



# How to make the most of a Camping Holiday

By A. G. BARRALET

**H**AVING decided that a real holiday in the open is what you want, the next thing to decide upon is where you will spend it.

I am told, but you must check it for yourselves, that no parish in England is more than 80 miles from the sea; therefore, wherever we live a seaside camp is a possibility. Don't forget, however, that mountains, lakes, forests, moors, and even the flat marsh-country possess charms of their own.

I like a wooded, hilly country myself, with a stream hard by, and one or two quaint little towns and historical buildings in the vicinity which I can explore during my stay; but I don't set myself up as a judge. Let us say the vote has been taken and the spot fixed. Now we must secure the actual site, settle what tents and kit we shall require, and decide whether we shall "hike," "bike," or go down by train or motor.

As for the site, suppose two of us run down one week-end and make inquiries. The "super" at the local police-station is always a good man to get hold of. He knows the people who have suitable land available, and can always help us with distances and other topographical information. The clergy and ministers of all denominations are generally very willing to help; so, too, is the post-master, and it will be an extraordinary thing indeed if our two emissaries cannot find a squire, a farmer, an inn-keeper, or a small-holder to offer us a picturesque little corner

where we can pitch a few tents and light a fire.

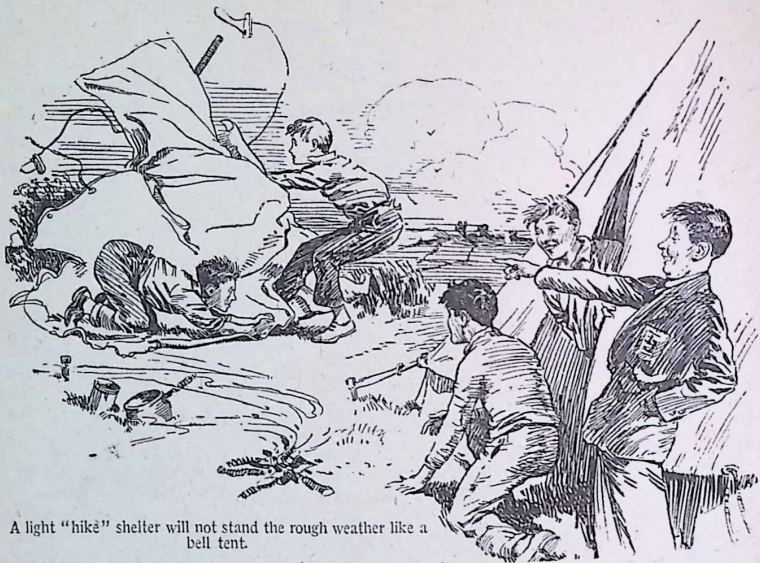
Don't forget the important question of water-supply, and while our fellows are on the spot they may as well make a note of the shop-keepers, nearest doctor, telephone, and all those other useful details which would earn a boy scout his Pathfinder's badge.

The location settled, we can spend the intervening weeks or months in pleasurable anticipation and intelligent preparation. For instance, shall we make it a "permanent" camp, and explore the country round about from that centre, or shall we do a bit of "hiking" and travel as "light" as possible?

For myself, I like the old-fashioned bell-tent, pitched in a sylvan nook whence I can make excursions afoot or awheel, north, south, east and west, or remain luxuriously at ease under the trees; whereas a "trek" or "hike" means constant packing and unpacking, and the shouldering of heavy loads which becomes uncommonly like hard work on a hot day, and decidedly uncomfortable on a wet one.

In a stationary camp one fireplace will suffice for the length of our stay; we gradually find places for our pots and pans and stores, and there is a sense of being "at home"; but a "hike" means hours spent in getting on the move, and digging oneself in again. And say what you will, a light "hike shelter" won't stand the rough weather like a bell-tent.

Of course, it is pleasant to travel through the country, but "hiking" and camping are



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really different propositions, and you must have the question out among yourselves.

Above all, we must find out all we can concerning the tiny corner of the earth where we are to spend our holiday when the eagerly expected time comes round.

The ruined castle, the village church, the inn, the family up at the "Hall," the "dew-pond," the moat round the farmer's house, the tumulus, the adjacent woods—all have their tale to tell, and there are free libraries in town which we can ransack in the winter evenings.

We shall find all sorts of familiar things awaiting us at our camping site if we care to make their acquaintance beforehand. Rocks and stones, birds, flowers, the little creatures that live in the burrows, ay, the very insects, will speak to us if we have learnt something of their language.

What clothes shall we wear? The oldest

and most comfortable, with a reserve of more "respectable" garments for special occasions. Camping is said to be a grand opportunity for taking a sun-bath, but rain and mud baths are not unknown in such situations, and a change and a sufficiency of warm clothing is a wise precaution.

Beware of cold nights. There is nothing more miserable than scanty bed-clothing in the chilly "small hours."

We can rough out a daily programme of games and expeditions before the start, and apportion the work so that every man may know his job on his arrival. By all means take the camera, and the old "push-bike" will be wonderfully useful.

Now let us consider a few hints for running the camp itself, trite enough, no doubt, to old campaigners, but worth mentioning, just to refresh our memories.

If you are camping at any place for the



first time the owner should be given the opportunity of selecting the site, and should it appear unsuitable, offer alternative suggestions.

It is desirable to pitch at a reasonable distance from the house, and, once settled down, trouble your host and his servants as little as possible.

A way should never be forced through hedge or fence. If it be necessary to pass through fields of growing crops keep to the paths or as close to the hedges as you can.

If you find a gate closed, see that you close it again after you have passed through. Burn all the refuse that will burn, and bury the rest. The camp site, especially in front of the tent door, should be free from all litter. The washing-up and personal ablutions should be performed at the rear of the tent, and the soiled water disposed of well away from the camp, otherwise the ground near the tents will become sodden and malodorous.

If hay or straw be used for bedding it is a good plan to have a bag made which can be filled and emptied in the barn. This saves making a mess about the field. Never strike the tent till the hay and straw has been removed, otherwise it will blow in all directions.

If you obtain eggs, milk, and butter from the house, don't go for them at "any old time." Arrange when they are to be fetched, and pay your camp accounts, as far as possible, on the spot. This will save the possibility of disputes afterwards. See that your fire is so placed that there is no chance of igniting the undergrowth, the hedge, or overhanging boughs. "Damp down" before turning in for the night, and remember that a good cooking fire is a very different thing from a bonfire.

If you borrow any implements or utensils from the farmer, be careful to return them punctually and in good condition. As regards your own kit, make an inventory before you start for camp, and re-check it when you pack up.

Before you leave, see that the ground is as tidy as you found it, if not tidier, and make a

point of thanking your host and all the local people who have helped to make things run smoothly.

Two words of warning.

If you go bathing in local waters ascertain beforehand whether there are any particular dangers to be avoided, and if you use an oil stove for cooking don't set your clothes or your tent alight.

The fellow who lives in rural surroundings may think that camping would not greatly appeal to himself; but what about a camp ten or fifteen miles out of London?

Instead of going boating and bathing and fishing, he might see the sights of our wonderful capital.

If the idea appeals to him, there are plenty of delightful spots in Kent, Surrey, Middlesex, Bucks, Herts and Essex which would fill all requirements.

There are plenty of railways, 'buses and trams which would swiftly run himself and his chums into the city—and London is simply teeming with places of interest.

Of course, this idea applies equally well to any other of our big towns.

So, you see, a camping holiday can satisfy the desires of a country lad quite as well as those of the fellow who is eager to get away from the city in which he lives. Because, apart from the sheer pleasures of sleeping under canvas and "roughing it," the success of such a holiday depends upon the way one's leisure is spent.

Some fellows enjoy open-air pastimes, others like rooting out the historic associations of their immediate environment; still others prefer exploring ruins and old castles, and there are very many who would appreciate a cheap and care-free lodging in the open—with all London to wander in during the day-time.

However you spend your time, you will certainly find a good book a pleasant companion—and don't forget to write home! Camping is fraught with terrors for nervous friends, and it is just as well to let them know that you are having "the time of your life."

THE END