

# BEDFORD & DISTRICT LOCAL ASSOCIATION (1939 - 1945)

(World War II Census)

County No.	Group.	I.H.Q. Regn.	
1st.Beds:	Onesters	4952	
5th "	Bedford School	4955	
7th "	Kempston.	4957	
8th "	Queen's Park.	14489	
14th "	Rushmoor School.	4959	
15th "	St.Mary's, Bedford.	4960	
18th "	Bedford Modern School	4961	
29th "	Training College "	4964	(Pack only)
55th "	Silver Jubilee "	18806	
61st "	Wootton	18891	
90th "	Bunyan	9629	
94th "	St.Paul's Methodist	4970	
104th "	Marston Mortayne.	19246	
95th.Beds:	Owen's School		Evacuated School Groups
96th "	Rye Grammar School		
64th "	Holy Trinity		(Pack)
19th.Beds:	St.Martin's		
20th "	Goldingstone		
27th "	St.Peter's	23177	
23rd "	Bromham		
35th "	Stewartby	23678	
41st "	Clapham	24152	REGISTERED or RE-REGISTERED During the War
67th "	Oakley	*****	
91st "	Harpur Central School.	*****	
105th "	Amphill Road - - -		
118th "	Cranfield.	24300	
117th "	Biddenham	*****	
122nd "	Civil Defence Troop	*****	
11th.Beds.	St.Paul's C of E.	4958	
19th "	St.Martin's (Troop)	18626	
43rd "	Haynes	17747	
65th "	St.Guthbert's	4969	DISBANDED during the War
78th "	Cardington.	15774	
101st "	Kempston C of E	4971	or just after
104th "	Wilshamstead	12297	
115th "	Willington	12290	

+ those Groups above marked \*\*\*\*\*

\* also re-registered



## *Local Scouting History*

### *World War II Period (1939 - 1947)*

Although in most respects 1939 was a very successful year for Scouting, quite early there were war clouds gathering on the horizon and the dull rumblings of the approaching storm. By September war was inevitable and the evacuation from London commenced. The Cattle Market - or Fairground as it then was - became transformed into a large canvas camp manned by Rover Scouts and representatives of the several local authorities and served as a distribution centre for re-housing the evacuees who were arriving regularly from St. Pancras.

Scouts were out in force, meeting the trains at Midland Road station, marshalling the arrivals to the Centre and then conducting them to their new 'homes'. This 'operation' was completed in about three days and carried out efficiently. The Scouts of Bedford were not found unprepared and this was one of their finest moments.

War was declared on Sunday 3rd. September and almost overnight conditions were changed and these new conditions must be faced. In the first place most of the Scouters and Rovers, being of military age, were seen called up into H.M. Forces or Civil Defence Services, leaving many Troops completely devoid of Scouters. The future of Scouting lay in the hands of the Patrol Leaders and the fact that Scouting emerged from the conflagration stronger than ever bears witness to the way they rose magnificently to the occasion and fully realised their tremendous responsibility.

Getting accustomed to the new conditions was by no means easy. Training was now centred around Air Raid Precautions and Civil Defence, and for the first few months gas-masks had to be carried constantly (and they could become very cumbersome). Meeting times had to be changed for many Troops and in some cases Scout headquarters were requisitioned for military or Civil Defence purposes.

Coming as it did, late in the year, this training worked quite well into winter programmes but with the arrival of Spring 1940 restrictions became a bit irksome - especially as the war on the Western Front seemed to be at a standstill and the possibility of air raids seemed remote. Attention was turned to the Russia - Finland war which had broken out - and that was far enough away.

Late spring, however, saw the invasion of Norway, France and the Low Countries and after the evacuation of Dunkirk all became as it were in the front line and 'on duty' all the time. Hardly a day or night went by without an air raid warning, especially round about September and October when the Battle of Britain was at its height.



During this period and indeed throughout the remainder of the war, many Scouts were doing messenger and other duties, often all night, with the Civil Defence services and quite a few Meritorious Service Awards were gained.

The evacuees settled down quite well in the district and several joined local Groups, in addition to two large Troops attached to Schools evacuated (Owen's School and Rye Grammar School), which took Bedford Registration numbers.

Scouts had adapted themselves well to war-time conditions but the greatest concern at this time was the prohibition of all camping. Later this ban was lifted and several interesting camps were held. These were mostly at Group level.

After the combined effort during 'the Evacuation', for various reasons, Scout Groups mostly operated singly. The next occasion when they were all brought together was on Saturday 18th January, 1941, at the Memorial Service to the late Chief Scout and Founder of the Movement - Lord Baden-Powell - who was 'called to higher Service' on the 8th January. The Service was held in St. Paul's Church, which was packed to capacity by members of the Scout and Guide Movements. In his address the County Commissioner - Mr - Captain S. H. Starey - gave a brief outline of the life story of 'B.P.' as the Chief was lovingly known.

In October of the same year several Troops met at the 94th Beds: Sea Scout Headquarters for a special Scouts' Own, this being the occasion of the Cornwell Scout award to Troop Leader Harold Parry of the 94th.

In those days very few Groups had Headquarters which they could call their own and the 94th. were considered fortunate in obtaining a lease on the buildings in Duckmill Lane, near the weir, which had an ideal situation. The Headquarters was opened by the I.S.Q. Commissioner for Sea Scouts, Admiral Campbell on Friday 14th June, 1940 (The day the German army entered Paris). Incidentally it was round about this time that 94th. discontinued 'Land' Scouts. (At one time they had five Sections in the Group - Wolf Cubs; Boy Scouts; Sea Scouts; Senior Scouts; Rovers. a record shared only with 18th Beds: (Modern School) and 15th: (St. Mary's) - who had Air Scouts instead of Sea Scouts) Of course no Group had sufficient Scouter man-power to maintain so many branches so this happy situation did not last long. Three sections was more than most could manage.

Although by 1941 the ban on camping had been lifted no County or District events had been organised, it was a great occasion, therefore, when we received a visit from the new Chief - Lord Somers. This Rally was held in the grounds of Dr. Barnardo Howard Home, Cardington Road, and was made a County event.



This was on Saturday 16th. October 1943 and is reported more fully elsewhere. (Under "Chief Scout's Visit")

In the meantime there had been one very successful District Rally in 1942 - a detailed report of which is included herewith.\* *(At close of record)*

A second Rally was held in Ellis & Everard's field, Fenlake, at the week-end Friday 7th. to Sunday 9th. July, 1944. This could well be termed the 'Austerity Rally' for although on all fronts the Allied Forces were advancing and on the Home front there was less tension, the war was by no means over and the accent was still on Civil Defence - and we were on our 5th year of rationing. It was a 'do it yourself' effort and no dignitaries were invited for special tasks. The Opening Ceremony was performed by Alderman A. L. Nicholls (who was one of us, for he was the L.A. Chairman) and fifteen Groups were represented (three more than at the 1942 Rally). They were:- 1st.Beds.(Onesters); 5th.Beds.(Bedford School); 7th.Beds.(Kempston); 8th.Beds.(Queen's Park); 11th.Beds.(St.Paul's); 15th.Beds.(St.Mary's, Bedford); 18th.Beds.(Bedford Modern Sch.); 27th.Beds.(St.Peter's); 55th.Beds.(Silver Jubilee School); 61st.Beds.(Wootton); 90th.Beds.(Bunyan); 91st.Beds.(Harpur Central School); 94th.Beds.(Sea Scouts); 95th.Beds.(Owens School); 96th.Beds. (Rye Grammar School).

Camp was pitched on Friday evening and at one time it looked as if it would be a wet week-end but rain cleared by Saturday. After the Opening at 3 p.m. the afternoon was almost wholly given to Wolf Cub demonstrations, games and Jungle Dances. No Scout demonstrations were performed in the Arena - all being carried out on the respective camp-sites. There was plenty of activity.

Rovers were also much in evidence, three Crews being well represented, each with its responsibility - 15th.Beds (Ambulance duty), 55th.Beds (I/c Camp hygiene), 94th.Beds. (Camp maintenance - in which capacity they built a useful step-bridge over the fence to enable the public to enter from the riverside path - for at that time there was no entrance).

Evening was spent on Scout Sports, finishing with a Six-a-side Rugger knock-out tournament in the final of which 94th beat 1st: (the 15th. and 5th.Beds. were third & fourth) The result of the Sports was 1. 1st.Beds.(Onesters); 2. 94th Beds (Sea Scouts); 3. 90th.Beds.(Bunyan); 4. 15th.Beds(St. Mary's, Bedford). 5. 8th.Beds.(Queen's Park). Ten Troops entered. The evening was brought to a close with a 'utility' Camp Fire, ably arranged and conducted by the Troop Leaders' Council. Most Troops and several Guide Companies were present.

Heavy rain on the Saturday night cleared sufficiently to enable Sunday morning activities to be carried out but the Scouts' Own arranged for the Sunday afternoon was rained off. However, a Scouters' Pow-wow took place in one of the larger tents. On the whole it was a great success. The Camp Chief again was the D.C. Mr. F. W. Kuhlicke with Deputies G.S.M. E. A. Pilgrim (Scouts) and G.S.M. R. W. Turner (Rovers).

This was actually the last District event of the war years. Groups continued their Scouting activities but on the 'war stage' scenes were changing so rapidly that minds were focussed on them rather than 'scouting'. Such local efforts as "Wings for Victory" and "Salute the Soldier" Weeks were organised and of course Scouts took part in their particular areas and then, suddenly it seemed, came Victory in Europe on 8th May 1945 and there was a time of spontaneous celebration. Then on 15th August came victory in Japan and more celebrations.

During a period of fast moving events occurred the 'Call to Higher Service' of Lord Somers (August 1944) and the election of Lord Rowallan as Chief Scout (February 1945). It would be wrong to say they passed unnoticed but these important events did not receive the national or local publicity they would have done in normal times.

With the cessation of hostilities things did not return to normal immediately (in fact some would say they never did). Several Groups which survived the actual war time now collapsed, for National Service was still in force and would-be Scouters were still being called up. The evacuated Groups returned to their own Associations.

According to available L.A. Records it was not until 1947 that Groups (and Associations) had a National Re-registration, so for records purposes we include 1947 in our war-time period. By then, after times of varied and varying experiences things were at last on their way towards 'Post War Scouting'.



\* SCOUT RALLY (Saturday 27th - Sunday 28th. June 1942) In aid of 'B.P.' Memorial Fund.

Troops of Boy Scouts, formed in a vast semi-circle, with numerous packs of Wolf Cubs in the centre, and each complete with Colours and Colour Parties, presented a colourful spectacle at the opening by the Mayor (Mr. A. M. Dudeney) of the grand Bedford and District Scout Rally on Saturday.

The event took place in Ellis & Everard's field, next to the Girls' Modern School.

The Mayor (also President of the Local Association) expressed his pleasure at seeing this fine Rally, and of the grand work done by the Movement in the past. Also, he said, there will be even greater opportunity in the future,

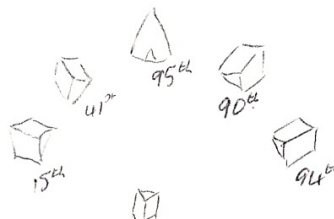
The breaking of the flag was followed by a general salute. An inspection of the parade was then made by the County Commissioner (Capt. S. H. Starey) the District Commissioner (Mr. F. W. Kuhlicke) and the Mayor.

A demonstration of activities which take place at Pack meetings was given by the Cubs, under the supervision of Miss B. Hedley (A.D.C. Wolf Cubs). This consisted of two games "Skinning the Snake" and "Hanging out the Washing", Physical jerks, and two Jungle Dances which were most interesting.

The 5th.Beds: (Bedford School) Troop gave an impressive physical training display - perfect in timing and rhythm, followed by a display of gymnastics.

Then came TENT PITCHING for which 15 minutes were allowed (10 minutes to pitch, 5 to strike), the object being to show that a whole camp could be pitched very quickly when proper teamwork is used. Tents were pitched in a 'model camp' semi-circular formation and all six entries were up in well under the given time. Teams were - 15th.Beds: Crew, 15th.Beds: Troop, 41st.Beds: (Clapham), 90th.Beds: (Bunyan), 94th.Beds: (Sea Scouts) and 95th.Beds: (Owen's School)

'I was very much impressed' writes the "Bedford Record and Circular" Reporter 'at the efficient manner of the demonstration. In a few minutes the tents had been erected, inspected by the District Commissioner and G.S.M. R. Turner, dismantled and neatly packed away.



Next was an exhibition of mass Semaphore and Morse signalling by the 18th.Beds: (Bedford Modern School) and the 95th.Beds: (Owen's School) and the 96th.Beds. (Rye Grammar School) Troops, and it was clear that a keen and high standard of proficiency had been reached.

The 41st.Beds: (Clapham) Troop proved themselves expert gymnasts, as was seen by their feat of diving through hoops.

During the ensuing interval the public took the opportunity of inspecting the model camp. About 30 tents were pitched on the east side of the field, and near several of them in preparation for tea, fires had already been lit by those Scouts who were to spend the night in camp. A bivouac built of rushes captured much admiration, especially among the younger generation. Another thing in the same camp (that of the 15th. Beds) to claim attention was the weird and mysterious Totem Pole at its entrance. This was the County Rover Totem which was won by the Crew.

In the evening the activities were resumed with a display by the 94th.Beds: (Sea Scouts) on the bank of the river. Various methods of rescue from the water and an exhibition of boat drill were seen. The 7th.Beds: (Kempston) Troop made a neat raft entirely from reeds, groundsheets and staves. This was paddled very successfully over the river several times.

A clever example of pioneering, an aerial runway, high over the river, was made by the Rovers of the 7th. and 94th.Beds. under the supervision of R.S.L. C. W. Denton. (During that evening and on Sunday a steady stream of people had the enjoyable experience of swiftly crossing the river by this method). Other feats of pioneering to be seen were the strong monkey bridge, built by the 5th.Beds: (Bedford School) and the signalling tower built by the 96th.Beds (Rye Grammar School). Both were exceedingly strong structures and were a credit to the Troops concerned.

A combined A.R.P. and First Aid display followed. Fires were seen extinguished with stirrup pumps, and casualties were dealt with very effectively. Troops taking part were 1st.Beds: (Onesters), 8th.Beds: (Queen's Park), 15th.Beds: (St. Mary's) - Fire Parties, 55th.Beds (Silver Jubilee) and 101st. Beds (Kempston C of E) - First Aid parties. All were very highly commended by the Civil Defence Authorities. This display was supervised by S.M. F. Wicksen (8th.Beds) assisted by A.S.M. R. Wiles (55th.Beds).

An exhibition of Scouting Games in the Arena proved very popular, not so much for the skill displayed as for the vigour put into the effort.



Owen's School Troop put on an extra rough game of 'British Bulldog' but even this was made to appear quite gentle compared with the final game of 'Rugsec' between the 15th and the 94th. Beds. 94th. were slightly the heavier side but 15th. appeared faster, not that it mattered, for as things were neither could claim any advantage. Norman Creighton was outstanding for 94th. and made some determined breaks but he never managed to get past the 15th. full back - who was unrecognisable, having sustained a broken nose early in the game. Result was a goalless draw between two very tough teams. (Incidentally the 15th. back turned out to be the Camp M.O)

This was followed by a Camp sing-song. Popular Scout songs, rounds and yells were heard, and Mr. H. J. Colson F.R.C.O conducted. The hymn "Jerusalem" was sung and finally "The King" and the lowering of flags concluded the day's proceedings. The new Chairman of the L.A. (Mr. F. Nicholls) was amongst those present.

There was a slight rain on Sunday morning but this soon cleared. Camp Flagbreak at 9 o'clock was conducted by G.S.M. E. Pilgrim (94th) and G.S.M. R. Turner (15th); and Orders of the day were read by S.M. F. Wicksen (8th). After the camp site had been cleared of all litter a bathing parade was held at Newnham Baths.

The Public were again admitted to the camp in the afternoon and a Scouts' Own Service, beautiful in its simplicity, concluded the Rally. It was conducted by Rev: J. C. Williams (Director of Religious Broadcasting), and the congregation included a number of Guides and Rangers. Music was provided by Bedford Trades Band.

The Service began with the National Anthem, followed by the singing of the hymn "City of God". Prayers were said by Rev: E.J. Bennett. The re-affirmation of the Promises followed, Capt: Stacey leading the Scouts and Guides and Miss Hedley the Cubs. A.D.C. W. T. Nye read the Scout Law, while all stood at the alert. This was followed by the reading - Matt: 25 vs: 1 - 13 - by the D.C. A collection was taken in aid of the Lord Mayor's Air Raid Relief Fund.

Those present (in addition to those already mentioned) included the Mayor & Mayoress, Mrs. Knight-Watson, Group Capt: S. Smith (A.D.C. Air Scouts), Miss E.R. Hewatson (Divis: Comm: Guides) and Mr. H. Parrett (Deputy Camp Chief).

The CAMP CHIEF for the RALLY was D.C. F. W. Kuhlioke with G.S.M. E. A. Pilgrim and S.M. F.T. Wicksen (Duty Officers) and G.S.M. R. W. Turner (Medical Officer) as DEPUTIES.