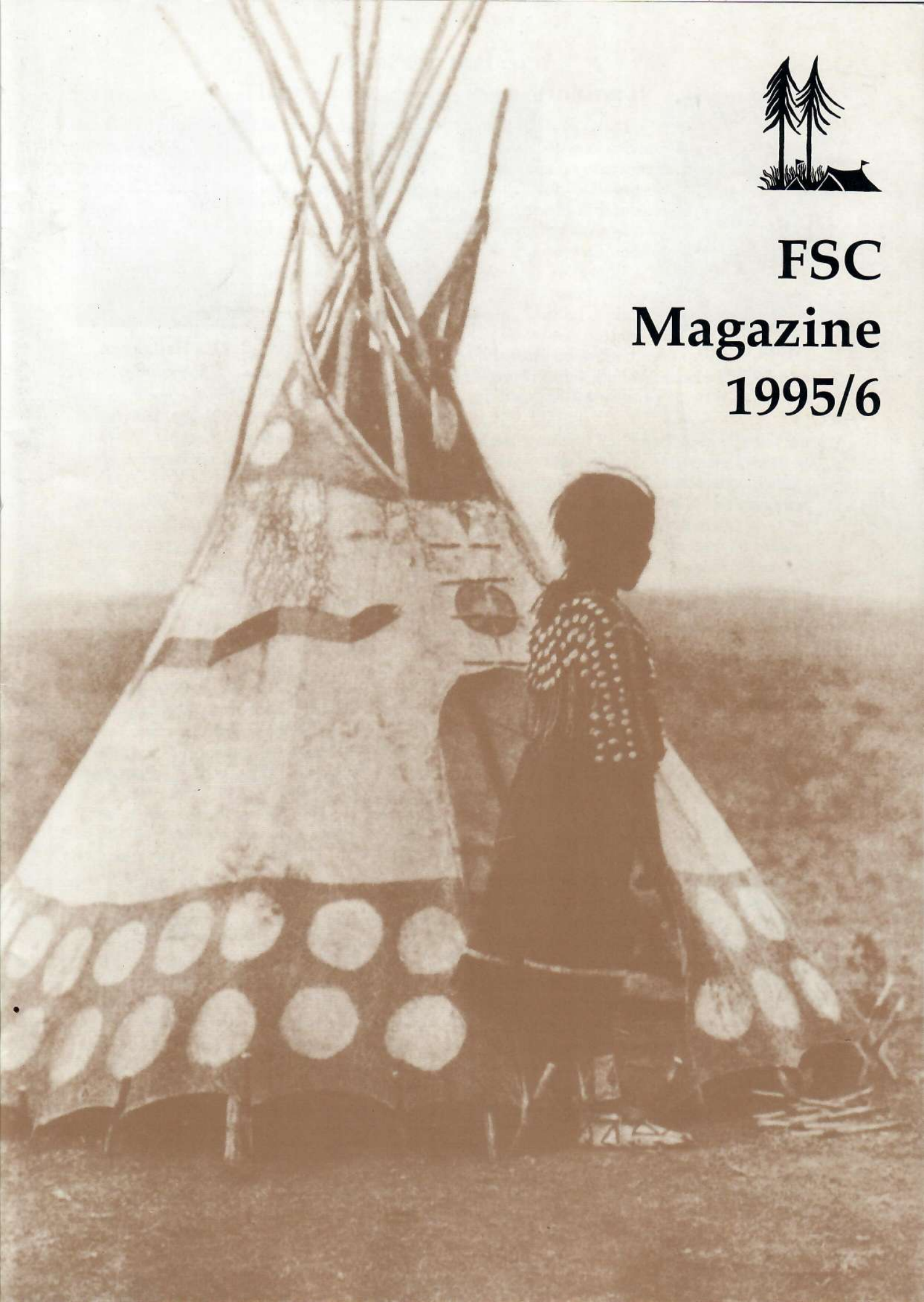




FSC
Magazine
1995/6





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Thanks to everyone who helped and:

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 "Middle Class Adventure", Paul Nixon
 "Medicine Crow", *New Internationalist Publications*
 "At the water's edge", Edward S. Curtis, c.1900

Comments and contributions for the next magazine to Jez Brown, 93 Gleneldon Rd, London SW16 2BH

What's in that cup? There's more to tea than drinking it

admirably. It is, (and I recognise the trap I am about to fall into of waxing poetic about a pretty common occurrence), the reaffirmation of the kind of relationships that develop in our camps because we want them to and will make do with nothing less. After all, we could have gone with or where your relationship with your fellow camper is more a function of the power of your legs or your position in the hierarchy. But I chose FSC, where early morning cups of tea told me that I am worth caring for by someone prepared to do it because they want to.

My doubts about FSC arise when I think I see evidence that maybe we are more interested in 'doing' and 'having' rather than 'being'. Is it possible that one day we will be interested in axing only for the sake of axing or walking just for the sake of beating the others, or throwing ourselves off cliffs on to a passing pony only because it is the latest aerial sport? I don't see a lot of evidence for these anxieties to breed on, but I think we must remind ourselves frequently that we are here to be with and for each other, rather than to use each other for personal kicks.

My hopes for FSC, based on many an early morning cuppa, live in this spirit of generous concern that begins with the early morning ritual gift. They are buoyed up by the evidence around me, of people continuing to enjoy the FSC experience over many years. Many of my early camping companions have become parents now or their hair is missing or grey. When I see them, I know we still keep something of our earlier shared experiences because we can start in again without having to go through the whole process of 'getting to know you'. Such are my hopes for FSC – that all our camping together may lead to that sense of our always knowing that we share a vision of mutual concern, and that that concern is rich enough to extend beyond the magic circle of FSC and enrich others' lives – even if the tea gets a bit cool on the way to its destination.

Mary Brown



It's been a while now since I woke up in an encrusted sleeping bag by the shore of a lake so clear that every detail of the hovering snow-clad mountain was repeated in its depths. The cold had not kept me awake, but I had spent a lot of the night watching the stars and changing moonlight shadows. I woke easily near sun-up to find that most of my small party were already up and huddled around a small stove that was burning fiercely, heating water. I could see people drinking, but no one was coming towards me with a shallow Sierra Club cup full of some hot and revivifying substance. They were happily looking after themselves, and indeed, greeted me cordially when at last I managed to get my caffeine-starved body to the source of delight.

So why did I feel such a jolt, such a twinge of neglect? I admit I love tea in bed, but I can manage perfectly well without. Much reflection has at last revealed to me why morning tea, brought to me, assumes such an important dimension in my life. The tea is not just hot liquid bringing new energy and a jolt to the nervous system. The tea is attached to an arm, which is attached to the rest of a person who becomes attached to me in the form of some kind of caring relationship. That is the crux: I am made aware of the feeling even as I sip the nectar. Amongst all my memories of the Sierras there is no memory there of our all being united in our concern for each other through a cup of tea made specially and given to each other to say "It's good to be together".

"A mere difference of national custom" you may well say. However, taking it home to FSC, one could well understand why the camp chief might find it too difficult to wake his staff in this time proven way of starting the flow of creative energy. I have never ceased to marvel at the miracle of the early morning cuppa. It has unfailingly arrived at my tent in all weathers; it comes hot, too hot, cool, and only once too cold because the 'camp chief for the day' had refilled the pot from the river. That precious cuppa is not just a lever to get me out of bed, though it performs the task

MAP STRINGS

A story to introduce the idea. People can then make their own map strings e.g. on hike or on their own explorations

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT A GIRL WHO MADE A MAP STRING LIKE THIS ONE. THE PEOPLE OF HER VILLAGE NEEDED TO FIND A NEW PLACE TO LIVE. THEY DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT WHAT LAY BEYOND THEIR VILLAGE SO THEY DECIDED TO CHOOSE FOUR PEOPLE TO EXPLORE TO THE NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST. THE GIRL THIS STORY IS ABOUT WAS CHOSEN TO GO AND FIND OUT WHAT WAS IN THE EAST.

SHE WALKED WITH THE SUN BEHIND HER ACROSS THE GRASSY PLAIN. SHE THOUGHT ABOUT THE JOURNEY AHEAD AND ABOUT RETURNING TO HER PEOPLE TO TELL THEM WHAT SHE HAD FOUND



She took a piece of string from her bag and tied a bunch of grass to it to remind her of the first part of her journey.

Later she came to the foot of steep, rocky mountains. She tied a rock onto her string and started to climb.

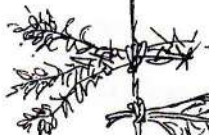


She strode out towards unknown adventures and it felt like her heart was flying. She saw a bird's feather on the path and tied it on her string.

She found a clump of silver birch trees and decided to stop for the night. She tied onto her string some pieces of the bark and twigs and flint she had found to start her fire.



In the morning the wind was blowing a gale. The trees shook and rattled making a sound a bit like the seeds rattling inside this seed pod.



She set off down a heather covered slope. The heather was bouncy and smelt sweet. She tied some on her string.



She was hungry. She felt like this skeleton leaf.

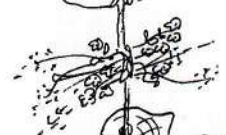
Eventually she came to a thick chestnut forest and made a meal of chestnuts.



She wanted to see what was ahead and climbed a tall pine tree. At the very top she swayed about in the wind and felt like this cone at the end of a twig.



From the tree she saw a long straight track heading East through the forest. And beyond the end of the wood was a shirey expanse of water. She found a long straight stick and a flat shirey stone to remind her of the track and water, and walked on.



That night she had a soft bed of grass and yellow bedstraw.



The next day she reached the water. It was the sea. There were fish and shell animals and seaweed to eat, space for tents and shelter from the wind.



The last thing she tied to her string was a mermaid's purse; where a fish had begun it's life. She thought "this is a good place for our village to start a new life."

THE GIRL RETURNED TO HER VILLAGE. WHEN IT WAS HER TURN TO TALK IN THE CIRCLE SHE SHOWED HER MAP STRING AND DESCRIBED HER JOURNEY; THE THINGS SHE HAD SEEN AND HEARD AND FELT. THE PEOPLE DECIDED TO GO AND LIVE BY THE SEA IN THE EAST. THEY USED THE MAP STRING TO REMIND THEMSELVES OF THE WAY. EVENTUALLY IT FELL TO PIECES.

Camp Chiefs or Camp Chairs?

FSC has changed since 1963, as has the rest of the planet. Styles of leadership have evolved, and the content or curriculum of the day have altered. Tests and trials have largely diminished. We camp in harsher landscapes than Norfolk. We have a greater commitment to camping with children with special needs. We have a staff-training programme, often criticised, which did not exist in 1963. Following 'Heart, Head and Hand' in 1990 a number of leaders, including Camp Chiefs, have moved to the Amerindian root of FSC. The talking stick is used, by children and by staff. Child democracy plays a stronger part. Children and staff expect to be able to assert (and I use that word very carefully) what they would wish from a camp. This makes the style of Camp Chief leadership rather different. The Camp Chief has become more of a Chair, a listener, a communicator, than a

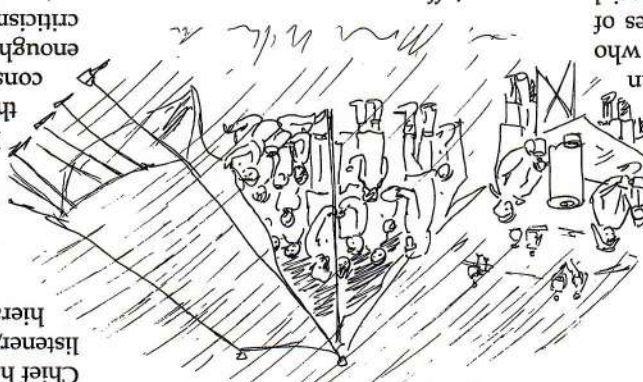
I do believe that assertion and requests made by children and by staff should be listened to with respect. And that they should be made with consideration - made early enough to be acted on, not left as criticism which leads to destructive antagonism. The need for a Camp Chief of the 1990's to attend to the human interactions with sensitivity as well as to maintain or develop the woodcraft way and ritual makes the job one for a polymath - or counsellor. I believe that a re-emphasis of listening skills is bound up with compassion, care and civility.

Leslie Holden

The Camp Chief of the 1990s needs to show care - and to receive it.

difficult situations could be resolved, and about enjoyment. I learned that there could be a harmonious group of adults, drawn from a wider social background than I had moved in. I learned that you could do unimaginable things like live out of doors in the rain, like bale out the kitchen fireplace during stormy weather, like recover from the rigours of hike and with reasonable grace move to the dancing field.

After some years I learned that the Camp Chief had other duties, such as to report on staff, usually in brief and optimistic form. I learned that on occasion, staff were asked to leave FSC, because the Camp Chief had made adverse comment of a serious kind. I noticed that Camp Chiefs did not shout at children



Neither did staff shout at children even when naughty things happened (like rustling a herd of cows through the kitchen). Since I had been to a school where corporal punishment could be used, it interested me that it was not used in Forest School. Since I had been to a single-sex school, it interested me that the boys and girls were not obsessed with sexuality. I noted that a few Camp Chiefs were female, but otherwise carrying out the same sort of work as the male ones.

Those were my early impressions of the genus Camp Chief. Of course

I came into FSC as a sort of adult - over the age of 21, with no previous experience of youth leadership. Apart from knowing that I was going to a camp in Norfolk, with children present, I knew little about the organisation. I arrived into a Utopian environment, a cross between the garden of Eden and Jurassic Park. Required clothing was a little more than a fig-leaf. I was in what I know now to be a small standing camp. It contained a group of adults called staff, who had tea each day after lunch. We talked gravely about integration in groups, and other phenomena new to me such as elves, hikes, night-games (a nocturnal version of rugby). I had become an expert country dancer at primary school, so was at the same stage as the assembled campers. The staff group contained several Camp Chiefs and a Camp Chief.

In describing the Camp Chief I will not describe an individual, but the genus of the time. The Camp Chief seemed to be older than me. (As the years have passed they have grown younger). The Camp Chief seemed to be male, an impressive, patriarchal figure who could have led one of the Tribes of Israel. The Camp Chief had special duties - to light the fire each day, and to chair the staff meeting morning after lunch, to lead a meeting in the morning at the rally circle. To lead, or at very least take an active part in daily song or dance. To be a genial figure from whom staff could gain advice and support. In short (and usually shorts) to be a servant to all.

It seemed natural to give the Camp Chief a good deal of respect, and the ones at whose feet I learned about FSC were impressive people. I learned a lot about character, how

The Fire

Fire is the visible reminder of the life-maintaining forces. It provides light and warmth, protection from outside dangers and it is used for cooking and cleansing. When Lodge Common Council draws to a close the Camp Chief will call on the Keeper of the Fire to spread the ashes while the camp stands silently. One ember is retained which will link the camp to a future campfire to signify continuity from year to year. The dying of the fire is a symbol for the ending of the life of the camp.

What Place Do Work Camps Have In FSC?

My aim in attempting to piece together an understanding of this question is to help fuel a current debate on workcamps, stimulated particularly by the ending of a significant run of international work camps (IWCs) at Rushall Manor. This event has coincided with Beefy's decision to step down from the role of overall workcamps' coordinator. The three – IWCs, Beefy and Rushall – had become almost synonymous.

According to Beefy, workcamps began in 1949, two years after FSC itself rose from the embers of Forest School. The site of the school, Whitwell Hall at Reepham in Norfolk, had become FSC's first stores site, precursor of Haddenham. The founders of FSC had taken the view that while children 'ended' at 18, staff should not be asked to undertake that responsibility until the age of 20. A camp format was therefore required that would bring together these potential young staffers, with a leaven of older hands, and provide a forum for talk about the art and implications of staffing. What more appropriate format than workcamps?

Beefy makes it very plain that work, "digging in particular", seemed an ideal stimulus to such conversation: "Nothing like it, really", he says. The particular work to be done was primarily the servicing of the site and FSC's hoard of equipment, "motivated by service to each other and others in the town of Reepham." It was of course a time of reconstruction in the country at large, following World War Two, and the concept of workcamps involving mainly young people offering their labour to projects not otherwise fundable was promoted by a number of organisations. The phenomenon has reappeared over the past decade as we have become increasingly aware of the more insidious degradation of the planet as a whole.

But the principle of work by young people for 'the community' was an important plank in the structure of one of Forest School's wellsprings, the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry. Chapter 12 of the history of that organisation (copy held by Lorna

English) explains how, at the height of the between-the-wars Depression – at the same time as Forest School was being established – the OWC was heatedly debating how to assist 'those who lacked work to lead fuller and more rewarding lives than was generally possible on the dole.'

Sandyballs, the original site of Forest School in the New Forest, was chosen as an ideal place for the 'retrieval of dignity, pride and health through work in natural surroundings.' One of the sources of OWC's thought was the Ephebe programme in Ancient Greece, in which physically and mentally demanding work for 18-21 year olds formed a kind of peaceable alternative to military service.

Beefy describes how the removal of eyesores became a major theme in the 50s. "The Second World War had seen many derelict sites with gun emplacements, barrack rooms and dumps and clearing these came under the heading of service to the community, usually sponsored by the Civic Trust." Arthur Cobb, FSC's Secretary then, was a member of the Civic Trust. Nick Hawthorn remembers his first workcamps, one: "run by Beefy on a site just outside Wantage where we were engaged in removing the last vestiges of an old wartime camp. All the concrete bases for what had been Nissen huts had to be broken up and removed, and the land restored to its former use. The following year at Land's End we were to remove the remains of a gun emplacement. We had the loan of Cyril from the local council together with his lorry and I remember that one of the other volunteers was a vicar whose name I think was Vivian and who distinguished himself by setting Land's End on fire. We also had some valuable assistance from the local army who came to blow up one or two of the more solid emplacements."

In 1966, Work Service Camp One was led by Arthur Cobb and according to the programme was 'for men and women of 18 years upwards who may be contemplating joining the staff of FSC, and for foreign students.' Beefy recalls that "the international aspect of these camps

was designed to develop an interest in world affairs and to encourage foreigners, largely from Europe, to engage also in our children's camps." The Work Camps Organiser: Miss Tess Vellacott.

In 1968 there were five camps: the programme refers to camp fire and folk dance after work and 'often we have informal discussions concerned with the work or about the part which young people play in the world of today.' During the 70s, there were canal restoration workcamps clearing towpath and weed with mechanical boats on the Kennet and Avon; pond clearance on the Devon/Somerset border; the setting up of a bird sanctuary and more demolition work on the Island of Steep Holm in the Bristol Channel; dry stone walling in Snowdonia in the 1980s, work camps took place at Barnsbury (North London) urban wood; Slough House Wood at Danbury, Essex; Lower Kingcomb organic farm cum nature reserve in Dorset; Gray Hill 17th century farm; Hindleap Warren outdoor pursuits centre, Sussex; and of course Haddenham itself came on stream as a workcamp project.

In 1984, FSC began an involvement with the John Simonds Trust, whose aims were seen as closely akin to FSC's. The Trust owns Rushall Manor Old Farm in the valley of the River Pang in Berkshire. Over the ten years that followed, fortnight long International Work Camps, mostly chiefed by Beefy, have been attended by thirty or so 17-30 year olds, the majority from continental Europe. Strong contingents have come from the Basque country in Spain, from Poland and Czechoslovakia, with many other countries also represented; leavened with a handful of home grown FSCers to bring our inimitable flavour and traditions to these camps.

John Durham attended several of the 1980s IWCs and feels workcamps to be a third form of FSC camp, complementing standing camps and mobiles. "Each provides an FSC experience and much transfers from one to the other if you do more than one. For those who found themselves

for the first time with a welcoming and caring group like FSC, the idea of it being a 'work camp' soon diminished and their presence alone brought them into and gave all the pleasure of being together in a group."

John recounts one particular instance: "I remember I learnt to replace a landrover wheel with a Hungarian called Goresh (phonetic). He couldn't speak English, I had no truck and were several miles from camp, and no jack suited for the job. By listening to each other and watching expressions we managed to construct a turning device from a bit of tubing, a pair of pliers and an oversize spanner. We just got the spare on in our own time, using most of the tool kit and things we found at the side of the road. This was a great experience; we were pleased and amused and amazed and that feeling of achievement came from much of the work we all did at Rushall."

"Sitting round the fire used to get off to a slow start as no one song could be sung by all. Through the patient efforts of Beely and Arne (Hedger) the camp fires became lively and creative. One camp took about a week before the group somehow found a tune that every language could put words to, and each contingent sang their version. Later on, the Polish group sang a song, then the Spanish, Basque/Spanish rendering of *We know frogs go: la lalalala*, led by Begonia is something else!

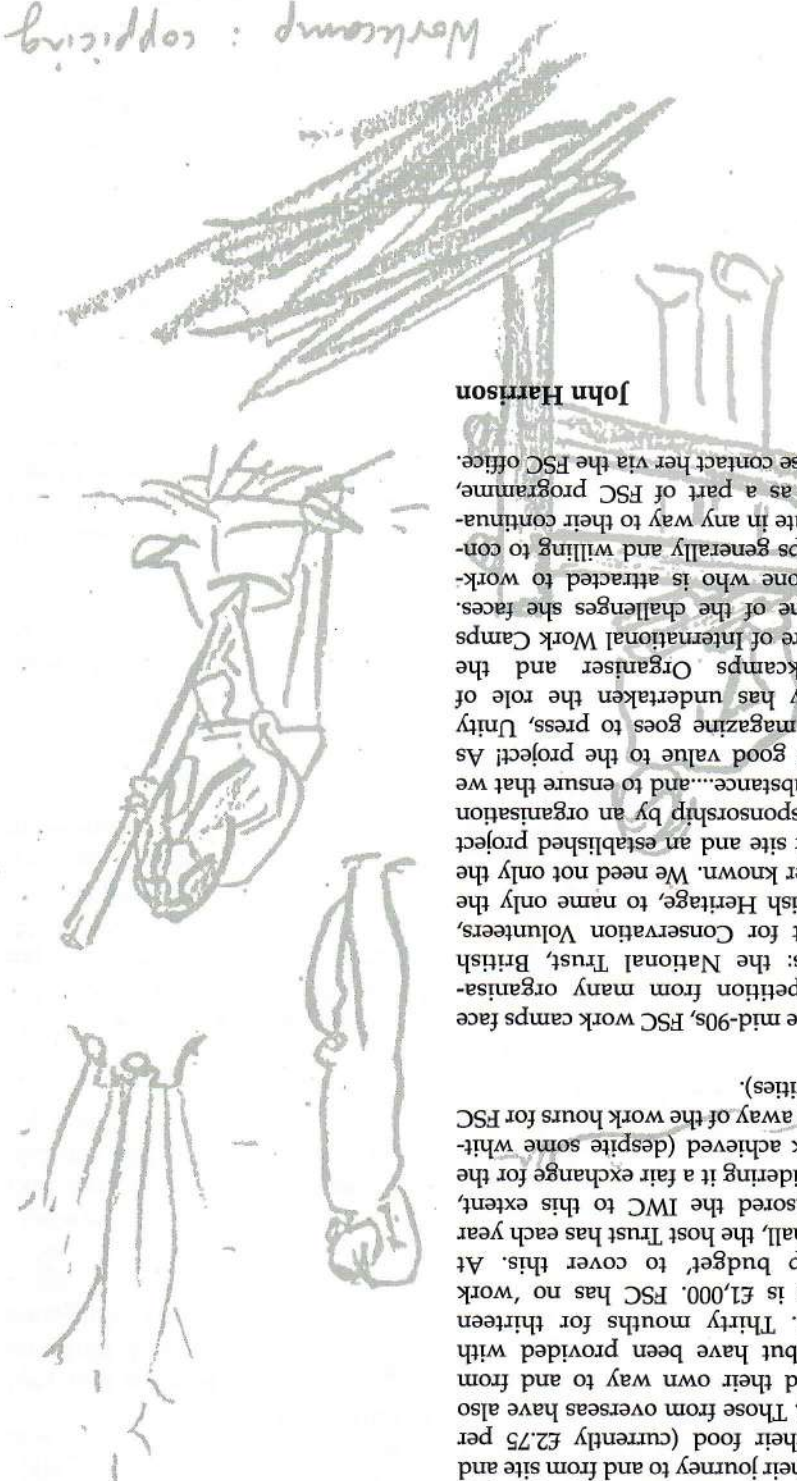
Rushall's lovely buildings – including, as many of us know, an 18th century tile barn – have been extensively renovated, paths developed through the woodland, a pond excavated and path-enclosed by these ten years of FSC IWCs. After the 1993 camp, the Trust decided that the work of rehabilitating this old manorial farm as a demonstration and learning centre is complete. Though we may well continue smaller, maintenance camps there, FSC sought a fresh site for its 1994 IWC and decided upon Gray Hill, where a Trust formed by Stuart Peachey and others is restoring farmland and buildings

At this point in time the future of IWCs hangs in the balance. FSC camps have to be self-financing. The tradition at workcamps is that our own, i.e. Britain-based people pay for their journey to and from site and for their food (currently £2.75 per day). Those from overseas have also found their own way to and from site but have been provided with food. Thirty mouths for thirteen days is £1,000. FSC has no 'work camp budget' to cover this. At Rushall, the host Trust has each year sponsored the IWC to this extent, considering it a fair exchange for the work achieved (despite some whitewashing away of the work hours for FSC activities).

In the mid-90s, FSC work camps face competition from many organisations: the National Trust, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, English Heritage, to name only the better known. We need not only the right site and an established project but sponsorship by an organisation of substance...and to ensure that we offer good value to the project! As this magazine goes to press, Unity Kelly has undertaken the role of Workcamps Organiser and the future of International Work Camps is one of the challenges she faces. Anyone who is attracted to workcamps generally and willing to contribute in any way to their continuation as a part of FSC programme, please contact her via the FSC office.

John Harrison

Workcamp: coppicing



An allegory



There were once two people who were returning to the forest. Their task was to build a fireplace and gather wood in preparation for the feast. First, they needed to make sure that they had a shelter, and one person had brought a tent large enough for both to share.

"Let's put the tent here," said the first person when they met. "I like this place, and I always put my tent here."

"No," said the second person. "The trees are too close together here, and we can't see the sky. I think we should clear some ground further over there, where the trees are thinner and there is more space."

"But," said the first person, "every year I put my tent in the same place. I look forward to having my tent here, in this place all the year. I don't want to change. I like to do these things the same. It may not be the best way, but I really prefer it, and it would spoil things to have to change."

"Nonsense," said the second person. "It's about time you did

something different. The tent would go much better over there, where there is more light, and a view of the river. Think how nice it will be in the morning, with the sun coming into the tent."

They argued for some time. The afternoon wore on, until the first person said, "Come on, let's start building the fireplace and collecting wood. The others will be here soon for the feast and we have nothing ready." "No", said the second person. "We must make a decision about the tent first. It's going to rain soon, and it will be much harder to put up a tent in the rain. Why don't I take the tent over there and put it up, while you start to make the fireplace?"



"No," said the first person. "I think we should make the fireplace together. It's what we came for and it's what is important, after all. While we are making the fireplace and collecting wood we can think about where the tent can go."

"No," said the second person. "You will only think about where you want the tent to go. And anyway, it doesn't matter if we don't get everything ready, the others can help when they get here."

"That won't do," said the first person. "They will expect to find things as they have always found them. There should be a fire and a welcome and enough wood to cook the feast for us all."

"I don't see why we shouldn't do things differently," said the second person. "Put the tent in a different place, and get everyone to help with the fire. It doesn't really matter."

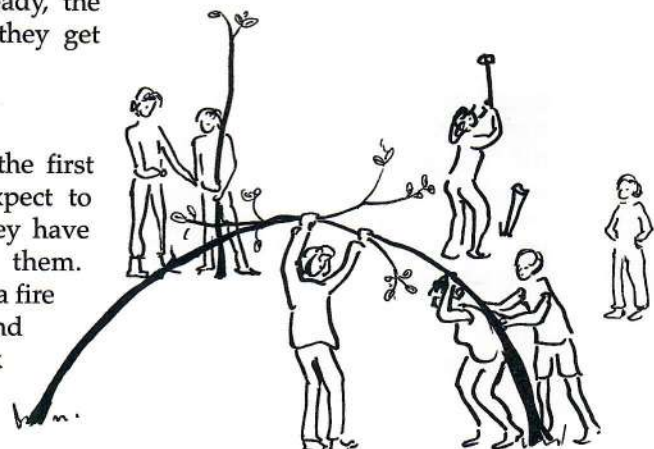
"You are confusing the tent and our purpose," said the first person. "The tent is me being nostalgic, and wanting things to be the same. The fire is for everyone, and it is important that it is built."

In the end the fire was built, and the wood collected, but without any real accord between the first person and the second person.

Was one of them right? They still could not decide where to put the tent, and it began to rain. Some of the others started to arrive. They were pleased to see the fire blazing – it made them feel welcome.

When they heard about the dilemma, they laughed. "Why don't you build a bender in a new place?" they asked. "That way, the old associations will not be broken, just changed into something quite new. Building it together, you will learn to trust one another, and no one need feel they have lost anything."

Jill Monk



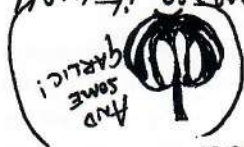
FOIL-WRAPPED VEGETABLES

A most delicious and effective meal for hire.



This is a brilliant meal because you can pick and choose your vegetables according to your desires:

For crunch: carrots, mange-tout, broccoli, cauliflower
 For sweet flavour: leeks, onions, peppers, tomato
 For bulk: potatoes, fennel sweetcorn, mushrooms



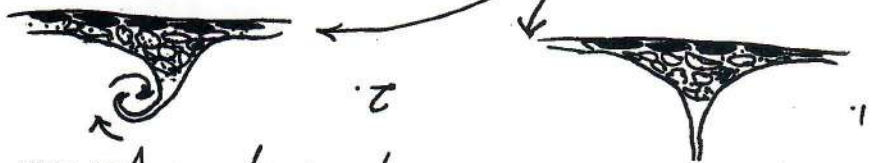
Take a generous piece of aluminium foil and grease it well (preferably with butter), then pile up your chosen vegetables in the middle of the foil, with those that take longer to cook on the bottom (so they will be nearer the cooking heat).

THEN ADD VEGGIES →

← FOIL
 BUTTER



Season the vegetables with plenty of salt and pepper, chopped garlic and any herbs that you may have (best ones for this are thyme + rosemary) and put a final knob of butter on top. Wrap the foil over at the top:



and then at either end, making sure all the edges are well sealed. It is important to leave a bit of air space inside the foil package, so that the vegetables can steam deliciously in their own juices.

Cook the foil-wrapped vegetables in a hot ember fire (i.e. not flames, just a good, solid baking heat) for about 15-20 minutes. You can carefully remove the package and open it up to check if the vegetables are all cooked (check the potato, especially!) - if not, re-wrap and return to fire. If cooked, you can add cheese to the top and either eat it right away, or put it back in the heat with the foil loosely re-covering the top, to let the cheese melt, bubble and go delicious.

-It's a glorious meal which is enough on its own, but can be bulked out with rice or pasta if you are really hungry. (which I always am).

YUM!

The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry and Forest School Camps

The woodcraft movement was started in the early 1900s in America by Ernest Thompson Seton, a naturalist and author, as a way of helping boys from the inner cities to learn more about life and better ways of living. In Britain soon after this, Ernest Westlake a naturalist and scientist, his son (Aubrey) and daughter, and a number of other people, (mainly Quakers) started the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry. In the 1920s and 30s it was very successful, with many children's groups active. At this time it was a mixed youth movement, similar in many ways to the Scouts and the Woodcraft Folk (which was started by ex-members of the OWC). Later as the younger members grew up, the organisation came to encompass all ages.

The organisation has always had a strong educational emphasis and the following early statement embodies some of the aims:

We do not profess to provide a ready-made solution to the riddle of the world. The Woodcraft Way we advocate is the way of the Saints. It is in his experience of life that every individual finds or loses his god. We aim, like the trainers of the knights of old, not to deny the darkness of the world, not to explain it, but to train men to meet it. We cannot guarantee them victory, but we can help to make them strong.

In the late 1920s members of the Order wanted to further the educational development side of the Order. One of the ways to do this was to start a school using the values and ideas developed by the Order. The main differences between this school – Forest School – and most others at the time were that much of the learning was done outside and a lot of it was by first hand experience. The youngest children at the school were not forced to go to lessons, but were allowed to roam around in the woods exploring, climbing trees, watching the animals and looking at the plants. As they grew and wanted to know more about something that interested them, teachers would help them to find answers and suggest other

directions in which they could look.

Currently the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry is a small family based organisation with about 140 member families. It is an educational and social fellowship, for all ages and sexes, which is non-political and non-denominational. The members believe in the 'Woodcraft Way' of first hand experience and the 'chivalrous spirit' of helping others, and being ready to respect and understand all peoples. The aim of the order can be found in the Affirmation to which all members subscribe:

To respond to the call of the world of nature, seeking from it simplicity, good sense and fortitude. To pursue bravely and gaily the adventure of life, cherishing whatever it holds of beauty, wonder and romance, endeavouring to carry the chivalrous spirit into daily life.

Membership of the Order is open to all those who feel themselves in sympathy with its Affirmation. It includes families, or 'kindreds', and individuals, or 'lone members'. Activities during each year include weekend camps, social gatherings and outings, discussion groups and adventure expeditions, organised by the two regional Guilds, Wessex and London, or Phoenix Lodge. Several camps are held each year, including the Summer Camp, the Folkmoot weekend (the AGM), and Hallowe'en. A quarterly journal, The Pine Cone, is published and sent to all members and those who express interest in the organisation. This gives accounts of recent activities, articles of general interest, the programme of future events and news.

The member families forming the active core of the OWC camp together regularly and are very much like an extended family. Less regular campers are always welcome, when they can make it to camps, bringing added variety to the activities and experiences. Everybody within the OWC finds something in it of value to them, otherwise they would not continue to attend events, however infrequently. However

Sweat Lodge

structure in blankets (lent by the local pony-trekking school), carpets and tarpaulins. In the centre a pit was dug for the rocks and the soil was used to create a spirit line from the fire to the lodge.

At about 9.30 the first glowing logs were taken into the sweat. Entering the womb-like lodge in darkness with just the red glow of the hot rocks and the heat coming off touch- es chords deep within me every time. At around 10.00 the main sweat took place and the lodge was filled with members of all ages; more glowing red rocks appeared through the doorway and we welcomed each one in as the heat grew and sweat poured off our bodies into the earth below. Once we had shared how we were feeling and were in need of cooling off we would leave the lodge and plunge in the icy cold water of the plunge pool we had constructed earlier by damming the stream. When the last of us left the lodge and sat naked around the fire, it was already the next day; shooting stars were in abundance and beautiful friendships had been deepened.

Ben Law
From Pine Cone, O.W.C
quarterly journal

A sweat lodge is a Native American purification ceremony and in its simplest form involves taking an outside sauna; in a more traditional sweat many prayers will be sent, give- ways intended and traditional chants sung. To me the beauty of the sweat lodge is in the deep connec- tion to the elements and the bonding and sense of harmony and openness which becomes established by all those who sweat together.

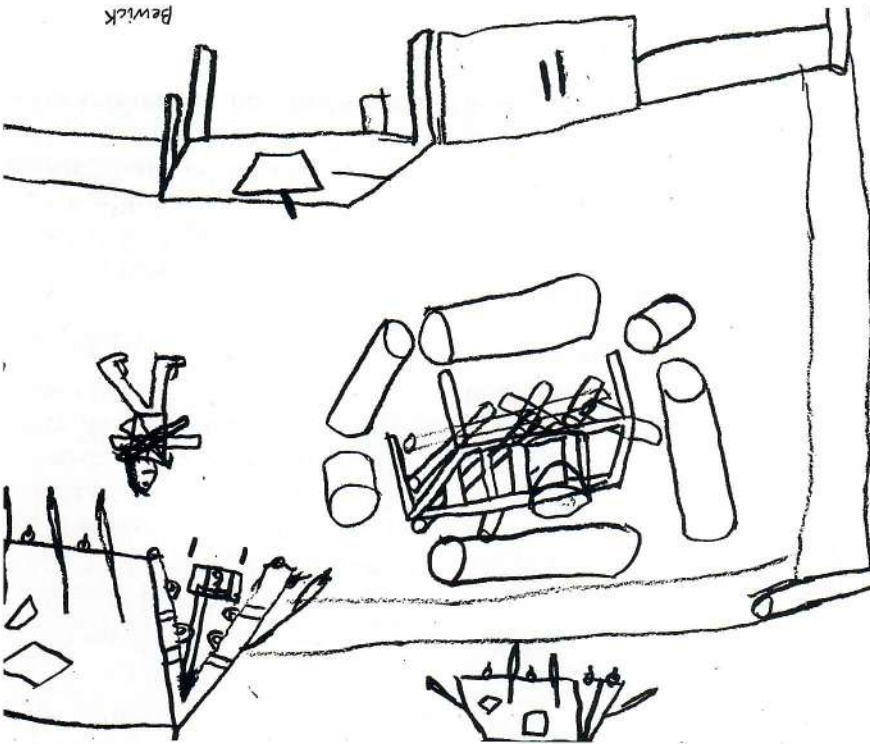
A sweat lodge is made by first con- structing a 'bender', hazel or willow poles cut green and bent to form a domed structure. At camp we cut green willow and stripped some of the bark which made strong ties to secure the poles. The preparation for a sweat is a long process but this is part of its beauty as all the different parts start to come together as the sun begins to set. We started con- struction just after five in the evening. First we built a large pyre, with limestone rocks (collected local- ly) resting on a platform in the pyre. It is traditional that the youngest should light the fire to bring the spirit of innocence into the heart of the fire: Charlotte lit the pyre and, with the help of a fire-lighting song, there was soon a huge blaze. We then constructed the lodge 'shell' from willow and then covered the

many of the important things about it are different to each individual. This makes it very difficult to explain in a few words what is so 'good' about the organisation. New people introduced to the organisation may initially find it slightly strange with a comparatively 'loose' structure. Sometimes it is frustrating because you think that nothing is ever going to happen, but it does, eventually (and it is often worth waiting for).

Woodcraft within Forest School Camps is often just something we do when we are at camp, with bits of wood, string, axes and saws, etc. However this is only skim- ming the surface, and as you read the old literature and talk to the older members, you begin to learn that Woodcraft is a way of life, that you take it home with you after camp and continue to develop throughout the year and your life. Almost everything that you do is influenced by Woodcraft in some way and it affects your outlook on life.

Anyone interested in knowing more about the OWC, or attending or visiting an Order camp is welcome to contact me for further details.

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Come the revolution

Experimenting with camps and camp chiefting

This article is about the ideas we wanted to try and put into practice on the camp we ran at Farndale. We were attempting to explore some of the traditional Forest School ideas about child democracy.

As camp chiefs, we set out firstly to concentrate on the way we did things rather than on what we did and secondly, to involve the lodge in the running of the camp as much as possible. From what we could remember from camps in the distant past, discussion and group meetings had a history stretching back a long way. We shared the view with others that this tradition had suffered some decline, but that it should be a key element in our camps.

We began by trying to unpick the role of camp chief, to focus on the functions of the role rather than as the source of power and control, however friendly that control might be.

Our goal was to involve as much of the lodge as possible in decision making, rather than being tempted to take the decisions ourselves. For this to work, the adults had to be seen to be letting go of at least some of the power, starting with the camp chiefs. We wanted to minimise the 'camp chief as god', the 'this is my camp' attitude.

We went to camp prepared to accept the responsibility for what was decided by staff and children even if, sometimes, when we'd had our say, it wasn't our first choice decision. Maybe when things didn't go smoothly people learned from this. At other times

we learned that there were other ways of doing things that were successful. The staff did feel encouraged to contribute ideas and to witness the range of factors taken into account around some decisions. Naturally, not everything is negotiable. In truth, sometimes quite a lot is already decided. If safety or childcare are issues, then explanation of reasons replaces discussion. However, we felt the camp was going well if whatever was done was done in the spirit of the good of the lodge.

What were the problems?

Too much talk. This might be a feeling when things on the camp are going well, but the capability to resolve difficulties or to use them as examples of a kind of democracy in action made the talking worthwhile.



Boring. Except that, if it's about what's important to you and you can change it, maybe you'll increase your tolerance. Taking the time to hear everyone is a problem, which is why feedback from groups at rally, rather than mere factual reports, is useful.

Not enough done. It's true that more can be done in a system where the camp chief issues instructions to the staff, who ensure that the children do them, either by giving orders or through friendly persuasion.

Too much focus on process rather than product. Some people asked, 'what are the camp chiefs doing? They say there's nothing on the agenda, that it's up to everyone.' We expected everyone to communicate their thoughts and feelings and to share the aim of making the camp a success.

We were aiming to create a climate in which people – staff and children – felt able to speak freely and to make suggestions, identify problems and propose solutions at an early stage. Our requirement was not that people had to be nice to each other, but that they be prepared to say why they were upset. Deviancy, in this context, would be a refusal to communicate. This all meant that the key part of the camp chiefs' role was the maintenance of a structure which encouraged participation, in which making a contribution was made easier than keeping silent.

How did we go about it?

We:

created opportunities for staff and children to comment on the camp and to identify proposed changes and activities

encouraged feedback at rally from groups, as opposed to factual reports

attempted dialogue at rally by opening discussion up to the lodge when suggestions were made

made the camp chiefs available to speak with staff and children

sent letters to staff in advance of the camp, outlining our thoughts,

The Ernest Thompson Seton Institute

Having spent some 30 years promoting his League of Woodcraft Indians on both sides of the Atlantic, in 1930 Ernest Thompson Seton finally settled in the American Southwest. He built Seton Village (in 1966 designated a National Monument), and set up a summer camp for teaching Woodcraft and Indian lore to leaders of youth groups around the world. Always a keen student and friend of the Plains and Woodland Indians, Seton moved to New Mexico where he spent his last 16 years among the Navajo, Apache, and especially the local Pueblo tribes. In a lovely spot south of Santa Fe, Seton

bought 2,500 acres of high desert, sagebrush and pinor pines, in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. He married his secretary, adopted a daughter, and in his 70s ran the Seton Institute of Indian Wisdom.

Nearly 50 years after the death of Ernest Thompson Seton, his daughter Dee Seton Barber has brought together family and friends from all over the world who believe in

Seton's woodcraft philosophy, and feel the time is ripe for a resurgence of interest in his work. Seton-o-philes met in March 1993 to form the Ernest Thompson Seton Foundation Inc (later changed to 'Institute' to reflect more accurately by its prime function). A board of directors was chosen; aims and by-laws formulated. An Advisory Board was established, including artists, businessmen, naturalists, professors and students, writers and photographers, ecologists and zoologists, as well as people who simply want Seton's art and philosophy to be readily available. They come from Japan, Canada, the Czech Republic, Great Britain and the United

States, all races and creeds, and, of course, include Native Americans, some the descendents of original Seton Institute staff. The old HQ, Seton Castle, is Dee Barber's home and now home to the new ETS Institute, until other premises are available.

Our Institute is still in embryo form – we're getting our Federal non-profit status sorted out; a travelling exhibit of Seton artwork is in the planning stage; urgent repairs to Seton Castle roof have sparked the need for fundraising activities (it's a historic building but low on the Park Service list for renovation); cataloguing of Seton's mass of artwork, publications, lecture notes, and journals (fascinating reading!) has to be undertaken. 1995's project on Seton's woodcraft groups in Great Britain has provided a lot of information on the international connections, as did the visit to Seton Castle in 1994 of a contingent from the Woodcraft League of the Czech Republic.

The Annual International Woodcraft newsletter, comprising articles from Woodcrafters around the world, goes out from Dee's computer as does a bi-monthly *Woodcraft North America Communications Circle* – a kind of round-robin discussion table.

Communication is the Ernest Thompson Seton Institute's major function, while plans to establish a permanent archive and research facility on the remaining 100 acres of Seton land are hashed out. The ultimate goal is to have a study center available for all to come and make use of the huge amount of material produced by and about this 20th Century Renaissance Man.

If you want to help, or just learn more, write to:

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Barbara Witemeyer



Czech Woodcraft

The latest political division of this small country has split the Woodcraft League into two - the Czech Republic with about 10,000 members, and a mini league in Slovakia. But their outside borders are open again and they are travelling to the West to learn about their Woodcraft roots. In 1993 a group visited the Woodcraft Rangers in Los Angeles, Seton Castle in Santa FE, and Carberry, Manitoba, where Seton grew up among the Canadian sand-hills. In 1994 the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry entertained a group of young Czech woodcrafters, led by their Chief, Martin Kupka, first for a week at the OWCS London Guild HQ in Weybridge Surrey, and then at the Order's Summer Camp in Cornwall. In the true Woodcraft 'Service Way' tradition of sharing, the Woodcraft Folk, and Forest School Camps contributed towards the expenses of this visit. The Czechs were thrilled to meet and talk with other Woodcrafters, and now want to host an International Camp in their country in 1996, the 50th anniversary of Seton's death. ETS would have been delighted to join them.

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Ernest Thompson Seton's League of Woodcraft Indians, formed in 1902 in Connecticut, USA, was introduced into Great Britain first in 1906 to Baden-Powell, and then in 1916 when, with Ernest Westlake, Seton founded the International Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, which in turn spawned the Forest School, Forest School Camps and the Woodcraft Folk. Today some of the original rituals and ceremonies, based on Seton's idea of 'the best bits of the best Indians' are retained; but nowhere are Seton's *Book of Woodcraft* and *Birch Bark Roll* followed more closely than in Czechoslovakia, where the Woodcraft League has survived all attempts to quench its fire or spirit.

Translations of Seton's books first appeared in Czechoslovakia around 1912 (and are still being printed today). The principles of living close to nature and making life's necessities out of natural materials flourished in the beautiful Eastern European country of lakes and forests. During the Second World War and after, meetings of the Woodcraft League were outlawed. Undaunted, they 'went underground' and continued to meet secretly, assisted by dense woodland which hid their clandestine gatherings, and where teepee poles could be stored, unnoticed. This period is now referred to as 'living in the Forest Way'.

These dedicated woodcrafters (as opposed to so-called 'Euroindians' who also camp, but do not 'do woodcraft') follow the American Indian way as closely as possible, camping in full-scale teepees with central firepits for warmth, but also to cook on. They light the fires using a bow and firestick, dress in fringed, beaded buckskin, take Indian names, and keep faithfully to Seton's *Birch Bark Roll*. Asked why they choose to emulate the American Indian, Chief Martin Kupka said there is no European equivalent, and "why try to do something else? Why, if it works?" When the League came out of hiding and regrouped in 1990, the various 'tribes' had a mess of individual deed systems. To create the unity necessary for keeping the Seton ideals alive, these were all ditched, and Seton's 25 tenets were adopted by all. Chief Kupka's tribe had to give up 100. Even though some were out-of-date it was the only way to go ahead. Now they are working together to update the language and the Deeds, while keeping Seton's philosophy intact.

Folk Memory

Sometimes being on a Forest School Camp can be so satisfying. I find myself, body and soul, moving into a state of great contentment and a strange feeling of 'rightness', so much so that I begin to wonder what I do in my daily life that keeps me from feeling this way more often.

Maybe it's the day-long physical exercise. Maybe it's being out in the elements, close to nature. Maybe it's living so intimately with other people – eating, playing, working, sleeping – and the same people day after day. Maybe it's creating, in a way, our own mini-society; having to make our own entertainment, our own culture of songs, festivities, stories, running jokes. Maybe it's knowing (and seeing it proved) that everything you do affects someone else, that your voice counts and your contribution shapes your world. Maybe it's all of these things put together.

So why do these things feel so right? Well, the answer may lie in the past. We need go back less than ten generations to find our forebears living in a pre-industrial world, and whether they lived in the city or the countryside (as in the case of the vast majority) they were living a life that involved greater physical exertion, less protection from the vagaries of nature, and a greater sense of belonging to a specific community of people.

Less than a hundred generations takes us back to the time of Christ (line them up and they'd perhaps reach to the corner shop). Two hundred generations back and we come to a time when, in this country (and virtually everywhere else in the

world except the Near East and parts of Southern Europe), there was no knowledge of agriculture at all, settled village life had not yet been adopted. People, our ancestors, lived in tribal groups migrating with the seasons. And here you have a way of life that to us moderns has an almost unimaginable vulnerability to the natural elements; where 'physical exercise' as we call it was a grim necessity of survival; where whether eating, working or sleeping the individual was constantly in the company of people they knew intimately, often from birth; where the only sources of 'culture' – music, stories, dances – were the people themselves; where, by virtue of the group's small size, the individual's voice was heard and could have an impact on the community of which he or she was a part.

Our ancestors lived like this not for tens or hundreds or even thousands of generations, but tens of thousands of generations. It's hard to be exact, of course, but some sources estimate that 20,000 generations had the use of fire, and 100,000 generations used stone tools. Further back than this and we are in the realm of the Ape/Man.

So this way of living is fairly firmly established in our ancestry and, I am sure, deep in our unconscious. As a species we are very adaptable but I find it hard to imagine that the long repeated

sound of that way of life isn't still echoing deep inside us. Are ten generations, or even two hundred generations, long enough for that sound to die out?

It would be wrong to picture this past as a lost paradise and the modern world as a fall from grace. People in industrialised countries are better housed, clothed and fed than their forebears ever dreamt of. But each successive wave of new technologies has brought about, and continues to bring about, great changes in the way we live. The amount of physical exertion required of us has greatly diminished, and the traditional communities in which we once lived have, for good or ill, largely been eroded and displaced. There's more distance between people, and between people and nature. As for culture, that's now done for us by the mass media, and we are involved in such huge societies that the chances of our individual voices being heard often seem remote.

There's more distance between people, and between people and nature.

A Forest School Camp is a long, long way from the hard life our hunter-gatherer ancestors lived, but it contains enough similar elements for something inside us to wake up and say "Yes! I remember this!" And for a week or two we are blessed with the opportunity to live a life far more in tune with that which our ancestors lived, and one which satisfies so many of the deep human needs that our modern civilisation fails to meet.

Tom Sofer



Who Are We?

Birthday and everyone sang 'Happy Birthday' to me, although they didn't know me from Adam or Eve.

I had entered a charmed world and felt my heart would break when I knew, five years later, that we would have to leave.

I have never looked back. More accurately, I should say I have often looked back, never with regret, always with great fondness and gratitude. I had met people who had similar thoughts, aims, beliefs as myself, and my life is the way it is now because of my involvement with FSC.



That first meeting happened because Mary Brown joined the staff of the school I was working at and, in her infinite wisdom, decided that I was good material for FSC and that the best way to introduce me would be for me to come to a stores weekend.

That first journey to Horton Kirby was made along the route that came to be so well known to me.

(I recently travelled along it again and looked in vain for the landmarks I was once so familiar with.) Mary organised some guides, Nico Brown and Lydia Blackman,

who came with Rory, Pete and Moses. Unfortunately neither of them knew the way and it was, I believe, entirely fortuitous that, several hours later, three shattered adults, two quivering children and one smelly baby arrived at Horton Kirby. It was 7 May 1971.



Mary had told me that I should wear old clothes. I did, which was fortunate, as I was immediately bagged by Victor Brooks, who organised me spending the whole weekend cupping the new standard boxes that had just been made for the equipment, and which were stored in the loft from where they were lowered with enormous dexterity, glee, noise, and to my mind luck, by hordes of young people but mainly Browns and Brooks.

Universally the circle is the symbol of wholeness, harmony and perfection, having no beginning and no end. It signifies cherishing, sheltering, nourishing and supporting. The circle is also the design for nomadic tents and encampments, contrasting with the squareness and straightness of cities and houses. It emphasises that camp is a different place from home and that the patterns and expectations of the normal world do not apply. Returning to a circle represents a defence against disintegration and chaos, the return to wholeness.

The Circle

The circle represents the wholeness of a camp. The completeness of the circle is expressed by the presence of the whole Lodge. Each person thus contributes to the ritual nature of the Lodge. Rally, the meeting of the Lodge, brings the whole camp, young and old, into a formal circle. The first and last acts at camp are usually the assembling of the Lodge in the rally circle.



Maggie Beach



In our journey through life there should be no room for complacency. We need to define and redefine ourselves, our beliefs and philosophies to make who we are really count. We are an increasingly diverse group of people from many backgrounds. We must not be complacent but nor should we seek to impose our tribal ways on those who do not want them, whose journeys follow a different route to ours, for patronage should not be part of our way. As someone who could fit into some 'minority' categories, I do not want to be defined by them; I want to be welcomed and valued as the person I am. As I want to welcome and value those who come to FSC, whether they are brought in (as I was) or whether they discover us for themselves, as the people they are.



Another more recent signpost in my life was a book. I read *The Continuum Concept* (Jean Leidecoff) about ten years ago and was fascinated by its ideas. I learned that we were a carrying species, I learned about the concept of 'passive parenting' and, most importantly, I learned the philosophy of 'trust the child'. These all seem very obvious ideas, but are amazingly contentious in a society where adult convenience, parental omnipotence and the deeply held belief that children are innately wrong seem to be the order of the day. I also learned how important tribal living is to harmonious life, and came to the conclusion that my tribe is Forest School Camps.

So who are we, these people I feel so much part of and at home with (mostly) so in agreement with (sometimes), so irritated by (occasionally)? Although I think we all have some difficulty in defining ourselves, I hope we could mostly agree that we believe in the promotion of independence and interdependence through our camps. And surely that is the important point about a tribe, or community of people; their existence as a collection of independent individuals recognising their interdependence and needs and skills. So at any time, FSC is the sum total of the people we are.



The Woman Who Lost Her Luck

There was once a woman who lost her luck. Everything that could go wrong for this woman did go wrong, and she was the most miserable woman in the world. When, at last she was left with nothing but the clothes she wore, she decided to set off walking to find God to ask Her if it was possible to find her luck again.

As she was walking along, she came upon a tiger – a once proud, healthy beast, now fallen on hard times – emaciated, mangy and the picture of self-pity. “Hello,” said the tiger. “Who are you and where are you going?” “I’m a woman who has lost her luck and I’m walking to find God to ask Her if She can help me to find it again.” “Well,” said the tiger, “I’ve lost my luck too, and I haven’t had a square meal in weeks. Do you think God would help me too?” “I don’t know,” said the woman. “It may be that God is busy, but I’ll tell you what I’ll do. If I find God, and She isn’t too busy and can help me, I’ll put a word in for you too.” The tiger was very grateful for this, said goodbye to the woman, and she carried on her way.

Some time after leaving the tiger, the woman entered a large forest, and was walking through when she came to a clearing in the trees, empty of all but some sparse undergrowth and a small, stunted tree. This tree was so puny, it was barely more than a twig. As the woman walked past, the small tree called to her, “Hello. Who are you and where are you going?” “I’m a woman who’s lost her luck, and I’m walking to find God to ask her if She can help me to find it again.” The tree thought this was amazing as he’s down on his luck too, so nothing ventured, nothing gained – he asked the woman if she’d do the honours and get God to help him too. The woman told him the same thing she told the tiger, and said that she’d see what she could do. The tree thanked her and the woman went on her way.

After leaving the forest, the woman walked down into a valley. It was the most beautiful valley in the world – full of flowers, butterflies and a twinkling, silvery stream. Down in the bottom of the valley, on the other side of the stream, was a lovely thatched cottage, with a jigsaw-puzzle garden. Working in the garden, stripped to the waist was an Adonis of a man – he was gorgeous. As the woman walked past the garden, he called over the hedge to her – “Hello. Who are you and where are you

going?” “I’m a woman who’s lost her luck and I’m walking to find God to see if She’ll help me to find it again.” “That’s interesting,” said the man, “because I’ve lost my luck as well – do you think God would help me too?” “How can you possibly have lost your luck?” asked the woman. “You live in this wonderful place, you’re gorgeous-looking and in the peak of health – you can’t say you’re not lucky!” “Ah,” said the man. “It’s all very well having these things, but without anyone to share them with, I’m the loneliest man in the world, so that’s why I need God’s help.” “I see your point,” said the woman – “OK, I’ll see what I can do.” She said goodbye to the man and carried on her way.

Once out of the valley, the woman walked across a plain, until she came to the edge of the world (you must not forget that this is a story). She stood there, her toes hanging over the very brim, over the abyss below, and far away, out in the front of her, sitting on a cloud in all Her Glory, was God. God realised that She had a visitor so she welcomed the woman and asked her what she wanted. The woman explained that she was a woman who had lost her luck, and she had travelled to seek God and to ask for Her help. It just so happened that God wasn’t busy, so She told the woman how to find her luck again, and sent her back on her way.

The woman walked back across the plain – down into the valley and there, still working in his garden, was the man. He called out in greeting and asked the woman if she had found God and if there was any message? The woman told him that God had helped her and said that if she continued to walk, she would find her luck. “That’s wonderful,” said the man – “but what about me?” The woman told him that God had said that one day the man’s luck would come walking by. “Well, it’s obvious,” said the man. “You’re my luck! Come and live with me and share all I have.” “Oh no,” said the woman. “I can’t possibly do that – I’ve got to carry on until I find my luck – it can’t be me that God meant you to find.” The man was a bit cheesed off by this, but acknowledged the woman’s wishes, and they said goodbye.

The woman continued on her way, up out of the beautiful valley and back into the forest. As she came to the clearing, the very last leaf fell off the poor little tree and

The Woman Who Lost Her Luck

trove. "Heavens," said the woman, "this is a fortune – what are you going to do with it?" "Me?" said the twig. "Nothing – it's blighted my life so far, I want nothing whatsoever to do with it. You can have it and welcome." "Well, it's no use to me," said the woman – "I've got to carry on until I find my luck, and I couldn't possibly carry it." "Oh well," said the twig, "you'd better leave it there." So the woman said goodbye to the twig and carried on her way.

A short while later, she left the forest and walked on until she came upon the twig, lying stretched out on the ground, his emaciated form heaving dying breaths, each rib showing plainly through his once beautiful coat. "Thank goodness you've come back," said the twig, too weak even to sit up. "I've been waiting for you and I don't think I can last much longer. Did you find God?" "Yes I did," said the woman, "and it's marvellous news. God said that if I carried on my way, I would find my luck." "That's terrific," said the twig. "Was there a message for me?" "Oh yes," said the woman, "God said that you were to eat the first silly fool who stopped and talked to you." Which is exactly what the twig did.

Origin unknown
– told by
Althea Allen

floated to the forest floor. "Hello," croaked the twig (for that was all it now was) – "I've been waiting for you to come back. Did you find God, and can She help us?" The woman sank to her knees beside the twig and told it her news – that if she continued, she would find her luck. "What about me?" asked the twig. "Well, God said that there was something buried beneath your roots, which is stunting your growth, and if I can get it out, your roots will be able to spread, and you'll soon grow as tall as the trees around you," said the woman. "That's fantastic," said the twig. So, the woman picked up the shovel which was leaning against a nearby tree (you really mustn't forget that this is a story!), and started to dig very carefully around the base of the twig.

The shovel soon hit something large and unearthly, of all things, a big wooden chest. Using all her strength, she dragged it out of the ground and put it beside the twig. Then she shovelled all the soil back in around the twig's roots, and patted it down firmly. "Gosh, that's better," said the twig. "I feel as though I can breathe again. It's no wonder I couldn't grow with that thing taking up all the room. What is it, anyway?" The woman examined the chest, and finding it wasn't locked, opened it. You've guessed. It was full to the brim with treasure. Gold plates, solid silver tazzas, goblets, jewellery, diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires – it was a real

Head, heart and hand

Wisdom and control and the spiritual life reside in the head. It reminds us of the need for intelligence, awareness of the needs of others, for forethought and for keeping in check rash actions that might bring trouble to oneself or to others.

The heart is the centre of being, both physical and emotional. It represents the central wisdom of feeling as opposed to the head-wisdom of reason. It is compassion, understanding, love and charity.

The hand, 'the tool of tools', signifies craftsmanship and skill. It is the use of simple techniques rather than high technology and survival without destroying the balance of the environment. It is learning by doing and encouraging each other to have a go. It is the belief that any task is possible given the right tools and the right guidance and encouragement and that practical achievements are great enhancers of self-esteem.

Thinking Like a Mountain:

During our three-day staff training camp, held over the May Bank holiday, our aims were to pack in as much as possible, to find out ways of getting closer to our environment and to learn how to use ritual and ceremony to enhance more traditional activities.

We started off after supper that first night with an ice-breaker led by Julie in which we were asked to divide into pairs, take it in turns to explain why we had come, or where we had come from (or whatever), then take it in turns to report back to the group as a whole what the other person said. This kind of exercise teaches you to listen and to talk in public and, believe it or not, to relax quickly in a group you do not know well.

The ice broken, we then explained what the programme for the weekend would be, arranged the breakfast clan and retired fairly early having stressed that we were here to work not play!

Breakfast over by nine the next morning, the sun obligingly coming up over the surrounding oaks still not yet in leaf, we started with rally. Daniel started the day with a ceremony – a ritual fire in the middle of the circle (pre-turfed) to which

we each added a piece of wood. Dividing into groups, we took it in turns to describe a ritual or ceremony we had enjoyed, or felt embarrassed about, on a previous camp. We used the same reporting procedure as the night before. When we came back together again, Daniel finished off that session by leading a discussion on how ritual and ceremony at camp added a new dimension to traditional activities.

The two-hour long rally finally finished off with two discussions, one by me on the environment, Deep Ecology and the need for us as staff to make children learn how to live respectfully in harmony with nature, and one by Julie who told us of the importance of the circle at camp – the dining/rally circle, the camp fire circle and so on.

Squeezed into the small gap before lunch was a workshop on digging and axing led by Corinne and Julie and one on bender making by Daniel and I. Needless to say, the shelter bender was never used because the weather was perfect during the whole weekend.

After a massive lunch we had another rally. Daniel told us an elaborate story of his days as an executive and how, during a terrible storm, he had stumbled accidentally upon a group of children surviving admirably in the countryside. This was evidently his conversion to FSC. To cut a long story short, Daniel then challenged us to light a fire the old Pathfinder way. First collect your wood, pour a pint of water on it and then build and light your fire with one match. Daniel did in the circle and it worked. Half the camp followed Daniel and Julie in this firefighting activity and half came with me and Corinne to learn about Deep Ecology.

You've really got to do this for yourself to find out what it's about. Briefly, a group of ecologists have recently been postulating that the earth's problems, pollution, the profligate use of resources and our general attitude towards our planet are largely manifestations of the fact that we continually distance ourselves from our environment. We are separate from it and are, therefore, somehow aloof from it. By



Diary of a staff training weekend

following the path of Deep Ecology we can really get back close to our environment.

This is a way of learning about nature and our surroundings without learning the names of a single plant or animal, a way of learning that we are still part of our earth. So we walked barefooted through the leaf litter, brambles and mud, explored the woodland floor minutely with our cheeks and lips, smelt tasted and listened to the sounds between the mosses and lichens which clothe the trees and boulders of this unspoilt part of Wales. For all of us, this was a salutary and deeply peaceful exercise.

Before supper, Daniel led a workshop to prepare us for a night vigil. He taught us chants and how to protect ourselves with wood, fire and stones. He explained how profound an experience the night vigil can be for both adults and children, an activity which can be treated as an initiation or rite-of-passage, or simply as a way of being quiet and relaxed in the woods at night and of discovering a world we seldom experience closetted in our bedrooms.

After breakfast on Sunday and before rally, we got into our groups for a discussion. On this occasion, we had decided to divide ourselves into birth month groups. By restricting the groups in this way to a few individuals, we felt more relaxed and comfortable. A formal meeting within your own group before rally at camp is a useful device for problem sharing and solving. Rally was again a long discussion about the activities of the previous day and about the various night vigil experiences.

Lunch consumed, we all came together for a brainstorming activity to chew over ideas for challenging woodcraft activities. The focal point of the day at last arrived – a visualisation and meditation led by Corinne and Julie followed by the council of all beings. We all went off alone to a place where we felt comfortable and that felt special but within earshot. There we waited quietly for a sign or message or simply searched for an interesting artefact

Land

Kinship with all creatures of earth, sky and water was a real and active principle in the lives of the Amerindians. They understood very fully the causes of their actions to each other and the environment because they lived with the results. It was vital for them to nourish the earth as the earth nourished them. It was important for the Amerindian to sit and sleep on the earth because it made them 'think and feel more keenly'.

Relating to the natural world is the practical side of our Amerindian links. A camp expresses in song the closeness of the natural world and our dependence on the Mother Life God. Ritual care for the land when the used does not end when the activities are over. It is woven into the good clearing up and the land restored to its owner and to nature with formal thanks.

Rod Gritten

to bring back to the Council to share with us all. We felt emotional, humbled and at peace with the oakwood.

We needed to lighten up a bit afterwards and succeeded admirably by dancing hysterically – well almost – around the maypole and singing into the night.

A select few braved the dawn mists the next morning for a walk into the hills and then climbed back into bed for another couple of hours snooze before breakfast. More discussion groups before rally then a closing rally before a rapid communal clearing up. A thoroughly stimulating weekend with lots of new ideas emerging. Thanks to all and Blue Skies.

"Intolerance for Intolerance"

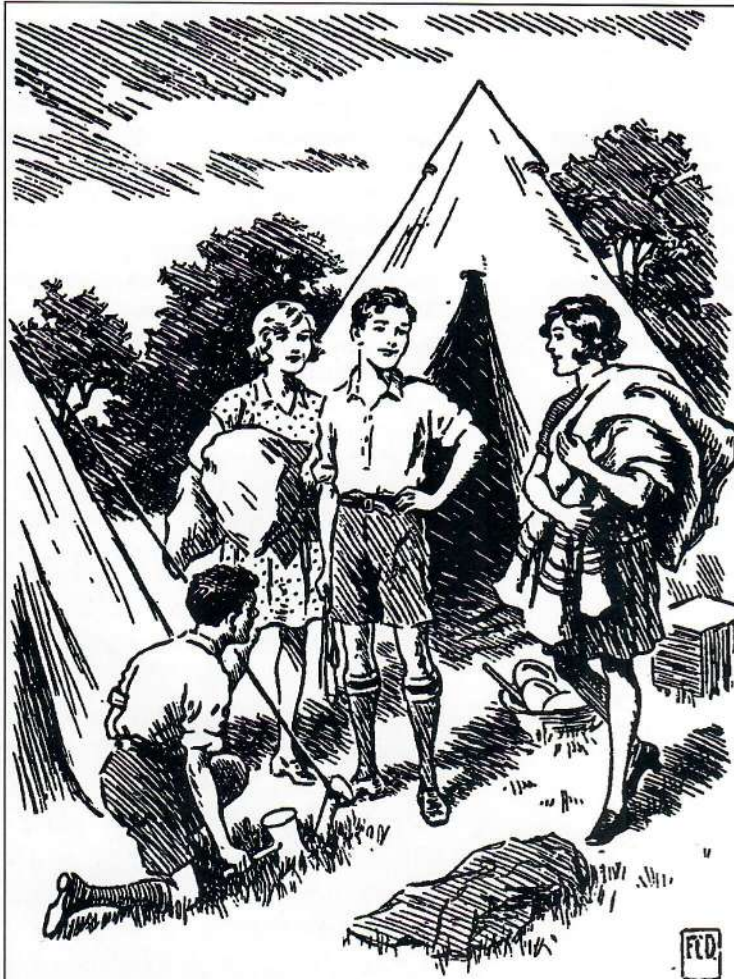
Aubrey Westlake, 1932

As the time of year comes around to make a decision about camping, a question comes to mind – why do we want to go again? We are all familiar with the obvious answers; it's fun, there's a sense of community, it's such a relief to get away from all the trappings and technology of modern life. But there is something more. Something that is fundamental, important and a challenge to everyone on an individual basis. In the effort to make a community we have to overcome our habits of prejudice.

We recognise the obvious targets of prejudice. It's easy to spot different skin colour or different accents. It's less easy to overcome our male, female conditioning but we are tackling that. It is most difficult to recognise the prejudices that have become a daily habit. The temptation is to exclude anyone we don't feel comfortable with and stick with people we can recognise as our type of friends.

At camp this can take the form of making fun of inexperienced or inarticulate staff, ignoring people who are older, younger, richer, who act differently, dress differently and so on, and this includes our attitude to children. Even when we know this is happening, it is a different matter to actually change our behaviour. For whatever reason we can start to feel threatened, antagonised or just irritated by someone and we start to alienate the person who gives us these feelings. This creates the divide that we need to learn to recognise and to reach across. We can talk about this stuff until the cows come home but it's all hot air unless we make an effort to put it into practice.

Much of the effort our society puts into life stems from this prejudice. Our lives can be polarised by 'them and us'. It occurs on a global level between nations and in our attitude to the whole planet.



"I have this ghastly suspicion," Fiona said suddenly, "that we're simply nothing but horrid little middle class stereotypes about to embark on some awful contrived adventure."

If we want to make a family of mankind, we need to start with ourselves as a basis for change. The process is simple enough but does require a certain honesty from each person. Allowing people to be who they are and merely being friendly is how it starts. When someone feels the warmth of a person trying to reach across, without any judgement, a recognition and a kind of healing takes place. As always camp is an excellent place to practice and to face these things. It is something we can take into society, for our family needs to be the whole of life.

This is expressed well in a scene from the film *Little*

Big Man where the old Indian is talking after another atrocity has been committed by the white man. He talks about the difference between the Indian and white culture. The white man thinks only of himself as being alive whereas the Indian thinks of everything as alive, not just human beings but animals, the rocks, the earth, the rivers etc. This attitude of both heart and mind could help us heal many of the divisions in our world.

Carolyn Thompson
and Julian Abel

1. Take a photo of your parents and take it with you.
2. Take a t-shirt that belongs to a parent.
3. Take a cuddle toy.
4. Think how annoying your brothers + sisters are.
5. Take one Take your house.
6. Cuddle someone you trust.
7. Try and make your tent like your bedroom.
8. Spurt
9. Spare

About being homesick.

Hello, my name is Marie and I'm 9

I've experienced homesickness and I hate it. You may make lots of friends and enjoy camp alot, but you might get homesick, this article is all about ways you can prevent home sickness. I hope I have helped you.

Marie Brown



Learn by doing, teach by being

