

33 Grosvenor St.

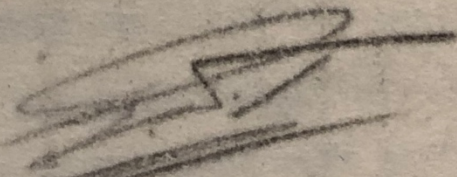
28/6/71

Dear Ken,

Herewith I enclose the notes
on the early days of Scouting.
They are entirely as collected by
(and later received from) M. Par-
rott at the time when The Path-
finder was in production, and
from Ernest's records.

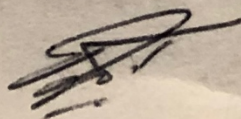
The Census figures are from
official ones handed down by the
Various L. A. Secretaries.

Yours sincerely



PS/

I am sorting out also Individual Group
records. Will let you have all North Dist-
rict as I do them.



The Early Days 1908 - 1928

The Scouting Story, of course, all began in 1907, with an experimental Camp on Brownsea Island. Following the success of this Camp in August 1907 Baden Powell published the book "Scouting for Boys" in six fortnightly parts, price 4 pence each, commencing in January 1908. It is not generally realised that he had no intention of founding a new movement, and the second chapter of Part one opens with the sentence, "To become a Boy Scout you join a Patrol belonging to your Cadet Corps, Boys' Brigade, or Club"

Hundreds of boys immediately began to form themselves into patrols quite independent of any other organisation; these patrols were later banded into Troops, and as the number of Troops grew, Local Associations were formed to look after them. The county organisation came last.

In Bedford some Modern School Boys formed the Bulls, Foxes and Hound Patrols, which later became the 2nd.Beds. Other boys in the Black Tom area formed the Peewits, Cuckoos, Eagles, Curlews, Owls and Woodpigeons, which became the 1st.Beds (Onesters). It would be very difficult - if not impossible now---to ascertain which was the first such patrol in Bedford, for there were quite possibly others (A third group did appear in the Spring Road area, but did not last long). It is fitting, however, that these earliest Patrol names should be recorded, and that the Peewit Patrol has maintained unbroken continuity to this day.

Throughout 1908, although these patrols were not directly connected, many inter-Patrol runs were carried out, usually with a gang of boys following behind yelling "Dirty Knees", or throwing stones.

In the late months of 1908 the first grown-up persons came along, firstly Mr. E. W. Ebbutt, who must be regarded as the pioneer and builder of local Scouting, and secondly Mr. L. H. Langden, brother of the then well-known Rev. F. G. Langden. The local strength at that time would be about 40, of whom 25 boys were under Mr. Ebbutt and 15 under Mr. Langden.

Imperial Headquarters did not exist, but a London office had been placed at the disposal of Baden Powell. This office began the registration of Troops and the 1st.Beds. was registered on January 12th. 1909 (as No.182)

the 2nd.Beds (No.183) being registered shortly afterwards. (The original certificate of registration still hangs in the Onesters' headquarters).

The first meeting of the 1st.Beds. as a complete Troop instead of separate Patrols took place on the February 10th. and the first Church Parade (to St.Andrew's Church) was held on March 14th. A bigger Church Parade, with the 2nd.Beds. and a unit of the Church Lads' Brigade was held at Caddington on May 2nd. On May 10th., 1909, Mr. Eric Walker, an official at the London Office, came to Bedford and addressed a meeting in St.Outhbert's Hall, which resulted in the formation of the Bedford Local Association, with Mr. Ebbutt as Hon. Secretary, an office he retained for many years.

A second result was that Warrants as Scoutmasters were issued to Mr. Ebbutt (1st.Beds) and Mr.Langdon (2nd.Beds), both being dated May 14th. On July 22nd. the two Troops gave a public display at a fete at Oakley House, and constructed a raft to take people across the river, and on July 25th they journeyed to Wrest Park, Silsbee, to be inspected by H.M. King Edward VII, who was staying there as a guest of Mr.Whitelaw Reid, the American Ambassador.

During September Baden Powell inspected 10,000 Scouts at Crystal Palace, the first big rally organised by the growing Scout Movement. The arrangements for this rally showed the necessity for a proper county organisation, and in December 1909, it was recorded that Sir Percy Everett, who had assisted the Chief Scout at Brownssea Island and who remained his right-hand man ever afterwards, was Acting Commissioner for Bedfordshire. Mr.Ebbutt took over the additional duties of County Secretary as well as those of District Scoutmaster, while still being Secretary of the Local Association and Scoutmaster of 1st.Beds.

There were ten Troops in the county at this date, and it may be of interest to know who they were. The 1st. & 2nd Beds. have been mentioned, the 3rd.Beds. was attached to the Bedford I.M.C.A. but it rose and fell within a few weeks (the county number was then allotted to the 1st.Luton Troop). The 4th.Beds. belonged to the Church Lads Brigade at Queen's Park (the 5th & 6th. were in the south of the county) and Kempston became the 7th.Beds, and still exists as such.

The 8th.Beds (Sandt) Troop was formed on May 18th. and the 9th.Beds. (Biggleswade) on June 2nd. and the 10th.Beds (Shefford) on July 8th, 1909.

In January, 1910, Mr. Eric Walker again came to Bedford and stayed with Major James Deane, of Goldington Bury, who then became our first County Commissioner. Major Deane was able to persuade the Lord Lieutenant, Lord St. John, to become the first County President, and since that date all successive Lords Lieutenants have been our County Presidents and have served us well.

Lord St. John called a meeting in the Shire Hall, which was attended by a number of influential people, one result being that the then Mayor of Bedford, Mr. Roff, gave the county a flag to be competed for annually.

Activities of the early days were mostly arranged between the Troops themselves - before the advent of the L.A. - and on the Easter Monday of 1909 there was a Field Day between the Bedford Scouts and the Church Lads Brigade. The Troops existing, as mentioned earlier, were 1st.Beds; 2nd.Beds; 3rd.Beds. (Y.M.C.A), and 4th.Beds (who were attached to the C.L.B), the total strength being about 60; the C.L.B. numbered twice as many.

The scheme was that the Scouts defended Biddenham and Bromham Bridge from the C.L.B. who were attacking from Queen's Park. Parading on St. Peter's Green, we were issued with these small fireworks known to pre-war generations as Chinese Crackers, and we then marched to Honey Hills to take up positions.

We had a glorious time and let off crackers on any pretence whatever. If someone thought they saw the enemy, or if some other patrol let off a few bangs, we did the same, whether there was any reason for it or not. Remember that matches and crackers were plentiful in 1909. Who won the day? Who knew? Who cared!! We ate our lunches long before we ought to have done, and then, joining behind our friends "the enemy", marched together to Bromham Green where we fraternised, and it was not long before the village shop sold right out of "pop", sweets and chocolate. The C.L.B. had a good bugle band in those days and we marched home behind it.

Camping, of course, was a novelty in those days and Scouts were some of the very few people who did go camping. It was one of the main attractions. Many are the tales which could be told of some of these early camps. Alderman A.L. Nicholls (an ex-Onester) loves to relate the story of a Camp at Fenlake Barns, in 1911, when the campers, out for a mid-night swim, encountered a real 'live' ghost.

The Scout Movement was but six years old when it had its first great test - the first World War (1914 - 1918). Up till this time Scouting had steadily grown and Troops had appeared in the surrounding villages - and others in the town. Some even started in the early war years. And, of course, Wolf Cubs came into being in 1916. But although the Movement survived nationally and locally several Troops had to suspend operations - some permanently. After the war, however, Scouting began to grow and spread, and Rover Scouts came into being in 1918. 1920 saw the First World Jamboree at Olympia, and there were several National Rallies in the 1920s (and Bedford was usually represented).

One such Rally was at the Alexandra Palace, North London, on October 7th, 1922, to welcome the Prince of Wales home from an Empire Tour. Approximately 60,000 Scouts and 19,000 Cubs met to greet the Prince and I remember how impressed I was with the smoothness with which the organisation worked. The assembly ground for each county was marked by a coloured flag, Guides took contingents to and from the stations en masse, and about dinner time each contingent moved to its rally position and then a succession of small parties were allowed to go to one of a series of convenient refreshment tents.

In sending its number each Troop had been asked to fill in a form stating how many pork pies, sausage rolls, cakes, minerals, cups of tea etc; it was likely to require, and as there was no rationing in those days there was ample food available for everyone. Someone must have known that Scouts always eat their rations for the day immediately they get in a train, however big a breakfast they may have had.

My Rover Crew had volunteered with the cleaning up, so we went to London the night before, slept at our 1920 Jamboree billet at Hammermith, and next morning placed a wreath on the Cenotaph before proceeding to Alexandra Palace. When the show began the Chief Scout was decorated with the French Legion of Honour and then, with the Prince, he began a tour of the assembly. Cheering at the far end showed that they were approaching and they slowly passed by. A few minutes afterwards they returned along the rear of the lines, so everyone was turned about in order to have a second view. After a short wait a gun was fired as the signal for a great rush. Every Scout ran forward about 50 yards, yelling as loud as possible, after which there was immediate complete silence. It was perfect discipline and the cessation of noise was most impressive.

tered as The Prince made a short speech which was amplified by loud speakers and then there were cheers for him and the Chief Scout. Unfortunately for the Bedfordshire contingent their special train was one of the earliest to leave and it was impossible for them to remain to the very end. I stayed behind with the Revers clearing up, but the Bedford Scouts made a quick journey home. Of the five boys in the whole country who missed their trains home, one came from Bedford, and that is quite an interesting story.

It is not usual for parent to bring a boy to Scout meetings and to take him home afterwards, but this is the story of one who did. Richard was living in the care of his uncle, and for well over a year his uncle came with him twice a week to Troop meetings and met him out again. We became quite friendly, but despite all I could say or do I could not persuade Uncle to allow Richard to look after himself. It so happened, however, that the Troop went to London for the Rally at Alexandra Palace, and when uncle said he was coming as well I just wouldn't have it, so, for the first time, Richard came to the Troop minus his uncle.

The story of the Rally you have already read. Richard enjoyed it, as we all did, so we came to the time when the Bedfordshire contingent approached the railway station for the journey home. Sure enough the uncle was on the platform, and he promptly took Richard off to have some refreshment. I warned them not to get lost in the crowd, but in about ten minutes the uncle returned alone, all distracted. Had Richard come back to the Troop? Had he gone back to the Rally? Had he gone on the wrong train etc. etc.? I told him I did not know, nor did I care. Scoutmasters can look after their boys, but uncles who take their boys away in such crowds deserve all the trouble they cause. However, all is well that ends well. The Troop returned home in its proper train, Richard returned alone on a later one, and a very worried uncle arrived at Bedford much later still. The spell was broken, never again did uncle escort Richard to Troop meetings, or fetch him home again afterwards.

It was about this time too that Scouting began to spread rapidly across the world and in 1924 came the second World Jamboree at Copenhagen in Denmark (Also the Imperial Jamboree at Wembley). Bedford was represented at both. In Bedford and the neighbouring villages several Troops (and Wolf Cub Packs) were started or re-opened. As Scouts, Cubs and occasionally Revers were regis-

tered as complete units this was becoming a bit unwieldy (see Census)

Athletics, Games and Sports were not generally recognised as part of Scout Training and many of the early efforts were never recorded but there has always been friendly rivalry between Troops and in the early days there were inter-Troop football, cricket and rounders matches. Of course games were not so 'specialised' in those days and a football 'match' would be played happily - and fairly, with any sort of ball, 'teams' of almost any number from 4 upwards, coats as goalposts, and the 'pitch' in any available space considered large enough, and often without the aid of a referee (the Scout Law was sufficient). The same applied to cricket and other games. (Human nature being what it is, they sometimes forget to ask permission to play in certain places and had to be Prepared to make a hasty withdrawal).

From time to time Sports were organised on a District basis but records have not been preserved - except perhaps by winning Troops. However, on such occasions, if there had been any outstanding performance or performer it became legend. On one such occasion, in the early 1920s (the actual date is forgotten) it was the outstanding performances in running and jumping by the 2nd. Beds. Troop - with special mention of a Patrol Leader Wynn (Incidentally some of the elder Scouters may still remember the 2nd. Beds as "Captain James' Troop". It was comprised chiefly of Modern School boys - which probably explains why it did so well at Sports). In 1928 Sports were re-introduced and a Cup - the "Walter Attenborough" Cup was presented for the competition. This was won by the 101st. Beds (Kempston C of B.) and the meeting at Bedford Modern School Field on Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th. September, was marked by some fine sprinting by L.A. Emmerton (19th. Beds) and distance running by Fred Seemark (15th. Beds) and Jimmy White (Onesters), winner and runner-up in the Marathon.

Times, manners and customs change even in Scouting. In the 1920s most Troops possessed a Trek Cart, and it was the custom at week-ends and holidays to load it with tents and kit, and off the Troop went to camp. By using the Trek-cart, every camp could be held in a fresh village, and it was usual to seek new pastures. The weather on Good Friday, 1923, was reasonable fair, so, fortified by numerous hot cross buns, we trekked to Weburn Sands, where we spent a pleasant night. Next morning we pushed on to Newport Pagnell, a pleasant stroll of about eight miles, but after mid-day the wind increased and by the time we had

erected camp it was blowing a gale. It grew worse and worse, the wind reared, tiles blew from roofs, trees were uprooted, and we took down the tents for safety. Crash ! Bang ! Two large chicken houses in the field had blown right over and the frightened hens, running around loose, were blown across the field. What a chance for doing the farmer a good turn ! We struggled and struggled and re-erected first one building then the other, and we even succeeded in getting most of the hens inside again. The wind still blew, but the worst had passed, and we could not help feeling the inward glow which comes from the knowledge of a good turn well done. But the best was yet to be. Someone had seen the chaos in the field and had told the owner. He hurried along expecting much damage, and was he pleased when he found we had not only saved the chicken houses, but his flock as well. "Will you accept this score of eggs, my boys? They will do for your breakfast."

Camp Raiding is and always was strictly prohibited (although it sometimes took place) but Flag Raiding is quite different. It is not much in evidence these days but it is a 'Wide Game' once one of the popular activities of the early Treeps - especially as an inter-Treep challenge. The following episode would suggest that it carried a certain amount of luck. St.Mary's and St.Peter's Scout Treeps were founded about the same time (1925-26), had more or less the same type of activity, and in consequence were great rivals - friendly of course, but always trying to get the better of each other. St.Peter's certainly seemed to be the more progressive Treep, but since the two had never been in direct opposition it was hard to tell. However, on one memorable occasion the two Treeps were matched at Despatch Running and Flag Raiding. Despatch carrying came first, and the carriers - Claude and Dick for St.Peter's, and Bob and 'Hank' for St.Mary's - met at a point along Cardington Road to receive the despatches which they had to get through to a point along Mill Meadows. Bedesman's Lane, Dickmill Lane and all the obvious entrances to Mill Meadows were bristling with patrolling Scouts from the rival Treeps. By some cunning device the St.Mary's pair reached Castle Road unnoticed, and had they continued walking past the "Circle" in Rethsay Road, would probably have had a clear run in. As it was, however, they decided to cut through the "circle" and there they almost stumbled over half-a-dozen St.Peter's "Scouts". It was hard to tell which were the most surprised, but the

St. Peter's six soon overpowered the St. Mary's pair and commenced to search them. They were soon satisfied that "Hank" had not got the message, and let him go. Had they been observant they would have seen that Bob had not even bothered to conceal the despatch, he was carrying it in his hand. But "Hank" once released, and having re-tied his boots etc. made an all-out dash towards his "goal". It was a great piece of bluff that worked, for St. Peter's decided he must have it after all, and once more gave chase, leaving Bob, who soon outpaced them and got the despatch through. But Claude had also got through for St. Peter's, and as the messages were valued differently to prevent a tie, they had to wait until they were opened. St. Peter's had gained a 6-5 lead. Next was the Flag Raiding, for which the two Troops were marched to Cardington Mill, where they separated to hide their respective flags. And the game got started. St. Mary's were again doing badly in attack but defending valiantly, when Bob and "Squib" decided to make a break. St. Peter's attackers turned to give chase and cornered the two. There was but one way of escape - across the river. "Squib" after a fight, was caught, but Bob decided to emulate Tarzan and swing across by tree branches, and swung outwards even as the first St. Peter's man had almost reached him. The experiment was deemed a failure for there was a crack as the bough snapped, and a splash as the unfortunate Scout hit the water - to the amusement of all. On the opposite side he clambered out, cold, wet and bedraggled, and commenced to walk ruefully across the field. Suddenly he gave a start. He was within 50 yards of the St. Peter's flag, having passed quite unsuspectively through the defence. Momentarily forgetting his plight he sped for the flag, easily outpacing the surprised defenders who had turned to give chase. So St. Mary's won after all. Bob received a warm reception from his Troop, but we understand it was nowhere near as warm as the one he received on arriving home wet through!

Competitions on 'Weedcraft' lines were always encouraged from the beginning and, as we have already read, Mr. Reff presented a Flag to be competed for annually by the Troops of the county (This, or its replacement, is now known as the County Challenge Flag - although sometime still referred to as the Reff Flag) and later, about 1927, D.C. A. F. Braun presented the Junior Challenge Flag for Troops of less than three years standing. (This became the Weedcraft Challenge Flag) Bedford (or Mid-Beds District) had its fair share of winning these Trophies.

Since the second World War much emphasis has been placed upon headquarters. In the early days if a Troop had the exclusive use of a building it was considered a great luxury and indeed patrol meetings were often held under a street lamp. This is no exaggeration. (The Oneasters had several 'hones' before finally obtaining their present site at Fenlake in 1932). Of course, it was the ambition of every Troop, especially the 'open' ones, to have their own headquarters, also the Local Association had the same ambition, not only for a permanent meeting place but a Camping Ground where local Troops could camp at any time. Occasionally events were produced to bring this need to the public eye.

A pageant of Scouting - "The Pageant of St. George" (Written by Mr. F. W. Kuhlieke) was produced by the Bedford and District L.A. on Thursday and Friday - 5th. and 6th. May, 1927. This took place in the Corn Exchange. This pageant was presenting to the public, scenes from history and legend, illustrating incidents through the ages up to the present day. These were varied and depicted episodes featuring such heroes as St. Alban, Sir Francis Drake, Captain Robert Falcon Scott, Catherine Douglas, the Knights of the Crusades, Beowulf and the Vikings, concluding with the Knights of today - The Boy Scout. On the opening night all performers lined up in De Parys Avenue and processed through the town to the Corn Exchange, where a large crowd were awaiting the opening. Everything went according to plan and - judging by the applause - to the satisfaction of the audience. (The dragon - a fearsome monster created by the 101st. Beds: Rover Crew - caused a little consternation amongst the audience, but it was quite harmless. Between the changes of scenes a combined Wolf Cub choir rendered appropriate songs. The grand finale when the present day Scouts performed a good turn - and promised to carry on the spirit and tradition of their famous forebears. They were then joined on the stage by the other performers with our Patron Saint (portrayed by S.M. M. F. C. Willson of 11th. Beds) in the foreground.

1928, after twenty years, found Scouting firmly established in Bedford and probably the outstanding event of that year was the Rally in Russell Park, on Saturday 14th. July, when the Scouts and Guides of the County were inspected by The Princess Royal - H.R.H. Princess Mary.

H. Parrott.

BEDFORD and DISTRICT Local Association

CENSUS 1922-1923

County No.	H.Q. Reg:	Year of Regn:
1st. Beds: (Onesters)	182	1909
2nd. "	183	"
4th " (C.L. Brigade)		" (Disbanded; reformed as Queen's Park Moravian - 1924)
5th " (Bedford School)	9169	1921
7th " (Kempston)	186	1909
20th " (Geldington)	11102	1923 ? (Possibility of an earlier regn:)
22nd "	10270	1914
50th " (Elstew)		1913 (Disbanded during 1914-18 war)
53rd " (Clapham)	9168	1921 * (Evidence of earlier registration)
60th " (St. Leonard's)		1915 (Disbanded during 1914-18 war)
65th " (St. Guthbert's)	184	1909
90th " (Bunyan)	7501	1920
94th " (St. Paul's Wesleyan)	9057	1921
96th " (Chandos Street Mission)	9798	1922 (Disbanded during 1923)
101st " (Kempston C of M)	11567	1923
1st " (Onestereubs)	3849	1921
2nd "	5700	1922
7th " (Kempston)	5605	1922
65th " (St. Guthbert's)	105	1919
90th " (Bunyan)	3665	1920
94th " (St. Paul's Wes:)	4547	1921

BEDFORD and DISTRICT LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Census 1925-1926

1st.Beds (Oneaters)	182	(1909)	H. Parrett S.M.
2nd "	183	"	Capt: V.P.James S.M.
4th " (Q.P.Meravian)	12519	(1924)	G. Hennes S.M.
5th " (Bedford School)	9169	(1921)	E. Robinson S.M.
6th " (St.Peter's Wer:)	14242	(1925)	F.H.Tyree A/S.M.
7th " (Kempston)	186	(1909)	F.A.Darlew S.M.
11th " (St.Paul's C of M)	13734	(1925)	G.G.Johnson S.M.
14th " (Rushmoor Sch)	14240	(1925)	S.O.Boyd A/S.M.
15th " (St.Mary's)	14241	"	Rev. A.G.Brown S.M.
18th " (B.M.Sch:)	12765	(1924)	P. J. King S.M.
19th " (St.Martin's)	13402	"	W. Berrall S.M.
27th " (St.Peter's)	15060	(1926)	R.W.L.Bedford A/S.M.
32nd " (Oakley)	12440	(1924)	T.W.Parkinson A.S.M.
60th " (Bromham Rd: Wes:)	13165	"	G.A.B.Westcombe S.M.
65th " (St.Cuthbert's)	184	(1909)	A.H.Wilkins A/A.S.M.
78th " (Cardington)	12766	(1924)	J.C.Hobling A/S.M.
94th " (St.Paul's W:)	9057	(1921)	G.S.Freeman A/S.M.
101st " (Kempston C of M)	11567	(1923)	H.B.D.Houghton S.M.
1st.Beds (Oneatercubs)	3849	(1920)	H. Parrett C.M.
2nd "	5700	(1922)	R.B.Gray A.C.M.
4th " (Q.P.Wer:)	7276	(1924)	F.S.Smith C.M.
7th " (Kempston)	5605	(1922)	F.A.Darlew.
11th " (St.Paul's C of M)	7830	(1925)	Miss C. Andersen C.M.
14th " (Rushmoor Sch)	8067	(1925)	" A.L.K.Watson A/C.M.
60th " (Brom: Rd:Wes:)	7366	(1924)	" D.A.Hands C.M.
65th " (St.Cuthbert's)	105	(1919)	A.H.Wilkins
94th " (St.Paul's Wes)	4547	(1921)	G.S.Freeman A.C.M.
101st " (Kempston C of M)	8511	(1926)	G. Egan A/C.M.
1st " (Oneaterovers)		(1918)	H. Parrett
87th "	13043	(1924)	F.S.Smith.