

CARMARTHENSHIRE

Early days in Carmarthen Scouting

According to an account given by Cyril Sprake Jones to George Eyre Evans, County Commissioner, exactly fourteen days after the publication of the first issue of "The Scout" by General Baden-Powell, Carmarthen's first patrol was formed, on 29th April 1908, by four scholars (sic) from the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. Cyril Jones was one of those four, and on that date they sent the following letter to Baden-Powell

"Sir,

We are pleased to send you the following names of boys who belong to the Peewit Patrol of Carmarthen Troop. We request that our Patrol may be registered.

Frederick Spurrell Davies (Captain)

W. Ivor Thomas

Cyril Sprake Jones

H.C. Reeves

F. Thomas

A. Courtney Snow

W.J. Williams".

This is the earliest evidence of the commencement of Scouting in Carmarthenshire. For many years afterwards, on their headed notepaper, 1st Carmarthen Scout Troop proudly claimed to be "the first in Wales".

The minute book and register of this First Carmarthen Troop Boy Scouts 1909-1910, still exists and is inscribed on the inside of the front cover "presented by Mrs F.E.Jones, 2 St David's Avenue, Carmarthen whose husband and two brothers were three of the original Carmarthen Boy Scouts. The register was begun on 4th August 1909 by C.S. Jones, Hon. Sec"

The minute book records that on 4th August, a meeting was held in Old College School, Bridge Street, where a lecture on Scouting was given by Scout Master B.I. Morgan. Laws were made, a bank started for boys to save, and library books chosen to be purchased. On 7th August, they had a field day, starting at 2pm consisting of a march and cross country hike from town to Trevaughan, cross country to Bronwydd, back in town by 4.45pm. At Trevaughan, a stop was made for what we now call a wide game, in the fields thereabouts. On 9th August, there was a march to Llanstephan, starting at 9am, lunch and tea at the castle, with each boy making his own tea. They left Llanstephan at 6.30pm "passage through being greatly hampered by an interested crowd. Arrived back in Carmarthen in about 2½ hours". On 14th August, there was

a field day to Bronwydd weir, for drill, fire, and tea, leaving Carmarthen 1.30pm, back 7.15pm.

There is a photograph in the minute book of the newly formed cyclists' patrol which had cycled to Dryslwyn, and on 30th October 1909, an event which may surprise many who thought that the first girls to be admitted to Scouting were Venture Scouts in 1967, "Corporals B.J. Isaac and C.G.R. Lewis promoted to 5th and 6th Patrol Leaders. The girl Patrol Leaders are E. Jones, M. James, M. Morgan, I. Barker". How many girls were in the Troop is not recorded. An undated note (before 8th March 1910) records "It has been decided to keep the Girl Scouts entirely separate from the Boy Scouts", presumably a reference to the decision nationally to set up the Girl Guides.

8th March 1910 was a very important day for the emerging Scout Movement in South West Wales. The Chief Scout Sir Robert Baden-Powell inspected a contingent of 250 Scouts at Swansea. The Carmarthen Troop attended and was rewarded by the comment by the Chief Scout that it "was one of the smartest he had ever inspected and all the other troops present ought to take an example from them". There are two photographs, one of the Troop parading through Carmarthen's Dark Gate before leaving for Swansea and the other showing the Chief Scout inspecting them. Further entries in the minute book record :-

April 1910 - "Two courts of honour have been held lately. The first put down Patrol Leaders J.M. Lloyd, E.J. Andrews and B.J. Isaac to corporals for insubordination on Easter Monday. The second fined F.M. Lewis and Graham Davies for misbehaviour in the clubroom".

10th May 1910 - The Scouts attended the reading of the proclamation of King George V as King at Guildhall and the Fusiliers Monument.

20th May 1910 - The Scouts, wearing black bands on their hats, attended a commemorative funeral service at St Peter's Church for the late King Edward VII.

23rd June 1910 - Scouts attended Gorsedd at Carmarthen Park. They did very good work by forming a human fence to let the bards pass through to the stones. During the ceremony they held the crowds back for some time but being new to the work they had to relinquish the "fence" and do the best they could "against a very unruly crowd".

19th September 1910 - Scout Master B.I. Morgan resigns.

The resignation of the Scout Master was a rather sad event. The Reverend Basil Ivor Morgan of Newchurch Vicarage, who was only 22 years of age, resigned after a disagreement with the Carmarthen Boy Scouts Local Association over the unauthorised printing of membership cards without consulting the Committee.

Assistant Scout Master, Mr E.L. Lewis took over as Scout Master but only for a short time, for from 18th October 1910 to 2nd August 1912 Mr A.R. Davies held the appointment (later, Capt. Arthur Rowland Davies M.C., DSO, Royal Engineers, British Expeditionary Force in France).

The above record of the Carmarthen Troop gives the flavour of the early days of Scouting. What else was happening?

Growth prior to First World War

Baden-Powell very soon realised that a structure was needed to support the rapid growth of Scout Troops throughout the country. In September 1908, he appointed Mr Eric Walker as Scout Inspector to act as his representative in the organisation of the Boy Scouts' movement, in particular to show local committees how to organise. In April 1909 a Manager was appointed, an office procured in Victoria Street, London and Baden-Powell began to appoint County Commissioners who in turn began to seek out District Commissioners. The August 1909 edition of the Boy Scouts (Baden-Powell's) Headquarter" Gazette recorded that "District Secretaries are requested to get their Local Committees formed as soon as possible....." and in October 1909 "letters are being received at Headquarters announcing the formation of Committees. In cases where these are formed for the management of a single troop, these should be called Troop Committees and not Local Committees, which include a large area and represent all the troops in the district".

On 17th January 1910, a meeting of selected gentlemen was held at 2 Nott Square, Carmarthen. It is not recorded who selected the gentlemen concerned who were Messrs J.W. Barker, Walter Lloyd (Mayor), Ivor Crossman (ex Mayor), Rev D.I.Thomas, Scout Master Morgan, Adjutant Lewis, and Capt. Fred G. Humphreys. They decided to form themselves into a Local Committee to assist in carrying out the arrangements of the 1st Carmarthen Troop of Scouts. Mr Barker was elected President and Chairman of the Committee, and Capt. Humphreys Secretary. The gentlemen seem to have ignored or perhaps were not aware of the advice given in the Gazette, since they called themselves a Local Committee, yet apparently considered themselves supporting only 1st Carmarthen Troop. They were mentioned in the January 1910 as a provisionally recognized Local Committee pending the visit of a Commissioner, and they very soon took on the duties of a Local Committee, because their meeting on 30th March 1910 records that Mr J.H. Davies had consented to act as Scout Master of the Model School Company of Scouts.

On 20th April 1910, the minutes record that the Adjutant and Secretary had visited Llanelly on the previous Thursday and that Mr H.J.Davies of Llanelly had appointed himself as Scout Master of a reformed Company of Scouts and wished to have their approval, also that the Secretary had received a letter from Mr R.B.Tyler, Headmaster of Laugharne School, requesting information on forming a Company at Laugharne. On 9th June 1910, Mr Eric Walker from London, now referred to as Commissioner of Scouts, was present at the meeting and it was reported that the Model School Troop were now properly formed and that Mr I.H. Davies, the Headmaster, had consented to act as Captain, assisted by Mr W Griffiths, and that the Chairman had received a letter from Mr I. Morgan of Kidwelly seeking information about forming a Troop in Kidwelly. Mr Walker addressing the meeting explained how

heavily Boy Scouts had been taken up throughout the whole country and congratulated the Carmarthen Scouts on having such a strong Committee and that he hoped that for the time being the Committee would consent to act as a County as well as a local Committee.

This is evidence of the emergence of a County structure in Carmarthenshire; also the Headquarters' Gazette records a Carmarthenshire entry for the first time in May 1910, showing Sir James Williams-Drummond, Bart., C.B. as President and Lieut-General Sir James Hills-Johnes, V.C., G.C.B. as County Commissioner.

1910 appears to be the year that Scouting began to really take off in Carmarthenshire, with Ammanford and Llandebie, Kidwelly, Laugharne, Llandilo, 1st Llanelly, 2nd Llanelly (Christchurch), Model School, and Pontyberem Troops all having been formed. Others followed; 1st Gwendraeth and Pontyates, Llanstephan, and St Clears being mentioned in 1911; Llandovery in 1912; 3rd Llanelly (St Albans) in 1913; 1st Burry Port St Marys in 1914; and 1st Llangennech in 1916. When they actually commenced meeting is not known as local records no longer exist or if they do, have not yet come to light.

There are however two ledgers of Scout Troops in Wales 1912/13, which are fairly certain to be those compiled by Roland Philipps. Roland Philipps who was from Pembrokeshire was a person of strong ideals and a committed Scouter. Sadly, he was killed during the First World War. His two ledgers which were donated to George Eyre Evans by the Warden of Roland House are an unofficial census of Scouting in Wales in 1912/13. The following table shows the information recorded in the ledgers

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Sep 30th	Troop	Number of Scouts	Scout Master
1912	1 st Carmarthen	41	Fred G. Humphreys, 36 King Street, Carmarthen
1912	1 st Kidwelly	17	F. Sheppard, Bridge House, Kidwelly
1912	1 st Laugharne	24	R.H. Tyler, Ashborne House, Laugharne
1912	1 st Llandilo	25	Wilfred E.L. Lewis, Bryderwen Villas, Ffairfach
1912	Llanstephan	12	H. Lockyer, Llansteffan
1913	1 st Kidwelly	17	Ernest G. Farneaux, 21 Lady Street, Kidwelly
1913	1 st Llanelly	12	James Henry Wilkins, 40 Lakefield Rd, Llanelly
1913	2 nd Llanelly	12	H.C. Roberts, 74 Swansea Rd, Llanelly
1913	3 rd Llanelly	37	Henry Charles Lloyd, 109 James St, Llanelly

1913	Carmarthen	58	Fred G .Humphreys, 36 King Street, Carmarthen
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It was fortunate for the development of the Scout Movement that it had seven years to progress and set up roots between its first stirrings in 1907 with the Brownsea Island camp and the start of the First World War. Had the period been shorter, the war might have seen it stifled and lost. In Carmarthenshire, local support for the fledgling movement was growing. In addition to Carmarthen in January 1910, Local Associations were formed at Llanelly in July 1910; Kidwelly in September 1910; Llandilo on 2nd November 1912; and Llandovery in 1913, although the origins of these Associations may well have been earlier. Headquarters do not appear to have followed their own guidelines in registering some of these as Local Associations since some were supporting only one Troop, and were little more than Group Committees as we know them today. Not all had their own District Commissioners. The first District Commissioners found recorded are :-

Carmarthen

Captain (later Major) Edward Jennings of Gellideg, Kidwelly, 1911-1920

Llandovery

Mr JCP Vaughan Pryse-Rice of Llwyn-y-Brain, Llandovery, 1911-1921

Llanelly

Captain Harold S. Burn of 20 Pembrey Road, Llanelly, 1911-1920.

Llandilo's first District Commissioner was not appointed until 1925 and Kidwelly always came under Llanelly's District Commissioner. The Ammanford area, despite its early beginnings with the Cwmamman Troop in 1911 (which ceased at the outset of the First World War) was a late starter. Ammanford and Betws Local Association were registered in 1927 to service what seems to have been a rapid explosion of Scouting in that area (1st and 2nd Ammanford Troops registered on 13th December 1926; 1st Ammanford Wolf Cub Pack on 13th July 1927; 2nd Ammanford Wolf Cub Pack on 24th November 1927; and Glanamman Troop on 1st December 1927).

1st Llanelly

It is not certain how the fortunes of the various Troops already mentioned fared with the onset of the First World War. Some may have floundered, with Scout Masters going off to war. The Llanelly and District Boy Scouts Association minute book 1914-1923 exists, in the Stepney Collection held by Carmarthenshire Archive Service, and gives an insight into those years. At this point, the mighty 1st Llanelli (modern spelling) and its gentry family backers, should be mentioned.

It is almost certain that 1st Llanelli, of all the many units which have existed in Carmarthenshire in the first 100 years are the only unit which can claim to have a continuous unbroken history. Even 1st Carmarthen, despite its claim to be the first in Wales, has had periods when it has closed. The evidence of the minute book mentioned above and a 1916 Local Association registration form, shows that a Llanelly Troop existed throughout the First World War, and when Headquarters established their new registration system whereby they took over registrations from Local Associations in 1919, requiring each Troop or Pack then existing to re-register, 1st Llanelly were the first Troop from Carmarthenshire to comply, their registration being accepted from 1st October 1919. From then until now, we know from the registrations that they have a continuous history. It is unfortunate that their current registration dates only from 10th December 1964. This does not indicate a break in their existence, simply that at the 1964 census their District was late sending in their returns and the existing registrations were cancelled. Each Group had to re-register.

1st Llanelly existed in April 1910 when they are mentioned as having "reformed" and must have very soon in their existence gained the patronage of Sir Stafford Howard and his wife Catherine, one of the Stepney family. Sir Stafford provided a splendid new two storey brick built headquarters in Murray Street known as the Drill Hall for the Troop. This also contained a rifle range. This was opened in 1913 by the County Commissioner, General Sir James Hill-Johnes, V.C., G.C.B. The building and the plaque commemorating the opening can be seen today, at the Asda end of Murray Street. Not only did Sir Stafford provide the building, but he also provided the Scout Master in the person of Mr A.J. Clampitt, whom he employed as caretaker of the building.

Sir Stafford Howard died in 1916. His widow who became known as Lady Catherine Meriel Howard Stepney continued as patron of 1st Llanelly until her death. Sadly, the Group lost the use of the original building when it was requisitioned by the War Office in 1938 and it was never returned by them. Today, it is the headquarters of the Army Cadets. Lady Howard Stepney stepped in again by providing new premises for the Group in the Stepney Estate yard at the rear of Andrew Street, which are used by the Group to the present day. The plans, reported the Llanelly & County Guardian on 21st July 1938 provided for "a substantial building, with a main hall 50 feet x 20 feet, in addition to which there will be a library, two workshops, kitchen and stores". According to the present Group Scout Leader, Chris Reed, Lady Howard Stepney promised that the Group would have the use of this site and the buildings for as long as Scouting exists in Llanelli.

There is a tradition of long service in Llanelli Scouting. Mr Clampitt was Scout Master and Group Scout Master of 1st Llanelly for very many years, Joe Evans served with 1st Llanelly in various leadership roles from 1943 to 1984 and was awarded the Silver Acorn in 1986, and Chris Reed has been an ever present leader of 1st Llanelli from 1966 to the present day, being awarded the Silver Acorn in 2005.

A growing Movement -1920 to 1938

No census figures have come to light pre 1920 from Carmarthenshire except the unofficial figures in the ledger previously mentioned for 1912/13. From 1920 onwards, census totals are available in most years and show eleven years of consolidation and growth to a highpoint in 1930. The following years to the beginning of the Second World War saw numbers decrease but maintained at totals well over those of the first 20 years :-

Year	Wolf Cubs	Scouts	Rover Scouts	Adult members	Total	No of Units
1920	53	209	16	14	292	2 Packs, 6 Troops
1930	313	411	35	110	869	28 Groups
1938	184	308	62	128	682	14 Groups

It should be remembered that until 1928, Scout Troops and Wolf Cub Packs were registered separately, although some may have been informally linked. It was not until 22nd November 1928 that a new system of Scouts Groups began, within which Cubs, Scouts and Rover Scouts could all be members of the same Group. The 1920 Troops appear to have been 1st Llanelly, 1st Llangennech, 1st Llandilo, 1st Carmarthen (The Hon. Mrs Coventry's Own), with two unknown, and the Wolf Cub Packs being 1st Llanelly and Carmarthen First.

The Groups (all "1st..." unless otherwise mentioned) in 1930 illustrate the spread of Scouting throughout the county. They are listed by seniority of registration :-

1st Llanelly; Llandilo; 1st Carmarthen (The Hon Mrs Coventry's Own); Llandoverly; Pwll; Pembrey; Johnstown; 1st and 2nd Ammanford; Abergwili; 5th Carmarthen (South Wales Training College); 3rd Llanelly; Felinfoel; 2nd Carmarthen (St Davids); Tumble; Penygroes; 3rd Carmarthen (High School); Manordilo; 5th Llanelly St Mary's; Llandebie; Cross Hands; Tycroes; 2nd Burry Port; 1st and 2nd Dafen; Cwmamman; Whitland; 3rd Carmarthen (Queen Elizabeth Grammar School).

Most of the townships in Carmarthenshire are represented, with the major towns of Llanelly, Carmarthen and Ammanford having more than one Group. A notable exception throughout the 1920s and 30s is St Clears. After an early existence pre-First World War, St Clears does not appear to have reformed until 1941. Several of the Groups were "controlled", now known as "sponsored". 5th Carmarthen (South Wales Training College) – later to become Trinity College - was controlled by the College Principal; Felinfoel by Holy Trinity Church; 2nd Carmarthen by St Davids Parish; 3rd Carmarthen by the High School; 5th Llanelly by St Mary's Catholic Church; 2nd Burry Port by the Catholic Church.

The support and influence of the gentry families of the county is notable throughout this period. The Stepney family in Llanelly have already been mentioned.

Llandovery had its own District from 1911 to 1970 (except for the years 1949-55) and the District Commissioner was Mr J.C.P Vaughan Pryse-Rice, J.P., D.L. from 1911-21, followed from 1921-1949 by Major William Edmond Logan Stewart, D.S.O., D.L., J.P., who was the brother-in-law of Mr Pryse-Rice. Major Stewart and his wife entertained all the members of 1st Llandovery each January for a tea, or "annual bunfight" as it is described in 1st Llandovery's logbook, at their home Llanfair-y-Bryn, and were strong supporters in every way. 1st Llandovery built a Scout Hut in 1926 and this for very many years afterwards was called "The Wigwam". Llandilo's patron was Lord Dynevor. 1st Abergwili were supported by the Phillips family of Cwmgwili, and were allowed by the Bishop of St David's to use an outbuilding (a disused horse stables) in the Bishop's Palace grounds as a meeting place. Their Scout Master was Mr Don Maliphant.

The Hon. George Coventry, who resided at the Coomb, Llangynog, later to become the Coomb Cheshire Home, was District Commissioner for Carmarthen from 1922-24 and it is presumably his wife, Nesta Donne Philipps before marriage, who gave her name to 1st Carmarthen (The Hon Mrs Coventry's Own), a title which was still being used by the Group in 1943.

Nesta's mother, Lady Mai Alice Magdelene Philipps gave her name to 2nd Carmarthen (Lady Philipp's Own), which was changed to 2nd Carmarthen (Lady Kysant's Own) when her husband was created Baron Kysant in 1923 This 2nd Carmarthen had a short existence from 1921-1927.

3rd Carmarthen Scouts performing traffic control duties at the Royal Welsh Show in 1925 so impressed Prince Henry (later Duke of Gloucester) on his visit to the Show that he gave them permission to call the Troop "Prince Henry's Own". This Royal benevolence was not received with great joy at Scout Headquarters, who would not allow the Troop to use this appellation, on the grounds that it would set an unwise precedent. One can imagine the Troops disappointment at this decision, yet Headquarters may well have been prescient for the Troop had a short life, its registration being cancelled on 30th September 1927.

4th Carmarthen (1926-31) was unofficially known as Lady Mond's Own, Lady Violet Florence Mabel Mond being the wife of Alfred Moritz Mond, M.P. for Carmarthen 1924-28. The Scout Master was Mr L.D. Owen-Evans. Although the Scout Group was short-lived, the Mond name lives on in Carmarthenshire to this day in the form of the Mond Cup, a soccer competition.

1st Johnstown (1926-31) was unofficially known as "Mrs D.H. Thomas' Own". Johnstown is on the fringe of Carmarthen town, and the Thomas' lived in Starling Park, shielded from the main Carmarthen - St Clears road by trees and a drive, the land very recently transformed into a housing estate. The Troop used the

“Woolroom” in the village as its meeting place.

The continual increase in numbers and the spread of membership to all parts of Carmarthenshire throughout the 1920s was no doubt due to several factors of which the patronage of the gentry families and the support given by many churches are important. The growing reputation of the Movement and the relative dearth of other activities for young people is another explanation. Members of Scouts from the early days were themselves reaching adulthood and becoming Leaders. In Carmarthen, Mr D.I.B. Jones (always called Dib) made this transition. He joined 1st Carmarthen as a Scout in 1909, was an Assistant Scout Master with 2nd Carmarthen by 1921, and is believed to have served continuously in various roles until 1945, ending his service as District Commissioner 1939-45.

There was another factor which assisted the development of Scouting in Carmarthenshire in this period, and this was the entry into the Movement of George Eyre Evans. No chapter on Carmarthenshire (or indeed Welsh) Scouting would be complete without reference to this remarkable and well loved gentleman.

George Eyre Evans entered Scouting in 1924 at the age of 67 when he was appointed District Commissioner for Carmarthen. Although born in England, he was educated in Carmarthen where his father the Reverend David Lewis Evans was Professor of Hebrew and Mathematics in the Presbyterian College in the Parade, Carmarthen. George was a pupil at The Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Carmarthen, before training as a Unitarian minister. He held pastorates at Whitchurch and Aberystwyth. By 1924, he appears to be living a life of a gentleman of private means, pursuing his many and varied interests. He was Secretary of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society and Field Club of which he was a founder member, and had helped to create the Antiquarian Society Museum in Quay Street, Carmarthen. The Museum was one of his passions. He collected many of its exhibits from many sources and visited it daily when he was in Carmarthen.

Records existing from that period do not record how he was persuaded into Scouting. Once enrolled, he threw himself into it with abounding enthusiasm which rubbed off on others. He was a well loved man in Scouting, both by its adult members and young people alike. This is clearly demonstrated in the letters between himself and former Scouts after they had become adults and were dispersed about the globe. These letters and many others, also photographs, are in the series of bound Log Books numbered I to XXV which he maintained from 1925 until his death. The Log Books are deposited with the Carmarthenshire Archive Service, and make fascinating reading. It is because of his passion for collecting and recording events that we know so much about this period.

George Eyre Evans was District Commissioner for only one year, relinquishing this appointment to become County Commissioner. He was a great communicator and one of the means he used was a column in the Carmarthen Journal. The first

appeared on 18th December 1925, and subsequently every week without a break until his death in 1939 when he was still County Commissioner. He was well known to all Scouters in Carmarthenshire and beyond, always in contact to find out what they were doing, with the notes then appearing in the Journal. He was a founder member of the Welsh Scout Council in 1925, becoming Chairman of its Propaganda Sub-Committee. This was not as forbidding as it sounds, as its purpose was to spread the Scouting message. He threw himself enthusiastically into this extra task, and became well known throughout Wales and beyond, travelling anywhere that he was asked to give talks illustrated by the use of lantern slides. It is rather astonishing to read of all the places he visited for Scouting, since he possessed no car (a fact he proudly stated on his headed notepaper "no telephone, no motor car, no umbrella, no typewriter") and he used the much more extensive railway network of those days for many of his visits. He always wore his full Scout uniform when on Scout business and on other occasions too. At a Welsh camp organised by the Welsh Scout Council attended by the Prince of Wales (later the Duke of Windsor), the Prince christened George Eyre Evans "Sing-songs", by which name he called himself thereafter in Scouting circles. The Secretary of The Scout Association, Lord Hampton, attested in a letter to be found in the County Commissioner's Log Book VII for 1929, how unusual it was that a gentleman of George Eyre Evans' age was affectionately addressed as "Sing-songs" by old and young alike.

George Eyre Evans inaugurated an annual Carmarthenshire Scouts Pow-wow which was held in January of each year in various locations throughout the county to which all Scouters, officials, and Patrol Leaders were invited. These were well attended conferences, starting in early afternoon and going on into mid evening, ending with a Scout' Own. Sometimes a parade through the town in which they were being held was incorporated to show Scouts to the public. There was a printed invitation issued and the 1933 invitation starts with the exhortation from George Eyre Evans in typical style "Cheerio, brother Scout, I bid you welcome to our eighth Pow-wow. Keep up the tradition that it is a point of honour not to be absent : come in full kit".

His enthusiasm and love of Scouting clearly rubbed off on others and he was very well served and supported as County Commissioner by his District Commissioners. Major Stewart for Llandovery has been previously mentioned. For Llanelly, Frank H. More was District Commissioner from 1925 to 1953, having prior to that been Llanelly Local Association Secretary for two periods, 1914 to 1917 and 1919 to 1924. He was the Agent for the Stepney Estate, and the close association of Lady Stepney with Llanelly Scouting may in some part explain his length of service. For Carmarthen, Captain J. Ithel Thomas, a lecturer at Trinity College, held the appointment from 1925 to 1938 and later was County Commissioner himself from 1948 to 1949. For Llandilo, whose District Commissioner also covered the Ammanford area in this period, there were five persons who held this appointment in George Eyre Evans' time as County Commissioner; they were Lieutenant Colonel St.L. Hawkes 1925 to 1926; Mr J. Martin Davies 1926 to 1929; Mr T.E.J.N. Powell

1929 to 1930; Mr S.F. Barnes 1931 to 1932; Captain J.W. Nicholas 1932 to 1943.

In 1928, a Medal of Merit, which currently is awarded to adult members for outstanding service over a long period, was awarded to a Scout, J.R.R. (Jackie) Thomas, aged 15, of 2nd Carmarthen (St Davids) Troop, for rescuing a dog from a cliff face at Tresaith. Jackie, his father (Captain Ithel Thomas) and another Scout were walking on the beach at Tresaith on 31st August 1928 whilst at Troop camp, when they heard a dog whining. It had become stuck on a cliff ledge. They climbed to the top of the cliff and Jackie was lowered by his father on a rope to the ledge. He wound the rope round the dog, and then found that there was insufficient left to wind round himself. He had to hold on grimly whilst a cable rope was found, whence he and the collie were hauled to safety, to the loud cheers of a crowd which has assembled to watch. Jackie Thomas after service in the Second World War became well known in Carmarthen as Major Thomas the dentist. He was a staunch and active member of, the Royal British Legion until his death only a few years ago. A true Scout.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, many Groups were registered and most lasted for a short time only; a few years or even less. There were others though who were more firmly founded. 1st Llanelly, 1st Llandilo, 1st Carmarthen, and 1st Llandovery were there throughout. 1st Ammanford were registered in 1926 and were certainly still in existence at 1938. 5th Carmarthen (South Wales Training College) lasted from 1928 to 1956, for most of the period with Rover Scouts only, expanding after the end of the war into other Sections. 3rd Carmarthen (Queen Elizabeth Grammar School) formed in 1930 running as a Scout Troop only and continued until the School was closed in 1978. It was amalgamated with 4th Carmarthen Cub Pack, to form 5th Carmarthen Scout Group, which exists today.

In 1934 a former Llandovery Scout, Gwynne Jones, hit the headlines making attempts to beat the world record for a delayed parachute jump, and in August 1938 he achieved this record. With this background one might have expected Gwynne to have entered the RAF; however, 1st Llandovery's Log Book records him as entering the Royal Artillery for service during the Second World War.

The Pow-wow invitation for 1936 records that Mr Herbert Lloyd-Johnes, M.A., of Dolaucothi had just given the Carmarthen Local Scout Association a valuable site in the centre of Carmarthen, on the corner of Woods Row and Orchard Street, on which to erect a Scout Hall. This gift was in memory of the first Carmarthenshire County Commissioner, General James Hills-Johnes, V.C, G.C.B, Lady Hills-Johnes, and her sister, Mrs Johnes. With fundraising efforts delayed because of the Second World War, it was twenty four years before the Carmarthen Local Association was able to build the Scout Hall. The Hall was erected in 1960 and is in use by Scouts to this day.

What is clear from the census figures is that the 1930s were the peak years in

attracting members of Scout age and above (with the particular exception of the Second World War period which will be mentioned later). The Scouting ideals of service to others and strong personal discipline come through strongly in surviving documents of the time, and these were to serve the Movement well throughout the difficult years to follow. Support for Scouting was good too. The Llanelly Old Scouts' Club had 54 members in 1938 having been formed two years earlier. Local Associations regularly held annual dances to raise funds for Scouting.

Rover Scouting appears to have been strongly supported in Llanelly and Carmarthen. Rovers in Carmarthen consisted of the 3rd Carmarthen Rover Crew, and 5th Carmarthen (Trinity College) Crew. A Rover Den was established, courtesy of Mr Colby Evans, in rooms at the back of the Emporium building, since demolished, in Hall Street (Guildhall Square), Carmarthen. Quoting from a personal account given by Gordon James (later County Commissioner, then a Senior Scout in Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Troop "...the Rover Den was a "magic" place for Senior Scouts who were allowed to use it for a couple of hours just after school on two or three days a week. Its "furniture" was all hand made by the members of the Rover Crew and its modest library contained scores of books and magazines on Scouting matters. Its main attraction to my friends and me was the table tennis table!..... I was sorry to find that the Den had been closed long before I returned to Carmarthen in 1949." Another description of the Den describes it as having a chapel, recreation room, then the Den itself. Chairs were made from halved barrels, painted and padded. There was a library, piano, photographs and open fire. This must have been a very welcome and private place.

In 1938, a Welsh Patrol attended an International Jamboree in Australia. The Patrol was led by Scout Master George Hodges of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Troop, Carmarthen, and two Scouts from that Troop, Michael Jones and John Roberts, were chosen to form part of the Patrol. Many items of Michael's memorabilia and his photograph album relating to this are deposited with the Carmarthenshire Archive Service.

In August 1939, four Scouts from the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Troop - Alun Thomas, Noel James, Basil Jones and Gordon James - were invited to join their Skip Denzil Davies and a friend Pat Gordon, a house master at Rugby School, on a climbing expedition in the Zillertal Alps in Austria. However, their climbing activities were suddenly curtailed when Mr Gordon received a telephone call from friends in London and the party left Austria in a great hurry, travelling through Switzerland into France and thence in a blacked-out troop train to Calais where they caught one of the last ferries back to England on Sept 3rd - the day war was declared. Needless to say, this late departure (and fortunate escape) made the local headlines when they returned.

The Second World War to the mid 1950s

On 9th November 1939, an era ended when the revered man of Carmarthenshire

Scouting, George Eyre Evans, died. His loss was keenly felt, as evidenced in 1st Llandovery's Log Book entry "Sing Songs" passed away in Carmarthen. What a loss to the 1st Llandovery Troop & to Scouting in Wales generally". His memorial service was held on 19th November in Parc-y-Velvet Chapel, Mansel Street, Carmarthen (now tastefully converted into a dentist's surgery). A newspaper report recorded that "beautiful lilies which graced the altar table had been sent by Jos Morgan of Spurrell Street, Carmarthen, now on military service and Herbert Harniman, now in London, both of whom were formerly Scout orderlies to George Eyre Evans". A measure of the regard felt for "Sing Songs" can be gauged by the report that Commissioner Wyndham Richards cycled from Llandebie to attend the memorial service. George Eyre Evans' legacy to Scouting is still apparent in Carmarthenshire. His Silver Wolf is held in Carmarthen Museum, his Log Books which he gifted to the Welsh Scout Council in his will are deposited with Carmarthenshire Archive Service, and a bequest in his will for the benefit of Scouting in Carmarthenshire continues to provide a yearly income for Carmarthenshire Area Scout Council. Truly a remarkable man.

George Eyre Evans had written his Carmarthen Journal weekly column "Scouting matters" right up to his death. The last one in his Log Book for 1939 is numbered column 704. Mr D.I.B. Jones, who had been appointed District Commissioner for Carmarthen in 1939, commenced his own series of weekly articles in the Carmarthen Journal, commencing on 13th November 1939 through to 1945 called "Scouts, Scouters and Scouting". His Log Book containing these articles, numbered 1 to 284, ends on 13th May 1945, and is deposited with Carmarthenshire Archives Service. Report number 278 in 1945 records his own resignation as District Commissioner. Many of the articles reported visits to the Rover Den of servicemen home on leave.

Mr David Mainwaring, a Carmarthen solicitor, was appointed acting County Commissioner in the weeks following George Eyre Evans' death. Mr Mainwaring had been County Secretary from 1935 until his appointment as County Commissioner. He was called into service with the R.A.F. There are references to him as County Commissioner when home on leave, until he was replaced as County Commissioner in 1942 by Canon Tom Halliwell, Principal of Trinity College, Carmarthen, who held the appointment until 1948.

The wartime period, with the wholesale enlistment of men and women into all forms of war service, could well have been the death of Scouting, with its Leaders going off to war. Remarkably the reverse happened when membership numbers increased. Scouting was kept alive by many of its younger Leaders prior to being called up and by visiting servicemen. Dib Jones' articles record this story. Early in 1940, Abergwili, Ammanford, 1st Carmarthen, Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, 3rd and 5th Carmarthen Rover Crews, 1st Llanelly (with the redoubtable Mr A.J. Clampitt still their Group Scout Master), 2nd and 3rd Llanelly, Pontyberem, Pembrey, Llandovery and Llandebie were active. Scouts were undertaking waste paper, tinfoil, aluminium collections and messenger duties in most locations as part of the war effort.

In March 1940, a unique event occurred. Alec Tobin, a 15 year old Patrol Leader with 1st Carmarthen was invested with the Cornwell Badge (often referred to as the V.C of Scouting) for his great courage and fortitude in undergoing more than twenty operations on his eye which had been damaged by barbed wire penetrating the eye in a mishap when he was ten years old. He underwent a final operation without any anaesthetics in the faint hope of saving the eye. Sadly, he lost the eye. He was invested with the decoration by the Chief Commissioner of Wales, in front of a large audience in the Hall of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. This is the only award of the Cornwell Badge ever to have been made in Carmarthenshire.

During the war, registration of Scout Groups was devolved to District Commissioners who were given blocks of numbers to register new Groups. The first new Group to be mentioned by DIB Jones was 6th Carmarthen formed on 17th March 1940 by St Mary's Catholic Church in Carmarthen. Their enthusiastic Group Scout Master was the Reverend Father John. Through lack of records it is not known how long this Group was active. Although they and Reverend Father John are mentioned quite regularly for the next two or three years, they do not appear to have been given an official registration number until 23rd May 1945 when they were registered as 6th Carmarthen (Ovada) and are mentioned as "reforming" suggesting they may have had a period out of action. There is no record of this registration ceasing and yet on 23rd September 1952 there was a further registration as 6th Carmarthen (RC), and the Group finally closed on 31st March 1957. Next after 6th Carmarthen in 1940 were two further new Groups, at Newcastle Emlyn, and at Bancyfelin. The Scout Master of the Bancyfelin Troop was a Mr Fairclough, an evacuated school teacher.

1st Llandovery's Log Book mentions a new Troop at Cyngordy, a village about five miles further on from Llandovery on the Builth Wells road "We have welcomed two Evacuees as members of our Troop - Austin Selby (Cheshunt) & Patrick Williams (London). We hope they will be happy with us". The first entry in the Log Book for 1941 gives an insight into those wartime days "During War Weapons Week the Troop paraded at the Town Hall and marched in procession to Llandingat Church for special services on two occasions. We were about 20 strong on both occasions. On the Saturday - opening day - we paraded through the Borough & then went on to Llangadock - some of us having rides down in Bren Gun carriers".

1941 was a very important year for Carmarthenshire Scouting with a rapid expansion in membership. The first new Group mentioned by DIB Jones was Kidwelly (38th Croydon) under Scout Master Mr Silburn, working under the Croydon Association. Next, a new 1st St Clears Troop was formed with the assistance of Father John of 6th Carmarthen. Much of the credit for this was given to Mr A. Cooper, a London County Council school master of the evacuated Albion Street School from the London area, and a warrant as Scout Master was issued to Mr Fairclough, with the Bancyfelin Troop he had been running being absorbed into the new St Clears Troop). The vicissitudes of wartime Scouting are illustrated by two extracts from their minute book :-

4th April 1941 First Committee meeting held in Girl Guide Hall which they were to share for the Troop meetings.

20th June 1941 Roll call of 28 Scouts. Military had commandeered Guide Hall, trying to find other premises to use!

A few weeks after 1st St Clears, 2nd Carmarthen Air Scout Group (Lady Owen Phillips' Own) were formed, under Rover Scout Leader Alun Thomas and Group Scout Master Mr H.T. Lawrence M.A. Although contemporary accounts by Dib Jones refer to them as Lady Owen Phillips Own, one of their former Scouts, Arwyn Price told this writer that they were known as Lady Kysant's Own taken from the original 2nd Carmarthen in the 1920s, and he thinks their standard may have been laid up in Llangynog Church.

Arwyn recalled that he joined 2nd Carmarthen Air Scouts in 1941 from 1st Carmarthen Cubs. The Leader at 2nd Carmarthen was Mr Griffiths initially, and later Gerwyn Thomas. Gerwyn Thomas was organist at St Peter's Church for many years. Their meeting place was firstly in rooms above a shop in Water Street (later Julian's the jewellers), then in the cottage in Orchard Street which was demolished to make way for the present day Scout Hall, finally in a hut at the rear of Parc-Y-Velvet Chapel. They had visits from airmen from Pembrey Airfield who would bring items of gear with them and give talks. He was tested for his Air Spotter's Badge by Gerwyn Thomas. Twenty four silhouettes of British and German aeroplanes were shown in turn for a few seconds. The pass mark was twenty correct identifications and he failed on his first attempt with only nineteen. He passed second time round. The following letter to Dib Jones from Flight Sergeant W. Gordon H. James, 621 Squadron, Air Training Corp, is reproduced from Dib Jones' Carmarthen Journal article 187 in 1943 :-

"Dear District Commissioner,

I am sure you will be pleased to hear that some of your Air Scouts have succeeded in passing their test for the much coveted air spotter's badge. The standard required to gain the badge is very exacting indeed, and it augurs very well for the future of the Air Scout Troop that two of its young Patrol Leaders gained the honour at their first attempt. I am bound to comment on the performance of P.L. Ken Saunders who did remarkably well, having a percentage error of less than five per cent, and also on the performance of P.L. Arwyn Price, who was nearly as good....."

Is Arwyn's memory at fault fifty four years after the event or did Gordon James get the facts slightly wrong?

Arwyn also recalled that for the National Service Badge, the Scouts collected jam jars and bottles which were taken to somewhere in Mansel street; cardboard and papers taken to a tin shed in Brewery Road; acted as casualties for Civil Defence exercises in various sites - the Gas Works (bottom of Morfa Lane where MFI now

stands), old tin works (where Jewsons is now situated); and even as far as Gorslas; stayed in Llangynog Church Hall some weekends to act as “the enemy” for Home Guard exercises. He recollects taking part in a Gang Show in 1942 in the English Wesleyan Chapel. This had been produced by a serviceman. One of the items was a tableau “Scouts of the World” in which Arwyn was “China”.

Despite this being wartime, Arwyn says that there was much going on in Scouting to occupy his time. There were some long camps of seventeen days in Llanstephan and Coomb, held jointly with other Troops. He feels that he benefited greatly from his period as a Scout. In particular, the Electrician’s Badge introduced him to a subject that was later to take him into his career as an electrician and electrical engineer.

Sir Roger Manwood’s Grammar School Scout Group was the next Group to establish itself in 1941. The whole school had been evacuated from Sandwich in Kent, firstly to Penclawdd in the Gower, before coming to Carmarthen in 1940,. The School was based at Pibwrlwyd on the outskirts of town, with some of their pupils being billeted in town. Once formed they quickly grew into a very large Group, peaking at three Troops (known as 1st, 2nd and 3rd Manwoods, even though within the same Group structure) and one Wolf Cub Pack, with up to 90 members. The School returned home to Sandwich in late 1944.

During 1995, when there was a year of events to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a link was re-established between Carmarthenshire and Kent. Aneurin Heath, an Assistant Cub Scout Leader with 5th Carmarthen, had heard of the Manwoods connection. After extensive research in the local Carmarthen newspaper records and Carmarthenshire archives, for accounts of Manwoods in Carmarthen, he contacted the District Commissioner of Deal, Walmer, Sandwich and District Scout Council. The result was that a small party of Cubs from the Sandwich Cub Pack, with Leaders, including the District Commissioner, Colin Tappenden, travelled to Carmarthen in May 1995 to spend a weekend as guests of 5th Carmarthen. This visit was reciprocated in 1999 when 5th Carmarthen Cubs travelled to Sandwich. As a result of the publicity for these events, Aneurin received many letters from former Manwood pupils who had been evacuees in Carmarthen. Their memories of the period were very fresh, and Aneurin has a treasure trove of their letters, which he intends in due course to deposit in the Archives. Aneurin and his wife Debbie (Cub Scout Leader) also in 1995 organised an exhibition of wartime memorabilia in the Scout Hall as a project for the Cubs. The exhibition received much acclaim in Carmarthen.

Not many weeks after Manwoods, the formation of 4th Carmarthen Sea Scout Troop is recorded, Jack Young as Scout Master and Jim Gibson as A.S.M. They also had Wolf Cubs (including London evacuees). Their Akela was Miss Margaret Hughes, and they had a Sea Scout cabin in Water Street (very appropriate!). On 20th September 1941, 1st Laugharne was formed, Rev. J. Iorwerth Thomas as Scout Master, and then 1st Ferryside (6th Stepney), a mixture of evacuated lads from

London and local boys.

1st Coomb commenced 1942. This was a National Children's Home in residence at Coomb House, Llangynog. In 1944, 1st Llansadwrn was started by Streatham LCC School evacuated to the village, and registered by Llandovery Local Association.

The Groups founded in wartime may not have lasted very long. It is doubtful whether even those local to Carmarthenshire continued much beyond the end of the war. One which did however was 1st Pendine (Llanmiloe), from 24th August 1944 to 31st March 1966. Its first Leader was Sergeant Leates, He remained with them until February 1950. Their Committee minutes for 14th February 1950 record that he had tendered his resignation as Group Scout Master because "running the Group had become too much for him lately". His resignation was accepted with great regret, and the 7th March 1950 minutes have the foreboding news that the Group had been temporarily suspended until a successor was found to Mr Leates. Happily, by 4th April, the minutes recorded that a warrant as Scout Master was in the course of issue for Lieutenant Cooper. The military ranks are no doubt a reflection of the help received from the staff of RAE Pendine as it was then, a military firing range and experimental testing station.

Whereas Scouting in Carmarthenshire from 1908 to 1939 is well documented through George Eyre Evans' Log Books and various minute books and other memorabilia, the period from 1946 into the mid 1950s is something of a mystery with very few documents having survived. The impression is that it was quite a difficult time, with many of the old Groups going under. At County level, Canon Tom Halliwell was succeeded as County Commissioner briefly in 1948/49 by Alderman Ithel Thomas. His son Jackie was his Deputy. Alderman Thomas and his son were presented with their warrants on a special occasion in October 1948 at the official opening of a new headquarters for 1st Carmarthen in Brewery Road on the site of the old brewery, thanks to the generosity of Buckley's Breweries. On that same occasion, Mr D.I.B. Jones was presented with a barometer to recognise his work for the cause of Scouting over 38 years. In 1949, Mr Edwyn Hughes, Chairman of the Carmarthen & District Scout Association, replaced Alderman Thomas and was County Commissioner until 1956. This period also saw the retirement of District Commissioners Major Stewart of Llandovery in 1949 and Mr Frank More of Llanelly in 1953, both after 28 years of service as District Commissioners.

The Llanelly Local Association minutes of 1st December 1949 record the attendance of a person who was to figure large in Llanelly Scouting over the subsequent half century and more as a Scouter, District Commissioner and a variety of other posts - Glyn Clarke. This early mention pre-dates the official starting date of Glyn's service in Headquarters' records

The census table which follows will illustrate the wartime growth and subsequent fallback :-

Year	Wolf Cubs	Scouts	Rover Scouts	Adult members	Total	No. of Groups
1941	269	527	38	43	877	26
1943	233	577	20	100	930	22
1949	151	170	17	71	409	8
1955	119	104	1	33	257	9

All these figures have been extracted from the Welsh Scout Council Year Books. The high number of Groups in 1941 and 1943 must mean that most of the pre-war Groups managed to survive and were boosted by the new Groups previously mentioned. Contrast this with the reductions in 1949 and 1955. The 1955 membership total was the lowest since 1924 and it was not until the Scouting Jubilee Year of 1957 that the corner was turned. Why 1945 to 1955 was such a difficult time is not clear. Most probably the slow economic recovery after the war and the reduced birth rate during the war impacted on Scouting. Many of the old Groups went under and new Groups appeared, with some lasting a short time only.

The Welsh Scout Council Year Book for 1953/54 records the formation of a Sea Scout Group at Ferryside, new Groups at Newcastle Emlyn, Kidwelly, Llanegwad, Pendine and Whitland. Plans were in hand to restart Groups at Llandoverly and Llandilo, with some Llandilo lads being so keen that they were cycling to do Scouting at Llanegwad. The weak point was stated to be at Carmarthen due to accommodation problems (which suggests that the old brewery site was no longer available); 1st Carmarthen had closed in 1950. The Llanelly Troop was stated to be strong. In addition to the Groups mentioned in the Year Book, the other Groups in 1953 were 5th Carmarthen, Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Troop and, probably, 6th Carmarthen. 1953 was the coronation year of Queen Elizabeth II, and celebration Coronation beacons were lit by Scouts in nine locations in Carmarthenshire. These were at Llwyn Cutta reservoir at Llannon; Penlan in Carmarthen; Penlan at Llanegwad; the Camp at Eglwys Cummin; Carreg Cennin Castle; Trevaughan Farm at Whitland; Mynydd-y-Garreg Quarry at Pontyates; Cwmllynfell at Brynamman; Moelfre near Newcastle Emlyn.

1956 to 1976

In 1956, Jack Nell, who was Group Scout Master at Newcastle Emlyn where he lived, succeeded Edwyn Hughes as County Commissioner and held the appointment until 1968. He worked in Carmarthen as a solicitor and Clerk to the Magistrates Court. The situation at Newcastle Emlyn is interesting. Most of Newcastle Emlyn is situated in Carmarthenshire, and a wartime Group and the Group which was registered from 9th October 1952 until 31st March 1961 under the name 1st Cantref Emlyn were registered under Carmarthenshire Scout County. When Scouting was

revived there, date unknown, the new Newcastle Emlyn Group registered with Cardiganshire Scout County and that situation remains to this day.

In December 1955, Field Commissioner Joe Garrett had presented to the County Executive Committee his scheme to reorganize Carmarthenshire into six Local Associations :-

- 1 Whitland and Pendine
- 2 Carmarthen Borough and Rural District Council area
- 3 Llanelly and Kidwelly
- 4 Newcastle Emlyn
- 5 Llandilo Urban and Rural districts
- 6 Llandovery Borough and RDC area.

This seems a surprising proposal to make at a time when membership was so low. Two Districts already existed, Llanelly and Carmarthen. Llandovery Local Association was established in June 1956. Also in 1956, West Carmarthenshire District was formed, although the formal registration of the Local Association for West Carmarthenshire was not completed until June 1958. West Carmarthenshire absorbed from Carmarthen District the Groups at St Clears, Pendine, Whitland and Laugharne. Newcastle Emlyn and Llandilo Districts were never set up. In 1962, a Local Association was formed for Ammanford which absorbed Ammanford and Cwmamman Groups from Carmarthen Association, and in 1964, West Carmarthenshire was absorbed back into Carmarthen.

Despite the depressingly low membership of 1955, expectations of growth were high, for a letter exists from the County Secretary which states that it was hoped to achieve a membership of 2000 by the Jubilee Year of 1957! Even though his hope was very unrealistic, there was a modest growth to 503 members in the following year's census. Membership held between 500 and 600 for most of the years from 1958 to 1975, which must have been encouraging after the post-war decline.

The Scouting Jubilee Year Jamboree in 1957 was held in Sutton Coldfield and was attended by Scouts from Llanelly, Llandovery and Carmarthen.

On 6th July 1960, Llanelly District appointed as their President, David Mansel Lewis and Sir David (as he subsequently became) has been a staunch supporter of Carmarthenshire Scouts ever since. He relinquished the Llanelly presidency on becoming County President on 16th May 1973 which office he still holds. Sir David who was Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire and then Dyfed from 1973 to 2002 has allowed the Stradey Estate in Llanelly to be used for many Scouting activities and was himself a Wolf Cub with 1st Llanelly in the late 1930s at the Drill Hall (not a very assiduous member, he states!). The contribution of the Carmarthenshire gentry

families to Scouting has been mentioned previously, and Sir David is the last representative of these families still active in Carmarthenshire Scouting. The support of this quietly spoken, modest and charming gentleman of the old school and his wife, Lady Mary, is much appreciated by Scouting folk.

29th September 1960 saw the long awaited official opening of the new Scout Memorial Hall in Woods Row, Carmarthen, on the site which had been donated 22 years earlier. The official opening was performed by the Lord Kenyon, Chief Commissioner of Wales. The original wooden building is still in use today, the only change being an extension which was built at the back in the 1990s to house camping gear. This is the only Scout Hall in the county which is not owned by a Scout Group. Because the original gift of land was to Carmarthen Local Association, and the Hall was built by them, ownership is today vested in Carmarthenshire Area Scout Council following the closure of the Carmarthen District in 2005.

The Royal Welsh Show was held at Golden Grove in 1961 and a large number of Scouts from 1st Carmarthen and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Troops acted as stewards at the Show, camping on the showground.

Another long serving adult member, Ray Steel, makes his appearance in 1962, being mentioned in the County Executive minutes of 9th April as attending the meeting as a newcomer to the Movement in Llandovery where he was helping with the Troop. Ray, a bank official for many years in an era when members of that profession were frequently moved by their banks to gain experience, assisted with various Scout Groups in Carmarthenshire, Breconshire and Pembrokeshire before finally settling in St Clears where he has been a Scouter since 1982.

A notable event was the visit on 17th July 1965 of the Chief Scout, Sir Charles MacLean. Permission was secured to use Kidwelly Castle and Cubs and Scouts descended on the Castle for a morning of presentations within the Castle and projects on display in the adjacent field. The Chief Scout paid a further visit in 20th June 1969, with the venue this time being Carmarthen Park. This was an evening visit where the main events were chariot races (Cubs), pedal car races (Scouts) and a go-kart demonstration run by Venture Scouts.

Llanelly & District Local Association held a Swimming Gala on 26th March 1966, organised by their District Commissioner Doug Callow. Included in this were some inter-District events, and this was to develop into the County Scout and Guide Annual Swimming Gala.

A County Cubs Jubilee Sports Meeting took place at Ystrad Tywi County High School, Carmarthen, on 3rd September 1966, whilst in September 1967, a combined Scout/Guide Activity weekend took place in Stradey Wood, Llanelli.

2nd Ammanford acquired land in Manor Road for a modest price of £300 from Lord Rupert Nevill acting as the personal representative of the late Lord Dynevor and

opened their new Scout Hall in July 1968. This was a traditional wooden building, until in 1993 an outer brick wall was built, with the original wooden walls retained as an inner wall.

A County Sports Day, previously a District event, was held on 13th July 1968 at Ammanford Recreation Ground. On the first weekend in September 1968 the second combined Scouts and Guides Activity event was again held in Stradey Woods with nearly three hundred attending. On 14-15th September 1968 a Carmarthenshire Inter-Patrol Camping Competition organised by Peter Charlesworth, an energetic Group Scout Leader from 1st Llandovery, took place in the Halfway Forest, with 1st Tycroes being the winners. Since 2nd Ammanford won a County Camping Competition in 1969, this would suggest a good period of Scouting taking place in and around Ammanford.

During 1968, Gordon James (the same Gordon James who was in the Scouting party which made the dramatic late departure from France on the day war was declared in 1939) succeeded Jack Nell as County Commissioner. It is a measure of the esteem in which Scouting was held at that time that a special ceremony was held in Carmarthen's Guildhall to present Gordon with his warrant as County Commissioner, attended by the prominent people of Carmarthenshire society. Gordon had qualified as a solicitor after wartime service in the Royal Air Force and was practicing in Carmarthen. He re-entered Scouting in 1956 when he became District Commissioner for West Carmarthenshire, then District Commissioner for Carmarthen in 1964. He served as County Commissioner until 1976. Over the 20 years from 1956, he gave much of his spare time to Scouting, becoming well known also at Welsh Scout Council level.

Gordon was well served administratively through much of this period by Edward Beadle. Edward Beadle was a Londoner who moved to Carmarthenshire around 1950 to become Chief Clerk at the Fire Brigade Headquarters in Carmarthen. He was one of the founders of 1st Whitland in 1950 becoming their Group Scout Master, before moving to live in Carmarthen. Mr Beadle may have been District Commissioner for Carmarthen for a period in the 1950s as there is correspondence bearing his signature under that title, before becoming County Secretary from 1956 to 1970, where he was a prominent personality.

John Hanby became District Commissioner for Carmarthen District in 1969 taking over from Gordon James. John, who was a hospital administrator, is unique in Carmarthenshire as he served as District Commissioner in two Districts (if Gordon James' periods as District Commissioner for West Carmarthenshire and then Carmarthen are discounted because one was absorbed into the other). He was District Commissioner firstly for Carmarthen District from 1969 to 1974, followed on his return to Carmarthenshire as District Commissioner for Llanelly District from 1974 to 1978. His wife Pauline was District Secretary for Carmarthen from 1969 to 1974. They were living then at the Dower House in Johnstown, on the hill above Trinity

College's playing fields. The Dower House was and is surrounded by woods, and Pauline Hanby reported in March 1971 that Scouts working on a new hut in an adventure area near Dower House found a hand grenade, with a Scout nonchalantly tossing it in the air! The woods had been used during the Second World War as a range by the Home Guard and American troops. By good fortune the hand grenade did not explode. It was disarmed and no doubt the Scout concerned told many a tale about his experience for years to come.

A joint sponsored walk was held on 8th July 1973 to raise funds for Scouts and Guides, promoted by Gordon James and his wife Joy as County Commissioners for Scouts and Guides respectively. This must have been one of the earliest sponsored walks after these came in as a means of raising funds, and was unusual for its location. The walk was over the recently closed stretch of railway from Pencader Station to Newcastle Emlyn Station, 10 miles in total, with refreshment stops at Llandyssul and Henllan Stations. Buses were supplied to take entrants to Pencader and Stephen Rees a Llanelli accountant was the Transport Officer. The purposes of the sponsored walk were stated as being three-fold; one, it was a good healthy exercise; two, it was a joint Scout/Guide activity; three, it was hoped to produce substantial and much needed funds for both organisations.

In 1974, 1st Ferryside, which had reformed in October 1969, acquired land for a nominal payment of £100 to Kidwelly Properties, and erected a sizeable building leaving plenty of land around it for other uses. Sadly, 1st Ferryside last declared an active membership at the 1999 census and were closed on 2001. The building has been badly vandalized since lying unused. The Area Scout Council to whom title has passed is of the view that it would be difficult to re-establish Scouting in Ferryside on that site because of its location and are seeking to demolish the building and sell the land.

County headed notepaper in 1974, as seen in the archives, shows the Carmarthenshire County Scout Council having a motto. This was "Forward is our Password". Where or when this was adopted is a mystery and it does not appear to have been used for long.

Present day Scouters may be interested to know that in 1975, Scout Headquarters' capitation fee (this was payable to Headquarters for each member declared on the census for that year) was £1.00 per member. The name was changed from capitation fee to membership subscription in 1976; despite this change, many continue to use the term "capitation fee" to this day.

In 1976, the County Scout Council purchased a former warehouse in Kidwelly for use as a Headquarters. This was also used as a meeting place by 1st Kidwelly. It was sold in 1988, since it had not proved suitable for the purposes envisaged by the County.

Gordon James resigned as County Commissioner in 1976 and wished to see a

younger person take over to provide a generational change of direction and outlook. This was achieved when Stephen Rees, mentioned above as Transport Officer for the sponsored walk, succeeded him. Gordon must have been pleased that the membership which had consistently held at 500 plus throughout his term as County Commissioner showed a substantial increase from 560 in 1975 to 705 in 1976 at the census immediately prior to his resignation.

1976 to 1985

Stephen Rees (known to all as Steve) directed operations from his accountant's office in Llanelli. He was also an officer in the Territorial Army and this showed in his Scouting work, where everything was organised down to the last detail. Steve's office began to take on a secondary role as a Scout office, and members of his staff began to take roles in Scouting. One became County Insurance Adviser; another, Bryan Bevan, was enrolled as County Treasurer in 1980 and remains so to this day.

It would be unwise to claim that any period in Scouting history was the best era, as there are many aspects to good Scouting and numbers are not necessarily the best indicator. What can be said though is that the decade from 1976 to 1985 was a golden era when the membership peaked and exceeded 1000 probably for the first time, and there was a Scout Group in many areas which had not seen one before, or for some time.

Year	Beaver Scouts	Cub Scouts	Scouts	Venture Scouts	Adults	Total	No. of Groups
1976	0	353	232	18	102	705	18
1978	0	457	296	30	105	888	21
1982	0	648	299	18	168	1133	Not known
1984	14	614	283	35	170	1116	37
1985	16	602	266	32	165	1081	37

Full information for the other years in the decade is not currently available. However, 1980 was the year when the 1000 membership level was breached reaching 1051, and it is clearly seen that the greatest increase was in Cub Scouting.

Steve took a bold step in 1977 of appointing Ann Richards as District Commissioner for Carmarthen District at the (relatively) young age of thirty three. Ann had a knack of being able to recruit people as Scouters. If asked why there were no Scouts in Brechfa/Llangunnor/Cynwyl Elfed, she would answer "there are – you start them" and this approach very often succeeded in a new Group opening. Ann was to remain as District Commissioner for a period of seventeen years.

Alf Harlow was appointed District Commissioner of East Carmarthenshire District in 1978 and his District was very active, with many District events taking place.

Glyn Clarke of Llanelli District had served a first stint as District Commissioner from 1971 to 1975, and returned to the appointment in 1978. His wife Olive was a Guide Commissioner and the two Movements in Llanelli worked closely together for many years as a result. Glyn was a much respected figure. He retired as District Commissioner in 1991 at the then compulsory retirement age of 65 for warranted appointments, subsequently serving spells as Badge Secretary, District Secretary, Appointments Secretary, and finally District Treasurer, until his final retirement in 2005. Glyn passed away on 1st August 2006 at the age of eighty, having given in excess of fifty years' service to the Scouting Movement. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Wolf in November 2006. Posthumous awards are not normally made by The Scout Association. An exception was made because the nomination for the award was received before Glyn's death and in recognition of his distinguished service.

With the support of the three District Commissioners, Steve was able to stimulate activity in the county in different ways. The training team featured more prominently than for some time. Jean Fox became Leader Trainer in 1977, and in the following four years, 109 Leaders completed their basic training and 22 Wood Badges were gained. Steve took over the organisation of the County Scout & Guide Swimming Gala in 1976 and continued until his term as County Commissioner ended in 1981. The Gala was meticulously planned by him, with nothing left to chance, and with a great number of people given very specific tasks by him to ensure it ran smoothly. Sadly, the event became too much work and the final one in 1981 was for Scouts only.

A Dyfed Camping Competition for Scout Patrols, sometimes known as the Three Counties Camping Competition, started in 1974 and ran until 1984. Each of the Counties, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, organised the Competition in turn in their own county.

There were two major visits by the Chief Scout during this period. On 24th June 1978, Sir William Gladstone met the massed members in Kidwelly Castle – an inspired choice – where the Cubs dressed as Normans, with the Scouts in normal uniform. On 19th June 1982, Major General Michael Walsh met members in Carmarthen Park where an event "Scouting Meets the Public" had been arranged. The Park was transformed by Scout tents and marquees, with various Scout skills being demonstrated. This was memorable for the aerial runway erected by Jeff Everden, Scout Leader, and his 1st Carmarthen Scouts. This was a specialisation of Jeff's and was probably one of the final occasions when it was seen before health and safety regulations began to make it very difficult to use aerial runways as a Scouting activity.

In 1979, eight Carmarthenshire Scouts/Venture Scouts attended the World Jamboree in New Mexico, to be followed by five to Canada in 1983. The five in 1983, all from 1st Carmarthen, were Graham Richardson, Graham Slate, Timothy Edmunds, Jamie Gilbert and Jonathan Hawker.

From 1979 to 1984, there was a Cub's soccer league in Carmarthen District, as an extra activity. Matches were played on Saturday mornings, with teams from Pendine, Llanllwch, Llanstephan, 1st and 5th Carmarthen, Abergwili, Llangunnor and Llanllwni participating in various years. Organiser Hugh Morgan's (A.D.C. Activities) brief to Leaders was "remember, the League is arranged for the benefit of, enjoyment and competitiveness of the boys and all matches should be arranged and played accordingly." Many people consider that sporting activities should not be a part of Scouting. However, in the writer's experience as Group Scout Leader of 5th Carmarthen at the time of this League, the soccer generated interest in the parents of the Cubs who took part, and from this, they took much greater interest in all the Group activities and it was easier to get their help when required. Two of these parents, Mike Hackett and Ellis Jones made sponsored parachute jumps in 1983 to raise funds for the Group.

This decade saw three Scout Groups establish themselves in new premises. 1st Mynydd Mawr started life as 1st Penygroes on 19th August 1971. On 10th January 1979, it changed its name to 1st Mynydd Mawr as a reflection of the area which it served. Janet Bradbourn became its Cub Scout Leader in 1978, and in 1980, Gareth Lloyd Williams, a local estate agency proprietor, became Group Chairman and Doreen Davies, a local businesswoman, Group Treasurer. These three, with Janet having become Group Scout Leader in 1994, have formed the backbone of the Group ever since. Having secured a plot of land in Black Lion Road, and with the support of the local community through fund raising activities, a Scout Hall was opened in 1986.

Two towns saw reformed Groups registered in 1976 after public meetings had been held. These were 2nd Llandeilo registered on 17th March 1976 and 2nd St Clears registered on 7th December 1976. Someone of that era clearly felt that if there had been a 1st..... Scout Group in the locality previously, the new manifestation had to be called the 2nd.

2nd St Clears, after seven years hard work by a fundraising committee, acquired an army building from the S.A.S Regiment in Hereford. The St Clears Junior Sports Committee agreed to its erection on their Banc-y-Bailey field and the Group decided to erect the sectional building before planning permission had been obtained, and seek this retrospectively. The building work had just been completed, leaving further work to be completed internally before occupation, when in October 1983, a fire completely gutted the building. Harcourt John and the Scouts, returned from a hike to find only a charred shell and a low concrete wall base remaining. Fortunately, the building was insured and the Group very quickly recovered from this devastating

blow by obtaining a ninety nine year lease of a new site from St Clears Athletic Association in the Welfare Fields off Station Road, and by 1985 a “permanent” Scout Hall had been built with the assistance of a community industry project.

2nd Llandeilo in 1977 obtained a 21 year lease from Dinewr Borough Council of a building off Dynevor Avenue formerly used by the Air Training Corp. The Group, having become dormant in October 2002, was revived in 2004 through the hard work and effort of the District Commissioner Linda Owen. A new lease of 25 years was signed in 2005, and a shared arrangement for use of the building by Scouts and Guides was implemented. On St David’s Day 2007, there was a fire, thought to be arson following a break-in. Although the building was saved thanks to prompt attendance by the Fire Brigade, most of the equipment was destroyed or damaged by the fire, there was extensive blackening on the walls and the electrical system was put out of action. In the early days after the fire as this piece is being written, the Leaders are recovering from the blow. They may decide to seek grants to add to the insurance monies to rebuild the Hall rather than restore the original.

1st Llangennech, registered on 20th January 1982, secured a piece of land in Nany-Y-Gro from Dyfed County Council and opened their new Scout Hall in 1989. This is a splendid building on a good site The Group is thriving with a good mixture of long service and new Leaders.

1986 to 1999

The peak years of the “baby bulge” of the early 1980s passed, and in common with the rest of Scouting, membership began to decline from 1986 onwards. This occurred despite the introduction of Beaver Scouts in 1984, and their numbers masked the reduction.

In 1982, 1st Carmarthen celebrated seventy two years of Scouting with a special day of activities for their young members and parents in the museum grounds at Abergwili. This had started as a seventy years’ celebration until someone pointed out they had “lost” two years! The publicity for this event and an appeal for archival or other material gave rise to the now considerable collection of Scouting material held by Carmarthenshire Archive Service. Miss Maureen Patch, Dyfed County Archivist of the day, was District President of Carmarthen Scouts until she left to take up a similar post with Greater Manchester Record Office in 1985, and she was of great help and encouragement in setting up the archive.

Ann Richards decided in 1986 that the drive to raise funds to extend the Carmarthen Scout Hall was losing impetus, and that she would undertake a sponsored walk from Llanstephan to Snowdon to boost the funds. With the exception of the first two days, which covered the first 36 miles, she was without a walking companion or any form of back-up. She started on Saturday morning, reaching her destination in 5 days, and after a few days rest, she was joined by a coach load of supporters of all ages to climb the final few miles to the summit of Snowdon. Her efforts were not rewarded as

well as they deserved financially. Nevertheless, the Hall extension was built a few years' later, with valuable assistance from a small team of ladies who ran monthly jumble sales for the building funds. These stalwart ladies have continued, despite the passing away of two of their members in the intervening years, to run the jumble sales, with the monies raised being used towards the Hall running costs.

Albert Parry succeeded Steve Rees as County Commissioner from 1981 to 1988. Harold Smith from Swansea held the fort from 1988 to 1990 until a new local County Commissioner was found in the person of Hywel Rees, a Chief Inspector of Police, who served from 1990 until 2001. Whereas most of his predecessors had been steeped in Scouting in various roles prior to becoming Count Commissioner, his only prior experience had been as a Scout parent when his sons had been members. Hywel was a man of many interests and freely stated that he could only devote a limited part of his free time to Scouting. His sense of humour and good spirits soon endeared him to Scouters throughout the county.

A three District structure had existed since 1971, consisting of Carmarthen, Llanelly and East Carmarthenshire. This was increased to four when in 1988 Towi & Cothi District was formed supporting the Scout Groups in Llandovery, Llangadog, and Llandeilo, formerly under East Carmarthenshire District. By 1994, however, it had become clear that a 4 District structure was becoming more difficult to sustain, and in that year, following the recommendations of a report by Assistant Area Commissioner Martin Spain, commissioned by Hywel Rees, were accepted, and the four Districts were amalgamated into two, Carmarthen and Llanelli. Llanelli District changed its name to Llanelli & East Carmarthenshire in 1997.

The new millennium

In 2001 Nigel Cole succeeded Hywel Rees as Area Commissioner (Areas having replaced Counties in Wales by decision of the Welsh Scout Council). Nigel, in contrast to Hywel Rees, was steeped in Scouting having been a Scouter and Commissioner in Potters Bar for many years prior to moving to Carmarthenshire with his wife Val. They took on the leadership of 1st Llandovery Scout Group in 1999 when it had only a Cub Pack and quickly transformed it into a full 4 Section Group. Nigel served for a year as District Commissioner of Carmarthen District before accepting the Area Commissionership.

In 2003, there were 457 members which was the lowest seen since 1962. It was also becoming difficult to find people to take on roles at Area and District level, and it was felt by the Area Team that it was unnecessary to have 2 levels over Scout Groups. After agreement had been reached by the Area Executive Committee and after discussion with the whole membership, the two Scout Districts were closed on 31st March 2005, and the Area became the sole supervisory unit in Carmarthenshire from 1st April 2005. The last of a long line of District Commissioners when the Districts

closed were Linda Owen (Carmarthen District) and Ralph Stephens (Llanelli & East Carmarthenshire District).

At the Area Annual General Meeting in September 2006, The Scout Association's Silver Cross for Gallantry was presented to Thomas Wade, an Explorer Scout from the Blue Boar Explorer Unit at St Clears, for saving his father's life. Although this incident had occurred in July 2005, his Group Scout Leader did not hear of it until the following February when he promptly nominated him for an award. The citation with the award reads "In recognition of his heroic actions when his father was trapped beneath his overturned tractor following an accident, his quick thinking to jack up the tractor, clean away dangerous chemicals and then to call the emergency services were a major contribution in saving his father's life. July 19th 2005". Aneurin Heath, mentioned earlier, whose day job is as a paramedic supervisor with the Air Ambulance, was called to the incident and gave his testimonial that without doubt, Thomas' actions had saved his father. Subsequently, Thomas, and a neighbour, Graham Scourfield, who used his mechanical loading shovel to pull the tractor off Mr Wade, were awarded Testimonials on Parchment by the Royal Humane Society in recognition of their bravery.

Everyone in Carmarthenshire Scouts is very proud of Thomas, and also of Aneurin Heath, who was awarded an M.B.E. in this year's New Year's Honours' List for his services to the Health Services in Carmarthenshire. Well done, both!

Centenary Year

At the census date of 31st January 2007, there were 510 members in eleven active Scout Groups and six Explorer Scout Units :-

Scout Groups :

1st Llandovery; 1st Carmarthen; 2nd Ammanford; 1st Kidwelly; 1st Llanelli; Llandeilo; 2nd St Clears; 5th Carmarthen; 1st Llangennech; 1st Laugharne; and Gwendraeth Valley Air Scouts

Explorer Scout Units :

Archwilwyr Twrch Trwyth - Wild Boar (Ammanford area); Black Ox (Llandovery area); Laugharne; Merlins (Carmarthen area); Scarlet Dragons (Llanelli area); and Towy Tornadoes (Carmarthen area)

1st Mynydd Mawr, which had been dormant for two years whilst their Scout Hall was refurbished, has restarted, initially with a Beaver Section. The Group has a large catchment area around them at Gorslas and the signs for the revival are very hopeful. The next target will be 1st Tycroes on the outskirts of Ammanford which has been dormant for seven years. They have an excellent Scout Hall erected in 1978. With the Welsh Scout Council having received grant funding for three years to employ three Development Officers, the Area Commissioner has bid for their help to

start Groups at Whitland, Burry Port, Nantgaredig and Johnstown (Carmarthen). There have been Groups at all four places previously and it is felt that there is a good prospect of re-introducing Scouting.

Therefore, Scouting's Centenary Year in 2007 brings with it new optimism. Our first Centenary Year event was a World Thinking Day and Founder's Day Service held jointly with Carmarthenshire Guides in Heol Awst Independent Chapel, Carmarthen. This was well attended, and was preceded with a Parade from St Peter's Civic Hall through the main area of town to the Chapel, with standards borne. This was the first time for many a long year that a Parade of Scouts and Guides had been held in Carmarthen and attracted much public interest. The service was arranged by our Area Chairman, Reverend Martin Spain and conducted by our County Chaplain, Reverend David Jones, with the help of Reverend Towyn Jones (the Chapel's presiding Minister) and Martin. Carmarthen Town Band provided the music for the service. Our next main event will be the Centenary Camp at Dinefwr Park at Llandeilo, which the National Trust has kindly allowed us to use, and all members are looking forward to this.

So, Centenary Year brings with it new hope, expectation, and optimism in Carmarthenshire Scouting.

Author's note

Most of the information which has enabled me to write this short history has been culled from the extensive collection of records deposited with Carmarthenshire Archive Service, supplemented by visits to the Archives Department of The Scout Association at Gilwell Park, and to Llanelli Library. Some has been taken from my personal knowledge of events as they have happened over the last twenty nine years.

I should like to thank the staff of Llanelli Library, Pat Styles at Gilwell Park, and most of all, the staff at Carmarthenshire Archive Service for their help during my visits.

Nigel Cole (Area Commissioner) and Ray Steel (Group Scout Leader, 2nd St Clears) have been most encouraging and helpful with this project, and I thank them both; also my thanks to Sir David Mansel Lewis, Gordon James, Ray Steel and Arwyn Price for contributing their personal reminiscences and photographs; Aneurin Heath for making his 1995 file and photographs available; and to my wife Hefina for proof reading the text and contributing her help in correcting errors and grammar.

I am very conscious that much of the story I have related focuses on Carmarthen, and there is much less on other parts of the county where much good Scouting has taken place. This is not a deliberate omission; simply, there are few records deposited at Carmarthenshire Archive Service for these areas which I could consult. Hopefully, one day, someone will be able to fill the gaps by writing the histories of their own Groups.

I hope that members will not be disappointed if they do not find themselves mentioned. I have mentioned individuals where I felt they should be mentioned in the broad picture. It is however impossible to mention all those who have contributed over the years.

Any views expressed are my own. I have generally used the spelling of place names as they were used at the time, i.e. Llanelly/Llanelli, Llandilo/Llandeilo, etc., as they appeared in the documents I read.

David McPherson

Assistant Secretary & Hon. Archivist

Carmarthenshire Scouts

18th March 2007

Carmarthenshire Scouts Archive Collection ("CAS") (ref : DSO/4)

Carmarthenshire County Council

Carmarthenshire Archive Service

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Published records available

"Scouting In The County Of Carmarthenshire From 1908 - A Miscellany Of Information" by David McPherson, 15th December 2002 (can be found in CAS DSO/4 and the National Library of Wales)

1st Llandybie Scouts, Golden Anniversary, 1929-1979, commemorative booklet (can be found in CAS DSO/4/33)