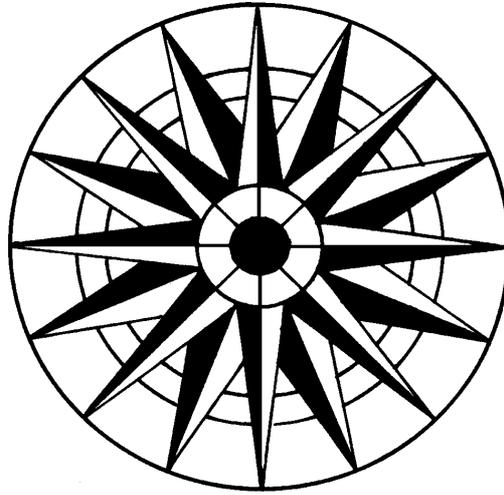


HOW TO WRITE A HIKING LOG

BY ELWYN JENKINS

Art work by Robert Robilliard



© South African Scout Association

P O Box 2434, Clareinch, 7740

Second edition
Reprint 1996
Internet edition 2002

CONTENTS

- When must logbooks be kept?
- Expected standards
- Why keep a log of a hike?
- Planning your hike
- Public relations
- Dress
- Equipment for logbook
- What goes in a logbook
- The cover
- Page numbers
- Logbook layout
- Map reference for area of hike
- Suitability of food and kit
- Report on the journey
- Time, bearing and distance
- Observations to be recorded
- Theme
- Route maps
- Keeping rough notes
- Illustrations
- Example of logbook pages
- Collecting specimens
- Logging a journey on the water
- Example of score chart for hike logbook

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Futura Footwear
Northern Transvaal Training Team, South African Scout Association
Don Priest and Christopher Elphinstone
VELD LORE and Vic Clapham

WHEN MUST LOGBOOKS BE KEPT?

Logbooks of hikes are required for the Top Award (No 11: Expedition) and the Hiker Interest Badge. Written logs may also be presented for Adventurer (No 13: Day Journey) and First Class (No 16: First Class Hike).

EXPECTED STANDARDS

The standard set for the Top Award and Hiker Interest Badge hike logs is very high. It is therefore a good idea for Scouts to obtain practice in keeping logs by making good, short logs for the junior hikes that they have to do. In fact, some Troops require Scouts to make a simple log of their Pathfinder hike in order to introduce them to logs.

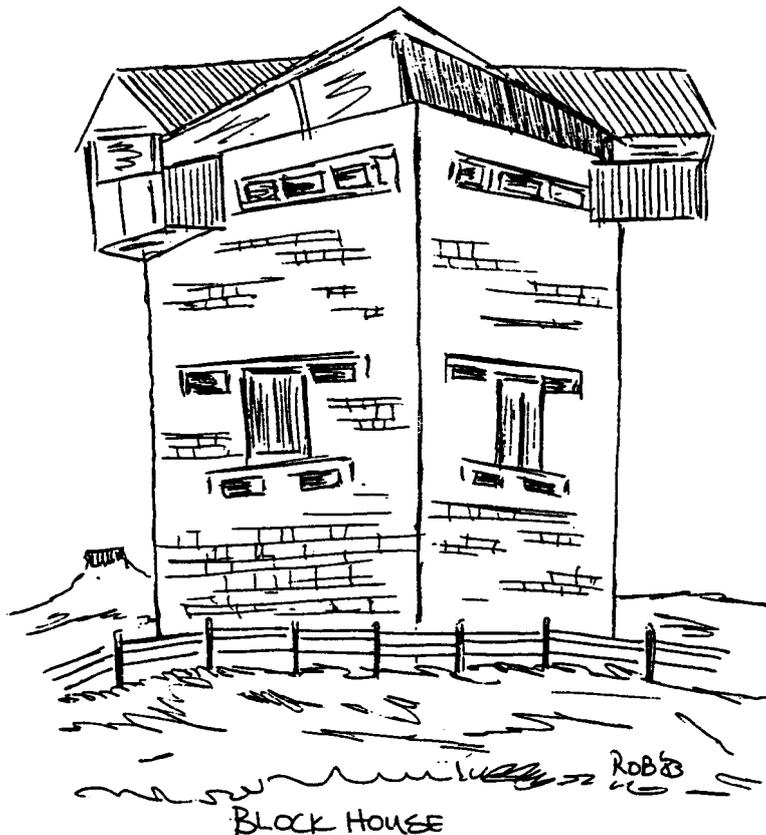
The following are the minimum requirements:

1. TOP AWARD EXPEDITION

Comprehensive notes must be made during the expedition. These notes are used in the compilation of a detailed hike log. The notes together with the hike logbook must be submitted to the examiner within fourteen days of the completion of the hike.

2. HIKER INTEREST BADGE HIKE

Notes and a hike logbook similar to those required for the Top Award Expedition must be submitted to the Examiner.



WHY KEEP A LOG OF A HIKE?

To give an accurate record of the route of the hike, so that anyone else reading it should be able to follow the same route without trouble.

To give a good report of the countryside through which the hike went, including the landscape, plant and animal life, human activity and anything of special interest, such as historical sites. This report should contain useful advice for future hikers and campers in that area.

To give an interesting report of the events of that particular hike, for the information and enjoyment of all who read it, and in particular for the Scout who went on the hike to keep as a souvenir.

A collection of the logs of the hikes that you have been on makes a good record of your Scouting, which you will be glad to have later on.

PLANNING YOUR HIKE

1. Obtain the latest maps of the area where you intend to hike. The best are the 1:50 000 topographical series, available from the Government Printer, Private Bag X85, Pretoria, 0001. You may need several adjoining sheets.

Also very useful are the orthophoto maps available from the Surveyor-General, Surveys and Mapping, Private Bag X291, Pretoria 0001.

2. If possible, talk to someone who knows the area.
3. Make sure that you will be given permission by the owners of the land to hike where you would like to go. This is especially important in choosing your overnight camping spot. Also check whether your campsite has water and whether you will be to make a allowed fire or must take a gas stove.

The Hiker Badge requirements require you to know the procedure governing access to Forestry reserves, Parks Board areas, National Hiking Trails and wilderness areas. You can find this out from these authorities by writing, phoning or calling at their offices for their pamphlets. You may have to obtain permission to enter an area and camp there several weeks in advance of the actual hike.

4. Choose your route. Remember to take into account that you will be walking more slowly than usual because you will be stopping to make notes for your logbook. Try to avoid routes across farmers' lands, orchards and fences. If you are going in Forestry or Parks Board areas or on Hiking Trails, you will have to keep to the paths.

Obtain a camping permit from your District/Scout Commissioner well before the hike.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Remember your good manners at all times in your dealings with the public. You should dress in such a way that you can be easily identified as Scouts. This will count in your favour because people are well-disposed towards Scouts. Don't do anything to spoil that reputation!

In addition to your dress, you need to carry some identification. The camping permit issued by your District/Scout Commissioner will do, but a letter of introduction from your Troop Scouter or DC is also useful. This should be presented to any farmer or official whom you approach or who questions you. Be sure to ask landowners for permission to cross their land or collect drinking water, etc. Nothing in your behaviour should give cause for offence.

Write letters of thanks to anyone who has been particularly helpful to you on your hike – this will be greatly appreciated and will mean that Scouts will be welcome there again.



DRESS

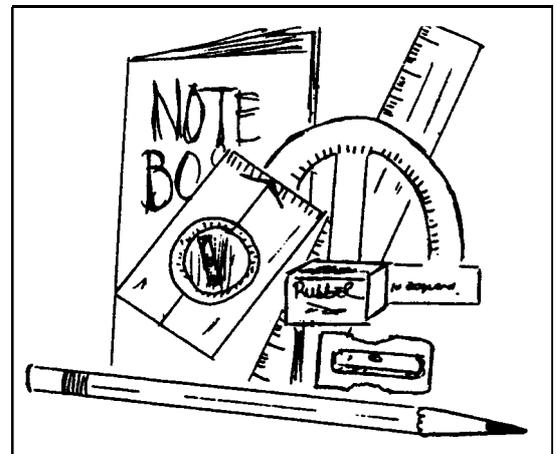
Certain regulations about what to wear while hiking are laid down by South African Headquarters and should be observed:

Although it is desirable that Scouts wear uniforms, hiking dress may be worn while hiking in the country away from towns, but there should not be a mixture of Scout uniform and casual dress.

It is recommended that all members of a party wear a dark-green, peaked cap, as specified in Rule 702.1, when in camp or hiking. (POR Rule 701.3)

EQUIPMENT FOR LOGBOOK

- Compass
- Map
- Transparent plastic map case, to protect map
- Protractor
- Pen
- Pencil
- Pencil sharpener
- Ruler
- Rubber
- Notebook
- Watch
- Camera (optional)



You will need something in which to carry your logbook equipment while you are hiking, because you need the equipment constantly, and therefore cannot shut it up in your rucksack – and it is very inconvenient to try to carry things in your hands while walking. You can make a cloth bag that can be slung around your neck, or an extra outside pocket on your jacket or one leg of your trousers.

You could also make a ‘field desk’ to give yourself something to press on when making notes or sketches. Use a piece of hardboard slightly larger than your notebook. Hold your papers on the board by means of rubber bands or bulldog clip, and fix a box on the board to hold pencils, paperclips and other small objects.

You should only make rough notes on the hike, so you can use any book or paper that you like. It is not a good idea to take your actual logbook on the hike with you, because it is clumsy and can get dirty and spoiled.

The final logbook should be of the kind that has a blank page opposite each lined page. The A4 size is best, as space on it is not so cramped. A ring clip folder with loose pages is also effective, as this enables you to make corrections and insertions easily, and it can also take bulky specimens, which a book cannot do.

Keep the logs of all your hikes in the same book (or series of books) so that you can have a complete record of your Scouting hikes. A hard-covered book or file is therefore a good investment because it is durable. Sometimes you may have specimens that will not fit into a book. These can be presented separately, mounted on a sheet of cardboard or in some other convenient way.

WHAT GOES IN A LOGBOOK

Here is a checklist. This is followed by an explanation of the main items.

The cover

At the front

- Table of contents
- Date of hike
- Names of people involved, together with the ages, Patrols, rank and level of training of the hikers
- Kit list and mass of kit
- Food – menus and quantities
- Remarks on suitability of kit and food
- Map references, area of hike, starting and finishing points
- Details of transport
- Statement of theme (if you have one)
- Map of area, with complete route shown.

The log itself

- Columns for Time, Bearing and Distance
- Route description, weather reports, observation notes and personal narrative
- Route maps
- Illustrations (drawings, photographs and cuttings, leaf impressions and bark rubbings)
- Specimens

At the end

- List of references to books and articles (if you looked anything up)
- Acknowledgements and thanks (to anyone who helped or gave hospitality etc)
- Space for the examiner's comments

Optional extras

- Outdoor code
- Patrol symbol
- Bundu signs
- Extra illustrations and decorations
- Cuttings from relevant brochures etc
- Souvenirs such as tickets and stickers
- Anything relevant

THE COVER

Make the cover of the logbook attractive, using a Scouting or hiking theme for the design. A distinctive cover is not obligatory but adds a great deal to the appeal and character of your log.

PAGE NUMBERS

Number each page, including the ones with maps and illustrations. You can turn the numbers of the log into a feature by using an appropriate design such as footprints.



LOGBOOK LAYOUT

Your whole log should be attractive and neat.

MAP REFERENCE FOR AREA OF HIKE

Give the reference on the 1:50 000 topographical covering your route, e.g. 2528 DC BRONKHORSTSPRUIT, and the date when the map was published. It is a good to include a map that covers the whole route. You can paste in the map or make a copy of it, with your route marked on it.



SUITABILITY OF FOOD AND KIT

Next to the items of clothing, equipment and food, write comments on their suitability as proved by the hike, e.g.

Track suit – unnecessary in hot weather

Towel – bulky and heavy – take small hand towel next time

REPORT ON THE JOURNEY

The first part of the log is taken up by the background information about equipment, food etc.

The report on the journey forms the main part of the logbook, and is set out as follows:

On the left hand side of the lined pages, draw the three columns for Time, Bearing and Distance. Next to them write your notes on the hike and your observations. On the blank pages opposite, draw your route maps and put your illustrations and specimens.

After the main part of the log you can give a further discussion of your theme before closing with your list of references and your acknowledgements.

TIME, BEARING AND DISTANCE

Use the 24-hour clock, e.g. 13:15

Mention at the start whether you are using magnetic or true bearings. Make a new entry every time you change direction or start again after a break. The entries should not be too far apart, i.e. make each leg of the journey fairly short, preferably from one significant point to another. Give the distance for each leg of the hike. It is a good idea to have a separate column for the cumulative distance. When giving distances, be specific as to whether they are for a leg of the hike or the cumulative distance of how far you have hiked altogether. Distances should be given in metres, not paces.

OBSERVATIONS TO BE RECORDED

<u>Weather</u>	Give a weather report at the start of each day and note any subsequent changes.
<u>Route</u>	Link your description to the map opposite so that the reader can picture where you went. You could put a number in your text to refer the reader to a similar number on the map that shows where a certain event or object occurred, like this: Climbed over border fence by means of a stile (3).
<u>Countryside</u>	terrain, vegetation, farming activity, etc.
<u>Historical interest</u>	buildings, rock paintings, battle fields, old mines etc.
<u>Human life</u>	styles of houses, farm lands, quarries etc.
<u>Animal life</u>	birds, wild and domestic animals, insects, reptiles, water life etc.
<u>Personal narrative</u>	The personal touch makes a log enjoyable if it is not overdone. Mention what you and your companions said and did, how you felt and what you thought – the funny times, the good times and the bad times. These will make the hike live for you again when you read the log in years to come. Comments of this nature should be included chronologically, as the hike progressed, and not in a separate section at the end.
<u>Overnight camp</u>	If the badge requirements include an overnight camp, the camp must be included. Check with your examiner whether this applies to your hike.

THEME

Sometimes your observations on the hike are expected to follow a theme, so that instead of trying to cover everything that you observe you concentrate on one particular aspect, such as birds, trees, grasses, erosion, land use, or geology. Try to find out beforehand what features of the area where you will be hiking would be particularly suitable for a theme. For example, there may be historical remains such as Anglo-Boer War blockhouses which you could record and discuss.

There is no need to become very technical in writing about your theme. What is required is evidence of your ability to observe and record. If you were looking at grasses, for example, you would not have to know their scientific names, but should show how they differ according to where they grow.

Most of your notes and discussion on your theme should appear at appropriate places in your log notes; but a separate summing up could be put at the end of the log.

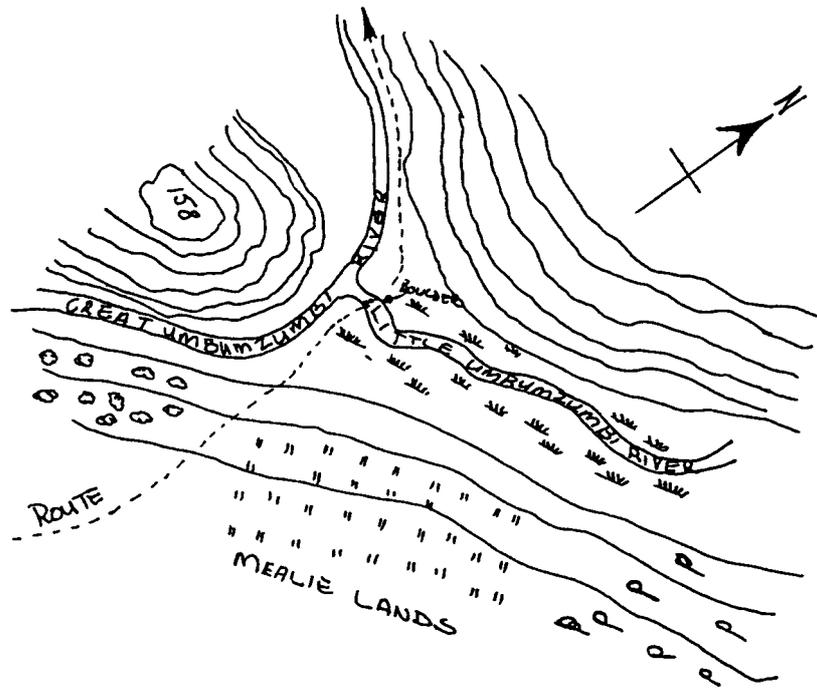
Find out from your examiner whether he wants you to follow a theme in your log.

ROUTE MAPS

Large-scale maps of each section of your route should be drawn opposite your route description. A scale about four times the size of the 1:50 000 maps is a good one (i.e. 1:12 500, or eight cm per km). On your first map, give the scale and key to the symbols and colours you will be using; it will not be necessary to repeat this information on subsequent maps.

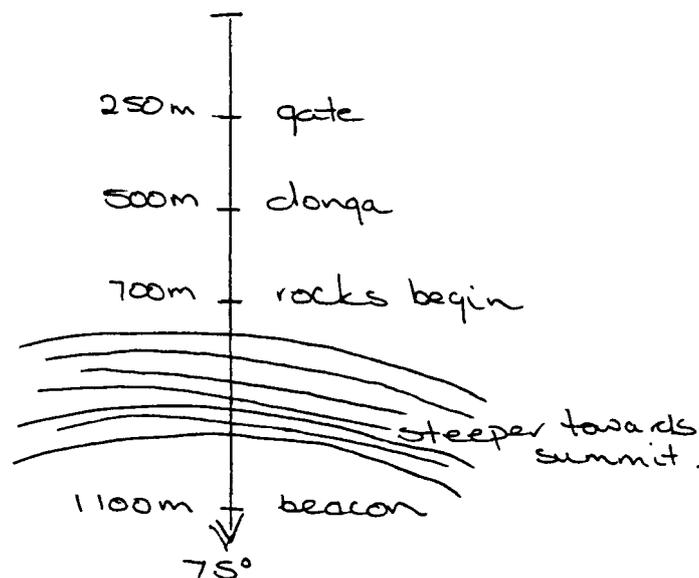
Your maps must not simply be enlargements of the 1:50 000; they must be your own version of what you actually saw on the hike.

On your maps, show the direction of your hike and anything of interest mentioned in your description, such as buildings, dongas, dams, fences, water pumps, orchards and lands.



If you show contours, they obviously cannot be given in accurate intervals, but only by impression.

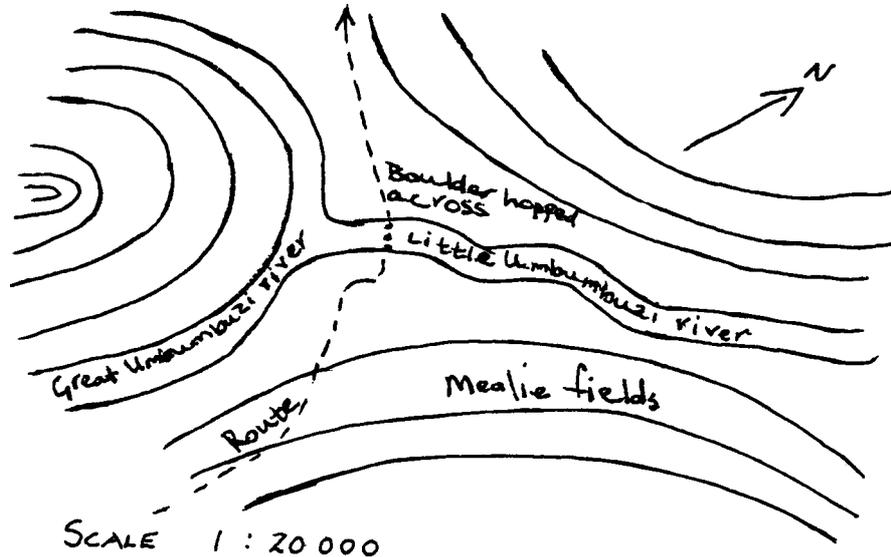
It is preferable to keep the orientation for all your maps the same, for example with North at the top on the page. To help the reader still more, indicate where one map carries on from the previous one. Always indicate True North on your maps.



KEEPING ROUGH NOTES

You need a kind of shorthand to keep notes while you are hiking. A strip map is one useful method. For each leg of the hike, draw a straight line, indicate your bearing, and mark features and distances along it, like this:

At more complicated places such as crossroads or junctions, draw a rough sketch map with the North marked, e.g.

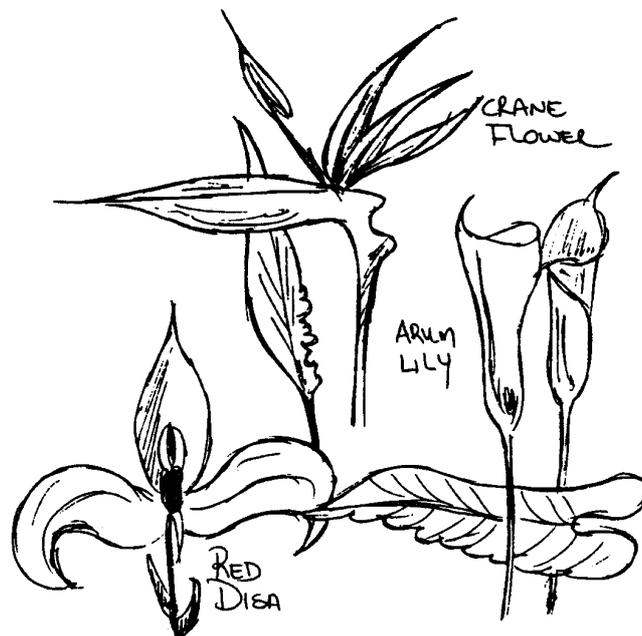


ILLUSTRATIONS

Fill empty spaces on your blank pages with sketches of scenes, people, and large and small objects. At all times, your own drawings are preferable to other illustrations, because a logbook should be your own work.

Photographs are not essential but do add interest to a log, especially if they show the route, and not just some of your friends eating. You can never be penalised for not including photographs.

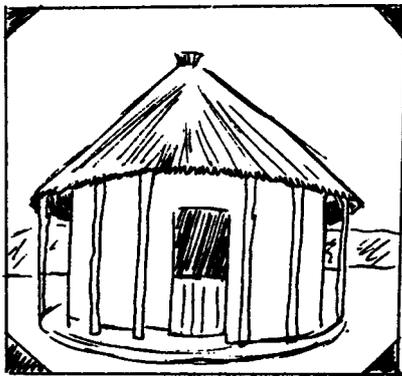
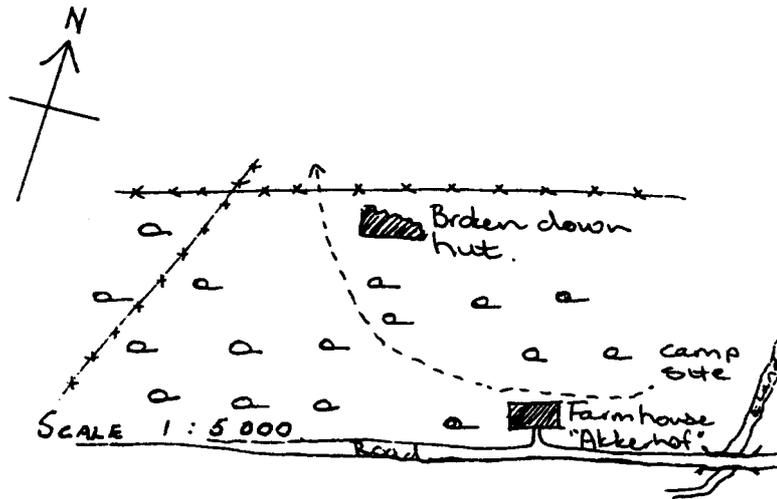
Include specimens, leaf impressions, bark rubbings and anything else that will contribute to your report.



EXAMPLES OF HIKE LOGBOOK PAGES

Sunday, 21 October 2002
 Weather: Sunny, light breeze.

TIME	BEARING	DISTANCE	REPORT
08:20	320°		From overnight camp at Akkerhof farm, hiked N.W. up steep hill. Country mainly grassland with some brush. Saw a broken down hut. Possibly North Sotho. Signs of vegetable farming around hut.
08:50	295°	1 km	Reached top of hill. Hills dotted with huts and spotted farm "Soetwater" in the distance. Noticed some huts in process of construction. Had our tea on top of hill.
09:45	313°	750m	Proceeded down hill rapidly. Arrived at farm "Soetwater". Met farmer who spoke to us.



Above: a typical North Sotho hut. Note the poles to support the verandah.



COLLECTING SPECIMENS

In many nature conservation areas, flowers and plants are protected by law and may not be picked or damaged in any way, and no items may be removed – even stones or pieces of wood. In these areas, you should use only sketches and photographs, and not take specimens. Make sure you check the rules, or ask the land owner for permission, before you take anything.

If you are allowed to take specimens, never destroy a whole plant. Usually it is sufficient if you take one or two leaves, seed pods and a blossom.

Plastic bags are useful for specimens – take some with you in case you need them. Cotton wool will protect fragile items such as snail shells and dried snake skins.

The best method for collecting plants is a field press, made up of sheets of newspaper between layers of hardboard, the whole apparatus held tightly together by large rubber bands.

LOGGING A JOURNEY ON THE WATER

The hike requirements allow for part of the journey to be completed on the water.

The basic characteristics of the log for such a journey remain the same. The following items should be made clear in the opening pages of the log:

1. Purpose and theme of the journey, e.g. water-birds or water-plants, depth or current analysis of waterways traversed.
2. List of crew/companions.
3. Type of boat used.
4. Course planning and nature of sailing plan - filed with examiner or Scouter prior to departure on the journey.
5. Description of equipment carried – obviously this should include reference to lifejacket, canoe-patching equipment, etc.
6. Menus and food quantities transported, including explanation of precautions taken to prevent spilling or getting spoilt in the event of capsizing.

In the log of the journey itself, particular attention should be paid to recording changing weather and water conditions.



EXAMPLE OF A SCORE CHART FOR A HIKE LOGBOOK

JUDGING FACTORS	MAXIMUM POSSIBLE POINTS	ACTUAL POINTS ATTAINED
General appearance of logbook	10	
Reporting on theme of hike	10	
Planning: food, equipment, route etc	20	
Sketches, photos, specimens	10	
Quality of sketch maps	15	
Log content	25	
Interest and value of hike to hiker	10	
TOTAL	100	
Bonus points for original cover	5	
GRAND TOTAL	***	
EXAMINER'S COMMENTS		