



THE WOLF CUB BOOKS – No. 5

# COLLECTOR AND HOMECRAFT

BY

SHADA

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Editor's Note:

The reader is reminded that these texts have been written a long time ago. Consequently, they may use some terms or express sentiments which were current at the time, regardless of what we may think of them at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

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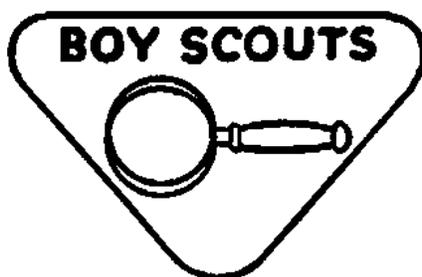
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## COLLECTOR BADGE

WELL Cubs, let us take a look at the Book of Rules and see what you have to do to gain this jolly interesting badge. The rule says that you must make a collection of one group or set of objects and that you continue your search for the objects of your choice for a period of at least three months. That's pretty clear, isn't it? From this you will gather that it is YOU who must do the collecting and that you must KEEP ADDING to the collection. It is not a bit of good your thinking you can take over Dad's collection of old army badges and buttons and just hand them up to Akela for her inspection.

The rule goes on to say that the objects must be neatly and systematically arranged, that you must know something about them and take an interest in them. There is no need for me to tell you what the word "neatly" means. A good Cub should always be neat and tidy in everything he does. As for the word "systematically", this means that your collection must be laid out in sensible manner and not just thrown together in any old fashion.

And lastly, the rule states that the Cub himself must decide what his collection will consist of and not what his pals tell him to collect.

## WHAT TO COLLECT

Now let us get down to it. And for a change we'll take the last part of the rule first and discover what you are going to collect. One thing you should bear in mind before you make your decision. Whatever it is remember that you have got to keep on collecting. If, for instance, you live in a big city miles away from the seaside it wouldn't be much use taking on the task of collecting sea shells. Another point you ought to think about is that the things really worth collecting are those from which you will learn something and are worth showing and talking about to your friends.

Here, to set you thinking, is a list of a wide variety of objects just waiting to be collected. Some are worth collecting more than others. I'll leave you to decide which are the most interesting from the collector's point of view.

Postage stamps	Army crests and buttons
Post marks	Feathers
Picture postcards	Sea shells
Cigarette cards	Magazine covers
Leaves	Cartoons
Wild flowers	Travel labels
Grasses	Fossils and rocks
Tree barks	Brass rubbings
Matchbox tops	Newspaper title-strips
Cigarette cartons	Woods
Coins	Fruit and chocolate papers
Moths	Beetles

There are, of course, lots of other things that boys are in the habit of collecting. Many of them are not worth the trouble and not to be recommended for Cubs. Take birds' eggs for example. When I was about your age there was a craze for collecting these and all too often we would allow our enthusiasm to run away with us. One of our crowd would discover a nest of a certain bird, take one of the eggs and bring it to school to show off to the rest of the gang and to tell them where he found it. That did it. Before the day was out there wouldn't be an egg left in that nest. Yes, I'm afraid we had no thought for the wretched mother bird. But then, there were no Cubs in those days or we would have known better than to have robbed nests in such a manner.

I like to think that boys of to-day are more sensible. But I am not so sure when I see groups of them standing around for hours on end filling up notebooks with bus and train numbers. I often wonder what they do with them when they have filled their book ... if ever they get that far. Autograph hunting is another craze I have never yet been able to understand.

Then there are chaps with too much pocket money who spend quite large sums of money on buying up models of animals and birds made of soap. About the only thing they can do with them when they have become tired of this curious craze is to have a jolly good wash! The important thing about collecting is that one should use one's eyes and *search* for new specimens. Any fool can hop along to a shop and buy them ... if they happen to have more money than

### **ARRANGING YOUR COLLECTION**

It would require a much larger book than this to tell you all there is to know about arranging your specimens. However, here are a few tips to help you on your way. If you look at the items listed on the previous page you will see that they fall into two main classes, namely (1) objects that can be kept flat on or between the pages of scrap books and (2) those that must obviously be kept in small boxes or mounted on to cardboard or arranged in shallow trays.

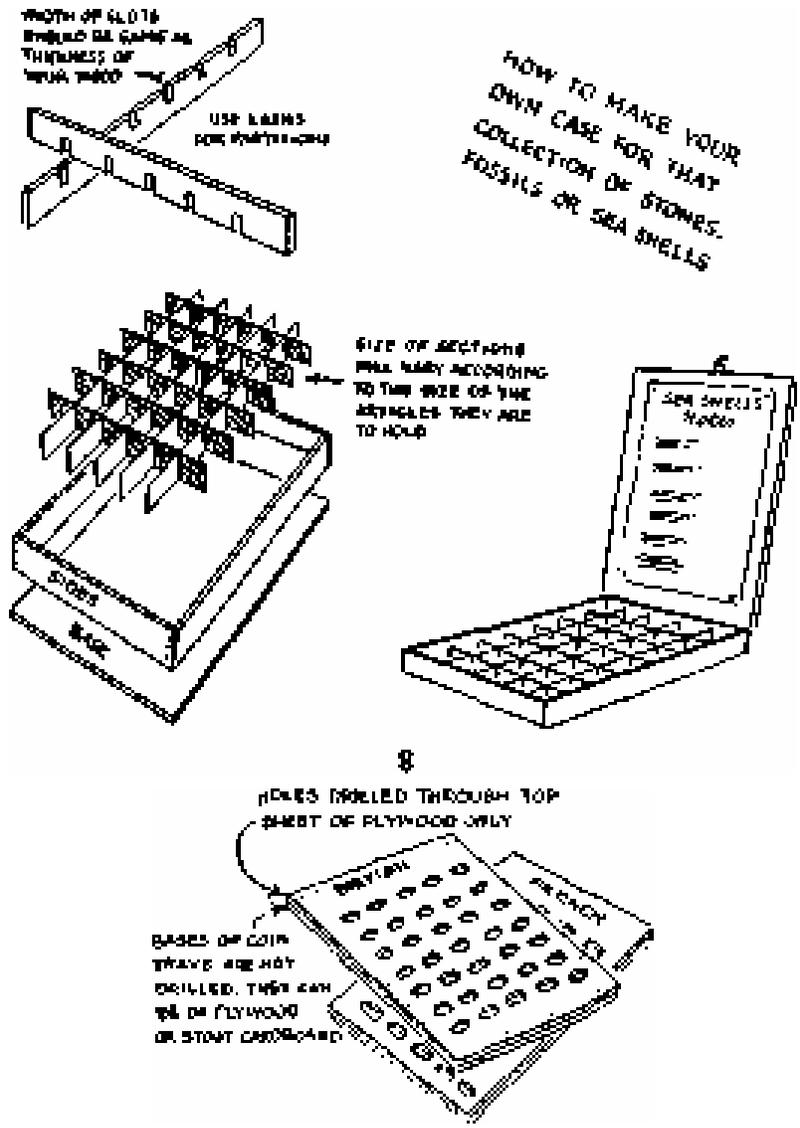


Leaves, wild flowers, grasses and feathers are best mounted on pages of books or sheets of paper with narrow strips of cellotape. The names should be neatly written underneath together with notes about the various specimens which can be obtained from books to be found in Public Libraries.



Articles, such as picture postcards, matchbox tops and post marks should be stuck down firmly with paste or thin glue. Don't put too much on or it will ooze out from around the edges and make an awful mess of your pages. Postage stamps should be fixed to your pages with little paper mounts. You can buy lots of them for a few pence. Stamp albums can be bought fairly cheaply but if you can't afford one to start with you can make up a book of your own with sheets of paper ruled with small faint squares, folded down the middle and with a brown paper cover wrapped round for protection.

Fossils, stones, sea shells and objects of that sort are best kept in shallow boxes divided into sections. I have drawn you a sketch to show you how you can go about making these. Each section should be given a number with corresponding numbers in a notebook against which you can enter the details of the specimens as you find them. Foreign coins are best kept in trays with holes drilled to carry the coins.



*Why not make your own coin trays?*

### A NOVEL COLLECTION

Brass rubbings make an interesting collection for the older Cubs. I daresay many of you have never heard of such things and so for a few minutes I would like to tell you something about them. You will find lots of Brasses in churches, particularly old ones. They are to be seen usually on the walls and sometimes on the floor and are put there in memory of people who used to live in the Parish and worship at the church and have since died. Many of these brasses contain interesting facts about the lives of the people whose names they bear. Quite often they contain crests and coats of arms of the family to which the people belonged and sometimes you will discover one with a rather amusing quotation.

To take a rubbing you need just two things – paper and a lump of shoe repairers' black or brown wax known as a heel-ball. Alternatively you could use a soft pencil with a thick lead but you have to take care for fear of smudging your work when you have finished. The paper should be fairly thin but strong. Tissue paper is useless.

When you are ready to commence, take a sheet of paper and hold it over the face of the brass with one hand and with the other take the heelball or pencil and rub it over your paper with firm strokes from top to bottom taking care not to shift the paper while you are doing it. When you have completely covered your paper you will find you have a dear impression of the design underneath.

Just one final word before you start on any rubbing. Do please get the permission of the clergyman or verger of the church first. It is very unlikely they will refuse your request.

### KEEPING A SCRAPBOOK DIARY

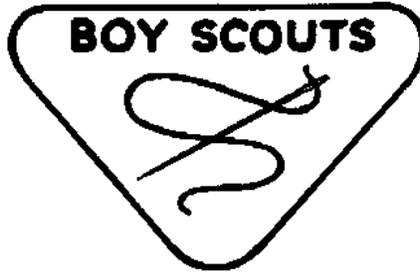
For those of you who do not wish to make a collection of articles for the badge there is an alternative test which allows you to keep a scrapbook diary for a period of at least three months. Not just for a few weeks but for *at least* three months.

Now this may consist of day to day happenings at school or in Pack; it may also consist of a nature diary based on what you yourself have noticed of the birds in your neighbourhood or what is going on at a nearby farm. Another idea would be to keep a scrapbook and diary of happenings in your own home.

One thing you should get clear from the start and that is your diary does not have to be just an endless collection of hand-written notes. Remember it says that you should keep a *scrapbook* diary which means that your book can contain snapshots or pictures cut from various sources, drawings, newspaper dippings, concert and sports programmes, letters – in fact anything which has any connection with the subject of your choice.

I can tell you it's great fun keeping books of this sort. For many years now I have made a point of recording all my holidays, particularly those I have spent abroad. Into them I have crammed everything, absolutely everything connected with my various tours. Picture postcards, cuttings and photographs cut from travel books, snapshots taken with my own camera, train, boat and coach tickets, travel labels, sketches, restaurant bills, signatures and addresses of the friends I made, notes on the customs of the local inhabitants, postage stamps and currency notes of the country visited, maps of the route, and of course a day to day diary of the things I did from the moment I left to the moment I arrived back home again. Even then the scrapbook wasn't entirely finished for I added for good measure the letters I later received from my newly-made friends.

And that is still not the end of it all. Years afterwards, when I have wanted to while away a long winter evening I have just reached for one of these books from my collection and looked through its pages. By scanning the contents I have relived all over again those happy summer days of yesteryear. And what is more my friends also enjoy looking at them too.

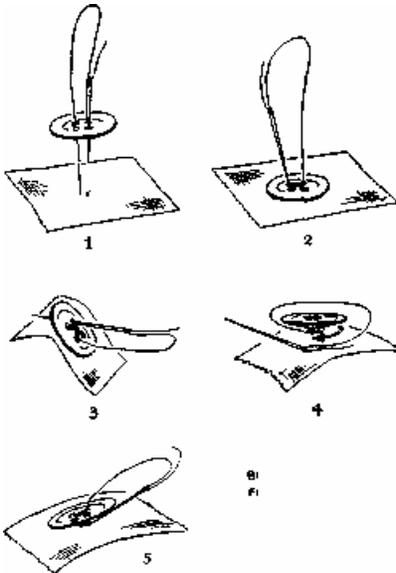


### HEMECRAFT BADGE

To gain this badge a Cub ... “Must thread a needle and sew on a button, darn a hole in a jersey or stocking and mend a tear, and carry out any two of the following tests: –

- 1)Knit a useful article.
- 2)Make a piece of netting (to put over seeds, for a bag, etc.)
- 3)Work a design in cross-stitch on canvas.
- 4)Make a rug or mat on canvas or hessian.
- 5)Wash and iron his scarf.
- 6)Make a basket.
- 7)Weave a useful article in raffia.”

I have known quite a number of Cubs who, although they were perfectly capable of tackling the tests for this badge, gave up before they started because they said the first part was just “girl’s stuff”. Now this is a very stupid attitude to adopt. Why, almost every sailor I have met, and a good many soldiers and airmen 100, are very good with needle and thread and are always keeping their clothes in repair- You wouldn’t call these men girlish, would you? How do you suppose explorers and others who go off into the wilds manage when they tear their clothes or rip off their buttons or poke their toes through their socks? They don’t take their mothers or sisters along with them you know.



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BUTTON SEWING IN FIVE EASY STAGES

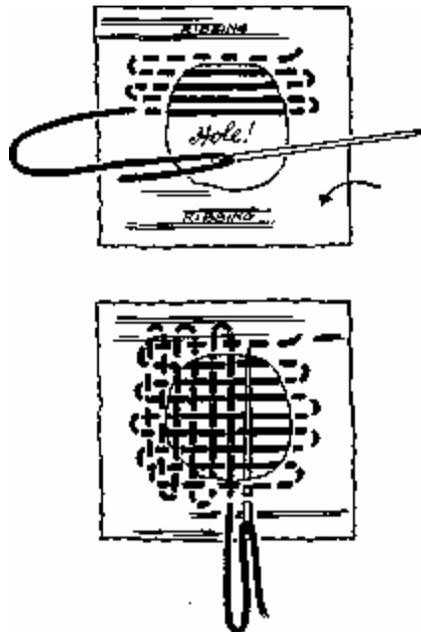
If you were stranded on a desert island and wore out or lost all your clothes how do you suppose you could set about making a garment of skins unless you had learnt how to do simple sewing? Robinson Crusoe knew all about sewing and mending, making nets, weaving baskets and lots of other useful things besides. In fact now I come to think about it I might almost call this badge the Crusoe Badge for most of the tests for it are just the things Man Friday's master excelled at. So let's drop all those silly notions about "girl's stuff" and think about some of the useful and jolly interesting subjects covered in the Homecraft Badge.

Like most of you, when I was a lad I enjoyed doing things to help and to please my mother. And if for no other reason than that you ought to be keen to learn such simple things as threading a needle, sewing on buttons, darning holes in your stockings or jersey and mending a tear. So let us get down to business.

### BUTTONS AND TEARS

Threading a needle does not mean pushing a thin cotton through the eye of a nice fat darning needle. That wouldn't be cricket! Besides, you should always use the right tool for a particular job and you would soon find out that a darning needle is not the suitable tool for buttons, especially small ones. With your steady hand and keen eye even the thinnest needles with tiny eye-holes can be threaded with a little patience and practice.

I daresay you'll make a bit of a hash of the sewing on of your first button, just as I did. I well remember my first attempt at putting back a button on to my trousers, which finished up with my shirt firmly stitched up to the lining, with the button looking very sorry for itself hanging dejectedly from a few loose threads. My second try was perhaps only a shade better but by the fifth, or maybe the sixth, I was able to put up a pretty good show. My advice to you is to experiment with an odd piece of cloth and a few of those odd buttons I am sure your thrifty mother has stored away in a tin box at the bottom of her work basket.



START OFF BY WORKING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE RIBBING.

WORK ON THE INSIDE OR "WRONG" SIDE OF GARMENT.

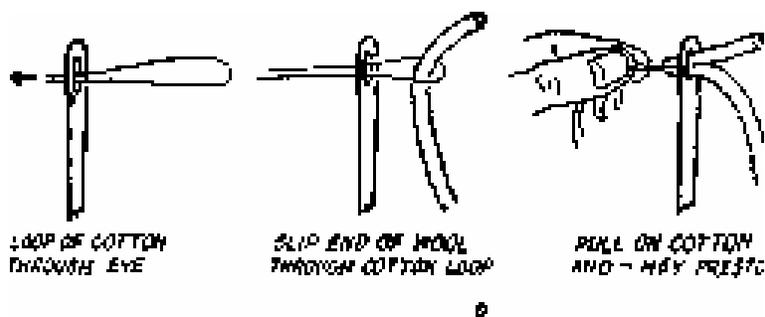
STITCHES WIDELY SPACED FOR CLARITY BUT YOU SHOULD SET THEM CLOSE TOGETHER.

If you simply have no idea how to start just sit and watch mother closely next time she settles down to an evening of mending. The same thing applies to the mending of a tear which, although a little more difficult to master, can soon be picked up by watching how the expert does it. *If* you are a normal healthy fellow you are bound to rip your shorts on a tree or bush sooner or later and if you are a smart Cub you won't always have to go, shorts in hand, asking Mum to do such a simple job for you. You'll do it yourself, I hope.

### DARNING

Here again you will find that the job is nothing like so difficult as you first thought. Every Cub should take a pride in his uniform and so soon as a hole appears in the elbow of his jersey he ought to be able to stop it from growing larger. The same applies to those small holes that are bound to appear from time to time in the toes of your stockings. Don't wait till half your foot is sticking through the end before getting out the darning wool and needle. A wee hole can soon be put right – yes, by you yourself, but even mother will find it a tough job trying to dam a hole as big as your fist. Remember the old proverb, "A stitch in time saves nine". The sketches on the opposite page will help a little in showing you how to make a neat strong job of a darn but, again, my advice to you is watch how mother does it once or twice to start with just as she probably did from her own mother.

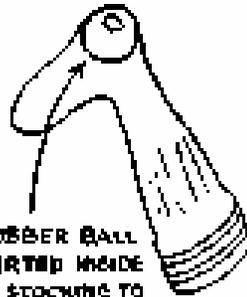
Threading wool, especially thick wool, is not quite so easy as threading cotton. Don't wet the end as so many do but try my favourite dodge which I have illustrated below. When you have mastered my method show your mother the trick. It ought even be new to her.



*A threading tip*

You will, of course, choose wool of the same colour as the garment you are mending. Remember to always turn the jersey or stocking inside out and work your darn on the inside. Remember, also, not to work your darn too dose to the edge of the hole. The wool around the hole itself will often be worn thin in which case it will need strengthening. So work well away from the edge of the hole. Finally, take note that darning does not mean drawing the sides of the hole together but rather *fitting* it with a web of wool.

Having got thus far you will be well on the way towards getting your badge. All that remains to be done is for you to choose two subjects out of the seven listed at the commencement of this chapter. This book is not big enough to deal with all of them so I propose confining myself to those numbered 2, 3, 6 and 7 and leave you to find outj if you wish, all about the remainder.

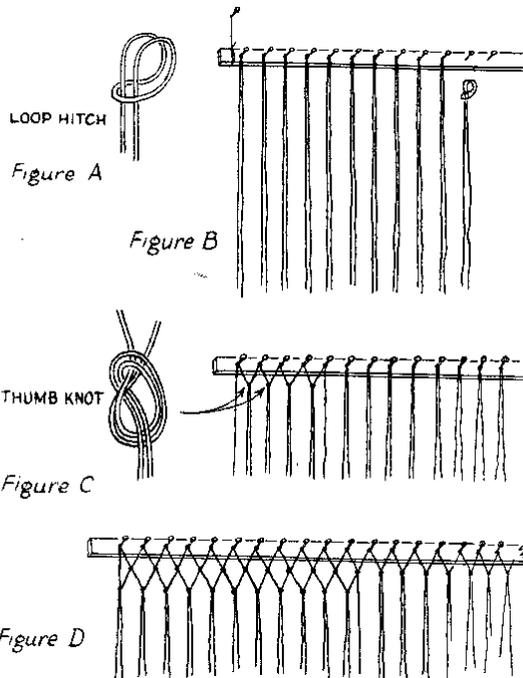


A RUBBER BALL  
INSERTED INSIDE  
THE STOCKING TO  
BE DARNED CAN BE  
VERY HELPFUL

### MAKING A PIECE OF NETTING

In this section of the test you are given a choice of the type of article you may make. It can be a piece of netting for father's garden peas to climb up, a string bag that you can use when you are sent to do the family's shopping, a butterfly net, a shrimping net or anything else you can think of.

Whichever you finally decide to do the basic construction will be more or less the same. So let us start with a fairly straightforward job and make a length of garden netting which can either be used for Dad's peas or for keeping the birds away from the strawberry crop.



The method I intend describing is not the way netting is normally made but a very simple form which any of you Cubs can follow. After you have tried your hand the following way you can have a go at the more finished style. So let's commence. First of all get hold of a length of wood about 6 feet long by about 2 inches wide and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick. Now obtain a number of small nails about 1 inch long and hammer them in to a depth of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and at about 2 inch intervals along the entire length of your wooden batten. If you want your finished netting to have a wide mesh, space out your nails a little more than that but if you are aiming at a smaller mesh, then lessen the spaces between your nails. Now hang your batten up horizontally to a

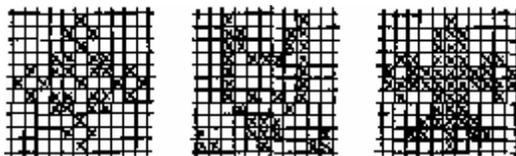
height you can reach fairly comfortably. Next get a ball of strong twine or string (not too thick) and cut it up into 10 feet lengths. Fold each length in half, and with a loop, hitch each one on to a separate nail (Figure A). When you have done this your work should begin to look like Figure B with pairs of string hanging down to the ground.

Starting from the right, and missing the very first string, take its companion and the first one of the next pair and tie them together with a simple thumb knot about 1½ inches below the nails. Figure C will show you what I mean by a thumb knot. Continue right along to the end of your batten, knotting alternate strings in a similar manner. When you come to commence your second row (Figure D) take your first string, which you haven't used yet, and tie it to one of the strings hanging below the knot on the right. Then continue as before right along the row. Each row of knots should be tied about 1½ inches below the row above. You should soon find your net taking shape and before you know where you are you will be working your last row along the bottom of your pairs of string. When finished remove the loops from the nails at the top and there you are!

### **WORKING A DESIGN IN CROSS-STITCH ON CANVAS**

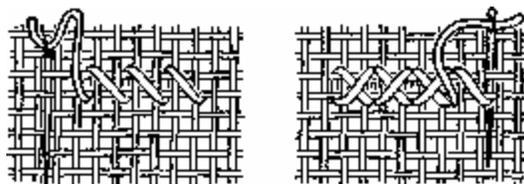
Cross-stitch work calls for the careful counting of threads so that the design may be worked out correctly on to the weave of your cloth or canvas. Your canvas should therefore have a fairly coarse, open weave with the warp and weft threads of the same thickness so that a square inch of the canvas has the same number of threads running lengthwise

Let your choice of design be a simple one and free of curves – at least to start with. Here are a few easy but pleasing designs from which you can choose.



Having selected the canvas you are going to work on you must then choose your thread and needle. For your purpose I would suggest your thread be a two-ply crochet wool of various colours but any wool will do really. Your needle can either be what is called a tapestry needle or any needle such as a darning with an eye big enough to take your thread.

The method of working cross-stitch is clearly shown in the diagrams given here. The important thing to remember is that all crosses should be crossed in the same direction. Don't try to trace the design on to the canvas, because you will find it almost impossible to keep to. It is far better to work out the design on a piece of squared paper and follow that as you go



When you have attempted this type of work you will begin to realise what it meant for those people who, many years ago, produced such beautiful samplers as are still to be seen and admired in many a home all over the country.

### **MAKING A BASKET**

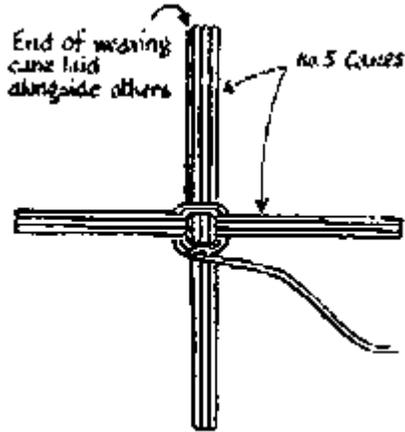
The cane used for basket-making comes from Borneo where in its natural state it is known as ratta. It is found twining about the trees of the forest and grows to very great lengths.

Before it is sold it is stripped of its leaves and outer covering and split into varying thicknesses, graded and numbered according to size. The thinnest is numbered 0, the next size is numbered I and so on up to 15 or probably more.

Now every basket has a framework or skeleton and it is this framework which has to be made first. Medium canes (those numbered about 5 to 7) are used for this purpose whilst the thinner variety (number 4, say) should be used for the actual weaving. The thickest canes (up to round about 14 or 15) are used to make handles.

Before the work of making a basket is commenced you have to make the canes softer and more pliable than they are when you buy them. You can do this by allowing them to soak for a while and then laying them out to drain off. Don't do all your canes at one time but only a few at a time as and when you want them.

As a start, let us decide to make a shallow basket suitable for holding cut bread. First of all, take six number 5 canes, each cut to a length of 12 inches which, for the purpose of description, we will call rods. Lay these together in two sets of three in the form of a cross. Now get hold of a number 4 cane and lay one end of it alongside the top arm of the cross, carry it down to the centre and continue it over and under the four arms for a couple of turns as illustrated at the top of the next page.

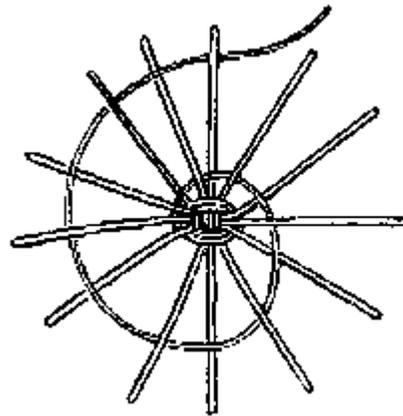


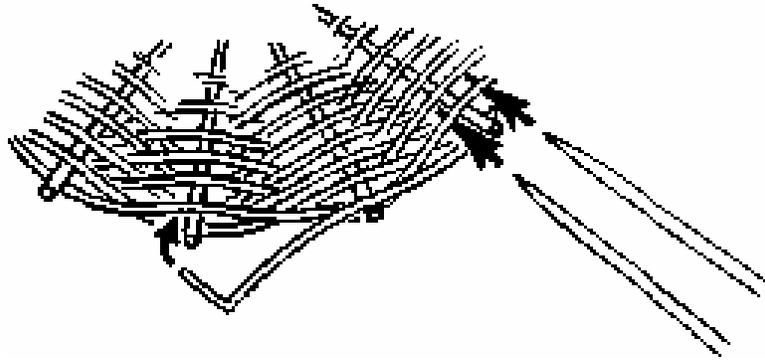
The next stage is spreading out the rods, which make up these four arms, to form thirteen separate arms or spokes. You must have an uneven number of spokes in your framework in order to carry out your weaving correctly. You can't do it with an even number.

Having got so far you can now get down to the actual weaving, continuing to work your number 4 size cane over and under each spoke in turn, making sure that you push each completed turn close towards the centre.

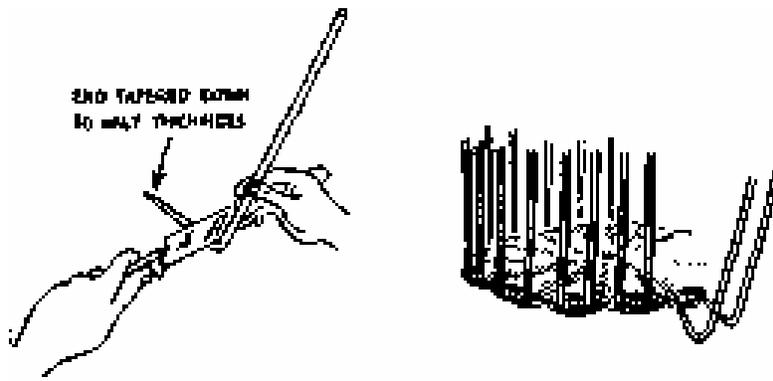
When you have completely filled in your spokes right up to the ends, you finish off by pushing the end of the cane you have been weaving with down into one of the hollows alongside a convenient spoke, having cut off all but 4 inches of your weaving cane.

You now have the bottom of your basket complete. So, on to the construction of the sides. If you wish your finished basket to be about 6 inches deep, you should cut twenty-five lengths of number 5 cane each measuring about 15 inches long. With a sharp pocket knife, thin down one end of each of these canes to about half its thickness for a matter of 2 or 3 inches. Push each of these prepared ends down alongside each of the spokes of the basket's base until they jamb themselves firmly into position thus:

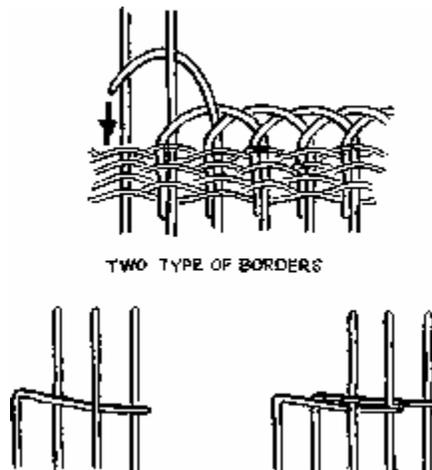


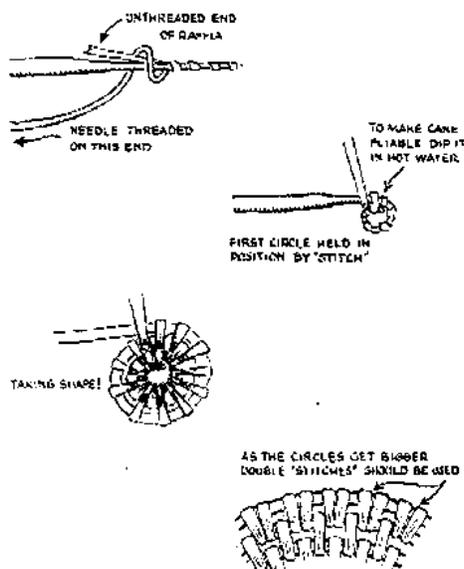


When you have completed this, lay your work on the table and with the back of a table knife press firmly down on to each cane in turn at the point where it emerges from the rim of the basket bottom, at the same time bend the cane upwards like so:



To fill up the sides, insert a length of weaving cane deep down alongside one of the base spokes, bend it at right angles and commence weaving in and out of the uprights, pressing each completed circle down towards the base. Continue until you have built up the sides to a height of 6 inches and finish off by pushing the end of the weaving cane down alongside one of the uprights. All you have to do now is to put the final touch to your work by making a border with what remains of the uprights. Here are two ways in which you can accomplish this.





*Basket work in raffia and cane*

### USEFUL ARTICLES IN RAFFIA

Raffia is the inner skin from the long leaves of the African raffia palm. It is not to be confused with the common bast used by gardeners. The raffia, which can be obtained from most fancy goods shops, is sold as natural, bleached (pure white) and in various colours made up into hanks or skeins. You can buy it by the pound.

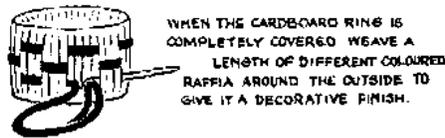
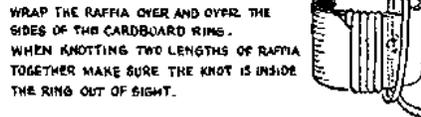
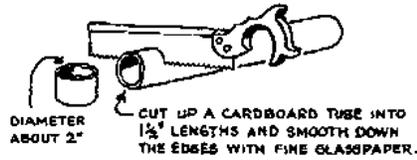
A great number of useful articles can be made with this strong material. It can be plaited for the making of mats, floor coverings, bags, slippers and even hats. It can be used in the same manner as wool and embroidered on to a canvas backing for the purpose of making such things as wallets, book jackets and tea cosies. Worked in conjunction with canes it can be used to make shopping baskets, work baskets and table mats.

But before you can hope to construct ambitious articles such as those I have mentioned it would be as well for you to become acquainted with this fascinating material by making a simple article such as a napkin ring, using a cardboard shape as a base. The illustrations on the next page will give you an idea how to tackle this.

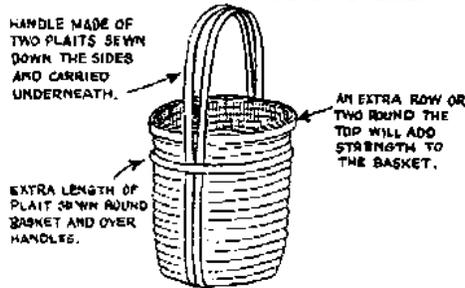
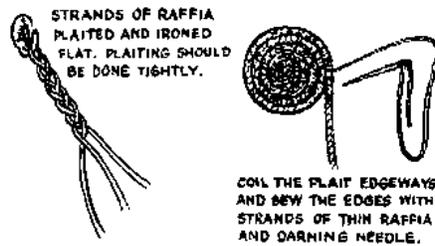
Table mats, trinket trays and fancy boxes can also be easily and quickly made if cardboard shapes are used for the foundations and covered with raffia. It is important to use broad strands for this work rather than narrow or stringy raffia. The cardboard foundation should be well covered and the winding should be smooth and flat. Work with the right side of the raffia outwards and always make sure the starting end is made secure either by inserting the end into a small slit cut into the cardboard form or by overlapping the first two or three wrappings.

Allow each of your wrappings to overlap slightly the previous one and make the finishing end also secure by drawing it under a few of the strands already worked. Joins should be made by laying a new strand between the cardboard and the old strand and continue to wrap, using the two strands as one, then bury the old end under wrappings already made.

Decoration may be introduced by changing the colour of the raffia at intervals or by weaving a coloured strand at right angles to the original wraps, taking the needle under three strands and over three strands for a number of rows, finally losing the end under a few strands.



*How to make a table napkin ring*



*How to make a raffia shopping bag*

I do hope you have found this little book of some help to you in your efforts to gain two very useful badges.

I hope, too, that you are well on the way towards your Second Star for with these two brightly shining "eyes" on your cap and the Collector and Homecraft triangles on your right arm you'll find yourself in the select ranks of the Leaping Wolf.

Jolly good luck to you.

SHADA

***Good Hunting, Cubs!***