

The first 50 years

Founded November 1946

Registered 5th February 1947

Colours Red & White

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Introduction

How do you cover the first 50 year History of a Scout Group - a difficult task.

We have tried to select items both great and small we feel have influenced, or have been notable milestones during the Fifty Years which we hope will jog memories and recollections of your particular time and connection with the Group.

In compiling this History, extracts and items have been taken from minutes of meetings; the earliest of these being the 1951 Annual General Meeting, and of course "Trumpet Call" magazine, that wonderful publication produced three to four times a year from 1975 to 1984.

With all the various references available to us, we have listed the Leaders of each section with dates of appointment, and recipients of awards, however we have in some cases found it difficult to accurately confirm these so please forgive us if you feel we have made an error.

In respect of the Assistant Leaders, Senior Scouts/Ventures and also the Band there have been many people who have been involved in the running of these sections that for various reasons have not all been recorded in minutes. We felt that because of this, we would not record any names at all, rather than print an inaccurate list. We apologise for this but nevertheless we thank them all for their valuable and essential support, throughout the history of the Group.

The accuracy of records we found wanting, and this is confirmed by Don Soley in that he admits the Group "were somewhat lax" about the official paperwork. He says he ran the Seniors whilst holding an ACM Warrant, Skip Choat ran the Group without a GSM Warrant and Peter ran the Troop with only an ASM Warrant. "All very irregular, but we got by" he concludes!!

It is our intention to compile an accurate as possible list of all Leaders and others in the near future for which any contribution would be most welcome.

Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge with thanks all those who have retained records, information, and long memories which have become a valuable source of material for this compilation.

We also wish to acknowledge the help received from the Records Department of the Scout Association, Lancing, for providing information of the Groups registration and dates of Leaders appointments.

We also thank the Secretaries of both the County of Greater London North and Edmonton District, for details of award winners.

In the Beginning 1946-1949

"Scouting, an excellent idea but easier said than done, as far as the formative years of the 18th Edmonton Scout Group are concerned", the Leaders at the time recalled.

Youth activities at the Church in the mid 1940's were somewhat mixed, for there was an active Girls Life Brigade group, but for boys little existed. A Youth Club was ailing, and the Life Boys/Boys Brigade was lacking enthusiasm with few boys, or Leaders.

The Groups first Leader, Stan Davis, who we assume had experience of Scouting elsewhere, was asked by Rev. Ford, the Minister at the time, if he could form a Scout Group.

Nine boys were on parade on that first night in November 1946....

Brian Davison, Jeff Choat, Brian Latimer, Stan May, Eric Oliver, Ken Oliver, Peter Rider, John Stone, Tommy Watts.

Peter Rider, aged eleven at the time, in particular remembered the first night, and sitting in a circle near the stage, being told about Scouting by Stan Davis. One thing he recalled quite clearly; that a Scout must always have "clean knees", for everyone in uniform those days wore shorts, and he wondered if his Scouting days were to finish before they had begun, as he looked down, and saw how dirty his own were!!

It was early in 1947 that the Cub Pack was formed with Bill Tubbs as the first Cub Master.

The Troop chose Red for the colour for the Scarves, however, another group in the District had the same colour so to differentiate themselves, Mrs Davis bought some white tape and sewed this to the edge.

In the February of 1947 the Group Recognition Service was held, attended by the Mayor and Town Clerk of Edmonton, the District Commissioner Mr Fowler, ADC Scouts Miss Cushion. Warrants were presented to both the Scout and Cub Masters, and the colours were dedicated. Mr Will Ashton donated the first Union Jack to the Troop in memory of his old Scoutmaster, from the 105th North London based in Seven Sisters Road Tottenham. Mr A Price, on behalf of the Parent Association presented the Cub Flag.



Church Parade - Early 1947

First Camps

The first ever camp by the Troop was held over the Whitsun weekend of 1947, at Theobalds Park Peter Rider once again recalls it was a great event, of going into the "big house" and seeing a huge indoor swimming pool, but regrettably to them - empty. They explored the stables and found Stag horns, these being particularly relevant as Peter was in the Stags Patrol. They were duly claimed as trophies and taken back to their tent, but unfortunately had to be returned at the end of the camp for they were to be displayed in the main entrance hall of the house.



Camp at Morthoe, Devon 1954

The first Summer Camp, also 1947 took place at Reculver, Herne Bay. The country was still very much recovering from the effects of the Second World War and with bread and meat still rationed Ron Davis recalls the menus were supplemented by rabbits supplied by a local farmer, that the boys cooked. (We do not know whether the boys had to skin them??!!)

Peter also recalls another big event with food in mind, for on one Troop night at the church, Tug Wilson arrived laden with ice cream in the saddle bag of his bike!! This was the first time the boys had seen ice cream for five years, due to wartime restrictions.

The Band

1947 also saw the founding of the Band, with the instruments being bought from the Red Cross by fund raising efforts of the boys. For example jam jars were collected and sold for 1d - 1/2lb jar, 2d - 2lb jars. Waste paper collection was another source of raising funds.

The 1948 camp was at Caister, near Great Yarmouth where a number of the Band attended. On the neighbouring site were Scouts from the 13th Coventry who spent some time with the 18th, as a result of which they went home and formed their own Band, which over the years went on to become one of the premier Scout Bands in the country. This is just one example where the 18th's Band have met other Scouts and generated interest for them to go away and form their own.

The Fifties

The earliest document on file recording the Groups' activities are the minutes of the annual General Meeting held on Monday 29th October 1951, at which Mr Frank Davison took the chair.

About 25 people attended. Items of particular interest included, the Bob-a-Job Week which was very satisfactory and the 18th were the top earner per "man" in Edmonton. There were 12 Senior Scouts of which 3 were away on "active service". The Scouts reported a successful year, and a successful summer camp although there is no mention of its location. The 18th entertained some Burmese Scouts following an International Jamboree, contact with these Scouts continued for a while following their visit, but disappeared in later years following unrest in Burma.

The cub pack numbered 30, only six proficiency badges were earned in the year which was reported as being "not so good".

During the previous year the Band had the honour of leading four other Bands in a parade at St Paul's commemorating "Festival of Britain Week", and were complemented by General Sir John Shay (we think County Commissioner).

The Group Committee commented that the Beetle Drives and Socials had been good, and suggestions were welcomed to improve income, as expenses were exceeding income. Ideas raised for future consideration were, the donation by all parents of 2/6d 12½p), and a News Sheet advising all parents of the "Movements" socials. An item of some curiosity in the accounts was amongst the mundane items of expenditure, was "Bovril for Visitors" total 8/0d (eight shillings or 40p)!!

In 1952, the Group held a social at St Paul's Institute, the refreshment arrangements included the purchase of 3 Gross of Cakes (1 Gross = 144), 36 bottles of Tizer, and sandwiches made from 4 loaves. A profit of £18.7.5d (£18.38p) was made.



Skip Choat, Don Soley & friend taking a rest during a Cub outing to London Zoo late 1950's

Two new tents purchased cost £22.12.6d (£22.62) in 1953, also a donation of £10, being the profit from two Socials was made to the Church Organ Fund.

Amongst items reported at the AGM in 1955, the 18th came 6th at the District Sports. The Cubs earned £20 during Bob-a- Job Week, and sold more Christmas cards than any other Pack in the District. Summer Camp that year was to the Isle of Man.

Maybe for the first time, in 1956, and to happen often in the years that followed, Cubs were reported as being "full" and a waiting list was started.

In 1957 the BP Guild was formed.

The 1958 Summer camp took place at Paignton with 28 Scouts and leaders participating, a selection of those attending, Tony Hudson, Peter Colville, Lewis Chuck, M & R Westbrooke and E. White. Pat and Peter Rider were amongst the leaders, with Pat acting as Treasurer; some of the items she recorded in her accounts make interesting reading:

- Camp Fees £92 0d
- Hurricane Lamp Repairs 11 4
- Oil 1 16 1&189;
- Refreshments 11 8

The railway fare for the entire party of 28 amounted to £51 .19.6d!! around £1.1 6.7d (1 .86) per head. (The fare in 1996, dependant on when you travel ranges from £26 to £90 each!!).

The Sixties

The meeting minutes of the early 1960's recorded that the Group was progressing well, all the sections well supported by both boys and leaders.

A varied programme was in place with participation and general success at District events. Camps were a regular feature with visits to Tolmers, Danemead and further-a-field to North Wales a distance of 247 miles, taking some 10 hours in the Scout Bus!

The Band, at times, was suffering from leader and instructor problems, a situation they have never seemed to fully overcome over the years.

Socials and fund raising by way of Bob-a-Job etc continued much the same as they had done for a number of years, although first thoughts of what was to become the annual Plant Sale were mentioned by Doug Warren in 1964.

Transport

As regards Scout Transport, Lewis Chuck remembered the early 60's when he was a member of the large Senior Scout Troop with Tug Wilson as leader, when summer evenings were spent at Tolmers cooking and pioneering, travelling there in Tug's laundry van.

Later on the Seniors bought their own 'bus'. This was originally a school bus, later to be a mobile greengrocers van before being acquired by the Scouts. Some good trips were had with that bus at Easter and other times, one of which was to Derbyshire, Lewis's eventual new home.



This bus was unfortunately to end its days on the M1 just south of Newport Pagnell, when the big ends expired on the return trip from a weekend camp in Wales. Richard Westbrooke managed to get a lift for all the party - on a carpet lorry!, he recalls it was quite an experience on the back of an open lorry on the M1 in the middle of the night, but getting a lift to the Cambridge roundabout couldn't have been better.

Scouting Review

1966 saw warning of considerable changes to Scouting, its structure and training programmes.

The St George's Day service in 1966 was unique, held for the first time at the Roman Catholic Church, Headquarters of the 20th.

The 18th held the District colour and passed it over to the 20th during the ceremony. Summer camp that year was at Plymouth, and a new Commer bus arrived in the October.

Coming of Age

1967, for the Group, was its 21st Anniversary celebrated by a Dinner & Dance at Cheshunt Sporting Club organised by Peter Rider, tickets were 30/- (1 .50); there was also a Group party at the Church Hall with 190 attending.

That year, David Edwards, John Harbutt, and Geoff Pierson each received their Queen Scout Award, and were also selected to represent Edmonton District at the World Jamboree in Idaho, USA.

1968 saw the Scouting changes, with Wolf Cubs being renamed Cub Scouts and new uniforms introduced to all sections; and in the District the replacement of Senior Scouts with the formation of two Venture units - East and West Edmonton

There was a Group Party - a request for cakes was sent out to parents, Peter Rider was M.C. and Mrs Soley organised the refreshments. The profit from a Jumble Sale was £59 5s 8d and the Parents Association set up a "Bus" Bank account, and intended to set aside a sum each year for its replacement.

In the April, Ventures, Geoff Pierson, David Edwards and John Harbutt attended the Queens Scout Parade at Windsor; and in December of 1968 Assistant Scout Leader, Chris Ring published "Mag 18", later to become Bugle Call and finally Trumpet Call.

The Seventies

The life history of the Venture Unit has been somewhat difficult to record for it has had many "ups and downs", and many people involved in its running, quite a few not being around long enough to have a warrant hence the difficult decision not to list elsewhere the Leaders. We are reasonably certain however that the Venture Unit was established in 1970 with Peter Charlesworth as its Leader.

In 1971 the Cubs came a disappointing 10th in Sports Day. They enjoyed themselves on a visit to the Tower of London followed by a river trip to Greenwich. In 1971 also, and once again, the Band was finding it difficult to maintain numbers, but nine boys from the 10th joined. In the same year the new District Headquarters opened.

Things got better in 1973, when the Cubs won every class in the District Go-Kart Rally, they also came 5th in Sports Day, with the Group 3rd overall. The Group presented a Goodwill Pennant to the Brownies to mark the foundation of their Pack in the same year.

The AGM Minutes of April 1974 reports the Venture Unit being reformed as The Duke of Wellington Unit, as mentioned already another "up" and "down". Cubs achieve 2nd place in District Conker Competition and Ron Morey mentions in his Cub Football report 134 goals were scored during the season, this at a rate of 1 every 5.7 minutes!!, he also resigned as team manager, Mike Horder carried on as team trainer.

The Band entered the National Competition at Alexandra Palace. Guides for the first time were accepted as Members, and they also changed from Bugles to Trumpets, but due to the "three day week" they took nine months to arrive.

Trumpet Call was launched in 1975 with Doreen Ashley as editor, this was a joint Newsletter of the 18th Scouts and 21st Brownies and Guides. The "Skip Choat Award for Endeavour" was donated in the same year to the Group by the nine original members of the Troop for presentation every Anniversary.

But was the biggest event of that year Mike Horder starting the "Football Boot Bank"??



The Band at a Winter Church Parade - Early 1970's

Another Review

Once again the Scout Association reviewed the way Groups should be formulated, which resulted in 1976, the Fund Raising and Social Committee being created from the previous Parents and Supporters Association.

Of other happenings in 1976, Cliff Buddle, Steve Cracknell, John McLellan, Ant Rider, and Simon Webb took part in the North London Gang Show, memories included Ant getting Ralph Reader's autograph, and coming on stage as a reindeer and doing a funny dance.

The Ventures were continuing and changed their name to perpetuate the memory of Skip Choat, membership was now opened for girls to join, Scouts won the District Bone of Contention by beating the 4th 4-2 in a night football match at St Georges field using the Street lamps for illumination!! Andrew Soutter and Chris Ashley went parascending and the Troop had a wine making evening at District HQ.

The PL's had a training Camp at Phasels Wood and at the Summer Camp in Oxfordshire, Andy Warren forgot to take his tent; and finally Mike Horder hung up his boots as Cub Football manager. 1977 saw Andy Warren, Andrew Soutter Chris Ashley and Murray Walker take part in a canoe expedition on the Thames covering 35 miles. The cubs went to Trent Park to meet the Chief Scout, as part of the Queens Silver Jubilee Celebrations and two Queen Scout Venture Expeditions took place, with one group being Andy Warren, Steve Palmer, Mick Morey, and Brian Cook, visiting the Lake District, the other group (names unknown) went to Derbyshire.

Nine members of the Band joined the National Scout Massed Band Silver Jubilee Tour, with performances in Plymouth, Bristol, Southsea, Brighton and London Trafalgar Square

Same Band - New Name

The Band renamed in 1978 as the 18th/21st Edmonton Scout and Guide Band. It was reported at that years AGM of the drop in Cub numbers to 17, although there was a list of boys waiting for their 8th birthday. However Band numbers were on the increase and now reached 39.

George Gough, the District Commissioner, commenting at the same AGM of the Groups' ability to always find someone for every task, wondering if the definition of a volunteer was "Someone who didn't understand the question!"

Eric Geeves took over as i/c Jumbles, and the Monthly competition started the same year.

In 1979 the Group Bus Fleet doubled to TWO!! Ron Bird reported at the AGM he was having further discipline problems with the Band and once again the Ventures were having difficulty in finding a leader. The year finished with a Christmas Party on a Thames River Cruiser.

The Eighties

The 1980's had a disappointing start with the Band struggling to retain members with only eight regularly attending practice, the Instructors who had been ever present for many years looked elsewhere to encourage recruitment but without success, and in early 1981 the Band was suspended. Ron Bird the Bandmaster for the previous 13 years took all the instruments for storage in his loft in the hope of re-establishment (see 1988)

Another topic of concern over many Group Executive meetings was the bus fleet, decisions over their future hinged each year on the passing or not of the annual MOT test.

In 1981, the Cub Christmas outing was to see Dick Whittington at Broxbourne; and the Boxing Day football match score that year was Scouts 1 Parents 7.

Trumpet Call was still going strong and in 1982 reached its 21st issue, editor Mike Horder thanked Gary Young who finally put down his pencil as designer and artist of many of those 21 front covers, and welcomed Tim Geeves whose "agressive" designs were a stark contrast.

In the same edition a "Sits Vac" wanted a Bus Manager and a Marquee Manager, usual pay and hours of work!!

The Group Take to The Water

The Group were given a wooden Mirror Dinghy in 1984; Bernard Fenton with help from his three sons undertook the refurbishment over a period of months. It was relaunched at the Young Mariners Base, Cheshunt. Use of the vessel was somewhat variable, although Ian Fenton sailed it at the National Scout Sailing Regatta on Kielder Water, Northumberland gaining a creditable 3rd place. The Dinghy was used at one or two "fun days" and was finally donated to the Young Mariners Base for their use.

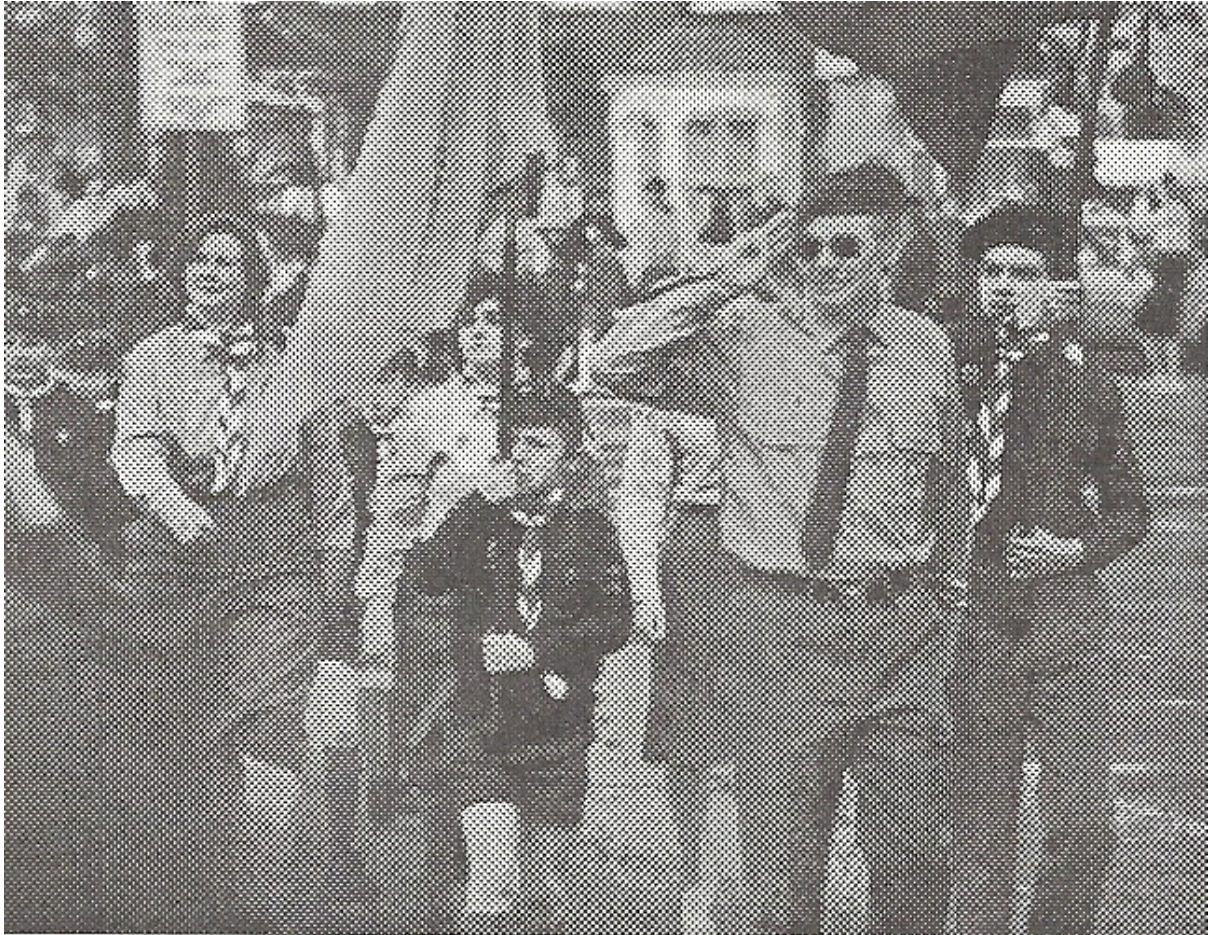
Numerous camps were reported as successful with venues ranging from Norfolk to North Wales and locally at Gilwell and Tolmers for both Cubs and Scouts.

Ventures were on the "up" in the mid 1980's under the direction of Steve Palmer, with activities including gardening, service crew, and a combined camp and preservation work on the Tallylyn Railway in Wales. They enjoyed, paracending, a trip to the bank, and of special interest, beermaking

The 1980's also saw "The Marsh Family Catering Service Inc' come into being, the Groups own NAAFI wagon being Mike Horders' motor caravan. They were ever present, at virtually all Group activities, providing eats and drinks for the "troops", with, in some cases at a fund-raising event, working in difficult "field" conditions; but the most amazing thing about Pat and Alan was their ability to cater for what at times seemed to be "hundreds" for almost nil cost!

Early in 1986 Ron Morey dragged the Group into the technological age by starting to keep the Group Records on Computer.

A further milestone in the history of the Group was reached in June 1986 when the Beaver section was formed, with Skip Choats daughter Mary Bird as their Leader. Mary was continuing a long run of service, having previously completed twelve years as both a Brownie and Guide Leader. Assisted by Brenda Lartice, around fifteen boys started things off in June, this increased to 24 in the September, with a waiting list. Beavers proved to be popular right from the start and have remained so for their first ten years.



St Georges Day Parade

Mid 1980's Ron Morey Leads the March

Ian Fenton - Cubs; Paul Cully - Scouts Carry Flags

Followed By Jenny Horder Acsl & Joan Naylor Akela

Encouraging End to The Decade

The Band was reformed in September 1988 under the leadership of Bernard Fenton, looking after drill, and Pauline Knight instructing and arranging music, with valuable assistance provided by Ron Bird in the early days. The first Church Parade after formation was March 1989, delayed a month because of bad weather in February.

The Nineties

The 1990's have seen all sections participating in a full and varied training programme, items of note include, for the Band two special training weekends when instructors from the HM Royal Marine School of Music, put the Band through their paces with new drill and display routines. The Drum Major at the time, Joanna Sweeting, gained much from the tuition as well as the Drum section who have played nothing other than Royal Marine marching and static drum solos since then.



District Beaver Day at Gilwell - 1991

Romania

In 1991 the old communist regime of Romania was brought down by a revolution, and for the first time in many years western journalists were allowed in to report to the rest of the world the conditions inside the country.

Appalled by the television pictures being broadcast, a group of Scouts and Guides from the Districts of Edmonton and Enfield which included Julie Bird, Clive Marsh and Mike Young from the 18th came together with a plan to organise an aid expedition to an orphanage in the country.

A period of intense fundraising was required by the team before they set off to Sighisoura a town located in the Transylvanian Mountains, in the centre of Romania.

They carried out work improving the facilities in the orphanage and hospital both of which dealt with babies that had contracted AIDS. That first trip was deemed to be such a success that another followed the following Christmas, with the English Scouts and Guides giving a party for the children along with an English style Christmas Dinner.

We thank Clive for providing these few words of Scouts and Guides doing their good deeds wherever there is a need and regardless of the difficult circumstances that might be faced. The expeditions proved worthwhile for both the English and Romanians who learnt much of each others way of life".

The AGM of 1992 had the usual reports and presentations of yet another good year: however one presentation was fairly unique, being a Thanks Badge to Frank Monk, he gained this without ever having a son. Frank was, and in 1996 still is, involved with the sale of books at jumbles and other fund raising events.

We come up to date, with the July 1996 Group Executive Meeting, and the last set of minutes before this history was compiled. Some of the reports/topics discussed by the Committee were:

Beavers, ten new boys had just started, and even with seven going up to Cubs there still remained a waiting list. A new Leader was sought to take over from Mary Bird who had previously advised of her intention to retire, after some 10 years of running the Colony.

Cubs, were congratulated at winning the District Sports earlier in the Summer, they had also reached the semi-final of the 7 a-side District football competition. Ten boys were going to the Haileybury camp with the 10th, over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The Scouts report was brief and to the point "Everything is fine at the present". For this record, the Troop numbered an almost unmanageable forty, but Scout leader Tony Fowler was receiving good support from his Assistants.

Ventures reported Dorinda Cooper, Richard Fenton and Bethan Wilcocks, had gained their Venture Award.

The Band numbers are currently thirty, their last event was to take part in the National Music Day Parade. A parade in company with eighty other youth bands starting on Horse Guards Parade, then marching down The Mall, past Buckingham Palace, and returning along Bird Cage Walk.

The Treasurer's report showed a Bank balance of £13,500, further fund raising events were planned, the ubiquitous Jumble Sale activity was still going strong with a date in September, and also the same month various stalls, including Jack Pot Dice and Nearly New Clothes were planned for the Enfield Town Show.

So we reach the end of the year by year history, with the Group celebrating its founding. The occasion marked by the striking of a perpetual badge, the publication of this book, a reunion dinner at the Townhouse, Enfield; and following the Anniversary Service and Parade, the planting of a tree in the Church Garden.

Fund Raising

We conclude with a few interesting figures and a brief background on fundraising activities.

The Group structure and organisation has had changes brought about by Scout Association reviews over the years, with the fund raising effort variably the responsibility of the Sections, the Group, Parents and Supporters Association and the Parents Fundraising and Social Committee.

In the early days fund raising was a mixture of Parent and Scout events and activities, to mention a few; the dances at St Pauls Institute, now demolished and replaced with the Royal Mail sorting office in Station Road, Winchmore Hill; Whist and Beetle Drives. Socials in the Church Hall of which up to eight per year - no competition from television in those days!!, and of course Jumble Sales. Records since 1978 tell us the profit from Jumbles has been £9200.

The Scouts annual contribution for a number of years was the popular Bob-a-Job week, which the 18th regularly achieved the best results in the District. A grand total of £22 10s (22.50) was collected in 1956, for example.

Plant Sale

Apart from jumble sales, the longest running activity has been the plant sale. This first started as part of the Spring Fair in 1966, and organised and held every year since by Doug and Doreen Warren in their back garden in the Crossway. Profit information from 1973 to date, shows £10,840 has been raised, with its complementary Bulb Sale running from 1973 to 1989 raising £3800.



Fund Raising at District Fete - Plant Stall

Monthly Competition

In 1978 the Monthly Competition was started by Ron Morey, to raise money for running the Scout Buses. Each month a silly question is asked, with the entrant paying for the privilege. One half of the money collected is paid out in prizes and the other half going to the Group. The very first question was "The diameter of a 2p piece". Mike Horder became questionmaster in 1980, and in 1996 still is. The fee doubled with inflation in 1991 to £1. In 1996 there is an average of 160 entries per month, up from the original 70, being looked after by 13 collectors, three of whom, Sylvia Horder, Eric Geeves, and Tony Young, have knocked on doors since day one. To date some £10,000 has been raised for the Group.

Mike was asked his contender for the silliest question; the one that stuck in his mind, was how long would a block of ice take to melt? It was during the summer and he assumed that it wouldn't take long, but the weather turned colder and he ended up watching it for days and took it to a party at Peter Bendall's for the final throes!!

Deed of Covenant

Not exactly fund raising, but a way of raising funds is the best description of the Deed of Covenant scheme. This was introduced by Ron Morey into the Group in 1986. It caused a lot of work in setting up and even more in keeping it going, but with grateful thanks to H.M. Inspector of Taxes we have to 1996 received £8,600.

Nearly New Clothes

The clothes residue from Jumble Sales up to 1981 were taken away by a dealer for nothing; after that they were sold for rags, but at only £20 per jumble and still needed to be transported to his yard. Further thought was given to maximise the income from jumbles, by sorting the best clothes for sale later and so the Nearly New Clothes Stall was born.

Thereafter all the good clothes were transported to the Horder Household loft to await a gang of ladies under the command of Sylvia to price and label each item. Mike relates the first stall was a very wet Bullsmoor show, then District Fetes and Town Shows were regular venues. He has always wondered what his neighbours thought, seeing a human chain at 70 Park Avenue loading armfuls of "old" clothes into Scout Buses every week or so! The stall has raised around £8000 since it started.

The volume of clothes grew so much that Mike feared for his bedroom ceilings and the Church were approached for the Group to erect a second "Fundraising" hut. This was built over two weekends in 1989, with Bernard Fenton (site), Mike (staff), and Tony Tindal (surveyor), generally organising (or in Mike's case getting in the way!!)



Fundraising at Enfield Town Show - J.P.D. and Nearly New Clothes - 1986

"J.P.D."

Jackpot Dice... it is unlikely very many people know of its origin and introduction to the Group.

It first came into being through Eric Geeves who "borrowed" the idea from an old mate who first played it in an Army NAAFI years and years ago. Eric and Mike Horder tested it first at

Edmonton School Fete in 1978, and then released the patent to the group in 1980. The rest, as they say, is history.

Equipment in the early days was fairly basic, with the playing surface on a table and a rope for "protection". It became an instant success for both players and fund raisers, so much so that a second, more portable set was built by Bernard Fenton, initially for taking to Sandown, Isle of Wight, (we had some curious looks on the ferry from Portsmouth and then train to Sandown!!)

The No 1 JPD as it came to be known, was given considerable attention by Eric (and others), with a substantial barrier that no one except Eric could construct, and a display board telling how to play the game. The two units have frequently been used at the same time, at the same show ie Bexley Show, or at separate shows.

In excess of £18,000 has been raised for the 18th, and a further £6,000 for the benefit of many charities, including six local schools, other Scout Groups, the 1991 Romanian Appeal and handicapped organisations

It is interesting to note that more has been paid out in prize money than taken in profit.

Final Reflections

Socials, Fun and Family Events

Scouting is not all hikes and camping, family connections have always been encouraged and like all families the 18th have enjoyed themselves in all sorts of ways.

In the early days Beetle Drives and socials at St Pauls Institute were very popular and well supported.

From the mid 1970's the variation has widened with car rallies, sponsored walks, family camps, family "sports" days at Welwyn Lakes, two Gang Shows, firework parties and an annual New Year's party which one year had an attendance of 180, and who could ever forget the entertainers Hairy Harry and Mr Toots!!

A winter Scrabble league has been running since 1985, a sunflower growing competition for about the same period, with excellent trophies for both being made by Ron Morey.

The annual Boxing Day Scouts v. Parents football match continues and we thank Eric and Eileen Geeves for the twenty or so years of hangovers resulting from their after match refreshments of punch and sausage rolls. In all those years not one game has been missed, not even for bad weather.

The Church

We have always had a very good relationship with our sponsoring authority - The Church, with for many years the Minister of the time being our Group Chaplain, and we feel very much members of the Church family.

We are grateful for the support we receive and for the use of their premises almost whenever we need them.

We do our best to try and help them as much as possible, especially with stalls at their annual Church Bazaar, including books, bric-a-brac and more recently a Father Christmas Grotto.

We have also passed to them the proceeds of our annual quiz organised by Pete Bendall, and together with other Church related organisations assisted with a financial gift of some £1800 in 1986, in contribution towards the refurbishment work that took place.

We look forward to a continuation of this close affinity into the next 50 years.

The Boys

...and finally The Boys ... for without them, their interest and enthusiasm to join the 18th Scouting family, (or were they pushed?) we would not be reflecting and celebrating this, the first 50 years.

It is difficult to know how many boys have been through the Group in the past 50 years, however we have figures for those joining since 1979 which totals 415. Prior to that a realistic estimate would be 450 giving a total of some 860 boys, and of course we must not forget the girls who have been members of the Venture Unit since 1987.

The yearly average Group membership (including Leaders) has been around 105 since 1986 when Beavers started. We therefore continue to be a thriving Group in Edmonton District; where, in 1996, several are struggling with regrettably some closing or merging.

We hope that all the young people have found the Scouting experience a good one and that some element of it has stood them in good stead through life's interesting journey.

Final Message

From those early austere days of 1946 soon after the end of the Second World War when fifty years hence would not even have been thought of, 1996 sees the Group in a position of strength, with its Leaders and Parents maintaining its traditions and opportunities for the young people of Bush Hill Park

We in 1996, wish the Group well, to prosper and to continue for another fifty years.

We send a message to you, the readers in the year 2046, the 100th Anniversary Year.

We very much trust that the 18th Edmonton Scout Group will have passed through a second successful fifty years, be in good hands and be as strong as it is today.

Have a good celebration.



The 18th Edmonton Scout Group - October 1996

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