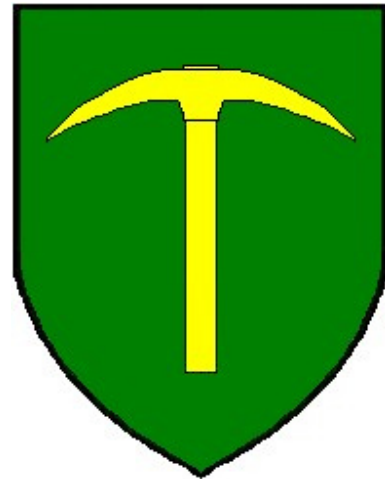




**May – August
2008**

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

The Troop has continued to meet each week either at Mubukuwene, our meeting place in Burnside or for our monthly hikes in the Matopos or at a selected venue when holding our popular sausage sizzles. Added to this, we have continued the tradition of holding our parent's camp each school term, although I must add that no parents attended this term's camp. Perhaps the weather was a bit too cold this winter. However, those Scouts who were in camp thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Was it because mums, dads and siblings were not around?

As usual, during the term we had requests for new boys to join the Troop. I however, delayed admitting new recruits, for I felt that the present Scouts needed to progress to a higher standard in their personal Scouting skills before taking in more boys. This proved to be the right course to follow, as the Scouts gained confidence in their skills. One of the aspects of Scouting is that the older, more experienced Scouts have the task of training new recruits. This serves to strengthen their own knowledge, gain management skills and also to give them the opportunity of passing on their technical skills to others. Next term should see the resumption of welcoming new boys. Several proficiency badges were gained by a number of boys, so enriching their experiences.

A new series of lectures on interesting topics have been introduced in Bulawayo. These lectures are held at the Natural History Museum once a month on a Thursday evening from 5.30 – 6.30 p.m. The lectures, which are on different topics each month, are given by people who have a deep interest in their chosen topic. It is pleasing to note that a number of our Scouts have become regular supporters of these lectures. The best part about these lectures is that one can ask any number of questions and there is no test at the end.

The plumbing project the Troop embarked upon at Gordon Park about four years ago has finally been completed. This project was undertaken for two reasons. Firstly the old galvanised metal piping had corroded to the extent that the water at Head Quarters had a distinct iron flavour to it. Not harmful to drink, but not a very pleasant taste. Secondly, if a tank ran dry an airlock would be created and it was a mission to get the water back into the taps. It was decided that the Troop would fund and install a new pipe. Funding takes awhile to generate and as the piping needed was in excess of one hundred metres and we settled on PVC piping and new fittings, all this took a long time. Then there was the question of the lease for the land being renewed, meant another delay. But, now it is installed and the new take off point higher up the rising main means we will not have airlocks in the event that a tank runs dry. The project has been a training exercise for our Scouts, as well as a good turn for Scouting.

As a Troop, we are members of the Matobo Conservation Society and on Saturday 9 August 2008, we were called upon to assist with the erection of a large road sign on the Bulawayo – Matopos road where it crosses the Maleme River. The sign, proclaiming "The Matobo Hills as a World Heritage Site" was painted by members of the Society and Mr. Gavin Stephens, the Chairman, was on hand to help us get the sign in place.



The Troop congratulates Mrs. "Bobby" Smith on being presented with the Scout Association's Medal of Merit at the church service held at Gordon Park on 10 August 2008. Bobby has been a regular member of the guitar group for many years that come out regularly to these services. Bobby, Thank You for your association with our services at Gordon Park over the past fifteen years and all the best for your future in your new home in Botswana.

**Dillin McAtier, Dale, Brendan, Declan,
Christopher and Gavin Stephens**

Towards the end of the term, a former Troop member Tom Timberlake, visited Bulawayo and spent a full morning talking with me. As he was unable to join us in our meeting, it was the hike weekend and he had other people to see, Tom left a bag of sweets to be shared out between the Scouts. Gifts of this nature from former members of our Troop are always appreciated. But, more importantly it is the thought behind their giving, for it is a reminder, that we the present members are just a continuation of a succession of young men who are enjoying the adventures offered through the Scout programme. So, a big Thank You Tom for remembering us and be assured that Scouting in the 1st is as active, adventurous and demanding as it was when you were here.

The annual William Arnold Carnegie Assegai Competition was held at Gordon Park prior to the end of the school term. Our Troop came second and has therefore qualified to represent Matabeleland in the National Inter Provincial Patrol's Competition to be held at the end of the year. I would like to congratulate Assistant Patrol Leader, Christopher MacKenzie, Daniel Francis, Dale van Aarde and Brendan Judge for doing so well. The Troop could not field a full Patrol and for two of the members it was their first competition against other Troops. Depending on where the National competition is to held, will determine whether we take up the offer to represent Province or to undertake our annual hike in the Chimanimani Mountains. A choice has to be made as we will not be able to financially afford travelling expenses to two widely spaced venues.

And now it is back to my hammock beneath my favourite *Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia* with my floppy hat pulled over my eyes as I dream of our expedition to and hike in the Chimanimani mountains in December.

N. Scott
Scout Leader

Big Cave Camp Hike

2nd May – 3rd May 2008

We left Christ the King Church at 5 00 pm for Big Cave Camp in the Matopos. Big Cave Camp is a private camp site about 48 kilometres on the main Bulawayo – Kezi road. Its southern boundary borders the Matobo National Park. On entering the farm on which the camp is located, we saw impala, wilderbeest and two klipspringers. When we arrived at the campsite, for overland safari tours, we were greeted by a member of the camp staff, who had lit the boma fire for us, as well as setting out camp chairs. Two paraffin hurricane lamps provided light for us to be used in the ablution blocks, which we discovered later to have steaming hot showers. Making ourselves at home we brewed a pot of tea and prepared our dinner, which we ate sitting around the boma fire. We were very excited and chattered about allsorts of things before having a final cup of tea and coffee. Then it was off to have a hot shower before going to bed.

We woke up early the next morning to find that the clouds had come over during the night and a cold wind had started blowing. Chris was the first to get out of his sleeping bag and made us all coffee. After a while we got up and made our breakfast. Having cleaned up the camp and put some of our kit into the Landy, we donned our rucksacks and started off on our hike.

It was not long before we reached the National Park game fence, which we crawled under and continued towards a large cave. The cave contained a few paintings by the San or Bushmen. We also surprised a klipspringer which, bounded away at our approach and watched a Black Eagle soar overhead clutching a small branch in one foot. From the top of a small kopje, Dale pointed out a windmill in the vlei below us. We re-crossed the fence back onto Big Cave Camp farm to have a look at the windmill and also to follow a track that led us across the vlei, which was overgrown with tall reeds. Once clear of the vlei, we re-crossed the game fence and found a very old path, which followed the vlei down stream. The bush was quite thick and we had to climb small kopjes to keep clear of the river. We eventually stumbled onto a vehicle track which we followed to reach Mwisilume dam. Here we had a short pit stop to empty our boots of the Matopos sand, sticks and stones.



The picturesque Mwisilume Dam

On leaving the dam, we followed the road for about two kilometres. Along this section we saw fresh rhino and leopard tracks in the sand. There were also leopard droppings, which we opened out to reveal hair and bone fragments. Leaving the road we bundu bashed through the tall grass towards the southern edge of Nsvatuke kopje. Once over the kopje, we soon found the road again which had taken a long route around the kopje. We followed the road for about half a kilometre. Whilst on this section of road, we came across a cobra sunning its self. On approaching it, the cobra silently moved off into the grass and disappeared. Our route took us to the Maleme River, which at this point was over grown with reeds. It was great, but tough going, bulldozing our way through the reeds, which were much taller than Norm.

From here we followed an old bush track up the Maleme River, out of the National Park and onto Inungu farm. On the farm we passed about sixteen head of cattle. We asked a farm worker for directions to the road leading to Matobo Hills Lodge. The bush, mostly thorn trees, was very thick along this section. Eventually we found the narrow road and followed it to the Lodge. At the Lodge we were greeted by a member of the staff who very kindly loaned us a kettle to boil water, in order to make our tea for lunch. It was now one o'clock and we were hungry. After lunch we had a swim in the pool, which had been built into the rocks. The water was freezing cold. Despite the noise we made whilst swimming, Norm fell asleep.

At two o'clock, we left heading straight up and over the range of kopjes passing close under Elephant Rock, behind the Lodge. From here our route was more or less a straight line back to Big Cave Camp. We found the going pretty tough though, for we cross-grained over kopjes and through valleys. At long last we crawled under the game fence of Big Cave Camp and then followed a game viewing road all the way to the main lodges of the camp. Along the way we found a fresh rhino midden. At the Lodge, we thanked the Camp manager for allowing us to camp on the farm the previous night. From here our campsite was only about a kilometre further on.

Our hike ended at where we had started. We had hiked for twenty-two kilometres through vleys, over kopjes, crawled under fences and had seen quite a few animals. It was cold and overcast when we had left on the hike, but by mid morning the clouds had cleared, the wind had gone. We were tired but happy and after a mug of tea and a hot shower we left for Gordon Park, where we spent the rest of the weekend.

Christopher MacKenzie, Brendan Judge, Dale van Aarde and Declan FitzPatrick.

Toghwana Dam to Gordon Park

6th - 7th June 2008

We met at Christ the King church as usual on the first Friday of the month. As my dad was taking us to the start of our hike, we put our kit into his car and set off for Gordon Park where we were to meet Norm. Just before we entered the National Park, Dale spotted a Rhino in amongst the Mopane trees quite close to the road. Unfortunately, Norm who was following in his vehicle about half a kilometre behind us only saw the tail end of the Rhino as it headed off down to the river for a drink.

At Gordon Park, we offloaded some of our food and kit that we were to use for the remainder of the weekend after our hike. Then, leaving Norm's vehicle "Inguluvane" at the Park, we all piled into my dad's car and headed off for Toghwana Dam taking the long way, as the shorter road was not in a very good condition. Travelling along the gravel road in the dark we saw a civet cat, which is not really a cat but belongs to the *Viveridae* family. This family includes genets and mongooses. We also saw a scrub hare which soon had us all laughing, for as we drove along it would race ahead just in the beam of our head lights and then it would stop, wait until we were almost on top of it and then race off again. We played this game for about five hundred metres before he got tired and dashed off to the side of the road, into the darkness.

On arriving at the Dam, we selected our campsite for the night and said good-bye to my dad who returned home. Our first task was to find some wood with which to make a fire in order for us to have some light. Having done this we heated our supper, which we had pre-cooked at home in order to save time. It was quite cold so we all gathered near the fire and chattered whilst we ate our stew. The moon was already going down when we got into our sleeping bags.

None of us had a good night's sleep as we had chosen a very hard and uneven place to sleep and there was a cold wind blowing all night long. After breakfast, we cleared up, packed our ruck sacks and started on our hike. As I was doing this hike for my Adventurer Badge, I had to plan the hike route and then to lead the hike. Well, my first task was to look at the map to orientate myself and then to try and follow the route I had chosen in the comfort of my home. Now out in the bush, it was another matter. Anyway, off I led with Daniel, Dale, Brendan and Norm following me. Oops, a number of wrong turns had us going straight up the side of a kopje, through the dense jungle and Boy the map didn't show all this. After an hour we were at the top of a kopje and looking back to the dam, which I had expected to be a small dot far, far away, there it was, not even a kilometre away and we were far from the Park and lunch. I wasn't very popular.



In a small cave we found a grain bin

Well, with a little bit of advice from an old hiker in the 'Patrol', on how to read the landscape, things began to improve. Our spirits were raised when we discovered a large scattering of slag from an iron age furnace, but sadly even though we searched for it for about fifteen minutes we could not find the furnace itself. Carrying on, we crossed a wide vlei and then into a small kopje where we were lucky to find two grain bins hidden in the clefts of the boulders. We made better progress from here and we soon found ourselves on the edge of a range of kopjes looking down into the Mtshellele valley. As we descended, luck was with us for I found an old footpath which we followed right to the river's edge. There was too much water and reeds at this point, so we had to hike up-stream for several hundred metres to a small set of rapids, where we could cross to the road leading towards Gordon Park. But, first a rest and a little snack of dry two minute noodles and some milk powder and sugar, our favourite snacks.

Having had a rest, Dale and I took off our shoes and hiked along the road back to the Park bare foot, whilst the others trudged along in their heavy boots. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when we finally arrived at the Park, tired and hungry. The hike had taken longer than I had planned and we had left our lunch at the Park the previous evening. However, our dinner that evening was very good and so was our sleep that night.

Christopher MacKenzie
Assistant Patrol Leader

The Hike of Tracks and Dung

4th - 5th July 2008

If we are not at Mabukuwene we are at Christ the King church getting ready to go on our monthly hike. We had all gathered and loaded our gear into the back of Norm's small Landy and off we went. We arrived at Gordon Park and Chris was off the Landy in a flash. He had got the Rough store keys in no time and doing what he loves best, making fires. He had got both fires, one in the outdoor stove and the second under the boiler going in no time. We had dinner nice and early, did a quick wash-up of the dishes and off to bed we went.

We were woken by Chris's alarm clock. Slowly we got out of bed to find it cold outside. While Brendan and Chris were doing things, Norman was cuddled up in his nice warm bed, so we went and jumped on him, which got him up very quickly. Brendan went and made some oats and tea for breakfast, after which we packed our bags and left on the hike.

We crossed the small waterfalls behind headquarters and then onto the main road which we followed for about two hundred metres before heading off into the bush, instead of following the boring old road. We headed towards a saddle in the kopjes, where one could normally find an animal trail. It was here that we found the freshest of dung. We spent a long time trying to think of what animal it came from. Norm said that we would try and identify it from one of the animal books we have at the Park when we got back. (Two weeks later, while taking to a Professional Hunter, Norm was told that it was the dung of an eland). We carried on until we reached a National Parks service track which we then followed. We walked along this track for about five hundred metres, before we found our first sign of a leopard. We first saw the fresh dung, as Brendan said "fresh from the baker". From there onwards we followed the spoor of a rather large leopard as we walked along the track. In amongst all of this, we also saw a lot of antelope tracks coming and going. But we continued hot on the leopard's tail until finally he turned off from the track and his spoor was lost in the grass. It was at this point that we came across fresh rhino dung. Perhaps the leopard and the rhino had met!

When we reached the main road, we followed it for some way. Along this section we picked up many empty beer bottles that had been thrown out of car windows. We also went passed some old fence posts, but the wire had disappeared many years ago. Finding a footpath that the grass cutters had made, we followed it as it provided us with a shortcut to the Park's offices at Hazleside, our first destination on the hike. At the Park's office, we handed in a letter for the Warden. Outside, on the road four women were waiting for a lift into town, we jokingly asked them if they were waiting for the "Matobo Express", which caused all of them to laugh. A short while later the "Matobo Express" arrived. It was a real 'scoro scoro'. It vaguely resembled a long wheel

base Land Rover. The doors were hanging loose on their hinges, and were wired closed. The tyres were bald and one was more than a little soft. They climbed in the back, along with the other eight passengers. We waved them good-bye and good luck – they certainly needed it, the good luck that is.

The three of us turned around and went back in the office to conclude our business. Pasted up on the wall were the new prices for the entry fees, fishing permits, lodges and camping. We were amazed at how all the fees had rocketed sky high.

From the office we went and had a look at some black, burnt-out stables, which were now piled high with thatching grass most probably to be used for the re-thatching of National Park's tourist accommodation. We then continued on our hike, heading for Ififi kopje. On the way we passed a small dam where a few gum trees were growing from big to small, thin to thick. There were also a number of bricks scattered all over the road which were probably being used to fill potholes in the road.

Carrying on, we saw another fresh heap of Zebra dung, but unfortunately no animals. Ififi loomed up in front of us. A short walk along the main tarred road brought us to a small dry stream bed, which we followed to the base of a kopje next to Ififi. Slowly but surely we headed up the 'gomo' when we suddenly came upon two Klipspringer. On seeing us, they leaped gracefully from rock to rock, until they were out of sight.

We were now a little hungry, so Chris suggested we head for a small cave he knew near-by in which was a grain bin. Although not yet lunch time, we had our lunch of bread and tinned fish washed down with a mug of tea in the cave. After this we headed for the top of the kopje, where Norm pointed out a way down the other side, in the direction of World's View, our next leg of the hike. Having climbed down off the kopje, we followed the main road to the Lower Outspan and the small weir at a picnic site. The water was flowing over the wall, it was freezing cold. Chris being Chris, went and stuck his foot into the water to see how deep the dam was. On our way back to the main road, two National Park rangers on patrol warmly greeted us.

Back at the Lower Outspan, we read the Plaque commemorating the fact that it was at this point that the funeral cortege of Mr. Cecil John Rhodes made the ascent of the kopje to his final resting



Brendan and Christopher at the deepest swallow hole

place on the top of World's View. We followed the old route to the new car park, where we talked to a group of tourists from the United States. Leaving them, we headed for some swallow holes in the solid granite on the southern side of World's View. We bumbled through the thick bush and then out onto a flat area of granite. Here we found a small cave which contained some Bushmen Paintings. We continued further until Norm showed us the swallow holes. We had fun exploring in the holes, the deepest one being about eight metres.

Leaving the swallow holes, we headed for Gordon Park. At the car park to White Rhino cave, Chris followed the main road back to the camp, whilst Norm and I entered the Park via the path past White Rhino cave. Our hike had come to an end,

during which we had hiked twenty-three kilometres. We stayed at Gordon Park for the remainder of the weekend.

Brendan Judge

The Sausage Sizzle

25th July 2008

This meeting was unusual because we held a 'sausage sizzle' instead of a normal meeting. The sausage sizzle only happens once a term and this one was held at Brendan Judge's house. Norm picked us up from Mabukuwene, except for Brendan. We all clambered into Norm's big Landy and Dale, Daniel and Chris put their camping kit into the trailer as they were going out to Gordon Park to take part in the Assegai Competition following the sausage sizzle. We got to Brendan's house, where we were warmly welcomed by Brendan, and Mr. and Mrs. Judge. We were led through the house to the braai fire where we found that the fire had burnt down to leave nice hot coals, just waiting for us to braai our meat.

We all took our meat out of our cooler bags and started to braai on the nice coals Brendan had provided for us. Norm disappeared for a bit, so a search was made for him, only to find that he was turning his big Landy around so as not to waste time when it was time to go. We went back to the braai and carried on talking. When Norm came back from the Landy, he had a dish and a pan with him. He got to the braai and asked Mrs. Judge for some water to make his 'doggy patties'. Mrs. Judge showed Norm where the water was and he mixed the dough until it could be formed into flat cakes and placed them on the braai grid. He asked Brendan, "Do you think it will bake on the grid and not run through?" Brendan exclaimed, "Never know until you try". Mike was the first to finish cooking. It was our lucky day, because Dylan's gran had baked us chocolate muffins to have with our meal, so we had an unusual starter before dinner. We had all finished our dinner, but Norm was still having fun making his 'doggy patties' into rolls to put his meat on. He was also given a roll with a burger on it from Mike.

We all went into the lounge to watch a DVD. We tried and tried for a long time to find the English language track to the DVD, but we failed. Whilst we were trying to sort out the right sound track, Chris came in from the braai with the box of Dylan's muffins. He went straight to the girls and offered them one each before offering them around to us men. We soon got bored with watching the DVD and went outside to warm ourselves up at the fire. Norm was still there eating his 'doggie patty burgers. We were not satisfied with the fire, so we took off the grid and placed some more wood on, to warm ourselves up.

Dale went with Brendan to Brendan's room to help get Brendan's camping kit to put in the trailer, as Brendan was also going to the Park for the Assegai Competition. Having come to the end of our 'sausage sizzle', it was now nine o'clock and time to go. We quickly cleaned up the mess and hopped into the Landy. Norm gave our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Judge and we all said bye and off we went, heading for Mabukuwene to drop off those who were not going to the Assegai Competition. Then the rest of us headed for Gordon Park.

"A Satisfied Sausage Eater".

The 2008 William Arnold Carnegie Assegai Competition

26th – 27th July 2008

After filling our stomachs with sausages at the Judge's house, Norman took us on the long dark road to Gordon Park where the Assegai competition was to be held over the next two days. We were the first Patrol to arrive at the Park, so we selected a campsite, erected our tents in the dark and went to bed. Brrr, it was cold.

Tweet, tweet. The birds woke Chris and I up. We remembered how we had got here, but wow what a cold night. We lay awake for a few minutes before waking Dale and Brendan. Our first task was to go down to Headquarters to get the *'inqola'* to load gumpoles and our camping equipment from our storeroom to take back to our campsite. Once back at our campsite which was in the Silver Boar camping area, Chris and I started on the construction of an 'altar fire', whilst Dale and Brendon started on constructing camp gadgets.

After breakfast, we really got on and made gadgets like, a washbasin stand, sleeping bag line, coat hangers for our uniforms, a shower in our campsite with hot water. We also built a step up to our kitchen area instead of having to negotiate our way around the stones. Just before lunchtime



For the competition we made an 'altar' stove to cook on.

the first of the other Troops arrived and started setting up their campsite, two sites away from us. After lunch all the other competing Troops arrived. Now there were seven Troops. Very few, but considering our current transport and food problems, at least the competition was going to be held.

Now that all the Troops were in camp, we were told to get into our uniforms for the opening parade. The Assegai was handed to the organiser by last year's winning Troop and the competition opened. The test bases were opened and the competition got under way. I quickly did one of the STA's and then we headed for the 'Skipper' Knapman Training Ground where we did the following bases; Law and Promise, Kim's game, Scout trestle, map and orientation, first aid. The small and easy stuff really, (except for the mapping, which is my worst subject) After doing these bases we returned to our campsite and built more gadgets including an "A" frame table with benches. By supper time we were finished building our campsite. Having prepared and eaten our supper, we then thought of a play to perform at the campfire that was to be a little later.

Yawn! Tired after the singing and dancing at the campfire we find that we have to do more test bases before we are allowed to go to bed. The bases were knotting and star orientation. Finally it is Zzzzzzzz..

Gee!!!! It is morning already. Wow, the other Scouts woke up at four in the morning. Can you believe it? Having had our breakfast, we got busy on a few STA's again. Our morning parade was delayed by the late arrival of some of the Troops, who were awarded minus points. Good, for they kept the rest of us waiting.

The camp was split into two groups, for the bases that were to be done for the rest of the morning. One group went with Norm and did a mystery volunteer base and the rest of us went back to the 'Skipper' Knapman Training Ground to do the following bases as individual Troops; life skills, tracking, compass orientation and 'action' first aid. Then the two groups swapped over. Our group went with Norm and did the mystery base, which turned out to be fire wood collection for the Park. The task was to collect as much firewood as we could in thirty minutes. The biggest pile earned the most points and reduced to the smallest. Our group collected the most. When we broke for lunch, Norm called us for a few minutes and took us down to the HQ water tank site, where he showed us the imprint of the front paw of a leopard that had walked over some fresh clay that had been cleared out of the settlement tank the previous week. It was huge. I think now that we have seen a leopard's spoor in the Park, we will believe Norm when he tells us he has seen an actual leopard.

Back at the campsite, we had inspection and showed the judges our camp gadgets. Following this, Dale and I did the twenty-question STA. We handed in our point cards, which had been marked at each base during the weekend competition.

After lunch, we were called for the closing parade. Gee, we were tense as the scores and positions each Troop received were read out starting from the lowest. (DRUMROLL) And in second place is the 1st Bulawayo (Pioneer) Scout Troop. Oh well, we didn't win, but we came a close second with only fifteen points behind the winners, who were the 31st Bulawayo. We shook hands and congratulated them on winning, but reminded them that we were not that far behind.

Now all that remained was to load our kit into our transport, Norm's Landy and return our kit to our storeroom at headquarters. We had a last pot of tea and fresh strawberry pancakes with Norm, talked about the bases and then locked up before returning home. Sigh!

Daniel Francis

My First 25 Kilometre Hike

1st – 2 August 2008

Norm's Landrover started with a jerk. We were leaving Christ the King Church and heading for Gordon Park in the Matopos. We were all bubbling with excitement.

"Gordon Park!" Norman shouted over the loud droning noise of the landrover. The huge silver gates were pushed open by Christopher and me. We jumped on the bonnet of the vehicle and rode up to Head Quarters of the Park. Norman advised that we were going to hike 5 kilometres that evening and it was now 6.00 pm. We unloaded our hiking gear and food, donned our packs and with Chris and Dale carrying a long plank we set off.

The night was dark as there was no moon. When we reached the vlei, Chris placed the plank over the small flowing stream in order for us to cross without having to wade through the knee deep water. Up on the other bank, we 'bundu bashed' through the thick bush until we reached a National Park's road. Our hike route took us along the road for a short distance, after which we veered off into the bush heading for a low point in the range of kopjes to our east, which we could just see the outline of against the starlit sky. Chris took the lead with me following close behind. We were scouting for a good hiking path. More than once I had bushes and small branches lash out at my body. As this was my first hike, I was excited and eager to keep up and do well.

We hiked over several low kopjes. The Night bush was awesome. Crickets, nightjars, buzzing mosquitoes and owls filled the night silence. We found ourselves camping under a large indigenous tree half way up the last kopje before the top. Chris lit a fire, for light. Pre-cooked dinners were served with us boiling hot water for a cup of tea. As we settled down in the open air under bright stars for the evening, my eyelids became very heavy with sleep.

At the break of dawn, we cooked and ate oats and drank tea. Stamping out the fire, we set off on the remainder of our 25 kilometre hike. We estimated that we had done 5 kilometres the previous evening. After some time of hiking we came across two elderly Africans on their way to cut thatching grass. We greeted them in passing. Hiking through an open vlei, the vegetation was sparse. We saw the remainder of what once was a boundary fence between the National Park and the Communal Land where the rural people live. The hike through the vlei took us onto a dusty rural road. Across from where we were, was a rural farm where a lady was sweeping the area around her home. There was much discussion between the scouts and Norman regarding

the possible name of the kopje which loomed behind the farm. Norman approached the lady asking the name of the kopje. The turkeys and goats residing in the garden sparked much conversation between us.

I was well pleased with myself having hiked this far. However, my ruck-sack had rubbed my lower back into a rash. It was most uncomfortable. We climbed the kopje and had a short rest at the top, eating biscuits, sweets and raw two minute noodles. It was decided to return to Gordon Park



via the scenic route of the mountain. On our way down, Norman found a dassie hanging in a tree. It had been caught by one leg in a wire snare. It was still alive, so Norman released it and it rushed off to the cover of some rocks.

The hike took us through dense vegetation with lots of grass and trees. We came across several pools of water and eventually stopped at a small waterfall. A group photo was taken by Norman. The sharp thorns of the “Wag ‘n Beitjie Boom” had Brendan in their clutches. He had no way of escaping and Norman had to come to his rescue. Us fellow Scouts jested with Brendan having been caught by a tree.

On top of the world. Dylan Strydom, Dale, Dillin McAtier, Brendan and Christopher

The dry dusty cattle path we walked along took us out of the dense vegetation and we saw Shumba Shaba, a kopje I recognised, not too far away and we knew we were close to Head Quarters at the Park. The hot sun was beating down upon us. We were all tired. As we trekked through the bush, we saw that a huge indigenous tree had been cut down by someone. We also noticed that the boundary fence for the National Park had been removed. As we crossed where it should have been, we joked that we were trespassing back into the National Park. Crossing over the familiar stream from the day before using the plank bridge brought us back into Gordon Park. The plank was once again lifted up and carried back by Dale and Chris to Head Quarters.

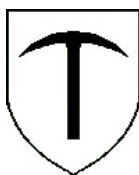
The hike was over. The kettle was placed on the fire and whilst the water was heating up we went for a refreshing cold shower and felt a little more energetic. Lunch had us all discussing the 25 kilometre hike. I for one was well pleased with myself for accomplishing this hike.

Dillin McAtier

Just be You

**This is your life, not someone else's.
It is your own feeling of what is important, not what people say.
Sooner or later, you are bound to discover that
you cannot please all of the people around you all of the time.**

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)



1st Bulawayo (Pioneer) Scout Troop

Troop Programme of Activities for September to December 2008

September

- 5-6 Monthly Hike
- 6-7 Parent's Camp: Gordon Park
- 12 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
- 14 Gordon Park Service: 12.00 noon
- 19 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
- 26 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
- 27 Provincial Cook-Out Competition

October

- 3-4 Monthly Hike
- 10 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
- 12 Gordon Park Service: 12.00 noon
- 17-19 JOTA/JOTI
- 24 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
- 31 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

November

- 7-8 Monthly Hike
- 9 Gordon Park Service: 12.00 noon
- 14 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
- 21 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene
- 28 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene

December

- 4 Schools close
- 5-7 Inter Provincial Patrols Competition
- 8-13 Chimanimani Hike
- 14 Gordon Park Service: 12.00 noon
- !9 Troop Meeting: Mabukuwene - Last meeting of the year

Additional activities may be added to the programme

