

Contents

Introduction8	SPRING	SUMMER	
Clothing14	Animal kingdoms 32	Animal kingdoms	
D	Tracks - common small	Droppings	84
Personal kit16	mammals and birds34	Ch . 14	0.0
Undercover18	Tracks - large mammals	Shelter	86
Under Cover	mammais50	Water	88
Base camp kit20	Shelter	water	00
2 msc cump mannin	Making a simple shelter 40	Fire	90
Cutting tools21	maning a simple sheller to	2 22 0	
S	Fire	Hygiene	92
Navigation 22	How a fire burns 44	The sweat lodge	
Using OS maps	Tinders 46	E	
Contours	Fire from sparks 48	Senses	. 96
Using a Silva compass26	Fire by friction 50	Seeing more	98
Resection27	Organising your fire 52	Choosing your	
Natural indicators	2 27	binoculars	. 99
of direction	Water54	Setting up	
		Finding wild animals	
	When the sap flows56	_	
		Basketry	.104
	Cordage 58	Coiling	
	Preparing bark for	Plaiting and twining	108
	cordage60	Basketry projects	.110
	Plaited cordage		
	Laid cordage	Pottery	
		Making a pot	
	Birch bark66	Finishing and firing	.116
	Working with birch		
	bark	The pursuit of food	
	Resin	Fishing.	
	TD1 -4 6.6 1 70	Fishing hooks	
	The pursuit of food 70	Filleting a fish	
	The importance of	Drying meat and fish	
	roots	Smoking meat and fish	
	The digging stick	Cooking greens	
	Salads and greens	FruitsFlour	
	Drinks and flavourings78	Cooking.	
	Dilliks and Havourings/o	The steam pit	
		The mud oven	
		The harvest feast	

Animal kingdoms	Animal kingdoms	1 Useful addresses230 2 Sharpening a knife232 3 Coppicing
Shelter.148Beds and bedding.150Making a simple bed 151Duvet.152	Winter shelters182Quinze184Group shelter186Organising a bivouac.188	Index
Fire 154	Insulation190Heated beds192	
Nettle cordage 156		
The pursuit of food 158 Primitive hunting 160	Fire	
Skinning a small mammal	Water 198	
Wasting nothing 164	Cordage	
Preparing skins 166	Withes cordage 202	
End-of-season-treats 168	Clematis cordage203	
Life out of death170	Carving	
Risks and dangers 171	Carving techniques 206	
Edible fungi	Carving projects208	
	Winter lights 210	
	Lamp211	
	Special equipment 212	
	Snow goggles	
	Snow-shoe (Roycraft	
	pattern)	
	The pursuit of food216	
	Winter plants 218	
	Seashore foods	
	Shoreline edibles 222	
	Seaweed	
	Trapping	
	Storytelling228	

Appendices

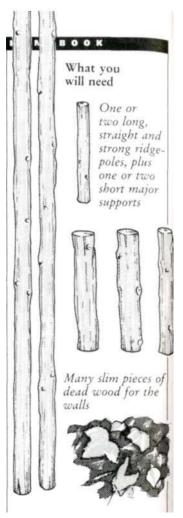
THE COMPLCTE OUTDOOR

Making a simple shelter

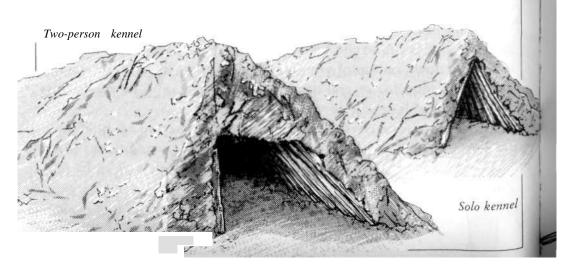
There are many different types of shelter, but for speed and efficiency few can equal these simple bivouacs. In a good location they can be built without a knife or any cordage from dead materials lying around. They are small and well insulated to help retain your bodyheat, and they will keep out even the worst weather. If well built they are a stronger and cosier refuge than the most modern hike tent. They block out the sound of the noisiest gale, letting you sleep.

Remember to keep the bivouac's size as small as comfort will allow. Check vour measure inside the shelter as you build it.

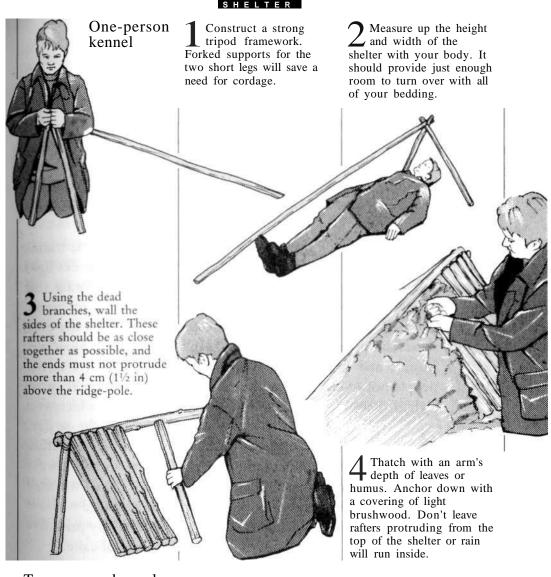
Given a good location, an average person working steadily in bad light can build the solo 'kennel' in about two hours. Two people can build the two-person kennel in half that time - as apart from an extra ridge-pole, the shelter contains the same amount of roofing material.



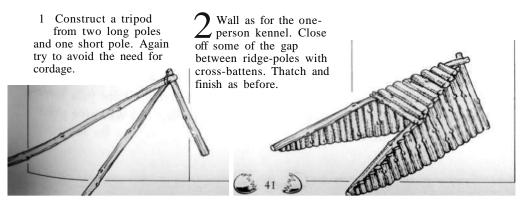
Dead leaves, humus or turfs for thatching, plus light brushwood







Two-person kennel



Fire

Woodsmoke! The very scent of it transports me down a trail of memories, to campsites alive with the fire's flickering shadows, and to friends sharing its warmth. When spirits are high, a fire's flames provide joyful light; and when spirits are low, the consoling warmth of the embers will thaw the frozen heart. For me, life is inconceivable without a camp-fire.

At the practical level, a fire is essential. It dries our clothes, warms us when we are cold, cooks our food, purifies our water, provides light

at night, drives away biting insects and much more. Being able to start and look after a fire is a skill which must be mastered. It is not easy - I regularly see people fail to light a fire even when equipped with waterproof matches that won't blow out. Morale and fire-lighting are so closely linked that I advise people not to try to light a fire in bad weather unless they are certain they will succeed. It is one of those skills which you

just have to practise and practise until, night or day, sun or snow, you can without any hesitation produce fire. In your outdoors equipment you should always carry some reliable means of lighting a fire. We shall learn the ways of our ancestors who managed without matches, because once you can light a fire by primitive means, using modern gadgets is a piece of cake.

Good in
emergencies,
lifeboat matches
cannot be blown
out in strong winds
or damp weather

cannot be blown Starting and managing your fire

out in strong winds when starting a fire remember to search out the driest

kindling and fuel available. This should preferably be dead wood snagged in the branches above ground. Dead wood found on the ground will burn but contains more moisture, making it more difficult to start the fire. In wet or windy weather make sure you have plenty of small fine kindling; this burns more readily and will give your fire a good hot centre.

Remember also that fire prefers to burn upwards. Flat fires smoulder; tall fires blaze. When lighting your fire, build upwards for a blaze.

But just lighting the fire is only the start. Your fire is a versatile tool which you can adapt and change to suit a wide variety of situations. Correctly managed, it will always be perfectly matched to the task you **put** it to, and in between it will burn slowly and efficiently, requiring

the minimum of looking after. With a deft flick of the embers an experienced fire-tender makes fire management look easy; but in fact it usually takes people several years to learn to make the best use of this resource. Bear in mind that there is an inherent skill involved in tending a fire, and you will probably learn more quickly. Whether for light, warmth, cooking or company, there is a specifically related fire lay.

If you visit any national park or wilderness area, you will often come across an old fire site

Strike-a-light: 200 years ago t ts was the principal way

scorched into the turf beside a stream and usually people lit their fires, filled with rusting tin cans. While the land will h striking sparks from a steel With a recover from this careless abuse, it shows a great lack gun flint

recover from this careless abuse, it shows a great lack of respect and spoils the sanctity of that stream-bank

for all who come after. Use of a fire brings with it a responsibility to leave no traces behind. Always choose a location where the fire will do no obvious damage - preferably bare earth. Be constantly aware, too, of the danger of forest fires; camp-fires should be sited in an area of cleared underbrush at least 4 m (12 ft) across.

While surrounding a fire with stones fits the romantic image of camping, in reality it achieves little more than the scorching of the rocks, which remain a testament to your presence for many years to come. In some controlled wilderness areas fires are permitted when there is no fire risk. If you are forbidden to have a fire, it is better for every other fire user if you obey the regulations. Although they may sometimes benefit the natural ecology, promoting plant regeneration, forest fires are a serious threat to safety. With fire, safety considerations override all others.

..

How a fire burns

There are three vital ingredients to fire: fuel, oxygen and heat. For efficient burning there must be an unrestricted supply of each. The average wood fire consists of a fairly random lattice of fuel. This lattice must be open enough to allow oxygen in the form of air to pass freely into the fire, while at the same time being tight enough to allow the heat to travel from one piece of fuel to the next. If the fuel is damp or too large to catch light, the fire will smoulder or go out. Many a novice has suffered the smouldering fire, the fire with too little air supply or the one which started but then went out because the lattice was too loose for the flames to pass.

What you need to build a fire



Very dry twigs 30 cm (1 ft) long and matchstick-thin. Should catch light from a match alone. Keep these twigs at least two hand-spans long.

Fine kindling

Kindling

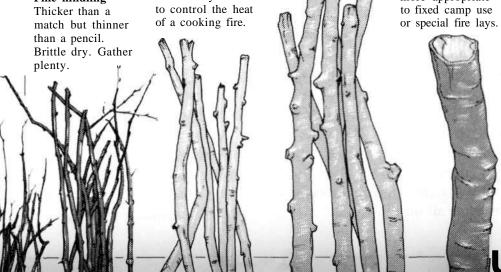
Brittle-dry wood of pencil thickness. This really gets the fire cracking. Again, gather plenty. Broken into pieces a hand-width long, this kindling is the best fuel to use when you need to control the heat of a cooking fire

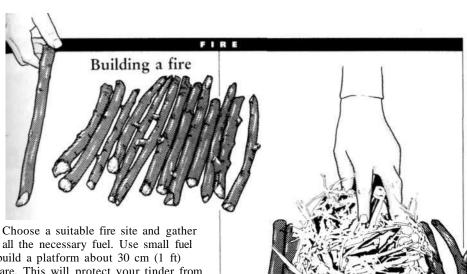
Small fuel

Thicker than a pencil but not thicker than your thumb, this fuel is the beginnings of the fire proper.

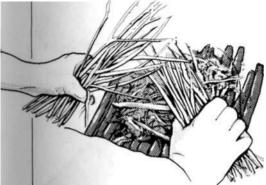
Main fuel

Sticks thicker than your thumb which you can break over your knee. For most trail fires this is the largest fuel needed. Anything larger counts as arge fuel' and is more appropriate

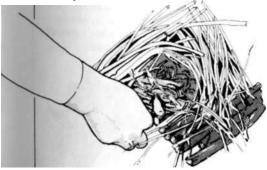




all the necessary fuel. Use small fuel to build a platform about 30 cm (1 ft) square. This will protect your tinder from the damp ground and burn quickly at the fire's heart.

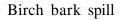


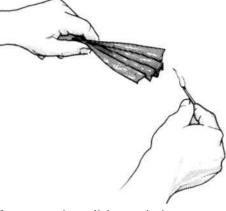
Take two full handfuls of extra-fine kindling and position them against the tinder with their tops overlapping directly above the tinder.



4 Light the tinder. As the flames rise, position the kindling in the flames from the tinder bundle. When flames burn through above the kindling, add the next size up, and continue this until you are burning main fuel.

Place a grapefruit-sized bundle of Leased fibrous tinder on the platform (see pp. 46-7).





If you are using a lighter to ignite your fire it is sometimes difficult to pass the flame into the fire without burning yourself. An answer is to make a birch bark spill. Birch bark burns well because of the oils it contains, but it tends to curl up tight as it does so. To make a spill you will need to fold a small square sheet of the bark concertina fashion to prevent it curling up. Light this from your lighter.

Tinders

Tinders are in many ways the most important part of any fire, for they create the initial flame and enable it to grow. A large-sized tinder bundle, soccer-ball size, will start even damp kindling burning. A wide knowledge of what can be used for tinder and how to use it is an essential of successful fire-lighting. If you are wise you will fill your pockets with good tinder whenever you come across it.



Dead bracken

Excellent tinder, widely available. Readily dries out, especially in a dry breeze. Collect by stripping leaves from stems. Good for friction fire-lighting.



Birch and cherry bark Burns long and hot. Bark peels naturally in small strips - gather and light with a match for a longlasting hot centre for firelighting.

Clematis

The tire-lighter's friend. Provides a fluffy seed down giving a short burst of flame from sparks. The bark of its stems peels away and is easily buffed into a superior tinder.



Common in hazel copses. Naturally shedding silky bark can be collected and buffed into tinder for

friction fire-lighting.



Cramp-balls
Hard black fungus, often
on ash trees, excellent for

fire-lighting by friction or with sparks. When dry, will take a spark and smoulder.



Bracket fungi

Various bracket fungi can be used to produce a tinder known as amadou. Good for use with a flint and steel.



Punk

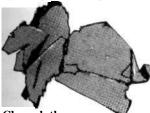
The dried rotted remains of wood, reduced to almost a powder, can be used with sparks, especially if slightly charred.



Cedar bark Fibrous and stringy, an excellent tinder to use with a magnifying glass. Buffedup fibres make good friction tinder.



Rosebay willow herb Seed-heads, collected into a tight cotton-wool-like mass, make good tinder for flint and steel. Improved by a slight charring.



Char cloth

A 100% cotton or silk cloth, set alight and then stamped out when charred very dark brown, was once commonly used and takes a spark readily.



Cotton grass
Found in boggy ground
during late spring and early
summer. Collected
together, this is another
good spark tinder.



Dry grass Humblest of all the tinders, dry grass can be easily buffed into a good tinder bundle for friction fire-lighting.

Preparing tinders

Body drying
If your best available
tinder is damp or wet, it
may be possible to dry it
by rubbing on dry
absorbent clothing,
particularly the thigh of
polycotton trouser legs.
Placed in the pockets of
such trousers, body warmth
will dry out the tinder.

Buffing

The best tinder for friction fire-lighting is very fine and fluffv. Many fibrous tinders need to be improved in this respect. This can be achieved by vigorous rubbing between your hands or against a dry rock surface.

Nicheing

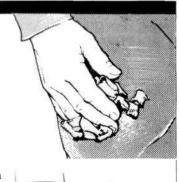
Using the point of your knife, make a small depression in the tinder into which to drop a glowing friction ember. This gives more surface area to catch and prevents ember cooling too fast.

Amadou

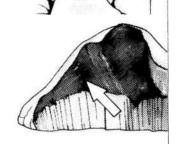
Break or cut open one of the bracket fungi to reveal the fluffy layer between pore tubes and cuticle. With the other areas cut away from it you have crude amadou for use with sparks.

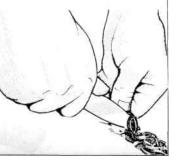
Tinder coils

Take one or two squares of paper-like birch bark about 22 cm (9 in) square. Roll into tight cigars and slice off finely to produce many tiny coils for your friction tinder bundle. Slightly difficult to ignite, but burn hot and long.





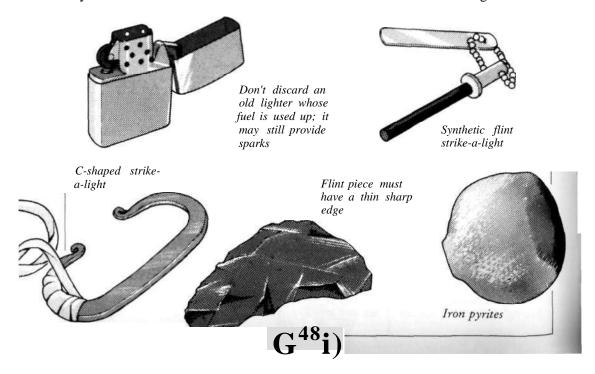




Fire from sparks

In the history of fire-lighting, self-igniting friction matches are only a recent invention. Until their introduction in the late seventeenth century, the most commonly employed fire-lighting method used in Europe was the flint and steel. In civilised circumstances the tinder box contained all that was necessary: the flint, the steel, the tinder and usually sulphur matches and a candle. The process was to strike the steel with the flint, showering sparks on to the tinder, which would begin to glow. Then a sulphur match - a simple spill dipped into molten sulphur which would not light by friction - was touched to the glowing tinder until it caught with a blue flame. Thus the candle could be lit. Quite a palaver if you had to rise quickly in the night. On the trail, however, sulphur matches were hard to come by. Instead, the glowing tinder was placed in some more fibrous tinder and blown to flame.

The use of sparks to light fires is today still a valid technique. Sparks can be produced from lighters which have run out of fuel, from synthetic flint and steels and from the ancient steel strike-a-light or the



hack of a carbon-steel knife. If you have access to iron pyrites, two nieces struck together, or one piece struck with flint, gives dull red sparks.

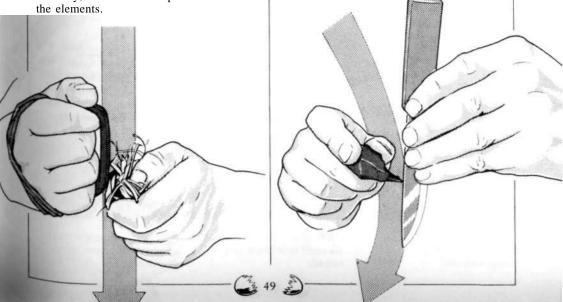
The best spark-producer of all these is the modern synthetic flint bar, which frequently comes attached to a block of magnesium. Scrape this bar with the back of your knife with a sort of wrist-flick to produce a bright shower of sparks which will ingite a wide range of tinders or even light trail stoves. So good is this shower of sparks that even the woody remains of umbellifer flowers can be drawn together and ignited. The magnesium block can be scraped to produce a small pile of shavings that will easily ignite from the sparks. Place the magnesium on a pile of tinder that will take light when ignited. An excellent tinder is the skeleton from a decomposing holly leaf. Sandwich the magnesium between two such leaves and set it alight by showering the sparks to fall through the leaf ribs. The leaves act as both tinder and a basket to prevent the magnesium blowing away.

Steel strike-a-light

The most practically shaped steel was C-shaped. The tinder was held on top of the flint, which was held steady while the steel was struck against it. This caused the sparks, tiny curls of red-hot steel, to be thrown upwards on to the tinder. Held in this way, the tinder was protected from the elements

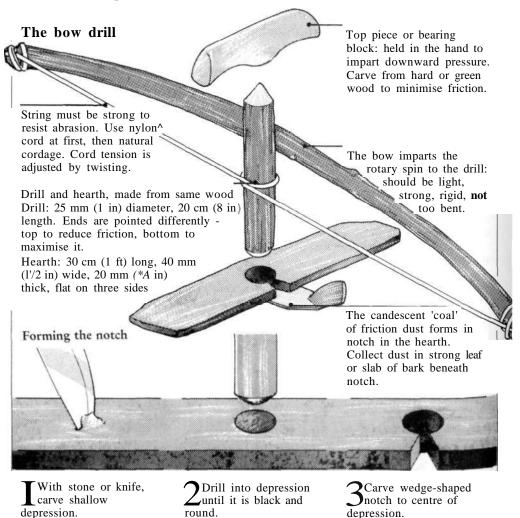
Knife strike-a-light

To strike sparks from a knife, hold the knife still above the tinder and strike it with the flint in a shaving action. The sparks will fall downwards on to the tinder. Strike only the back of your knife, not the blade edge.



Fire by friction

The truly primitive way to light fires is by friction. This undervalued method is useful, because you are nearly always able to find the necessary materials. Once the equipment has been made it takes only a few seconds to produce fire. Friction fire-lighting does, however, take some time to learn, and you have to provide the initial energy! Mastery of this technique builds confidence and a sense of freedom.





Operation

Knee positioned so as not to impede the free suing of your drilling arm

Bearing hand held firmly braced against the left shin, to prevent wobble

Drill twisted on outside of string held vertically; foot clamping the hearth to the ground

Drill smoothly, maintaining even pressure until smoke rises from hearth. If string slips, tighten it. Avoid squeaking due to insufficient pressure or dampness. As smoke rises, increase speed and pressure. Smoke should increase in volume, and notch will begin to fill with fine dark brown powder.



With notch full of powder and smoke sustaining itself, stop drilling and roll hearth away while gently holding powder with tiny stick or pine needle. Fan smoking heap of dust with your hand until it darkens and glows red.



Transfer the 'coal' now 3 formed to a waiting tinder bundle of the finely teased fibres. With your breath, blow the bundle to life, watching carefully to judge how hard to blow. People are more often too gentle than too harsh.



Suitable woods

Using the correct wood for the drill and hearth is vitally important. This wood must be in the correct condition - dead, dry standing wood, light but still strong, and not punky (pinch soft). Many species can be used; the following are six good woods commonly found.



Lime (basswood)



Sycamore





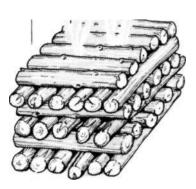
Alder



Hazel

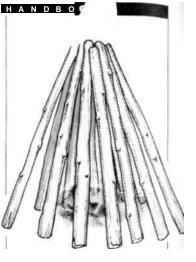
Organising your fire

Experience in using fires shows itself most obviously in the way a fire is managed. If your fire goes cold midway through cooking or persistently smoulders, you are not managing it correctly. Looked after properly, a fire is the most versatile provider of light, warmth and cooking heat. Good fire control should become second nature with practice, requiring minimal thought, as you adapt the fire's arrangement - its lay - to your changing needs.



Criss-cross fire - for cooking

Not quite as fast burning as the tepee fire, it does still burn quickly, providing a deep and even bed of embers. It can be constructed before ignition or more usually is simply the method by which fuel is arranged prior to cooking. It also makes a stable 'council' fire - a social camp-fire where ideas are passed around and celebrations take place.

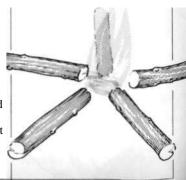


Tepee fire - quick to get going and to burn

This is a fire lay for bad weather or poor fuel, and one of the most popular ways to start a campfire. Arranged in this way the fuel burns quickly along its whole length, giving light and, after an initial burst, very little smoke, which rises straight upwards. The shape acts like a chimney, drawing in good quantities of air from its base and so enabling a fast burn to produce a deep bed of embers. The tepee does, however, lack stability; hence its most common application as the starter for one of the other lays.

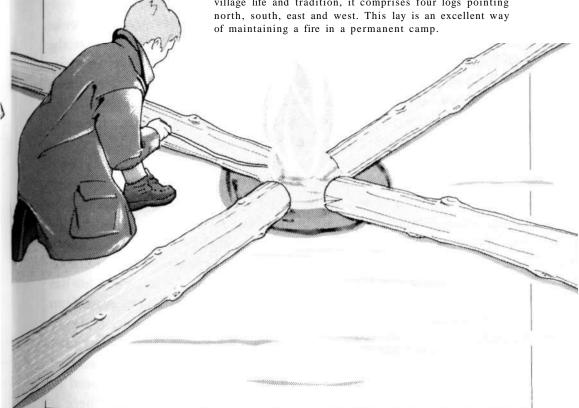
Indian's fire - for the trail

In between meals we need to keep our fire burning efficiently, with a minimum of fuel gathering. On the trail this is best achieved with the Indian's fire. Fuelwood is gradually fed into the centre, long pieces simply burned in half. If you are camping in the same place for a number of days, you can improve the fire by scraping out a shallow bowl-shaped ember pit underneath it. This helps the embers to retain their heat for long periods.



Star fire - permanent camp

The natural extension of the Indian's fire is the star fire. The difference between the two is the size of fuel. This fire is built with logs at least as thick as your thigh and often up to 7 m (20 ft) or more in length. The classic star fire is the ceremonial fire of the Cherokee; central to village life and tradition, it comprises four logs pointing north, south, east and west. This lay is an excellent way of maintaining a fire in a permanent camp.



Putting out your fire and leaving no trace

No sight so affronts the eyes outdoors than an old fire site filled with rusting cans and broken glass. When you leave your campsite you have two overriding responsibilities: to extinguish your fire and to leave the site in good order.

Putting out the fire is not difficult, but I¹ must be done thoroughly. The first step ¹s to spread the embers to allow them to cool. If you have already allowed the fire to die down, this is relatively easy. Now extinguish the fire by pouring water on it. Jo ensure that no underground roots are ¹ett smouldering unnoticed, allow the water to soak well into the fire site;

probing with a pointed stick helps. Once the dead embers and ashes are cool, pick them up with your hands and scatter them widely. Brush over the site with a branch and camouflage it to show as little sign of occupation as possible. Take all your rubbish away in your rucksack. If you have been using a ready-made stone fireplace, as commonly found in many backcountry areas, tidy it as mentioned and pile any spare fuel in a dry spot for those who come after you. Make it obvious that you have done your clearing up carefully. Take only memories; leave only footprints.

G^«i)-

Cordage

Cordage is a perennial need in the outdoors and a resource that takes time to produce. This is so much the case that the experienced become expert at avoiding the use of string or rope wherever possible. But sooner or later the inevitable has to be faced and cordage needs to be made. Once you start, however, like most people you will probably find it hard to stop; for the act of making cordage is highly enjoyable.

Spring provides the ideal circumstances to gather inner bark fibres. The flowing sap helps to loosen the bark from the wood, which enables you to remove long strips with ease. Fibres for making natural cordage fall into two categories by their usage: fibres best used dry and fibres best used wet; only in a few cases does a fibre fall into both categories.

To list all of the available bark fibres would fill volumes, so we shall investigate here two of the

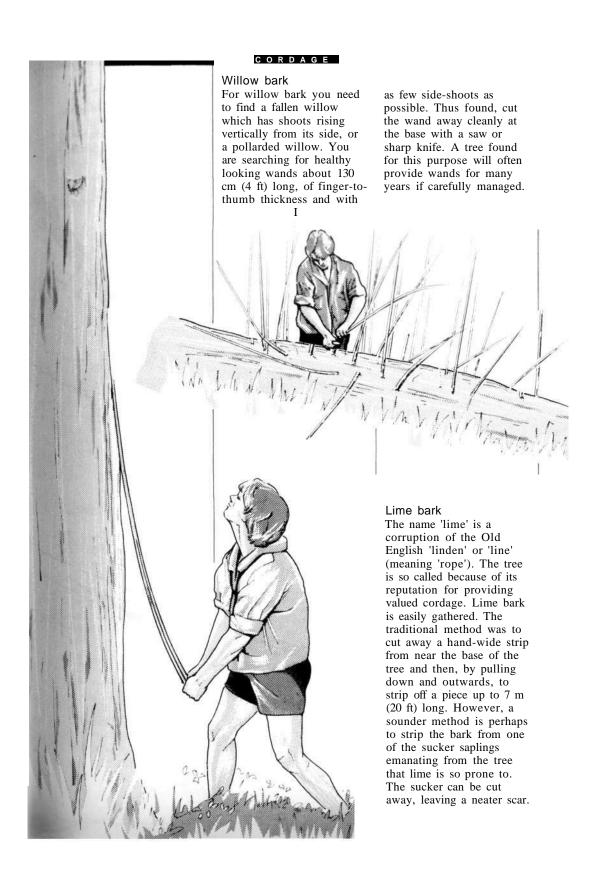
best. Lime bark is best used dry but can be used wet. Willow bark is mostly used wet but can be used dry. In each case it is the inner bark, sometimes called the bast, that we use.

With all cordage materials the gathering and preparation of the fibres take longer than the actual manufacture. For everything but the most quickly made cordage it is best

and to think of the three stages of gathering, preparation and manufacture as independent activities.

The best cordage is produced from fibres which have been allowed to dry and then are resoaked before

manufacture. This is because the fibres shrink more when dried from green than when dried from a resoaked state, which means the weave of the cordage will be tighter due to the reduced shrinkage. With careful manufacture and weaving, you can produce long, even, strong lines ranging in size from fishing line to bridge-building hawsers.

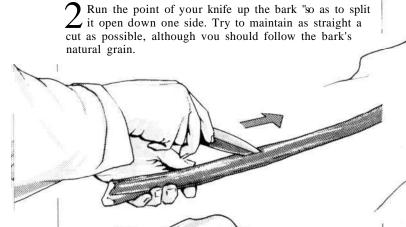


Preparing bark for cordage

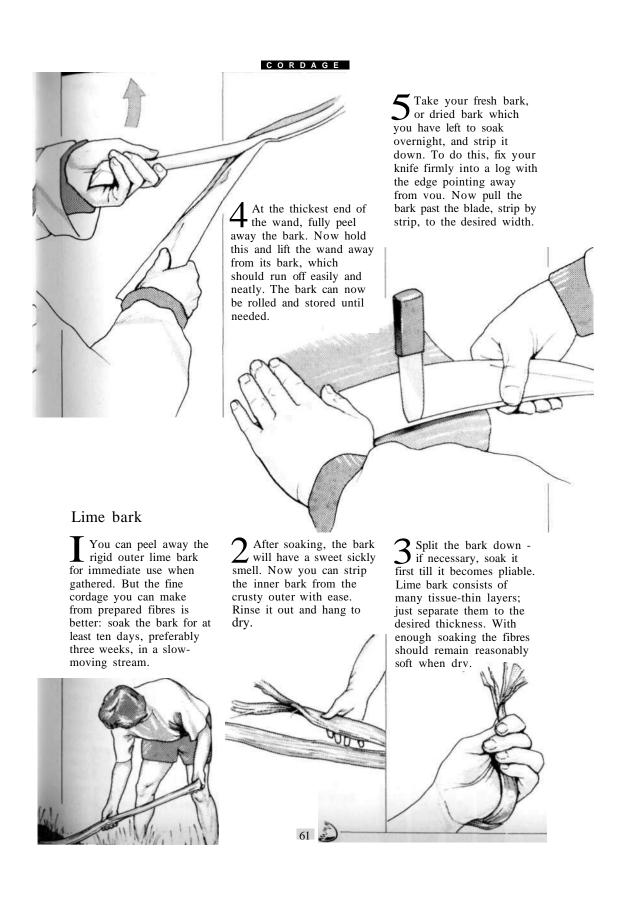
Most cordage materials can be pressed into rough service as soon as they are collected, but to make the best cordage you invariably need careful preparation. Always make sure you have prepared enough before you begin manufacture. To avoid getting into a tangle, it is best to organise your raw materials into manageable bundles.

Willow bark

Using the back of your knife, scrape away the thin green outer bark, being careful not to break the inner bark. The scrapings can be saved for making a dye (see p.63).



Gently work your way along the full length of the wand with your thumbs, peeling the bark halfway off. This should be easy if your bark is in the correct condition.

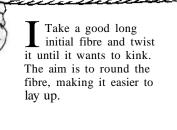


Laid cordage

This is the most versatile way to make natural cordage. It is easy to do and relatively quick when mastered, and it gives a remarkably strong finished product. You can produce laid cordage as strong as you need it - from light fishing-lines to ropes strong enough to carry you across chasms.



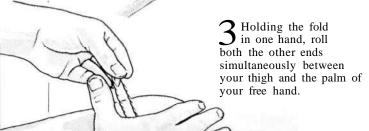
At the end of one full roll, clamp the ends against your thigh to prevent them untwisting and release the end you have been holding; it should begin to twist up. With control this can be persuaded to twist up in a very neat fashion.



2 Fold the fibre a third of the way along its length. It you fold it in the middle, any joins will be opposite each other - a weak arrangement compared to staggered joins.



Grasp the cord again where the twisting ends and repeat the process. With practice your co-ordination will improve and your speed increase. Keep repeating the process until you are within 5 cm (2 in) of the shortest end. Now you will need to join in a new fibre.



Additional techniques

Joining in

Joining in is not difficult. Just lay the end of a new fibre alongside the short end and twist it in, always twisting in the same direction as the thighrolling. Keep going. It helps to taper the fibres where they join so as to maintain an even twist.

Spooling

As the length of cord begins to grow, it must be able to revolve freely; if not, it will begin to unravel. The solution is to gather it up on to a free-hanging spool. Two crossed sticks will suffice.

Stronger cordage

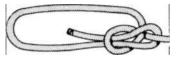
Stronger cordage can be made by three methods: first, by using thicker bundles of fibres; second, by doubling up the existing cordage; and third, by laying in an extra strand.

To double up existing cordage, you must twist in the opposite direction to that in which it was originally laid. Cordage twisted originally to the right (Z-laid) must be twisted to the left when doubled (S-laid).

To produce cordage with that extra strand - **three**-ply cordage - simply add the extra strand or bundle of fibres at the start. With three strands it is a little more difficult and consequently slower to roll on your thigh.

—£^65 J)—

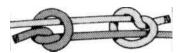
Knots for natural cordage



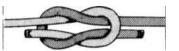
Bowline - a quick, secure, non-slipping loop at the end of a line.



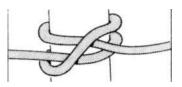
Double sheep bend - used for joining lines of differing diameters.



Single fisherman's - well suited to joining the more springy natural fibres.



Reef-knot - good for tying off ends, but not a safe knot.



Clove-hitch - simple and versatile, well suited for starting lashings, easily adjusted.



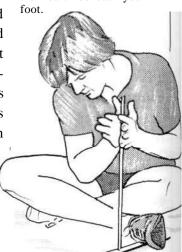
Clove-hitch - simple and versatile, well suited for starting lashings, easily adjusted.

Timber-hitch - quick and offision to attach to a post

Fire

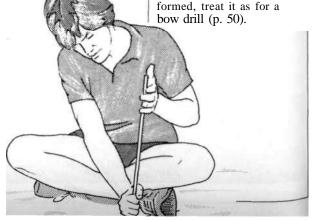
With the drier weather you can use the simplest friction fire-lighting technique: the hand drill. The advantage of this method is ease of portability and the fact that it does not require cordage. It does, however, require fitness and a good technique. The drill should be about 1 cm (up to *Vi* in) in diameter and 60 cm (2 ft) long. The hearth should be about 30 cm (1 ft) long, wide enough to accommodate the drill and about the same thickness as the drill diameter. The principle is the same as for the bow drill (see p. 50): drill a depression into the hearth to collect hot friction dust.

With the notch cut and a piece of bark ready to collect the dust, spin the drill between your palms, applying a steady downward pressure. Hold the hearth beneath your foot



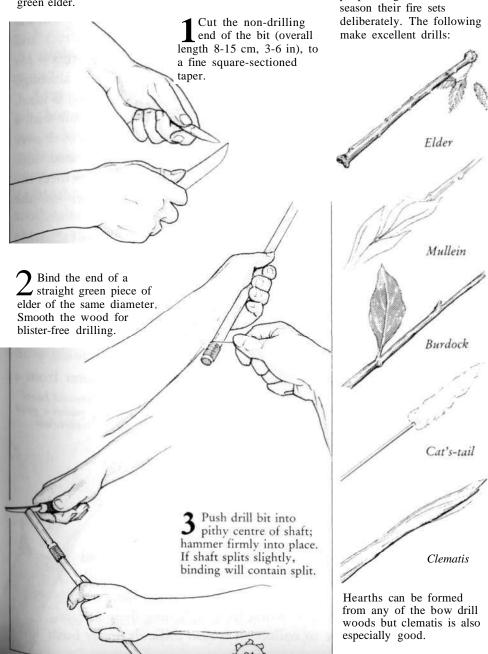
As you drill, your hands will move downwards. When they reach the bottom, hold the drill in place with one hand, quickly move the other back to the top, then bring the other hand up. Resume drilling.

Gradually build a coal. Watch the friction dust; you may need to drill faster or modify downward pressure. Once the coal is formed, treat it as for a bow drill (p. 50).



The two-piece drill

It may be that you cannot find a piece of suitable drill wood long and straight enough. A solution frequently used by native peoples was to lash a short piece of suitable wood to a long, straight non-suitable piece: for example a willow drill-bit lashed into a straight shaft of green elder.



Suitable woods for

The wood for a hand drill

set must be perfectly dry.

It was usual for native

people to gather and

drill and hearth

Fishing

Sadly our rivers today are dirty, poisoned and barren, not a patch on the fountains of life they once were. Over the last century, the steady rise in industry has been paralleled by a dramatic decline in many forms of river life.

Many of our rivers and other waterways are now too polluted by industrial effluents to support the number and variety of fish that once made their homes there. Increasingly, both sea and river fish are reared in the aquatic equivalent of factory farms and every year sees a reduction in the number of wild fish in our streams, lakes, rivers and oceans.

Town and city dwellers are distanced from their local rivers; on the fishmonger's marble slab and at the supermarket counter they can buy different varieties of fish that have been imported from all over the world. But nothing can beat the taste of a 'dead fresh' herring, cooked within hours of being caught, or the summertime flavour of that king of fish, the salmon.

We no longer celebrate the return of the salmon now that our rivers flow with waste being flushed away. Yet every year these masters of the wet world are driven to meet their destiny, guided by senses of direction we can only marvel at.

Simple thorns were the earliest fish hooks

These fine fish are able to navigate back hooks from the wide expanses of ocean to the shallow gravel-bottomed brooks whence they hatched, exhausting themselves utterly in the drive to fulfil their purpose. Today some have to swim home via the polluted effluence that was once a noble river.

From late summer, our ancestors waited expectantly for these silver salmon return to swimmers and caught them with net, line and spear "*rounds'" taking only sufficient for their needs but enough food to see them through the winter.

Fishing remains one of the few ancient pastimes still carried out both for food and for sport

But the elaborate equipment of today's fishermen would have surprised the first anglers; they had no acid-sharpened hooks, intricate flies,

sophisticated rods or polyester-fibre line. They had their eyes to watch the fish the knowledge of where to find cordage and the ingenuity to improvise hooks from thorns.

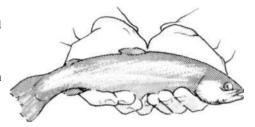
Even experienced anglers jest that these traditional methods do not work, but they are wrong; for these methods were the foundation of fishing itself, although requiring even more skill than does an angler of today.

Many (although not all) of the techniques employed by our ancestors are outlawed. They require infinite patience, ingenuity and skill. Only poachers dare to use them, for they are unsporting: in other words, deadly effective and efficient.

Tickling fish

Tickling is still carried out on the Falkland Islands as a principal method for catching fish, but it is outlawed more or less everywhere else. It is probably the most primitive of all fishing methods: when you see fish in the water it is only natural to try to pick them out. The secret is to enter the water and ease both of your hands very slowly and gently under the fish; in open water this is very difficult. An easier way is to chase the fish into a convenient eddy pool which can be dammed off, and then you can stalk the fish at your leisure. Gently reach through

the water with your hands so as to be able to grasp the fish with a lightning action that prevents its wriggling away.



1 Ease your hands very slowly under the fish with your thumbs upwards.



In position, grasp and bend the fish, draw it to the pit of your stomach and cast it ashore high on the bank where it cannot wriggle back to the water.

Fishing hooks

Think of fishing and you almost instinctively think of hook and line. Hooks and line are today sophisticated materials maximising strength for size. Improvised hooks - the precursors to modern gear - were made in many different ways from a variety of natural materials, from slivers of bone to thorns. Below are just a few varieties which can be used, fishing usually from a static line.

Making a threebarbed hook

What you will need



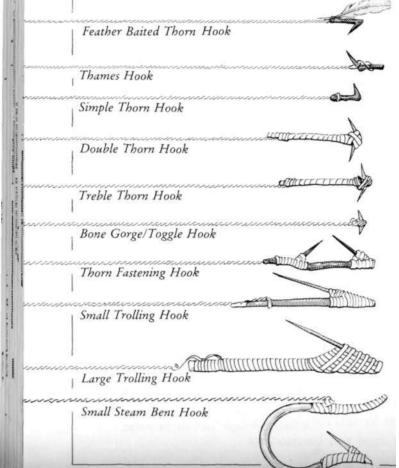
Strong bramble thorns still attached to the bramble

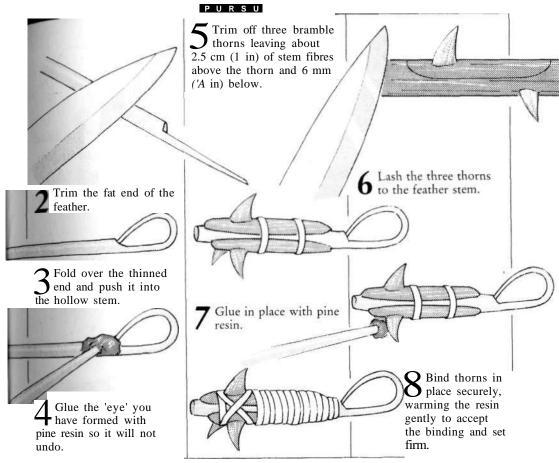


Fine cordage fibres: dried nettle strands (see p. 156)



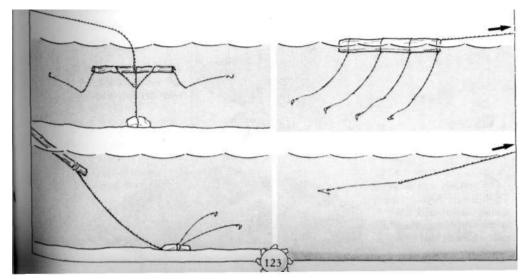
Strip off the feather's blades and retain the





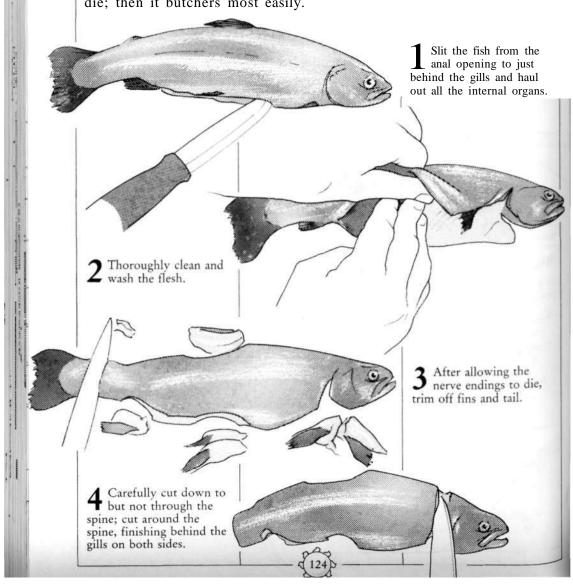
Rigs

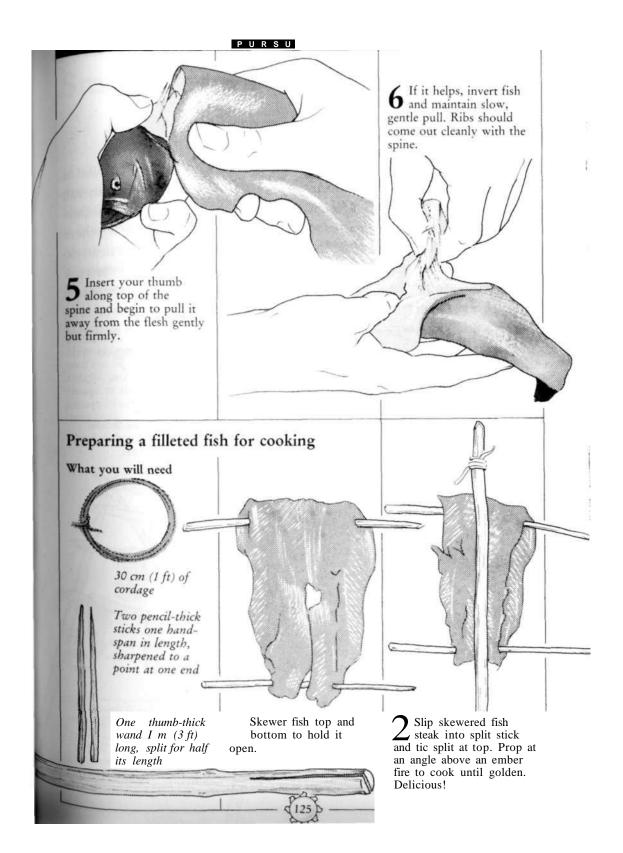
Bramble hooks work best with static line rigs such as these. You don't have to be present; leave the rig to fish, but check every few hours.



Filleting a fish

Having caught your fish, kill it with a firm blow to the back of its head with a pebble or hard stick. Use plenty of force for a swift, clean job. Assuming you have caught a trout, here is a way to fillet it. After gutting, leave the fish for 6 to 12 hours to allow the nerve endings to die; then it butchers most easily.





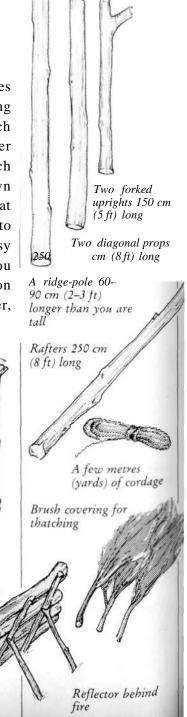
Shelter

Well-constructed

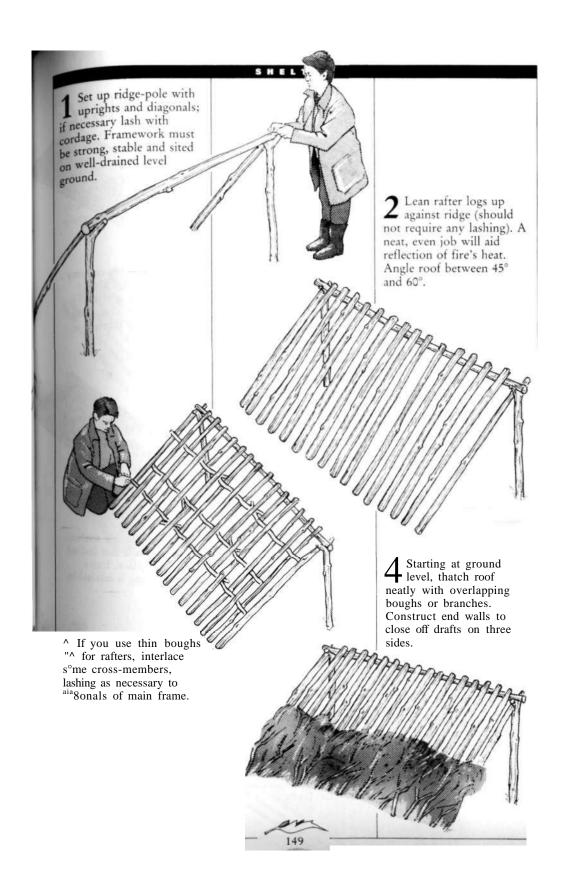
bed

Once the cold weather of autumn really takes hold, you need to start thinking about using winter shelters, particularly those which incorporate a fire. The classic cold-weather shelter is the open-fronted lean-to, which relies on a fire to provide warmth. Open down one side, it is designed to allow the fire's heat to be reflected into the shelter and down on to you from the roof. The sloping roof is easy and quick to construct but must overhang you far enough to prevent rain or snow landing on your bed! To make the best use of this shelter, you need the correct type of fire and bed.

Long log fire



What you need



Bedding

Few aspects of camping are as important to morale as a good night's sleep. This is easily provided by modern camping equipment; but if you are doing without this luxury you need to know the correct techniques. Many experienced campers are astounded by the comfort of their first night on an improvised bed - as good as any modern mattress, if not better!

Our main considerations are to raise ourselves above the heat-sapping ground, to be away from the damp and to provide comfort. You can build a good bed with one hour's work. That may not seem much now, but when you have constructed a shelter as well you may wonder whether it is worth the effort. It is. Weigh that hour against all the hours of sleep it will give you.

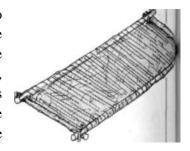
To help reduce the amount of bedding material needed, and to prevent it spreading, you need to enclose the bed by a frame, either specifically made or incorporated as part of your shelter. With the open-fronted lean-to, the rear wall will act as one part of the frame, and a simple opposing wall can be added on the fire side.

It is important to have sufficient bedding material: when you are on the bed, and the bedding has compressed under your weight, you need to be just at the level of the top of the retaining wall. This gives you the best advantage of the warmth of the fire.

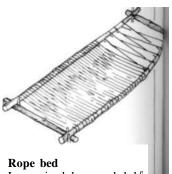
D B O O K



Bough bed Traditional North-country bed, using bough tips of evergreens. Boughs are pushed into ground. Best contained by a frame.

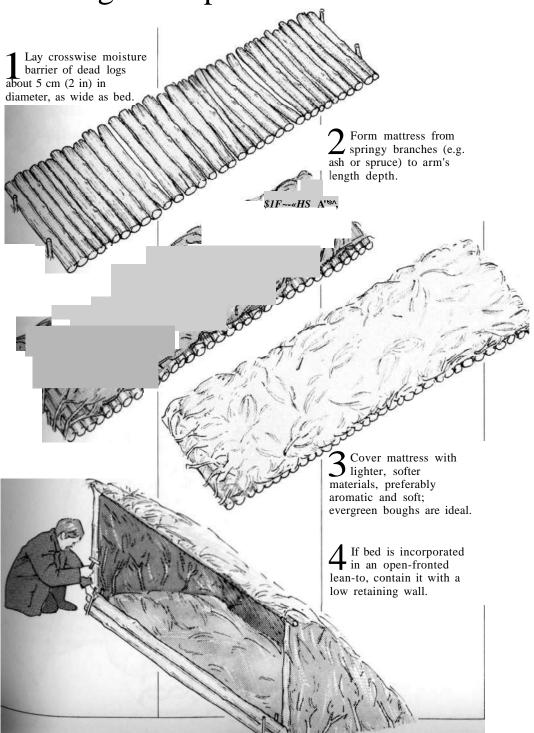


Withe bed Frame with willow withes passed across it and lashed securely in place. Extra central lashing is advisable.



Rope bedImprovised hammock-l>k^e
from climbing rope or
grass rope.

IVtaking a simple bed



Duvet

A shelter and a bed will keep you warm, but without a covering you are unlikely to sleep soundly. Making a blanket or duvet from

natural materials is not as difficult as you may think. A host of dry materials such as grasses can be woven into a duvet that is both warm and practical. They can even be used to make

roof covers and sleeping mats.

There are several ways to make a duvet -

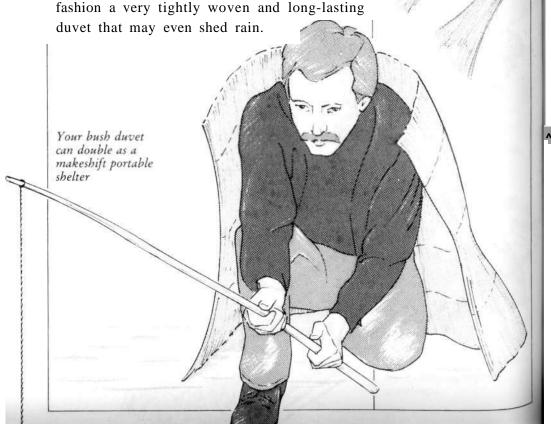
you can even build a makeshift loom. But I have found the best way is the simple hand method shown here; with this method you can

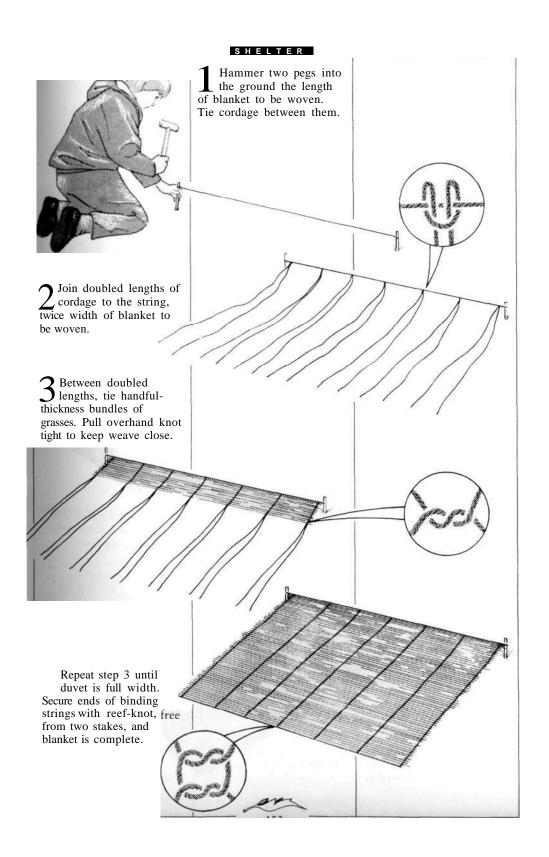
What you need



I Plenty of cordage

Good dry thatching materials - dried grasses or other plants

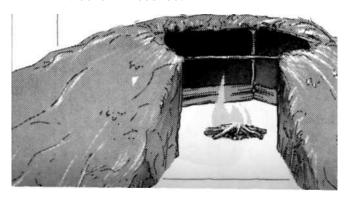


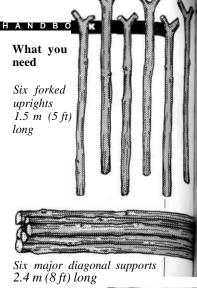


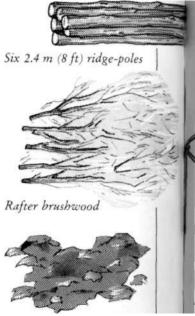
Group shelter

Winter is often a time when youth organisations work indoors, but what an experience they are missing out on! The group shelter offers comfortable winter woodland camping that no tent can ever match. Here you can recline, listening to the wind howling and watching it swaying the trees, but not feel its bite, as you are comforted by the warm flicker of your fire. Being circular, the shelter encourages social dialogue and friendship.

The shelter should be as small as possible to save on materials and to keep in the warmth. The diameter of the central opening must be small enough to trap the heat of the fire without becoming a safety risk: usually this opening is made too large. A doorway is important to make the shelter function like a chimney, drawing the smoke straight upwards. Either side of this entrance, set in a good store of wood to keep the fire fuelled through the night; and work out an all-night watch rota to ensure the fire is maintained. Your shelter will provide a good home for weeks if need be.







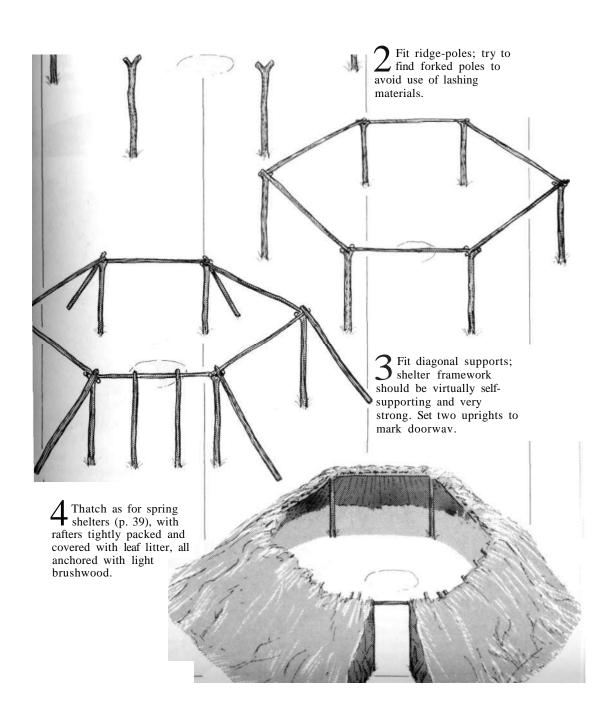
Leaf litter or similar for thatching

The group shelter gives you the warmth and comfort of a cabin for a fraction of the effort



SHELTERS

Lay out ground plan, dig bowl-shaped fire pit and set upright supports into ground not too far from fire.



Organising a bivouac

The experienced winter camper knows that organisation is the key to comfort and safety. In primitive circumstances this is doubly so. With daylight hours against you, and the weather making excessive demands on your energy reserves, careful planning can make a vast difference to your level of well-being. In snowy conditions, just moving about can become strenuous; how your bivouac is organised can make all the difference in such circumstances.

Start out by assessing the situation: isolate the problems and formulate your plan to eliminate them. Aim to achieve a camp so well organised that your routine almost runs itself without any conscious effort. I find that the secret is to get well set up from the outset. Good intentions to get set up the next day rarely work out as well as they sound.

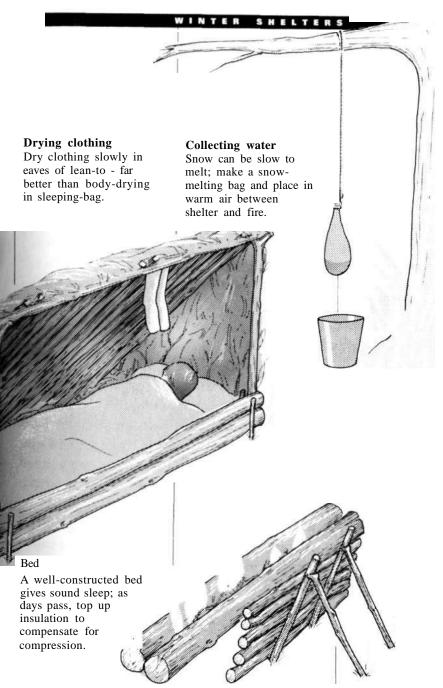
Cooking fuel Stacked within easy reach of fire ready for morning; try to keep in a dry place.

Fuel for the fire Stacked near to fire ensure there is more than enough for the whole night.

Wind direction

Set lean-to (p. 148) with wind behind and at slight angle - to keep shelter warm but smoke-free.





Fire

Organise fire to burn slowly; the long log fire (see p. 154) is ideal.

Fire reflector

A reflector placed behind fire (p. 52) is a must at this time of year.

Water source

Plenty of available water or sufficient snow for melting needs to be within easy walking from your bivouac.

Transporting fire

Having managed to start your fire, it is also possible to carry it with you as you travel about. There are several methods that have been used by tribespeople in different parts of the world, ranging from the Aboriginal method of carrying a burning log and swinging it to keep it alight to wrapping a coal in a fireproof leaf, a practice that is favoured by the African Pygmies.

A carried fire usually helps to keep you warm as you go about your tasks. It can be made to smoulder and thereby keep away insects. Most important of all, it is a portable morale-booster when conditions are harsh.

The best material for keeping a fire smouldering is dried bracket fungi like those used to make amadou (p. 175). Failing that you can make a giant tinder cigarette which smoulders slowly.

If you also carry two fist-thick bundles of fine kindling wrapped up in fibrous grasses, you have the makings of an instant fire as and when you need it.

Faggots

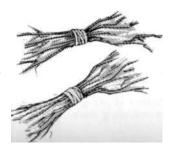
Collect two fist-thick bundles of fine kindling broken no shorter than 30 cm (1 ft) in length. Wrap these bundles with dried grass or bark. When you need a fire, prepare a small platform, place your bundles together on top of it with a small amount of tinder beneath them and ignite. The whole operation need not take more than a minute.



Light a broken bracket fungus; it should glow and smoulder with a pungent aroma; try e.g. Ganoderma adspersum.



Carry smouldering fungus in improvised bark or wood container or old can punched with holes; surround tinder in moss to give insect-repelling smudge.



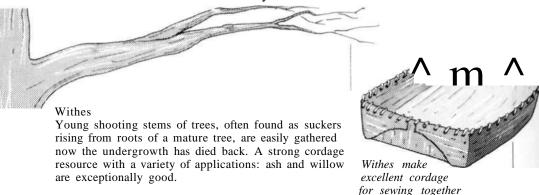


COMPLETE

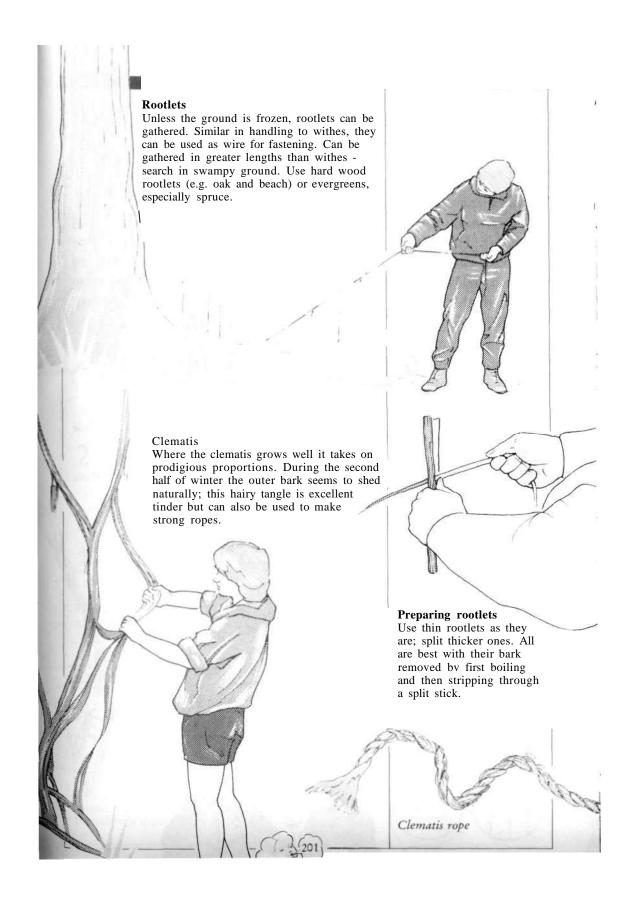
Cordage

In winter, cordage materials are generally less available than at other times of year. Most barks are locked tight to the trunks of dormant trees, and the majority of fibre plants are woody and brittle. Our native ancestors would certainly have stored cordage materials from other seasons to weave with through the long winter nights. However, there are still one or two cordage resources that we can make use of.

Finding cordage materials in winter more than in any other season teaches you to be adaptable - to use your eyes to search out fibres and your hands to test them. Many of the lifeless woody plant stems will still yield cordage if soaked in warm water and carefully and patiently worked. Take a hike to see what you can find.

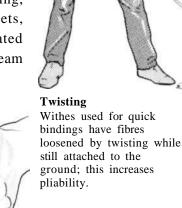






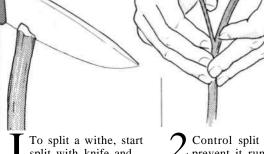
Withes cordage

Withes and rootlets are slightly different in their handling characteristics, as you will discover. However, they can be prepared in the basic same way. You can use both whole or split, and both are made pliable by boiling, although this is particularly true of rootlets, which benefit from soaking in a concentrated wood-ash solution. In a hurry, simply steam them under your fire for a few minutes.



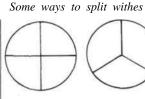
Plaiting

Plait withes in pairs to



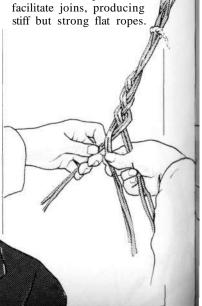
split with knife and continue by hand.

2 Control split and prevent it running off to one side by bending thicker side to greater degree. With practice you can split withe in three using teeth as a third hand.



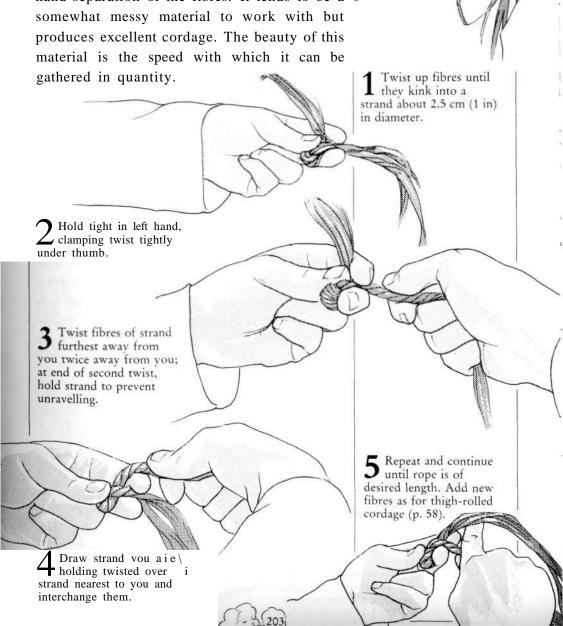






Clematis cordage

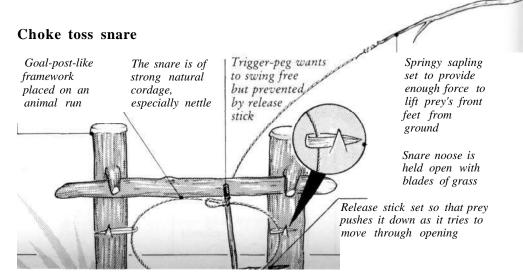
Clematis needs little more preparation than hand-separation of the fibres. It tends to be a

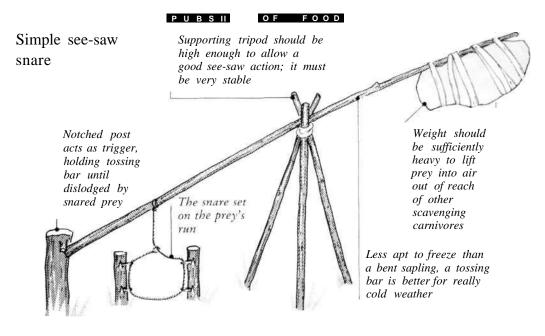


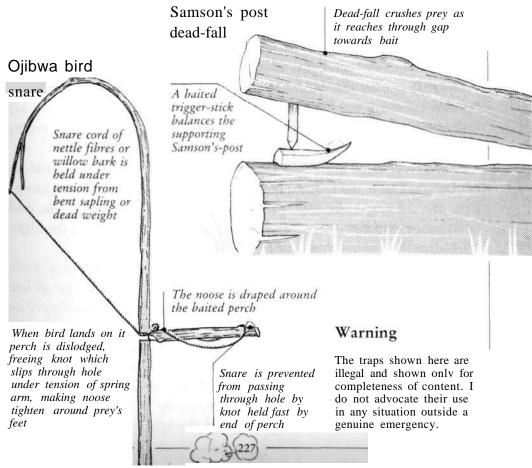
Trapping

Trap designs, born out of detailed observations of animal behaviour, epitomise human ingenuity. I consider traps to be the birthplace of modern mechanics. For traditional northern hunter-gatherers they were - and still are - essential tools of the winter. A trap enabled the **hunter to** be in many places at once, hunting during the long winter nights; and if the trap was well constructed even dangerous animals such as bears could be taken with minimal risk to the hunter. There was, however, always the risk of injury from a wounded trapped animal.

Traps are illegal today - for very good reasons. The main problem is that, no matter how carefully sited, they are indiscriminate and will take any animal, regardless of whether it is the intended victim. While many primitive traps are cruel, causing distress and suffering to their victim, in emergencies their use is justifiable. Even today, therefore, a knowledge of how to trap can be useful. In the natural world life is harsh, with little room for sentimentality - a fact many people feel uncomfortable with and refuse to accept. The trapper, relying on his wits, has no delusions: his first priority is to catch food to stay alive. However, the skilled trapper should be able to be both successful and humane, by using traps that kill swiftly wherever possible.







Useful addresses

Courses

Ray Mears

Bushcraft / Survival Courses

Woodlore Ltd P O Box 3

Etchingham

East Sussex TN19 7ZE

Tel/Fax 0044 (0) 1580 819668

www.ravmears.com

Email info@ravmears.com

Fungi

British Mycological Society International Mycological Institute Ferry Lane Kew

Surrey TW9 3AF

Mountain Walking Leader Training Board

Crawford House Precinct Centre Booth Street East Manchester M13 9RZ

The Royal Institute of Navigation

1 Kensington Gore London SW7 2AT Tel 0044(0)20 7591 3130 Fax 0044(0)207591 3131

www.rin.org.uk

Email info@rin.org.uk

The Young Explorers Trust

Royal Geographical Society 1 Kensington Gore London SW7 2AR Tel 0044(0)207591 3000 Fax 0044(0)2075913001

www.rgs.org

Email info@rgs.org

Equipment

Woodlore Ltd

P O Box 3 Etchingham East Sussex TN19 7ZE Tel/Fax 0044 (0) 1580 819668

www.ravmears.com

Email info@ravmears.com

Cutting Tools

Woodlore Knife (designed by Ray Mears) Training Knife Forrest Axe Wild Life Hatchet Axe Folding Saw Bow Saw

Fire Lighting

Fire Stick

Pocket Micro Torch Lighter Wax Paper

Tee Pee Tents

Light Weight Heavy Weight

Water Purifier

Pre Mac MWP Water Bottles Stainless Steel Mugs

Woolen Clothing

Swanndri Shirts Swanndri Jackets

Binoculars

Carl Zeiss Ltd

P O Box 78
Woodfield Road
Welwyn Garden City
Herts AL7 1LU
www.zeiss.co.uk
Email binos@zeiss.co.uk

Navigation Equipment

Garmin (Europe) Ltd Unit 5 The Quadrangle Abbey Park Romsey Hampshire SOI 9AQ www.garmin.com Email info@garmin.com

Silva Sweden AB

Box 998
191 29Sollentuna
Sweden
www.silva.se
Email info@silva.se

Suunto Europe

19 rue des Frefes Lumiere F-67087 STRASBOURG Cedex 2 France www.suuntoeurope.com Email suunto-europe@media-

Tents

net.fr

Hilleberg The Tentmaker

Onevagen 34
SE-832 51 FROSON
Sweden
www.hilleberg.se
Email tentmaker@hilleberg.se

Water Purification

PRE-MAC INTERNATIONAL Ltd

Unit 5, Morewood close Sevenoaks KentTN13 2HU www.pre-mac.com Email office@pre-mac.com The Outdoor Survival Handbook is a book of discovery, explaining the everyday skills you need to live in and enjoy the natural world without violating it. Season by season, this unique, fully illustrated guide describes the resources available in the wild and how to use them.

Clear step-by-step instructions and diagrams show how to master all kinds of techniques and projects:

- Construct a warm, waterproof natural shelter at any time of the year.
 - Build a good fire in all weathers
 - Track and identify animals
- · Orienteer, using map, compass and natural navigation aids
 - Make tools and equipment from natural materials pots, baskets, ropes, and much more.

Packed with practical tips, insights into nature and respect for traditional knowledge, this is a book for families, groups and individual hikers and climbers - for everyone who enjoys the outdoor life.

A master of primitive technology and a specialist in native living skills, Ray Mears regularly teaches and lectures on the outdoors and stars in his own BBC2 series, Ray Mears World of Survival.



