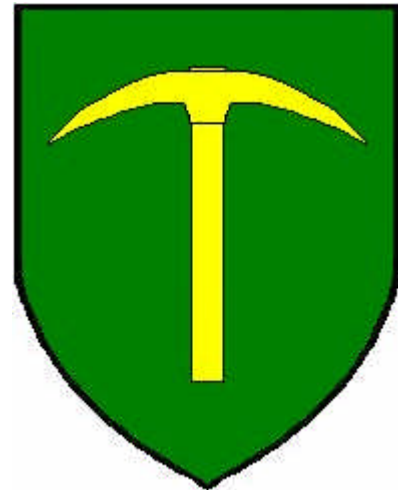


**September - December
2005**

Pioneer Trail



**Meeting
Mabukuwene Nature Reserve
Friday's 19:00 - 21:00 hrs**

**Scout Leader
Norman Scott
nclscott@netconnect.co.zw**

1st Bulawayo (Pioneer) Scout Group
www.angelfire.com/sc/matabeles/troops

Under the Pseudolachnostylis Maprouneifolia

Our Troop activities during the year have continued to be varied, conducted to a high standard and meaningful to our Scouts at all levels. Above all, they have provided an element of adventure, personal achievement and fun, living up to our Founder's ideal of developing our young men through opportunities requiring self-motivation and initiative.

I can safely say that each Scout has progressed through the syllabus, gained a proficiency badge or two and have forged bonds of friendship that are so important in our lives. Our contact with other Troops was maintained through the perennial Provincial activities, some of a social nature and others under competition conditions. Sadly we bade farewell to a number of our Scouts during the latter half of the year. All who left have remained in contact with the Troop and all but one have joined Scout Troops in the countries in which they have settled. All are happy and this too is a result of their being Scouts.

Our harsh economic environment has resulted in a few changes in operating our programme. The activities to have suffered the most are our monthly hikes, for we are now dependant on one vehicle, but this has not deterred our resolve to ensure that we do get out regularly into the bush. Gordon Park, the Provincial Scout Camp in the Matopos, continues to be our playground, offering abseiling, kopje climbing and general campground activities, to let off steam and relax. Of special joy, our Scouts are taking advantage of the monthly church services held at Gordon Park, where they assist in preparing the Chapel and volunteer to read the lessons during the service.

The Troop entered a team in the Provincial Cook-Out competition held on Saturday the 24th September. The three Scouts comprising the team were Christopher MacKenzie, Scott Herbst and Leon Wuyts. Leon had only joined the Troop two weeks before and was still to be invested. The team won the Scout section, so bringing back the Cook-Out Trophy to the Troop for the second time. My congratulations to you three Scouts.

Our parent's camp was held on the 8th and 9th of October. A report by Leon records the camp and the preceding hike, so all I would like to add is my congratulations to Leon on his investiture into the worldwide brotherhood of Scouts and to our Troop in particular. As I have said to all our Scouts on investiture, Scouting is what you make of the opportunities offered and in our Troop, there will be many.

This is the first year since 1965 that Matabeleland did not operate a Jamboree-On-The-Air radio station, nor did we have a Jamboree-On-The-Internet station, which event was started a few years ago. The JOTA camps at Gordon Park had become one of the most looked forward to events on the Provincial calendar, attracting some 200 Scouts into camp for three days. A sad reflector of our changing times.

The end of term sausage sizzle was different in that it was not held at our meeting place, Mabukuwene, but instead at Martin Sanderson's house. Thank you Martin for a great venue, your warm hospitality and your most interesting true story. It was indeed a very special evening.

The Troop, having won the William Arnold Carnegie Assegai Competition in August was invited, along with the Troops which came second and third, to represent the Province in the National Inter-Provincial Patrols Competition. The competition was held from the 2nd to the 4th of December at Gordon Park. Of the original Patrol to enter the Assegai competition, Christopher MacKenzie was the only one available and so we were only able to field a junior Patrol for this National event. I am very proud of our Patrol, comprising Acting Patrol Leader Leon Wuyts, Dylan Sandwith, Scott Herbst, Chayse Zangel and Christopher MacKenzie, for taking third position out of six Patrols. My congratulations to the 6th Harare (Avondale) Troop for winning the competition and to the 2nd Harare (Borrowdale) Troop for taking second position.

The last meeting of the year was an ice-cream evening at the Creamy Inn in Hillside. We were joined by Jonathan de Jong (Gumbie), one of our former Scouts, who was home after spending a year in England. It was great seeing you and hearing of your experiences.

Ending off the year, our Troop along with the 8th Hillside Troop took turns to with the ushering, selling chocolates at the chocolate box along with providing teas and coffees, though mostly cokes and fantas in the tearoom at this year's Bulawayo Theatre pantomime of Cinderella. Thank you to our Scouts for undertaking this community service and thank you also to the parents of those Scouts, for allowing your sons to take part, and in some cases, for attending with your son, and lending a helping hand.



Mrs. Zangel and Chayse selling chocolates.



Leon, Chayse, Norm and Chris on the front of the train.

The show was a great success, and many of the nights had large audiences. The actors in the show should be commended for their fine work, as it was truly a wonderful performance. However, not all was work, and after our duties on Thursday the 23rd of December we escaped and enjoyed a ride on the miniature railway in the Centenary Park. It is a pleasing sight to see the train now running again, and a heartfelt thank you to all the people who dedicated their own time and money into making the train a spectacular feature of the Centenary Park once again. We all enjoyed the ride, and it just goes to show, in my case

certainly, that one is never too old to enjoy riding on the miniature train.

And now, until the next time, it is back to my hammock beneath my *Pseudolachnostylis Maprouneifolia* with a floppy hat pulled over my eyes as I dream of a Blessed Christmas and Peaceful New Year for us all.

N. Scott
Scout Leader

Swannack Brothers on Hike

12th – 13th August 2005

We, the Swannack brothers three, were the only ones on this hike. We met at the church as usual at 5 pm on Friday afternoon. After greeting Norm, we loaded our gear, said our good-byes to our dad and set off for the Matopos. My little brother, Mathew, was itching with excitement because he was going on his first hike with us.

We spent the night by a well in the rural area near Fort Usher. We had a steady stream of people all through the night collecting water. This interrupted our sleep slightly! When we woke up the next morning we found that the water-collecting traffic had restarted and that Norm was sharing his bed with local ants! We made tea and ate our cereal for breakfast.



Final Memories – The three Swannack brothers: John C, Matthew and Edwin at the plaque of the battle of Nkantola.

We left our packs in the landie and set off for our hike; we followed a short path to a dry and sandy riverbed. There was evidence that the locals were digging for water in the sand. The four of us trudged on till we reached a dwala on which there was a plaque commemorating the Battle of Nkantola fought on the 21st of July 1896. In this battle Baden-Powell fought against the Matabele. After having a bar of chocolate and an apple each we set off following another little path. Our aim was to reach a store before 11 am. When we got to the store we found that we did not have enough money for four cokes. So we had to continue all the way back to the landie to get more cash to buy our well-earned cokes!

After our rest Norm drove us to Ghali Kopje. This we climbed at our leisure and enjoyed the typical view of the grey-brown, dusty, dry and hot Matabeleland winter veld. We sauntered back down to Gordon Park via Toghwana dam. My brothers, the dork's, did their best to annoy me by singing "Who do you think you're kidding Mr. Hitler..." at the top of their voices!

Back at Gordon Park we had a relaxed lunch and enjoyed the rest of the day there. We drained the water and contaminated oil from the pump and swept out the clay from the water settlement tank. This was tight as we slipped, slid and fell in the mud. We then had a badly needed shower, brewed some tea, packed our kit and set off home.

Edwin Swannack

Monthly Hike – Ififi to Gordon Park – Parent’s Camp and Service

7th – 9th October 2005

On a slightly cooler than boiling evening in October, we all gathered at Christ the King Church for this month’s hike, parents camp and service. The ‘we all’ turned out to be only Chris and me, along with Norm. Piling our kit into the landie I wondered what this weekend would have in store for us, little did I know...

We left fairly early, and instead of heading to our hike starting point, Ififi, we aimed our noses for Gordon Park first. When we arrived it was to find the Ross’s staying at the Lodge. A pleasant surprise, for with some strategic moaning and nagging, we managed to arrange for Mr Ross to drive us to Ififi so we could hike straight back to Gordon Park.



How about some food?? – Leon and Chris getting ready for dinner at Ififi, while Norm plays with his camera.

At Ififi we found a quite pleasant place to sleep, and after a hearty meal of instant noodles and macaroni cheese, we arranged our bedding. Norm, sly old fox that he is, sorted out a comfortable mattress on some leaves, Chris and I on the other hand, had to suffer. As for me, I only had stones to worry about; Chris had entire logs in his sleeping bag!

So, the following morning, refreshed and slightly bruised, Norm suggested we just nip up Ififi quick before we started our hike. We eagerly agreed and so off we set, with some bushwhacking and a couple of dead ends, we made it to the base of the actual dwala. Shedding out packs, we began

the climb. Before we knew it, we were at the top of the world, feeling invincible. It was truly magnificent.

After enjoying the view and taking a couple of photos we went back down the mountain and began our hike. After following the road for a while, we turned straight off into the bush and I thought, ‘oh good, we’re lost already.’ However, my hope in Norm was duly rewarded, and it turned out we weren’t lost, despite Mr Ross’s claims. We had instead set off for White Rhino Shelter with its beautiful cave paintings.

After pausing for a pit stop and painting-viewing session, somewhat dampened by the rather unsuccessful fencing off of the rocks, and a short chat on politics and conspiracy theories with Norm, we set off again, this time heading for GP. After descending into the park with several rather lighter-weighted water bottles clanking along with us, we headed down to HQ to pick-up what we’d need for the parent’s camp, that is after pausing at the Lodge for a quick cup of tea with the Ross’s.

We then packed everything we’d need and headed up to the 1st Pioneer’s campsite, beautifully situated. Amongst stately trees and huge granite boulders Chris and I cleaned the place up while Norm went to sort some stuff out. When Norm came back, we helped him to set up the tarpaulins and flags, and then, wow, time for another tea break!

Chris's mom and Rob arrived soon after that, along with his brother, so while the grown-ups set up their tents, we went down and had a shower. GP showers are the most amazing showers, I must say, though you have to be quick to get any hot water, especially with Chris around...

The rest of the day was spent abseiling off GP Rock, which was extremely enjoyable, even barefoot! Time just flew by, and soon we had to return to camp to prepare for the campfire. Extremely nervous, I bundled myself into my uniform: this was my investiture campfire, and I was so afraid I would muck it up somehow. However, it was magical, and I sincerely thank everyone who was there for making it so. After some singing and a yarn from Mr Sanderson (very interesting I might add) it was time for my investiture. It was a very memorable moment, and I only hope I can live up to the ideals shown to me that night.



Immortal Memories – Leon being invested into the Troop by Norm. Chris and his brother as flag-bearers.

Ceremonies over, it was time for some hot coffee and bed. Chris and I had boldly decided to sleep atop the dwala behind the camp, but the night was dark, excuses were rife, and leaves are so much more comfortable than bare rock. "It can be done; it will be done, someday..."

In the morning, Chris, Rob, Norm and I all went up Shumba Shaba, a magnificent experience, even with no water in the pools to play in. On returning to camp, we cleaned up and moved all our stuff to the landie while Norm set up the signs and such like welcoming visitors to the Park, for it was a church service Sunday. We then shot the pellet guns for a while as Norm set up the chapel for the service.

All smartened-up in our uniforms, Norm, Chris and I headed up to the chapel for the service while slowly people started to gather high up in the rocks. It was a great service about prayer, rounded off nicely with some great hymn signing from the rapidly improvised choir.

After the service, it was time to head down to HQ again for some food – which was mostly cake! It was a beautiful braai, with everything a good braai needs: lots of food and lots of fun and laughter. Thank you everyone who was there. The afternoon passed quickly, spent looking through old photo albums of the park, mostly done by Norman. There's a huge amount of history at GP, and it was beautiful to read all about it. It would be a severe loss to Scouting and the world as a whole if it had to end now.

Chris and his brother left early in the afternoon with his mom and Rob, so it was left to Norm and me to break camp and lock everything up. After sorting everything out, it was time to head home.

Tired, sore, but extremely happy, we arrived back at the Church. All in all, it was an amazing weekend, and I wait expectantly and hopefully for the many, many more to come. Thank you very much, Norman.

Leon Wuyts

Monthly Hike – Masiye Camp to Nanke and Back

4th – 5th November 2005

It was a warm, sunny afternoon as we arrived at Christ the King Church on Friday the 4th. Not many people were expected on this hike, so the low turnout of only four people: Dylan, Pete, Martin and me, along with the ever-present Norm, wasn't a great surprise. Without wasting much time we set off, as we had a long way to go to get to our destination, Mtshelili Dam.

After driving through the closely trimmed lawns of the communal lands, cattle being excellent lawn mowers, we arrived at the dam, alarmingly deficient of water. We found a good place to spend the night, within sight of the dam, and quickly cooked our supper.

The problem arose however of where everyone was to sleep, solved quickly by Norm and me, who found a good patch of leaves and set out our kit there. Seemingly the smallest problems are the longest and hardest to solve. After a nearby granite rock, inside the car, and eventually on top of the camp-fire were all discarded by the others, they eventually went to sleep in the midpoint of the rock, the car and the fire: right next to Norm and me, still trying unsuccessfully to get to sleep!

In the morning, slightly awake and nominally refreshed, we all jumped back into the landie and set off for Masiye Rest Camp, close to which we hoped to find a kraal in which to park the car and begin our hike, for this hike had to unfortunately be a lollipop hike, heading in a circle to arrive back at the car. We found just such a kraal and set off down the dusty road in search of a small river we could follow northwards to reach Nanke cave.

We found the river and headed off along a track that ran beside it. It soon became evident how beautiful a hike it would be once the rains began, as they soon would, and on my part at least many future visits were planned.

And so on we went until, after climbing a neighbouring ridge we could see our destination: Nanke cave. A quite harrowing yet enjoyable climb down then up the 90° rock face found us in a small, well sheltered overhang, with several truly spectacular paintings on the rock wall, along with wide, gaping cracks at the base of the rock. In one of these cracks were recovered a hidden artefact: a geocache tube. The tube contained some paper and some sweets, to which we added. (A full article and description of the sport of Geocaching follows this article)



Tea ready yet? – Dylan, Martin, Pete and Leon at Nanke cave, waiting for the tea to boil. Dylan is holding the geocache tube to be found at Nanke.

After a brief pause to view the paintings and have a munch to eat and a sip of water, we set off down the mountain we'd just climbed. The 'scenic route' turned out to be easier in the long run, as the direct path would have led us over several steep precipices which might have delayed us somewhat.

But eventually we sorted out our sense of direction and began to head back to the car, following the Toghwana river, with occasional pools of water. It seemed to take us hours longer to get back to the car in comparison to the time it took to get to the cave. The only logical explanation being the car

had maliciously moved in order to make us walk further. Typical. We did however eventually reach the road, removing a good slice of 'forever' from our thoughts of the remaining walk.

Setting off along the road we found the car again and set our noses in the direction of Gordon Park and lunch, the latter sounding extremely enticing in the midday heat.

We spent the rest of the afternoon bumbling around, whilst slowly watching the clock ticking by to the hour we had to leave and return to 'glorious civilization.' But as we sped off towards home, comfortable beds and luxuriant meals, it was interesting to wonder which was the more enjoyable: the backwoods life of 'roughing it' and hiking through the vleis, or the pampered existence of noise and disruption in the city.

Driving home, with the memories of the past two days slowly merging together, we soon realized that we had found, in those two simple days, our glorious civilization, yet miles from the closest town. For what can be more glorious than the sun rising over a still lake, a beautiful riverine valley, tinged with November sun, and painted by the innocence of youth.

Ah, glorious...

Leon Wuyts

The Sport of Geocaching

The following information was adapted from an Internet site: www.geocaching.com. For more detailed information and step-by-step tutorials, head over to the site, and be sure to visit the online forums, which contain a wealth of information provided by the people who manage and participate in the sport. And now, what is "geocaching" you might be wondering, well, read on...

Geocaching is an entertaining adventure game for GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) users. Participating in a cache hunt is a good way to take advantage of the wonderful features and capabilities of a GPS unit. The basic idea is to have individuals and organizations set up caches all over the world and share the locations of these caches on the Internet. GPS users can then use the location co-ordinates to find the caches. Once found, a cache may provide the visitor with a wide variety of rewards. All the visitor is asked to do is if they take something they should try to leave something for the cache.

Though Geocaching is the official name, several names do exist, such as The GPS Stash Hunt, as well as several different types of caching, such as Offset Caches and Multi-caches. The variety in the game is huge, as a cache can be hidden practically anywhere. Thus the difficulty arises when one has to find a cache, even with the GPS co-ordinates!

Some people might wonder what exactly a GPS device is, well, a GPS unit is an electronic device that can determine your approximate location (within around 6-20 feet) on the planet. Co-ordinates are normally given in Longitude and Latitude. You can use the unit to navigate from your current location to another location. Some units have their own maps, built-in electronic compasses, voice navigation, all depending on the complexity of the device.

The lucky thing is that you don't need to know all the technical mumbo jumbo about GPS units to play geocaching. All you need to do is to be able to enter what is called a "waypoint", a sort of electronic reminder of where the geocache is hidden. This is pretty standard, and should be covered by the GPS manual. You can usually find GPS units at any boat supply store, and some camping stores keep GPS units on hand. You can also purchase them online through Amazon.com and camping supply companies.

Geocaching is a relatively new phenomenon; therefore the rules are very simple:

1. Take something from the cache.
2. Leave something in the cache.
3. Write about it in the cache logbook.

A cache must always contain some sort of logbook, and every person who finds the cache must leave something in the logbook, albeit a name and date. But other things can be written in the cache logbook, such as jokes or information about nearby attractions. In addition to the logbook, a cache can also contain numerous other items, but discretion is always advised when placing things in the cache. Local laws must be respected, and all ages of people search for caches. But most importantly, food is always a very bad idea, as animals have better noses than humans, and several caches have been destroyed by animals doing a little geocaching of their own in search of the food stored inside.

However, most of the fun of the game comes from the fact that a cache can be hidden virtually anywhere! Geocaches do not have to be confined to outdoor rural areas. Geocaching in huge urban cities has an added edge; a cache well situated in a densely built-up area requires a great amount of skill to find, even with a very accurate GPS unit!

But, unless there's a note in the cache containing instructions on moving the cache to a new place, it is important not to move any of the caches. The GPS co-ordinates provided for the cache become useless and the owners of the cache who might occasionally check up on their cache would be very alarmed to find their cache missing. There are however alternatives which can be played with moving caches. Yet another alternative are "hitchhikers", which are certain objects with attached notes, which people carry from one cache to another.

Another beautiful aspect of the sport is the fact that caches can last for very long periods of time, so long as their impact on the environment is minimal. Some caches may be temporary, such as Easter Caches, or Christmas Caches, but most can last for quite a few years until they are virtually moved to a new location to keep the sport alive.

So, here ends our small overview on the new sport of Geocaching. Simple, yet fun, it forces people to observe their surroundings just a little better than they normally do. Imagination and skill is definitely needed, along with a little humour and good will. With all those wonderful characteristics, it's most definitely a sport that's going to go far. Now you know enough to begin your own geocache, but for more information, visit the website and search around for others.

Good luck and have fun Geocaching.

Sausage Sizzle at Khaya Pezulu

25th November 2005

I arrived at Mr Sanderson's house at about 6:30 pm, so that I could help set up the many candles which lined the pathway leading up to the fireplace on top of a kopje. The candles would soon set the mood for the entire evening. It wasn't long after getting the fire started when the landie arrived with a truckload of blindfolded Scouts.

Mr Sanderson and I walked down to meet Norm very quietly so as not to give away the place at which they had been driven to. Norm had driven them from Mabukuwene and on the way did several turns and rotations so as to confuse the Scouts. As they all got out they were all very confused and had no idea where they were, seeing the excitement radiating from the Scouts I remembered when I was in their position a few years ago and how excited I was. All the Scouts lined up, joined by sticks and were then lead up a path to the fireplace, the candles placed on the ground creating the desired effect. I lead them up a flight of stairs and around huge boulders. As they were still blindfolded their surroundings triggered many guesses as to where they were.

Just before they reached the fireplace Norm asked them where they were and how they had got there. There were many answers, including Hillside Dams and the back of Mabukuwene, but none thought it was Mr Sanderson's house.

Removing our blindfolds and becoming accustomed to the dark, we then got down to the serious business of braaing our meat over the coals on a grill that Mr Sanderson had provided. After eating and chatting for a while Mr Sanderson told us a beautiful story of how he found a sword in the attic of his house in England when he was a young boy. However, his parents sold the house and moved to Rhodesia, leaving the sword behind. He eventually went back to his old house, and after several discarded attempts he finally gathered up the courage to approach the owners of the house to ask if he could see if the sword was still in the attic, as he had discovered since that it had belonged to his grandfather. When he looked, he found the sword, though covered with dust. The moral of his story was a powerful, yet simple one: we all have a story to tell of our lives, no matter how trivial it may seem to us, all stories have the power to captivate others, and to show others the morals and truths of our lives. Needless to say, we all doubted that the story was true, and so one of our younger prospective Scouts, Shawn, asked Mr Sanderson where the sword was now. And so he showed us his grandfather's sword, which he had hung above his fireplace on his return to Zimbabwe. Once again it was another brilliant story by Mr Sanderson.



The Sword of his Grandfather – Mr. Sanderson and Shawn with the sword of Mr. Sanderson's childhood.

After the story the Scouts packed up everything and Norm drove them back to their parents. We are all greatly indebted to Norm and to Mr Sanderson for the fabulous evening.

Paul Carlson
Patrol Leader

National Patrols Competition: Gordon Park

2nd – 4th December 2005

It was a very wet Thursday when Norm, Leon, Scott, Christopher, Dylan and I were heading to Gordon Park for the provincial competition. When we got to Gordon Park Norm gave us the keys to the crew hut (at Headquarters) and then we got our kit out of the trailer and put it away in the crew hut. Afterwards Christopher and Dylan started a fire and then we had our supper. As usual, after supper we had our cups of tea, fooled around a bit and then dropped off to sleep.

Day 1 of the Competition - Friday

Friday morning we woke up to damp weather. The rain kept coming and going (thank goodness some of us thought to bring extra clothing). After breakfast (which was brekweet, a kind of oats) we went out to prepare for the competition. To prepare for the competition we took some gum-poles and put them nearer to where we were going to camp for the competition. Scott, Dylan and I went to help with the work, giving Leon and Christopher a break. After all the hard work, we all stopped and had some more tea. We all started playing some games with cards by Headquarters. When we saw the other troops arriving from Gweru and Harare, Dylan and I went down to the campsite to secure all that we had collected. Later on the rest of our Patrol came down to the campsite with the landie and trailer, loaded with the other items we needed and we all picked out our campsite for the competition. We took the trailer off the landie to unload all our goods. Norm also gave us some tarps and we put them up for shelter as we could see it was going to rain.

After we had set up camp, Leon went to go and register our patrol for the competition; Dylan and I went back to Headquarters to collect our supper, which we had stored in the fridge. Christopher back at the campsite cooked supper, which was mincemeat with tomato and onion. That went down very well and very quickly. After we had had our supper at around 7pm, we decided to have an early night and lights went out around 9pm.

Day 2 of the Competition - Saturday

We all woke up at around 6:30am and got dressed. Our first task was to build a boundary and gate for our campsite, then Dylan and I went back to headquarters to collect some fire wood, whilst Leon made some breakfast (which was the same as Friday). When we got back to camp, Dylan and I had to change into our uniforms quickly, because it was opening parade. Luckily, we weren't late. After opening parade was finished, Leon was called to get the programme for the weekend. When we got back, we changed and Dylan and I had our breakfast. After Leon got back, we looked at the programme and the list of things we had to build. Then Leon, Dylan and Scott went to the flagpole to get tested on flag work. This involved folding the flag up, hoist it up the flagpole, opening the flag and bringing it down again the correct way etc. Whilst Leon, Dylan and Scott were doing that, Christopher and I were discussing the rest of the program. When the three got back from doing the flag exercise, Leon, Scott and I started building a one-man shelter in the tree which was an item that had to be completed on Saturday. Whilst we were building the shelter, Dylan and Christopher were pitching and striking a tent. After the shelter had been built, I went to help Dylan and Christopher finish the tent. Christopher then made a sand filter by the campsite when he finished helping with the tent. When Christopher went to have it tested, he was told that it had to be made out of natural things; Christopher had used cotton wool, which was not allowed. This was conveniently left out of the instructions of what had to be used for making the filter. Leon made a chair out of rope and attached it to a tree (which was really awesome). We all then tried to make a mouse trap whilst we were having our lunch, but proved to be unsuccessful. Later on, while we were still eating our lunch (of 2 minute noodles) one of the judges came, and tested us on ropes and our chair. He asked about the mousetrap. We explained that we couldn't make one out of natural things, and he then showed us how to make one. He made the mouse trap out of sticks, rope and heavy stones.

After lunch, we changed into our uniforms because we had to all go to the Lodge for a talk that was given by ZRP (CID) on drugs and aids. We were all given a test, which had to be handed in the next day. The test was regarding the talk by the ZRP (Drug squad). We then went back to camp to change into our camp clothes. Christopher and I went to go and do the next task. It was to collect 7 leaves and name them. If I remember correctly (I stand to be corrected) we got them all correct. Whilst we were doing this, Leon went to get tested for the lashings. Scott and Dylan stayed at the camp whilst this was happening. We had decided that at least one scout had to stay at the campsite for security reasons. When Christopher and I got back to camp, Dylan and I went to do a test, which was how to handle and care for an axe and a knife. Leon was still doing the lashings test, so Dylan and I went to wait for him to finish. When Leon finished, we went back to camp and we all had to change into our uniform for the closing parade for Saturday.

After closing parade, we all went to Headquarters to get our supper out of the fridge, which was the braai meat. We went back to camp to change back into camp clothes (so as to keep our uniforms clean). We all then cooked our own meat of wors and steak. We also had to cook a sample for the judges as a task. We all went to take the sample to the judges at the cottage, and whilst we were there, we went down to Headquarters to take the flags down. It was a good thing we went to take the flags to Norm, because the times had been changed for campfire. It was meant to be at 7pm but changed to 7.30pm. We had a cup of tea with Norm and Norm then drove us back to camp for the campfire. When campfire was opened, each patrol did a skit. After campfire, Leon had to stay behind to get the next instructions for Sunday. When we got back to camp, we did the test about the drugs and aids. After completing the test it was about 10pm so we decided to go to sleep.

Day 3 of the Competition - Sunday

We awoke around 7am, had breakfast (which was brekweet again!!) and then changed into our uniform. The judges came for camp inspection and after that we all went for opening parade. We completed the rest of the things on the list, and then waited for the judges to complete the scores for each task that had been done. Whilst this was going on, we were just walking and talking amongst ourselves. We started taking apart the camp, which had to be done in a certain time. Norm dropped off the trailer and we started loading up the tents and our gear. We had to clear up the campsite as though no one had been there. The judges came back to mark that as well. Norm came back to collect the trailer and we went back to Headquarters to drop off the trailer. We then all went for the official closing parade. The judges revealed the final scores, resulting in us coming third, with the Avondale Troop coming first, followed by the Borrowdale Troop.

After the closing parade, we all went up to Headquarters and had some lunch which was cold meat and rolls. As we were having lunch we watched as the rest of the troops pack up and go home. Suddenly the rain started coming down really hard, so Dylan, Scott and I went and jumped into the landie whilst Norm, Christopher and Leon ran for the workshop. When the raining had stopped, we all went into the common room to chat about the weekend. Later on Christopher, Dylan and I went to the dam wall to see the hole. We jumped into the empty dam and walked to the hole in the dam wall. When we started getting bored, we went back to Headquarters and then Scott said he wanted to see the hole in the dam wall, so we decided to all go there (except Norm and Leon) and we ended up having a mud fight. When we got back to where Norm and Leon were, Scott, Dylan and I went for a warm shower.



The Patrol Leader of the Avondale Troop receiving his trophy.

We noticed one of the patrols from Harare hadn't left (their transport was late), so Norm took them abseiling. Scott, Christopher and I helped Norm set up the ropes for the abseiling. The three of us went back to Headquarters. We decided that we were bored so we went down the aerial runway (foffi slide). Leon supervised it and Dylan decided he didn't want to go down the slide. After a few times, we went back to help Norm pack up the abseiling ropes and equipment. The Harare transport came collected their troop. About an hour later, we packed up the trailer once again and attached it to the landie and came home.

Chayce Zangel

Mashashasha Hike

9th – 10th December 2005

I arrived at Christ the King Church at 5:00 pm to find no-one else had arrived yet, however in a few minutes Chris arrived, shortly afterwards so did Norm, and so we all packed up our stuff into Norm's landie. After Leon arrived we were off. After a brief stop at Retreat Shopping Centre we were on our way to Mashashasha Falls. We travelled along the Matopos Road, turned right at the Fort Usher road until we got to the Old Gwanda road. We passed a few rivers and they were nearly all in full flood. Turning right a few kilometres past the turnoff to Shumba Shaba Lodge we briefly stopped at a small kraal where we were hoping to meet Temba, who on a number of occasions before has walked with us along the hike. Unfortunately, he was not there so we went and found our campsite. Norm parked the landie close to the tree line and we set up a bivie, which was a vital necessity to avoid getting drenched from the unrelenting drizzle. After having dinner we went to bed with the slight patter of rain hitting against the bivie.



The Prepared Adventurers – Chris, Paul and Leon (Norm taking the picture) set out for a mistv hike to the Mtshebezi Dam.

We woke up early the next morning to find the drizzle had stopped and after a brief "battle" with Chris we settled down to breakfast, which consisted of many things, as we all had catered individually. Once we finished breakfast Chris and I went down to the Mashashasha River to wash the dishes. We got off to an early start in the crisp, clean and cool air that refreshed us and made us want more. The vegetation was a brilliant shade of light green corresponding to the growth the Matopos has in all her glory. Along the way, we passed under towering trees whose shapes were so unique and beautiful to look at that it was incredible. There was also a large array of mushrooms and funguses along the way with many shapes, colours and sizes. We arrived at the falls in no time, all the chattering we did along the way just chewed up the time.

We quickly stripped down and went and took a dip in the cool, slightly murky water. The smooth rocks were excellent for bum sliding, the only problems being the rocks in the pool that your feet slammed into as you hit the pool. We were right at the top of the falls and the view into the valley was breathtaking, absolutely beautiful. Looking down into the Mtshebezi Valley is a sight I will never forget. The size of the river was smaller than we expected, but it was still great fun anyway. We walked down to a pool at the bottom of the falls, which was really fun. There was a built-in water slide and a great place to jump into the water. The pool was really deep and as it was still before 10:00 am we stayed there for a while.

After leaving the pool we headed down to the top of the Mtshebezi Dam, where the river flows into the dam, still admiring the awesome green surrounding us everywhere. We stopped at a water flow metre and climbed the tower to have a look around: it was vandalized and was not in working order. We hiked up the dam for a while until we found a suitable spot for a quick snack, which we had brought with us. Our picnic-site was on a large boulder overlooking a riverine section of the dam. The water was extremely murky from all the mud and silt upstream.

We did not follow the same route back, but instead took an alternative route up the Mtshebezi escarpment. We had trouble keeping to the path and all of us got stung by stinging nettles, some more severely than others! After finding the path we continued along it until we went to a cave, the entrance of it completely almost completely covered by a massive boulder, making it invisible until you are right at it. We found around 20 grain bones inside the cave, along with a couple of broken ones and lots of remains of woodcarvings everywhere. We then stopped on a huge rock overlooking the Mtshebezi Valley, once again amazed by the natural beauty. We stayed here for a while, so I lapped up some rays and tanned for a while.



Sir Edmund Hillary – or rather Paul at the top of the radio mast.

We then headed back to the landrover. When we arrived at the landie we decided to have lunch at Shumba Shaba Lodge so off we went. Along the way we came across a tall telephone tower, so I excitedly asked Norm if I could climb it. To my great surprise Norm turned around and drove up to the tower where I climbed to the top. Only when I got to the top did I realize how high it was; the view was magnificent. There was a crow's nest at the very top with three green eggs in it. We continued down to the farm where we greeted the owner Mr Paul and had lunch. We then went for a swim in the farm dam, with a few daring leaps from some massive boulders in the centre of the dam and a row around in a small canoe, all mixed together to combine in a really great hike.

Thanks Norm for the wonderful experiences you have given us, we all really appreciate it.

Paul Carlson
Patrol Leader

Inspiration Quotation:

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and blood, who strives valiantly...who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never known neither victory nor defeat.

- Teddy Roosevelt
26th President of the USA



1st Bulawayo (Pioneer) Scout Troop

Troop Programme of Activities for January to April 2006

January

8	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
10	Schools open
13	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
20	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
22	Matopos Conservation Society: Field Trip
27	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
28	Provincial Sports Day

February

3 – 4	Monthly Hike
10	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
11 – 12	Parent's Camp: Gordon Park
12	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
18 – 19	B - P Camp: Gordon Park
19	B - P Day Service: Gordon Park: 12:00 noon
24	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

March

3 – 4	Monthly Hike
10	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
12	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
13	Africa Scout Day
17	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
24	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
31	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene (Sausage Sizzle)

April

7	Schools Close
7 – 8	Monthly Hike
9	Gordon Park Service: 12:00 noon
14 – 17	Easter
14 – 18	Patrol Leader Training Course: Gordon Park
16	Independence Day
21	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
23	St. Georges Day
28	Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

Additional Activities may be added to the Programme