



**A
HISTORY
OF
OUSE VALLEY
DISTRICT
BEDFORDSHIRE**



OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

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Foreword

This history has been compiled from records which are lodged in Bedfordshire County Records Office, Bedfordshire County Scout Archive records, local knowledge and help from members from the District both past and present. All this information has been most helpful and has been gratefully received.

Any further information will be appreciated and will be included in further reprints as and when required.

David R Shaw
56 High Street,
Riseley,
Bedford
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April 1998

Ouse Valley District

HINWICK- 1909
NORTH BEDS- 1921
OUSE VALLEY- 197?

H.Q. Registration Numbers

1921 23032
1938 26887
10109

District Leaders

North Beds

Lt. Col. R.R.B.Orlebar DC, Captain Starey DC, Brian Halling DC, Robert Henderson-Begg DC,

OUSE VALLEY

John Orritt DC, David Shaw DC, Ralph Sewell DC, Carolyn Knight DC, Bill Rutter ADC Cubs, Laurie Fellerman ADC Cubs, Fran Orford ADC Cubs, Bob Wickens ADC Cubs, Pauline Owen DCSL, Kevin Cantwell ADC Cubs, Brian Knight ADC General Duties.

PARISHES COVERED-

TURVEY, STEVINGTON, CARLTON, CHELLINGTON, HARROLD, ODELL, PAVENHAM, FELMERSHAM, MILTON ERNEST, BLETSOE THURLEIGH, SHARNBROOK, BOLNHURST, KEYSOE, COLMWORTH, RISELEY, KNOTTING, PODDINGTON, WYMINGTON, MELCHBOURNE, SWINESHEAD, PERTENHALL, DEAN, SHELTON, LITTLE STAUGHTON,

North Bedfordshire District(later Ouse Valley)

When Bedfordshire was first divided into Districts there were four, Borough of Bedford; Borough of Luton; North Bedfordshire and South Bedfordshire (this was in 1910). of these districts up to 1968 only one remained in its original form, this was North Bedfordshire which was virtually unchanged.

In the County Handbook which was issued annually in the years 1934 to 1939, there appeared a Census and Directory of all the Local Associations and Groups in the County. That of North Beds (sometimes known as Hinwick and District L. A.) appeared regularly year by year, together with Annual Report, but at the County Whitsun Camp one rarely, if ever, met up with a Troop from North Beds (a possible exception being 51st Odell).

A fairly lengthy report in 1950 by the then County Commissioner Capt. S.H.Starey, did much to explain the reason why. In attempting a survey of the district it becomes very plain that the report is by no means exaggerated. The district (now Ouse Valley) certainly spreads right across the County and unless one has private transport communication and travel are almost impossible. Public Services are practically nil, and there is not one town in the whole area. Some of the headquarters were actually on the Northampton side of the border. Harrold and Sharnbrook are probably the biggest villages.

OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

The most successful undoubtedly is the 51st Beds(Odell) which in 1979 celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Founded in 1929 the Troop has seen over 60 years of unbroken service, added a Cub Pack to its strength and for some years prior to the second world war had a Rover Crew. The only other groups to run Rover Crews were 24th Beds(Riseley), 42nd Milton Ernest and 45th Wymington, but the 44th Beds(Hinwick) and the 53rd Beds (Thurleigh) have had fairly strong Scout Groups.

In the early days many a village had its Scout Troop and it is interesting to note that of the first 50 registrations in the County

10 belonged to Borough of Bedford

3 belonged to Borough of Luton

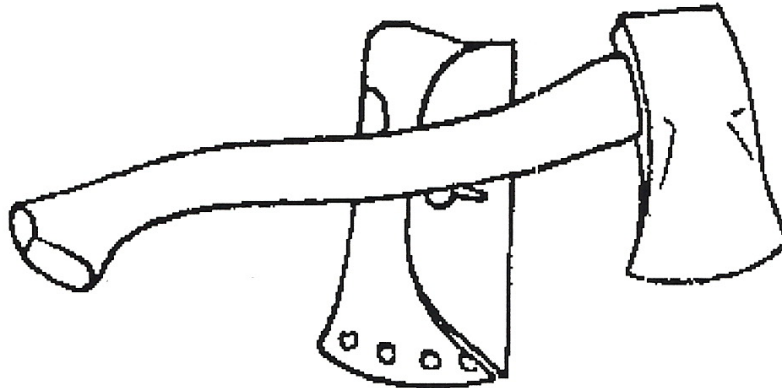
14 belonged to North Beds

12 belonged to South Beds

7 were a floating population, near but not quite in the Boroughs of Luton or Bedford

4 were unaccounted for.

Most of these disappeared during the first world war. In between the wars several starts were made to revive or form Troops and/or Packs in these villages but lack of Scouters proved a great drawback (this applies to all outlying village Groups). Get an interested man, lady, or better still family, and the Group will flourish while they remain. When the Founder departs suddenly - as so often happened during the two world wars and the Industrial slump of the early 1930's the Groups disintegrated.



OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

Group

OUSE VALLEY VSU

H.Q. Registration Date formed/lapsed

26.4.79/1983

H.Q. Registration No.

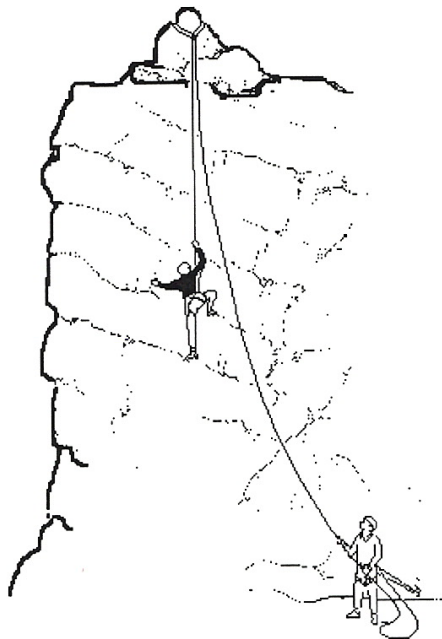
1979 43134

Tie

Brown

Leaders

Peter Jackson VSL



Group

TURVEY 36th BEDS BECAME 152th BEDS

H.Q. Registration Date formed/lapsed

1913/1919
1922/????
1933/1938
1946/1948
1950 UNREG SEA SCOUT
1967/1970
1996/ Beavers started

H.Q. Registration No.

21.4.22 TROOP 9800
27.3.22 PACK 5070
1928 4981
1933 9800
1946 24642
1967 38162

Scarf colour

Scout Green

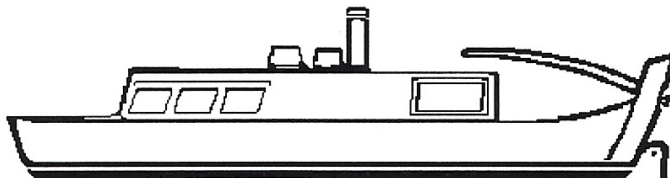
Special occasions

1928 Attended County Rally

Leaders

Harry Chapman Wendy Stark BL, Paula Cadman.

36th Beds(Turvey) one of Bedfordshire's earlier Troops had a rather chequered career. A Troop was recorded in 1913 but lapsed during the first world war. Re-registered 212 April 1922 (as a Troop) and as a Group in 1927/8 (IHQ Reg No 4981) SM Harry Chapman, High Street Turvey



OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

Group

CARLTON

H.Q. Registration Date formed/lapsed

1-4-74 1976

H.Q. Registration No.

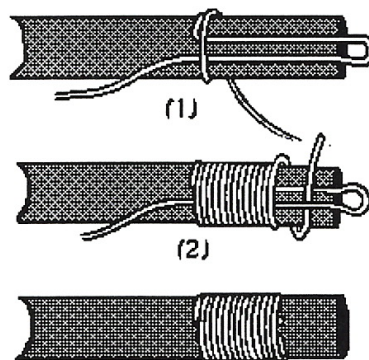
1967
1974 41290
? 42861

Scarf colour

Purple

Leaders

Chris Kelf CSL, Sarah Dickens CSL, David Humphries CSL, Barry Dickens ACSL, Sue Stapleton ACSL, Margaret Billington CSL, John Billington ACSL, Carolyn Knight ACSL, Jonathon Clark CSL, Steve Butler CSL, Kevin Cantwell ADC, Una Wilkinson BSL, Jo Keron BSL.



Group

HARROLD 38th BEDS

H.Q. Registration Date formed/lapsed

PRE 1913/1919
1924/1928
Cira 1932/1938
1955/1960
7.10.63

H.Q. Registration No.

1913 "??????
1924 12814
C1932 13288
1955 31317
1963 36651

Scarf colour

Yellow/Green Border

Special occasions

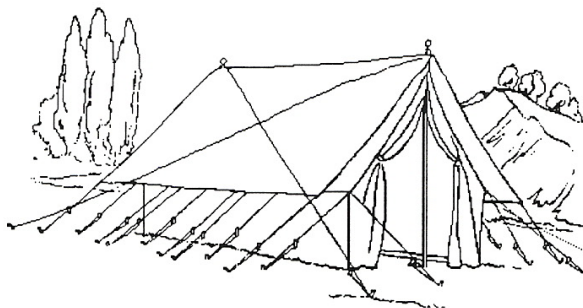
1913 Attended County Rally,

Leaders

Miss C D Pearce, Basil Horn CSL, Enid Horn ACSL, Jocelyn Shellard CSL, Richard Fairey ACSL, Nicola Bowden CSL, Ann Wise ACSL, Alison Wise ACSL, David ACSL.

Jocelyn Shellard CSL (1959 - 1997)

Joss spent 17 years with Harrold Cubs firstly as Assistant and then as leader. Her efforts and dedication were outstanding. She earned the respect of the boys with her contagious enthusiasm for scouting, A traditionalist at heart, joss would always use an Altar Fire for cooking and a Pack Tent for the boys at camp. Despite her deteriorating health over the last few years, Joss was never heard to complain and continued to provide an interesting and varied programme of activities for Harrold Cubs. She will be remembered fondly by all who had the privilege of working with her.



OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

Group

HINWICK 44th BEDS

H.Q. Registration Date formed/lapsed

1909-10 /1939
1959/1964

H.Q. Registration No.

1928 4983

Scarf colour

Brown

Special occasions

1913,1928,1948, Attended County Rally

Leaders

Lt. Col. Rouse Orlebar SM 1921, Miss E Orlebar ASM 1921, Frank Petit ASM 1921,
Miss Erica Orlebar CM 1921, Mr. Lewis, Mr. I H S Graham

Scout Troop was founded and registered at London office in 1909/10 in the days before such things as Census and Re-registrations came along to harass the long suffering Scouter. I.H.Q. Registrations came in 1919 and IHQ Reg. 199-1/10/19 was Hinwick's number. Scouts wore a green uniform with Brown scarf.

A Hinwick Troop was present at a County Rally in 1913.

The founder Lt. Col. R.R.B. Orlebar, Hinwick House, was G.S.M. when the Troop (with all others) registered as Groups in 1928 (IHQ Reg.. 4983). Also he was District Commissioner for North Beds (and leader of the County Contingent at Arrowe Park Jamboree in 1929). The Troop had representation at the 1924 Jamboree in Copenhagen, and the Group continued with unbroken service until during World War 2.

It was re-started in 1950 by Mr. I.H.G.Graham (grandson of the Founder) and then disbanded in 1964. Several Log Books and other records are filed in Bedfordshire County Archives (County Hall - Records Dept.) under Graham - Orlebar x464/14-18; 71-71.

OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

Group

WYMINGTON 45th BEDS (CHANGED TO 43th BEDS)

H.Q. Registration Date formed/lapsed

1921/????
1928/1938
1960/1963
1977/TRANSFERRED TO RUSHDEN DISTRICT 26.3.80

H.Q. Registration No.

1921 ----
1928 9477
1960 35166
1977 42178

Scarf colour

Red, White Border

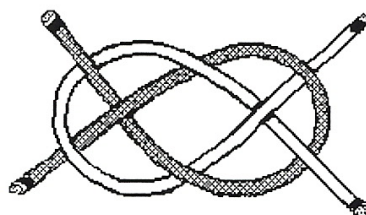
Leaders

Mrs. Barbara Hall , Mrs. Kenmore

The Group was founded in 1928/9 just after the entry Group System Mr. E.H.Smith, School House, Wymington was the first Scoutmaster and presumably the Founder. IHQ Registration 9477.

The Group - Troop, Wolf Cub Pack and Rover Scout Crew were represented at the Jamborally in Ampthill Park (1933) and continued with unbroken service until 1938 when registration was 'temporarily in abeyance - shortage of Scouters' (or similar wording) 1939 and the coming of World War 2, of course, did not help matters and the Group was disbanded.

The group was revived again for a short while in 1967.



Group

ODELL 51st BEDS

H.Q. Registration date formed/lapsed

12.7.29/-

H.Q. Registration No.

1929 9968

Scarf colour

- 1)Emerald,Orange Halves
- 2)Yellow,Green Halves

Special Occasions

1948 Attended County Rally

Leaders

Jack Coleman SL, Peter Coleman SL, Brian Knight SL, Martin Clark SL, Carolyn Knight ASL, Andrew Cookall ASL,

The troop was formed under Skipper Jack Coleman on 10th May 1929, and has continued from that date with very few changes of leadership. It has throughout its existence drawn boys from the nearby villages.

The Troop has gained a number of awards in competitions in the County over the years, some of which are the County Competition in 1958, and Patrol Competitions in 1967 and 1974. Over the years it has had a week long summer camp most years.

Scouts from Odell have attended many of the post world war 2 World Jamborees.

The troop has also had many of its Scouts awarded the King and Queen Scout Badges.

In 1974 Jack Coleman the Founder of the Group was awarded the Silver Wolf which was presented by the then Chief Scout.

In 1994 Mr. R. Mills went through the log book for the Troop and picked some of the highlights and recorded them as follows:-

A SIXTY FIFTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Odell Scouts recently celebrated sixty five years of continual scouting in the village. On Monday 9th May a representative group of scouts, accompanied by Group Scout Leader Martin Clark, former Scout Leader Peter Coleman, District Commissioner Carolyn Knight, parents and committee members, laid a commemorative wreath on the grave of founder leader, "Skipper" Jack Coleman. A short service was conducted by the Vicar of Odell, the Revd. Trevor Lightowler. Throughout the summer other events to mark this milestone in the scout group's history will take place, including a special camp for present and old scouts to be held at Snettisham in Norfolk.

OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

The 51st Bedfordshire (Odell) Scout Group held its first meeting on 10th May 1929 at Odell School which was the headquarters until the first scout hut was established. Jack Coleman, affectionately known as "Skipper" or "Skip" by many generations of Odell scouts was the founding scoutmaster. He remained actively involved until his death in 1976, when the leadership still remained in the family, as he was succeeded by his nephew Peter Coleman.

The early log books contain a fascinating insight into the history of Odell and the surrounding villages. They were maintained by a succession of young scouts with occasional inputs by the leader. Jack Coleman devolved a great deal of the organization to the scouts themselves who clearly responded to this challenge. The first committee, known as the Court of Honour, met on the 15th July 1930 and was attended by Patrol Leaders, D Hall and V Nash. Patrol Seconds S Hullatt and W Shellard and Scout Amos Gadsby. Victor Nash recorded these early events, including the setting up of a football team and the first camp which was held at Odell Moat in August 1931. The following year they camped further afield at Dovercourt, when the highlights included traveling to camp by lorry and a visit to an RAF aerodrome where the scouts were shown over huge flying boats. Subsequent annual camps were held at Snettisham (1936, 1938, and 1939) and at Chinnor in Oxfordshire in 1937.

In November 1936, Scout William Breary recorded that "...we are now installed in our new headquarters. This is a strong hut about 20 feet by 15 feet. We are now using the hut on Saturday evenings." By 1937 the troop had established a Rover Crew and in the same year William Breary and Percy Wheatley attended the International Scout Jamboree in Holland, a vast sea of canvas accommodating 25,000 scouts. This clearly had a major impact on the two boys. William Breary wrote: "I cannot attempt to write of the different nationalities and the customs we saw. They were so many." Percy was obviously impressed too, for he still regularly attends annual summer camps 57 years later!

In 1938 four Odell Scouts were presented with First Class Badges (G Bowler, R Skevington, A Esson and P Wheatley) they were the first in North Bedfordshire.

In September 1939 the log book entry stated "War having been declared, the troop meetings are so far a little unsettled, some scouts over sixteen are enrolled as messengers for ARP," However by October normality seemed to be restored and Skipper Jack comments "...troop meetings are now going strong and several scouts have already passed examinations for their National Service Badge." Indeed, annual camps were held throughout the war, although these were held locally and not without difficulty as one entry testified: "Despite the war and difficulties of rations, 11 scouts, including the Skipper started at the beginning of this camp, but the number, owing to war work, gradually lessened, "However, the war was to have much sadder consequences. William Breary, already mentioned, was tragically killed in action. He made many fascinating entries in the log book, concluding in 1938 with "...and now I have finished my entries in this book, having left the Troop. I trust my successor will do better than I have." Soon after that William Breary joined the Marines and, with the outbreak of hostilities, he was soon in action with his ship at the evacuation of British forces from Norway and then from Dunkirk. In May 1941 he found himself involved in a third evacuation, this time

from Greece. His Commanding Officer wrote: "I should like to bring to your notice the admirable part played by Marine W. R. Breary, who was killed whilst firing a Lewis Gun.." Skipper Jack was moved to write in the log book; "He was one of our Troop's successes. His was a character it was an honour, I feel to have helped to develop."

Thirteen other Odell scouts were reported as serving in the forces in 1944. Three were involved in active service in Normandy (E Green, J Kennedy and G Bowyer), one in Italy (W Shellard), one in India (T Douglas), four with the Royal Navy (K Shallard, V Brandon, V Bowdler and ? Stratton) and one in the RAF (R Sharp). R Gadsby and W Aston served with the Merchant Navy and L Hankin with the Black Watch. No doubt the scout motto "Be Prepared" held these and others in good stead in their future roles.

Odell is still proud of its links with American servicemen who were stationed locally. One log book entry of November 1943 records: "This week our American friend, Paul Stevanski, came down to visit the hut." During the war the scouts collected over 40 tons of paper. The last wartime entry simply stated; "One this day, 15th August 1945, Japan surrendered, so once more "Peace on Earth" and maybe soon our old scouts in the forces will return again." That was recorded by Scout David Coleman, nephew of Skipper Jack.

In peacetime Odell Scouts continued to offer a full range of activities, including the ever popular gang shows of which there are numerous references in the log book. In the early 1950s the Scout Hut which had been the centre of the village since 1936 was moved to a new site in Horsefair Lane on land belonging to lord Luke. The interior was improved, electricity was installed and it was warmer in winter. The new location with river frontage and more land enabled the range of outdoor activities to be expanded. Some years later the old hut was greatly expanded by the addition of an even larger hut which was formerly a wooden catholic church moved from Harrold. This small but active village troop now had premises which were the envy of many scout groups throughout the county.

The international dimension of scouting increased with more frequent opportunities for Odell scouts to go to World jamborees. In 1957 David Brooks and Andrew Macwilliam went to the World Jamboree held at Sutton Coldfield, an event attended by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh and scouts from all over the world. In 1963 Ken Newton from Turvey went to the World Jamboree in Greece and in 1967 Paul Barker represented Odell in Idaho U.S.A. His son, Daniel, went to South Korea in 1995. Between these generations other scouts went to World Jamborees. Brian Knight and Martin Bridgman went to Norway in 1975 and Paul Clark, Mark Stratton and Martin O'Reilly traveled to Canada in 1979. All these scouts gained from these opportunities and made valued international contacts within the world brotherhood of scouting.

These opportunities and the wide range of scouting activities generally would not have been possible without the support of the local community and the regular fund raising activities which over the years, have included dances, socials. Whist drives, gang shows, jumble sales, craft fairs, afternoon teas, sponsored events and prize draws. Generations of parents have participated in or supported the work of successive committees. Some, like, Joyce Knight of Harrold and Florrie Shellard of Odell, have given what seems like lifetimes of unstinting service to ensure survival and continuity.

OUSE VALLEY BEDFORDSHIRE

Sixty five years is a long time for a small village like Odell to support continuous scouting. That it survives at all is due to the traditions established over the years and the remarkable quality of the leadership of just four group scout leaders spanning its history. Skipper Jack Coleman laid the foundations in over four decades and was ably followed by Peter Coleman, Brian Knight, and current leader, Martin Clark, all of whom graduated from the scouts to carry on the traditions. They were ably assisted over the years by assistant scout leaders who were former scouts themselves. Self perpetuation is clearly an important ingredient.

Sadly the scout hut and field were lost in 1987. Dispossession was a consequence of the intention of the landowner, Odell Castle Estates, to put the land to other uses. Scout meetings now take place in the Village Hall, although the scouts have developed a riverside activities area on land rented from the Borough Council. This was opened on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Odell Scouts in 1989. Appropriately, it is known as the Skipper Jack Activity Area.

