

The Industrial prospects seemed a little brighter in 1934 and local Scouting began to improve. The 1934 Census showed the loss of three 'established' Groups - 2nd; 6th. and 19th.Beds., and the 40th.Beds. (Eaton Seccon) had been transferred to the St.Scots Local Association, but a large Group had been registered at Cardington (78th.Beds) and a strong Sea Scout section added to the 94th.Beds.(St.Paul's Wesleyan). The previous year both 18th.Beds. (Bedford Modern School) and the 94th. had experimented with this idea following a visit from the Assistant Headquarters Commissioner for Sea Scouts - Mr. Robert Hole.

Although previously introduced, this year fresh interest was aroused in the Bedfordshire Musical Festival and three Troops entered for the Class which included Scout Choirs (18th.Beds - B.M.S; 7th.Beds - Kempston; 15th.Beds - St.Mary's; being placed in that order). Unfortunately this Class was afterwards discontinued.

Also, although Scouters' meetings had been occasionally held, they now became regular, and to rouse more interest each Troop (or Group) acted as host in turn. Meetings were held monthly.

This period was in many ways reminiscent of the early days - and those following the first world war. Adversity had brought certain Groups closer together (in fact the 19th.Beds: St.Martin's had been absorbed by 27th.Beds. St.Peter's) and a very real bond of friendship prevailed between all Groups.

Several local Troops were again in camp at Westoning Manor (Whitsun) and later in June a new County competition for Rover Scouts was introduced; and this was won by the 1st.Beds. (Onesters) Crew. Actually Mid-Beds District were successful in winning all the County trophies. The 18th.Beds (Bedford Modern School) Pack won the Wolf Skin, 7th.Beds.(Kempston) secured the Woodcraft Challenge Flag; In addition to the Rover Totem the 1st.Beds (Onesters) won the Signalling Shield and the Group Challenge Flag. In the latter the 18th.Beds. were runners-up.

Five King's Scouts from the District, drawn from four separate Groups, attended the special St.George's Day Service at Windsor, on April 22nd. On the same day a Service was held in the Chapel of Bedford, which was kindly placed at the disposal of the Boy Scouts for the occasion.

On November the 11th a joint Remembrance Day Service was held with the Girl Guides in St.Paul's Church, Bedford, when the Rev. M. Scott, District Commissioner for South Beds; officiated.

The United Kingdom and British Empire celebrated, in 1935, the Silver Jubilee of the reign of King George V, and the Scout Movement of course played a major part. In Bedford and District on Jubilee Day (Monday 6th. May) most of the Troops joined in the procession through the town in the morning, joined in one way or another the celebrations throughout the day, and in the evening the three Rover Crews erected and manned the beacons on Waterworks Hill (1st. and 15th. Beds) and Milton Hill (94th. Beds), part of a Beacon-chain throughout the country.

Census figures, however, gave some cause for concern, for although there was an increase in activity, and 'no change' in the number of Groups, there was a steady decrease in overall membership. The 27th. Beds. (St. Peter's Own) and the 104th Beds. (Marston Moretaine) were forced to close down through lack of Scouters, but a new Troop was registered at Stewartby (35th. Beds) and the 60th. Beds. (Bromham Road Methodist) revived after six years. This loss, however, was more than compensated by the increase in the Rover section. No new Crews had been formed but there was a consolidation among the existing ones; also a number of Rovers Squires awaiting Investiture. Three members of the 1st. Beds. (Onesters) Crew took part in the Inter-national Rover Moot in Sweden.

During the year there was a satisfactory increase in Rover activities of all sorts. Rovers supplied a duty picket at Whipsnade Zoo on Sundays throughout the summer, Crews taking turn to do duty. Considerable interest in local history and archaeology was also shown by some South Beds. Crews. In the county there was an encouraging increase in Rover membership, and in the Mid-Beds. (as already mentioned) although Cub and Scout membership is down, that of Rovers is up. Activities in Mid-Beds. Crews did not perhaps extend so far as those of South Beds. but nevertheless there was considerably more co-operation between the three local Crews, notably in the Silver Jubilee celebrations. All three Crews entered the County competition, and although not with the success of last year (when Onesters won), it proved a much greater opportunity for getting to know the other Rovers of the County, particularly so during the Rover Moot held at the close of the competition.

As a result of discussion, and suggestions from Mid-Beds; it was decided that a week-end Moot be organised later in the year. Thus the Third County Rover Moot was held at the Royal Airship Works, Cardington, at the week-end Saturday - Sunday 21st.- 22nd. September. (Though at one time during the previous day it looked as though it would literally be washed out).



The venue was the 78th.Beds.(Cardington) Troop headquarters and the adjoining field. It was a great success in spite of the weather, which could hardly have been worse. There was a heavy thunderstorm on the Saturday night (or early hours of Sunday morning) and Sunday morning saw dozens of Rovers, wet through by the long rain-soaked grass, on a mushrooming expedition in the large field and around the hangars. The Scout Spirit had not been dampened.

Fifty nine Rovers were present on the Saturday and seventy three on the Sunday, representing the following Crews :-

<u>Mid-Beds. (Bedford &amp; District Association)</u>		1st.Beds: (Oneasters)
15th.Beds: (St.Mary's, Bedford),		94th.Beds: (St.Paul's Methodist)
<u>South Beds: (Dunstable Association)</u>		
30th.Beds: (Dunstable),		84th.Beds: (Houghton Regis)
<u>South Beds: (Luton Association)</u>		3rd.Beds: (1st. Luton),
93rd.Beds: (Christchurch) 5th. Luton.		91st. " (7th. " ),
81st " (8th. Luton)		97th. " (St.Andrew's) 9th.L
89th. " (Bury Park) 10th "		112th. " (High Town Methodist).
<u>South Beds: (Leighton Association)</u>		
25th. Beds: (1st. Leighton Buzzard).		

There were also several Scouters from the 78th.Beds. (Cardington) Troop - and one or two representatives from neighbouring counties.

The week-end included visits to the airship mooring mast, the wireless and meteorological tower, and the aircraft section of the Imperial War Museum (which brought back memories of the airships R.33 and R.101). The Assistant Camp Chief from Gilwell - 'Tiny' Chamberlain attended on the Sunday and gave a most interesting address on "Hiking with a purpose". A demonstration of advanced knotting and bridge-building was also part of the programme.

Fewer troops went into camp this year, but five King's Scouts from the District were again enabled to attend the St.George's Day Service in St.George's Chapel, Windsor, on this occasion being accompanied by the L.A. Secretary. The Headmaster of Bedford again allowed the School Chapel to be used for the local Service, this being conducted by the Rev: Hawker, of St.Paul's.

The District was not so successful in competitions this year. The 18th. (B.M.S) won the Woodcraft Flag and were second in the Wolf Skin and Signalling Shield but were handicapped in the Group Flag in not having a Rover Crew. Nevertheless they finished second, a very creditable performance. the 15th.Beds. (St. Mary's) finished third.

Early in the year (1936) the parishes of Houghton Conquest and Haynes were transferred from South to Mid-Beds. and played under the Bedford L.A.. A Troop was formed at Haynes and later a Pack added, thus a flourishing little Group came into being. This was perhaps the most pleasing feature of the year. No Groups were closed down, but some were in a more or less precarious state. There was again a decrease in the numbers of Cubs and Scouts but Rovers were still on the increase. The 94th.Beds. formerly St.Paul's Methodist, changed their registration from a 'controlled' to an 'open' Group. Also the 15th.Beds.(St.Mary's) had a tough (but successful) fight to prevent the Group from becoming 'controlled'

The 18th. and 94th.Beds. Groups still had Sea Scout sections for Senior Scouts. It is true that the 18th. submitted a 'nil' return because they were not yet fully registered as Sea Scouts. The 94th. on the other hand now had decided to run their Sea Scouts as a distinct unit.

They towed their guardship from its moorings to St.Mary's Embankment during July and a pleasing little ceremony took place when it was named "The Sea-gull" by Lady Bowring, the wife of the A.C.C. Sea Scouts. The Mayor of Bedford, Alderman Horace Neate was present and addressed the boys, congratulating them on their enterprise and encouraging other Groups to follow their example. It is, however, sad to relate that within a day or two of "The Seagull's" return to her moorings she was wantonly damaged by some unknown person or persons who smashed through her outer covering just above the water line, apparently with an axe. About the same time a canoe belonging to the troop which was chained to a stake on the bank was holed in three places and rendered practically useless. As the troop had been allowed the use of a private site for mooring purposes and had been unmolested for a long time the recurrence of hooliganism was the source of very great disappointment and not a little discouragement

Rover increase, however, is an encouragement. Two Moats were held during the year - the first at Westoning on the afternoon of the competition for the Totem Pole, when, as they asked for another, it was agreed to hold one in the Autumn in the South of the County. This was arranged for the week-end September 26th - 27th at Kimpton Bottom Lido, with an attractive programme of Swimming sports, but the weather caused a washout. For the earlier Totem competition the Crews were not required to camp at Westoning over the week end ( July 4th - 5th) - although all three Bedford Crews did - the competition beginning on the Sunday



that an Activity Log must be kept as from the beginning of the year. This Log was defined as "Some original work either in regard to Nature Study, Archeology, Geology, Town Planning, Local History, Topography etc.....The account should, if possible, be illustrated with drawings, photos, plants etc., and should show briefly how the Crew had set about their work and what part the several members of the Crew contributed."

This produced some quite good results, though one or two Crews hardly seemed to have given much attention to the written word as to what was required. In Bedford there had been great building activity. One Crew (the 15th.) traced over the last twenty years the gradual building over of green fields and the coming into existence of a new district, prefacing their work with a discussion as to what the community might reasonably expect from the Authorities when such things were happening. In another part of the County a Crew (30th.) attempted to reconstruct the past by careful archeological digging and the noting of the results, getting some of their finds "vetted" by the British Museum. These two Logs received maximum marks. In the overall competition 30th.Beds (Dunstable) just beat the 15th.Beds to win the Totem. 15th. were second; 94th. were 4th.

Otherwise in County Competitions none of the sections were successful the best performances being :- Wolf Cub Challenge Skin: 7th.Beds (Kempston) - third; Woodcraft Challenge Flag: 15th.Beds.(St.Mary's) - second, 8th.Beds (Queen's Park), fourth; County Signalling Shield: 15th.Beds - third. The Group Challenge Flag - 15th.Beds (St.Mary's) second.

Locally an Ambulance Competition was instituted for the 'Walter Attenborough' Challenge Cup. This was won by the 15th.Beds.(St.Mary's).

Slightly more camping was done this year. Early in the year Bedford, with the rest of the country mourned the death of H.M. King George V.

1937 proved a very eventful year. During the year the District suffered a sad loss in the death of Major H. J. Randall, Chairman of the Local Association. Mr. P. A. Bird, Chairman of the Executive was appointed his successor. Also Mr. W. Serrall, for several years L. A. Secretary, was compelled through pressure of work to resign. His place was taken by Mr. Norman Allen who, however, left Bedford soon afterwards and Mr. F. Marshall was then appointed.

Two new Groups (55th.Beds: Silver Jubilee School and 61st.Beds: Wootton) were formed and one (19th.Beds: St.Martin's) re-registered; 20th.Beds:(Goldington) was closed down after a period of difficulties. One or two of the village Groups were having a difficult time - chiefly through lack of Scouters - but this was overcome (temporarily at least) by Rovers 'adopting' the Troops. It was satisfactory to note that 12 Rover Scouts in the District (10 of them from the 15th; and 2 from the 94th) had taken out Warrants. In overall Census figures there was a nett increase of 108. Rovering activities were again on the increase. In addition to the Rover Totem competition a Rover Cycle Marathon was organised for week-end June 12th -13th. Eighteen teams of two entered but the weather was so bad that 10 of these dropped out shortly after the start. Of the remaining eight, seven finished the course. It was won by 97th.Beds: with 15th.Beds:"B" team runners-up. The 15th:"A" finished sixth. The Rover Totem was also won by 97th.Beds (St.Andrew's, Luton). This time the competition included camping. 15th. were unfortunate in having a big Grew in camp and were split into two teams, the average being taken at the close. They were placed equal third with 30th.Beds: This competition was held on the same week-end as the Wolf Skin and Signalling Shield competitions (3rd. - 4th.July). Mid Beds: produced no winners but in the Signalling Shield 15th.Beds:(St.Mary's) were second and 5th.Beds:(Bedford School) third. There was a very good entry for the Woodcraft Challenge Flag competition at Ampthill Park - week-end 12th - 13th. June - but it was completely spoilt by a persistent downpour of rain. The camp continued but judging was quite impossible. The competition (and consequently the Group Flag) was therefore declared void.

This was a very busy year with the Coronation Celebrations and a World Jamboree to occupy our planning intentions. Some of the local events were :-

A joint service for Scouts and Guides in St.Paul's Church, Bedford, in February, on the occasion of the birthday of the Chief Scout and Chief Guide. The Scouts afterwards paraded in the courtyard of the Modern School, where they were inspected by Lord Luke of Pavenham, President of the County Association, who also presented Woodbadges to several successful Scouters.

Empire Day was observed by saluting the flag on St.Peter's Green, Bedford, at 7 a.m. on the morning of 24th. May.

St.George's Day was recognised by a "Scouts' Own", followed by a sing-song for all sections in the Bunyan Meeting Hall on 23rd.April.



Several local Troops again spent Whitsun in camp at Westoning. What was so special about Westoning?, this year in particular? Of course it was not known at the time, but it was destined to be the last County camp to be held at Westoning. For the benefit of newcomers to Scouting, I will relate some of my experiences at the Whitsun Camp (actually of the previous year). I well remember leaving Bedford at 2 p.m. on the Saturday, in the pouring rain - and travelling by cycle via Ampthill, and arriving at Westoning at 3.30 p.m. It had been taken on ahead by lorry. It was fine when we arrived and we commenced pitching camp. Great care was taken over this as it was a competition camp.

As all other Troops were similarly engaged the time passed uneventfully until evening. Then came the time for "Camp Fire" which was several fields away. We crossed two streams, various hedges, and arrived, but alas, soon after Camp Fire was opened rain came on and it was decided to continue in a large outbuilding at the Manor, so back we trekked. It was now getting dark and, being Scouts, we did not bother to use the bridges but negotiated the streams as best we could. I remember seeing one of the 15th (St. Mary's) - trying to emulate his O.S.M. who had jumped the stream - full face downwards in the all too plentiful red mud at the bottom of the stream. Leaving him to salvage himself, we reached the building to continue the Camp Fire, which happened to be my first - and what a first - it was a smasher.

After a very cold night Sunday morning was bright, and it was spent exploring the countryside. After a very good pre-war camp dinner we all attended "Scouts' Own" on the Manor lawn, followed by a good tea provided by the County Commissioner. We arrived back at camp at 4.30 p.m. and had another tea. Sunday evening was supposed to have been spent quietly, but alas! sides were picked for the biggest "Rugger-own-British Bulldog" match I have ever seen. The contestants were 15th (St. Mary's Madmen) and 1st. (Oneaster Whippets) versus 7th (Kempston Killers) and 97th (St. Andrew's Luton Lunatics). It became a 'free for all' and there were several minor casualties, but what did it matter? In those days we had never heard of clothing rationing. Who won? Nobody seemed to know - or care. (Though it was later ascertained that the Madmen and Whippets had triumphed 7 - 5) Anyway we retired early that night and were asleep long before "Lights Out".

Monday morning was a headache for the village tuck-shop proprietors. Almost as soon as they opened they were sold out of 'pop' and sweets. After early dinner we prepared for the great event - the Treasure Hunt. For two hours every

Troop was at grips with each other for that treasure. I cannot recall who won, but the "treasure" was eight bottles of "pop" and bags of sweets. Having seen the winners collect their booty, we assembled on the lawn for the presentation of camping prizes. The winners were 81st.Beds.(a Luton Troop), with ourselves (1st. Beds), 7th, 18th and 30th (Dunstable) in second place. We were well pleased, but could not help thinking if we had not trapped a Commissioner in our grease pit we might have been winners.

Having struck camp, we left at 7 p.m. but looking forward to the next Whitsun, having had such a grand time. (Surely those who were present will never forget those Whitsun Camps, and I will close with the Westoning version of the "Gillwell song" - 'Back to West'ning, happy land, I'm going to work my ticket if I can'.

K.J.W. (1st.Beds)

A very successful "Scout Week", organised by the Local Association, was held in Mill Meadows in June. Several times in the past the 'Meadows' had been 'transformed', but on this occasion a 'Model Camp' was held from Thursday 24th. to Sunday 27th.June. Maybe on several occasions 'Model Camps' have been erected for a day or two, being manned in the day-time, but this camp was a real one, with Scouts actually camping and sleeping out. Most of the Troops in the District took part and a Camp Competition was organised, for which a trophy was presented. A Swimming Gala, Boxing and other competitions were also held, together with a competition for Wolf Cubs. A Grand "Camp Fire" was held on the Saturday evening to which the Girl Guides were invited and in which the public joined. This was conducted by District Scoutmaster Fred Loesley. At this Camp Fire the Chief Scout's address to the Scouts of the Empire was broadcast. It is also noteworthy that during the Camp a river rescue was effected by P.L. A. Bennett of the 43rd.Beds.(Haynes) Troop. The Camping competition for the "Bouring Trophy" was won by the 15th.Beds.(St.Mary's, Bedford) Troop; and the Cub Totem by 18th.Beds.(Bedford Modern School) Pack.

A Wolf Cub Camp was held at Kempston (on what is now Addison Howard Park) at the week-end Friday - Sunday 10th - 12th.September. Five Packs were represented - 7th, 15th, 65th, 78th and 94th, together with several Scouters. The EVENT of the year, of course, was the 5th.World Jamboree at Veghelensang, in Holland.



CENSUS covering 1930 - 1939 period.

4952.	1st.Beds.(Onesters)		
4953.	2nd "		Disbanded 1933
4954.	4th " ( Q.P. Moravian)		" 1932
4955.	5th " (Bedford School)		
4956.	6th " (St.Peter's Moravian)		Disbanded 1933
4967.	7th " (Kempston)		
14489.	8th " (Queen's Park)	Registered 1933	
4958.	11th " (St.Paul's C of E.)		
4959.	14th " (Rushmoor School)		
4960.	15th " (St.Mary's, Bedford)		
4961.	18th " (Bedford Modern School)		
4962.	19th " (St.Martin's)	Absorbed by 27th(1933) Re-reg:1937	
14584.	20th " (Goldington)	Registered 1933.	Disbanded 1937
4963.	27th " (St.Peter's Own)		" 1935
4964.	29th " (Training College School)		
4965.	31st " (Blenheim)		Disbanded 1932
4966.	34th " (Kempston Bunyan)		" 1932
17155.	35th " (Stowastby)	Registered 1935	
4967.	40th " (Eaton Socon)		Transferred to St.Herts L.A.1934
17747.	43rd " (Haynes)	Registered 1936	
18806.	55th " (Silver Jubilee School)	Registered 1937	
17156.	60th " (B. Rd. Meth)	Disbanded 1929; re-reg: 1936;	Disbanded 1938.
18891.	61st " (Wootton)	Registered 1937.	
19701.	64th " (Roxton)	" 1938.	
4969.	65th " (St.Cuthbert's)		
15774.	78th " (Cardington)	Registered 1934	
9629.	90th " (Bunyan Meeting)		
4970.	94th " (St.Paul's Methodist)		
4971.	101st " (Kempston C of E.)		
11136	104th " (Marston Mortayne)	Reg: 1930; Disb: 1935; Re-reg:1938.	
11459.	105th " (Holy Trinity)	Reg: 1930; Disband: 1931 (absorbed by 11th.Beds)	
12297.	114th " (Wilshamstead)	Registered 1931.	
12290.	115th " (Willington)	" 1931.	

In early March, 1938, the County Commissioner - Mr. Howard Spensley, was 'called to Higher Service' and this was a great loss to Bedfordshire in more ways than one. The future of the Whitsun County Camp was in the balance, as also so were the competitions normally held at Westoning Manor. However, Captain G.H. Starey, who succeeded Mr. Spensley as County Commissioner, made available Milton Ernest Hall for the Wolf Skin competition, and Yarrow Field, Milton Ernest for the Rover Totem competition. For Whitsun Camp Troops made their own arrangements.

It was a difficult year in many respects. Two Groups in particular were hard pressed to keep the 8th. Scout Law. The 15th., having rented a piece of land at Elstow and erected their own Headquarters, eagerly awaited the opening ceremony. Instead, they arrived one morning in January, following a gale, to find a wreckage spread across the field. The 94th. Beds., after gallant and sustained effort to maintain the guardship "Seagull" free from sabotage and interference, were reluctantly compelled to dispose of it; which meant they had to rely on canoes for Sea Scout activities. Both Groups had to start again from scratch, but they DID manage to 'smile and whistle'.

Numerically figures had again improved. The 60th. Beds (Bromham Road Methodist) had again closed down, but 104th. Beds (Marston Morsetyne) re-opened; one new Group (Pack) - 64th. - was formed at Roughton. Rovers continued on the increase. Crews were started in 18th. Beds. (Bedford Modern School) and 7th. Beds. (Kempston) Groups, though the latter did not register as a Crew.

Mid-Beds. did very well in County Competitions -

<u>Woodcraft Flag</u> (Amptwell Park - 25/26th. June)	1st: 5th. Beds (Bedford School);
	2nd: 15th. " (St. Mary's)
<u>Signalling Shield</u> ( " " - 9th. July)	2nd: 15th " "
<u>Wolf Skin</u> (Milton Ernest Hall - 9th " )	Winners: 18th. Beds (Modern School)
<u>Rover Totem</u> (Yarrow Field, Milton Ernest - 9/10th July)	2nd: 15th. Beds:
<u>Group Challenge Flag</u>	Winners: 15th. Beds. (St. Mary's, Bedford)

The Local Association Ambulance Cup was won by 7th. Beds. (Kempston)

St. George's Day and Empire Day were observed in traditional manner, the former by a "Cubs' Own" and "Scout's Own" followed by sing-song in Bedford Modern School hall; the latter by parade on St. Peter's Green at 7 a.m. A Scout Week was held in July (but no camp this year).

Most Troops held camps during the year and, apart from the difficulties



already mentioned activity continued as normal, but the European Political Crisis cast its ominous shadow over all, specially during late August.

Shortly after Sir Charles Bowring made his Annual Report for 1938, he himself resigned his appointment as District Commissioner, and handed over to his successor, Lt. Col. H. T. Craig - lately retired from the Indian Army. After the Munich Crisis - in late September - however, things more or less settled down again and 1939 started full of promise.

Camping continued as usual, but since 'Munich' Air Raid Evacuations & Civil Defence items had become part of the Scout Training and Scouts took part in one or two Civil Defence demonstrations and exercises in Russell Park. Once again Troops made their own Whitsun Camp arrangements.

St. George's Day was observed in a slightly different way, a QUERY HUNT devised by the new D.C. Fifteen patrols took part, meeting at Bedford Modern School at 3 p.m. where they were given instructions as to their starting point (Scouters being stationed at various parts of the District to act as examiners) Each had a different starting point but all had to visit each point in turn. The competition closed at about 6 p.m. with tea in the Faldo Road Community Hall. After a Scouts' Own and a sing song the "Craig Trophy" was presented to the winners - 15th.Beds.(St.Mary's, Bedford), 18th.Beds.(Bedford Modern School) were runners-up and 19th.Beds.(St.Martin's) third. In the Local Ambulance Cup Competition the 15th.Beds. regained the trophy from 7th.Beds (Kempston). 94th.Beds (Sea Scouts) were runners up.

The District did well again in County Competitions :-

Wolf Skin (Amphill Park - 10th June) won by 18th.Beds.(Bedford Modern School)  
Signalling Shield ( ditto ) 15th. " fourth.  
Woodcraft Challenge Flag (Amphill Park) " " 15th.Beds.(St.Marys, Bedford)  
Rover Totem (Yarrow Field, Milton Ernest W/S 24th/25th.June. won by 15th.Beds;  
Group Challenge - retained by 15th.Beds until March 1940.

Other local events were - Church Parade at St.Paul's Church on 20th. February to commemorate the birthdays of Chief Scout & Chief Guide; District Cub Training Course at B.M.S. during March; Empire Day Parade on St.Peter's Green at 7 a.m; Saturday 3rd.June - Opening of the 15th.Beds. Headquarters at Wistow by Rev. A. G. Brown former G.S.M. and Founder of the Group.

Lt. Col. Craig resigned his appointment as D.C. during April. He was succeeded by Mr. F.S.Smith. In spite of a good year (the Scout Year in those days ended in September) it ended with all Scouts on a War-Time footing.