

Lessons at Summer Camp

One morning at Summer Camp I was sitting in the Scouters' tent trying to compose a campfire song when I heard the following conversation at one of the patrol kitchens. Patrol Leader Adams* "Now pack it up, Brown. If you lay a finger on young Harding [a small boy in Adams' patrol] I'll pick you up and bounce you on your head." I did not have to wait long for the drama to continue. Scout Brown was a tough lad. He ignored Patrol Leader Adams' warning. Patrol Leader Adams was an equally determined lad. He picked up Scout Brown and, as promised, bounced him on his head (to the delight of the Scouts – and us Scouters!)

When we returned to Crowthorne at the end of camp I explained to George Brown, Scout Brown's father, what had happened in that incident at camp. George Brown was a friend of mine and neighbour. He asked if Patrol Leader Adams had made a good job of the bouncing. I said I thought so – there may have been bruises but no blood. "Good," said George, "it may knock a bit of discipline into his thick head!"

I last heard of these two Scouts – Adams and Brown. Adams was a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy and Brown a School Teacher. I had given them good reports when I was asked for character references. We all learned lessons from incidents at camp and this particular one had brought out the best in two boys who had the right spirit but needed the incentive to bring it out.

* Names changed to protect the guilty!

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