TEACHING SCOUTING SKILLS: CAMP GADGETS

What are Camp Gadgets?
Camp Gadgets are structures the scouts make at camp out of string and sticks, usually stands for bowls and pots, washing-up stands, boot racks and even gateways to their Patrol Campsite.

 Tradition vs Common Sense
In my troop building a ‘5 stave dresser’ is a tradition, but traditions are pretty useless if they don’t actually work, or are not built strongly enough to last the length of the camp. Lashings need to be done properly’. As a test we insist that the PL is lying on the ground under the dresser while a bowl is filled with water on the staves above them and it has to survive a little rocking!

Practice makes perfect
We take about 50 hazel staves to camp, which are continually replaced, but some of them are 12 years old now. If your Patrols have practiced basic knots and lashings on Troop nights, they should be able to arrive at camp, set up their sites and cook their first Patrol meal in about three hours or so. As with all successful
Scouting activities, preparation and fun ways of revising is everything. Spend winter Scout nights practicing basic square and sheer lashings to make a ladder to reach sweets on a high beam. Look at videos and pictures of previous camps because some young people might only build a Patrol site once or twice a year and might need a quick reminder or refresher.

Hold a gateway/flagpole/dresser-building competition on Troop nights. This can be great fun. Our Young Leaders were recently teaching dresser-building skills to one Patrol and made Patrol Leaders lay underneath the newly-assembled contraptions, while bowls were filled with water by the Patrol above. This tested their confidence in the structure.

More camp gadgets
Finally, patrol gateways are always worth constructing. They should say ‘Welcome’ and encourage visitors. Swing doors, a portcullis and turnstiles are possible additions, using washed-out plastic bottles buried in the ground for staves to revolve in and water-filled bottles as counterweights. Just type ‘camp gadgets’ into a search engine and you’ll find lots more great ideas to help you start your Scouts building these and much more.

http://www.scoutingresources.org.uk/pioneering/pioneering_gadgets_kitchen.html

http://ajm.pioneeringprojects.org/pioneering/PioneeringProjects.pdf

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=scout+camp+gadgets&hl=en&prmd=imvns&tmb=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=azLPT4O3JoOBhQfw-NmNDA&sqi=2&ved=0CHoQsAQ&biw=1024&bih=705