



## Staves! - Not Broomsticks

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*"At the Sign of the Council Fire"* By John Hargrave

This is what the Chief Scout says in the August issue of the "Headquarters Gazette": "Let the Scout individualize his own staff, even decorate it in his own way if he likes, but let him keep to his staff."

I was talking to the Chief only the other day and he is very keen that the picturesque part of Scouting should not be neglected. In the Gazette and on his "Scout Yarns" page he is urging us to make the staff not merely a broomstick but a part of the Scouts costume. And now he says "Let 'em decorate!" Right! Here goes!

Mark out with a pencil on your staff which parts you are going to whittle or carve out. If it is a rough-barked ash staff (which is what I always use) peel out the design with a pen-knife, and then paint in your colours on the clean white wood. On the other hand you may like to carve out your Patrol Totem and glue him or screw him on to the top of your staff - or fretwork him out and stick him in a cleft in the top of your staff. If you do this, keep the Totem Sign quite small - otherwise he will get in the way when you are out Scouting. Or you can have an eye-hole for taking a birdseye view of the distance and a slot for carrying letters, or in which you can put a string like a clothes-prop. This type is very useful when you wish to use your staff as a tent-pole, or for hanging a billy over the fire. In fact, the slot and eye-hole can be used for a hundred different camp-jobs.

But the great thing is to make it yours. It's to be your staff and not like anyone else's. At school we used to have clubs for our "School Gang." We cut these clubs from roots of trees and they were great big "Hefty" things - all knobbly and spiked and terrible-looking. I set the fashion in club designing. I painted it and whittled out all kinds of designs and it looked jolly primitive and "Scoutish" when finished. After that they all did it! Each club was different, and each boy made his own designs and did the whole thing himself - and if you lost your club or had it "taken" you were reckoned as a "Mumblebump!" I don't know exactly what a "Mumblebump" is - but it means you're butter-fingered, and half asleep, and blubber-handed and dream-struck, and flap-footed, and blob-eyed and lots more!

It's what you'd call a Tenderfoot - but we called it by the name of "Mumblebumposity," and it means generally a "wash-out" as far as Scouting is concerned.

Well, anyway, a Scout without a staff is a "Mumblebump" and a Tenderfoot; and a Scout who doesn't go right away this very second and begin to decorate his staff is being left out of it - he'll be "dead in this act", behind-the-times, out-of-date, and generally out-of-the-running.

Now then! Where's that staff? What? Haven't got one? Go out - get one - NOW! Must have a staff - Scout without a staff not a real Scout - what? Come along! Double up! Staves forward, please! Got it? Right!

Now then - decorate, carve, whittle and make that staff feel as if it belongs to you and is part of you and that you'd be lost without it - and it without you.

Put your Sign on it - brand your Mark on it, and make it a record of your Scout life - and if you lose it, if you break it, if you don't carry it - you're a - you're a - a - MUMBLEBUMP!

