

Updated
from
'Scout
Games'
SA 1978

Scavenger Hunt

Kit required: A list of items to be found; a collection box/ bag for each scout.

Preparation: Create a list appropriate for the area.

No. of players: Any number (best in small groups).

Site: Any safe site rich in things to find.

Leaders (for game): One.

Aim of the game: Each group attempts to scavenge all items in fastest time.

Patrols can follow the route either on foot, or on bicycles. Each is given a list of objects that it has to bring back at the end of the journey, and a scale of points is awarded for each object e.g.

Perfectly round pebble

Various named leaves (appropriate to area)

Nettle stem

Last year's acorn

Beech mast (or remains of)

A catkin

A thorn

Moss

A living creature in a matchbox



Eighteen
Wide Games

Harpenden and Wheathampstead Scout District